

A. S. HOLLIS

[OPPIAN], CYN. 2,100–158 AND THE MYTHICAL PAST OF
APAMEA-ON-THE-ORONTES

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 102 (1994) 153–166

© Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn

[OPPIAN], CYN. 2,100-158 AND THE MYTHICAL PAST OF
APAMEA-ON-THE-ORONTES

This title is deliberately paradoxical, since Apamea on the Orontes was founded by the first Seleucus in the year 300 B.C.¹ Previously a smaller settlement in the same place was called Pella, but that only takes us back one generation to the soldiers of Alexander the Great;² a shadowy earlier name, Pharnake, reflects Persian rule.³ Although the archaeologists have found traces of human habitation back to the Palaeolithic age,⁴ Apamea could not claim long-established Greek connexions or heroic myths such as were boasted by e.g. Tarsus in Cilicia.⁵ So one of my themes will be that of ingenious, do-it-yourself mythology. This was often required in the Hellenistic age, and sometimes reflected royal policy, as with the fictitious heroic genealogies which almost all the Hellenistic dynasties manufactured for themselves.⁶ At the most extreme, we may find shameless hijacking of well-known myths. For example, where did Apollo's pursuit at Daphne take place? You might answer Thessaly, Arcadia or Laconia. If so, you will be surprised to learn that the chase came to its climax in the suburb of Antioch called Daphne;⁷ the cult of Apollo there was fostered by Seleucus Nicator,⁸ who claimed to be Apollo's son.⁹

From the third century B.C. we hear of many works, both in prose and poetry, devoted to Foundations (Κτίσεις); Apollonius Rhodius is credited with no fewer than six poems of this type, on Alexandria, Caunus, Cnidos, Naucratis, Rhodes and (probably) Lesbos.¹⁰ Seven hundred years later the interest in foundation stories is still very much alive in the

¹ John D.Grainger, *Seleukos Nikator: Constructing a Hellenistic Kingdom*, London, 1990, 124.

² Strabo 16,2,10 p. 752 ἐκαλεῖτο δὲ καὶ Πέλλα ποτὲ ὑπὸ τῶν πρώτων Μακεδόνων.

³ Eustathius on Dionysius Periegetes 918 ποτὲ μὲν κόμη οὐσα καὶ Φαρνάκη καλουμένη, cf. J. and J.Ch.Balty, *Apamée de Syrie, archéologie et histoire, I. Des origines à la Tétrarchie*, ANRW II.8, Berlin/New York, 1977, 103-134 at 109. For Apamea and surroundings, see now Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East, 31 B.C.-A.D. 337*, Harvard, 1993, chapter 7.

⁴ J. and J.Ch.Balty (n. 3 above), 108.

⁵ P.Chuvin, *Mythologie et géographie dionysiaques: recherches sur l'oeuvre de Nonnos de Panopolis*, Clermont-Ferrand, 1991, particularly pp. 176-182.

⁶ E.g. the descent claimed for the Attalids appears in a poetical fragment of Nicander (104) Τευθρανίδης, ὦ κληρὸν ἀεὶ πατρώιον ἴσχω, | κέκλυθι μὴδ' ἄμνηστον ἀπ' οὐατος ὕμνον ἐρύξῃς, | Ἄτταλ', ἐπεὶ σεο ῥίζαν ἐπέκλυον Ἡρακλῆος | ἐξέτι Λυσιδίκης τε περίφρονος, ἦν Πελοπηίς | Ἴπποδάμη ἐφύτευεν ὅτ' Ἀπίδος ἦρατο τιμήν, on which Gow and Scholfield (p. 216) comment 'The genealogical pretensions of the Attalids seem otherwise unrecorded.'

⁷ E.g. Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 33,210-215, 40,149, Eustathius on Dion. Per. 916, G.Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest*, Princeton, 1961, 82ff.

⁸ Downey (n. 7 above), 83-86.

⁹ E.g. *Fragmentum Erythraeum Paeanis in Seleucum* (Powell, *Collectanea Alexandrina*, 140), 1-2 Ὑμνεῖτε ἐπὶ σπονδαῖς Ἀπόλλωνος κυανοπλοκάμου | παῖδα Κέλευκον.

¹⁰ Frs. 4-12 Powell. Apollonius is believed to have had personal connexions with several of these places.

Dionysiaca of Nonnus (Nicaea, Tyre and Beirut (Beroe)), and no doubt it had not slackened in the intervening period, during which our evidence for local foundation myths is as likely to come from coins as from literary sources.¹¹ My passage from *Cynegetica* 2, written at a time intermediate between the Hellenistic masters and Nonnus, has attracted little attention,¹² but interests me for a number of reasons. Although composed more than 250 years after the extinction of Seleucus' dynasty, in geographical terms the *Cynegetica* comes from the heart of the Seleucid realm. We know a lot about poetry written under the auspices of the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt, but very little about any corresponding output connected with the Seleucids; perhaps here is a hint of what it might have been like. The concerns of this passage would have been entirely appropriate to a poet of the third century B.C. As it happens, we know that a substantial poet of that time was connected with Apamea on the Orontes, and I shall end by wondering whether he might be seen behind some of the more ingenious fabrications.

Our passage is not strictly about the mythical foundation of Apamea (Syrian Pella), but it seems that Κτίσεις were also receptive to post-foundation myths,¹³ particularly when they involved some heroic figure - here it is Heracles, in the long fragment of the *Foundation of Lesbos* (Ap. Rh. fr. 12 Powell), Achilles. Foundation material may also appear in other genres, such as the account in Callimachus' *Second Hymn* of the foundation of his own city, Cyrene. And, as well as foundations, there was a recognized genre of encomia of cities and regions, which would naturally include the mythical past. Indeed this genre is suggested by *Cyn.* 2,156-158, lines which might seem to promise a separate future poem on the glories of Apamea, but in fact emphasize what the poet is doing at this moment,¹⁴ briefly stepping outside the category of didactic verse:

ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν κατὰ κόσμον ἀείκομεν εὐρέα κάλλι
 πάτρης ἡμετέρης ἐρατῆ Πιμπληΐδι μολπῆι·
 νῦν δὲ παλίντροπος εἶμι κλυτὴν θήρειον ἀοιδίην.

¹¹ As well illustrated in Chuvin's book (above, n. 5).

¹² Chuvin (n. 5) mentions it just once (172, n. 68).

¹³ For an account of the traditions and standard contents of a Κτίσις, see Francis Cairns, *Tibullus: A Hellenistic Poet at Rome*, Cambridge, 1979, 68-86 (with references to earlier literature). It is interesting to have an inscribed Κτίσις (c. 207 B.C.) from Magnesia on the Maeander, including various oracles connected with the foundation. See S. Dusanić, *Epigraphica* 45, 1983, 11-48; the oracles were discussed and reproduced in H.W. Parke and D.E.W. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1956, vol. I, 52ff., vol. II, 153-155.

¹⁴ Similarly, when Horace says to the fons Bandusiae 'fies nobilium tu quoque fontium | me dicente cavis impositam ilicem | saxis' (*Odes* 3,13,13-15), one might at first think that he was promising a future poem, but further reflection shows that he refers to the present ode. [Oppian] here has well caught the 'learned' manner; having allowed himself to digress, he recalls his poem to the primary subject matter (cf. Ap. Rh. 1,1220, likewise starting ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν ..., 1,648-649, Catullus 64,116 and various passages quoted by Pfeiffer on Callimachus fr. 12,6 = Ap. Rh. 1,1309).

The personal pride which [Oppian] takes in his homeland is also apparent from line 127 ἐμὴν πόλιν, which cannot fail to recall Callimachus on Cyrene (hymn 2,65 Φοῖβος καὶ βαθύγειον ἐμὴν πόλιν ἔφρασε Βάττωι). Alan Cameron¹⁵ draws our attention to the abundant evidence (mostly inscriptional) for relatively brief encomiastic poems which were designed for recitation at festivals or competitions in the Hellenistic age, and suggests that extracts from longer works may sometimes have been used for this purpose. If the same held good in the third century A.D., our present passage, 59 lines long, might have been very appropriate for such an occasion.

I should say something about the *Cynegetica* and its author. The poet's name is unknown. He has traditionally been called Oppian, but this rests on a clearly erroneous identification with the author of the *Haliutica*, Oppian of Cilicia, whose poem may be dated between 176 and 180 (probable references to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus). *Cynegetica* belongs a generation later, dedicated to Caracalla, probably in the years when he was sole emperor (212-217). Our poet is a Syrian from Apamea on the Orontes. He is definitely not pretending to be the author of the *Haliutica*, but, equally clearly, he models his *Cynegetica* upon the earlier poem.¹⁶ If you look at a standard history of Greek literature, you will probably find the *Haliutica* commended, and the *Cynegetica* dismissed in a few words as inferior, on linguistic and metrical¹⁷ grounds. But in one respect I find *Cynegetica* more interesting than (I will not say superior to) *Haliutica*. Despite his technical deficiencies, the Syrian, paradoxically, owes more to the learned Hellenistic tradition than does the Cilician. I discovered this in the course of commenting on Callimachus' *Hecale*; for example the Syrian is the only ancient poet to follow Callimachus' coinage οἰόκερος (Cyn. 2,96 from *Hecale* fr. 69,1 H.), and, from Callimachus' statement that the raven originally rivalled milk in colour (γάλακι χροίην, fr. 74,16), our poet himself coined a compound γαλακόχροεσ (3,478). Subsequently I noticed that Cyn. 3,227 ἔχε φίλος, μὴ τάμνε is based upon Aegeus' words when he restrains Theseus from drinking the poisoned cup, ἔχε τέκος, μὴ πῖθι (fr. 7). To change poems, the clausula in Cyn. 3.271 πανείκελον ὠπήκαιο echoes the *Aetia* prologue, fr. 1,31 Pf. πανείκελον ὀγκήκαιτο, and, to change poets, Zeus χρύσειος (qua father of Perseus) in Cyn. 2,9 probably comes from a papyrus fragment of Euphorion (Suppl. Hell. 418,42). One small indication of a learned poet is the use of words in ἄμορβ-; membership of this exclusive club seems to be confined to Antimachus of Colophon, Callimachus, Apollonius Rhodius, perhaps Euphorion,¹⁸ Nicander and [Oppian].

¹⁵ In his forthcoming book, *Callimachus and his Critics* (Princeton).

¹⁶ Thus our passage corresponds to the briefer allusion to the poet's homeland in Hal. 3,7ff.

¹⁷ His distressing indifference to violations of Hermann's Bridge is illustrated in Cyn. 2,120 δυκέρωτα πόθον Μελιβοίης.

¹⁸ If ἄμορβοί is to be restored in Suppl. Hell. 415, col. ii, 15. See my note on *Hecale* fr. 76.

Two more substantial passages of the *Cynegetica* are also interesting for their relationship with earlier poetry. The first book opens with an invocation of Caracalla,¹⁹ recalling in manner but surpassing in extravagance Theocritus' encomium of Ptolemy Philadelphus (17) - no doubt the intervening period had seen countless similar effusions addressed to Hellenistic kings and Roman emperors. Ptolemy may have been uniquely favoured by Zeus (Theocritus 17,73-76), but Caracalla is himself 'sweet scion of Ausonian Zeus' (i.e. Septimius Severus) Ἀύκονίου Ζηνός γλυκερόν θάλος, Ἄντωνίνε (Cyn. 1,3);²⁰ Aphrodite wiped her hands on the bosom of Ptolemy's mother Berenice (Theocritus 17,36-37 τᾶι μὲν Κύπρον ἔχοισα Διώνας πότνια κούρα | κόλπον ἐς εὐώδη ῥαδινὰς ἐεμάξατο χεῖρας), but Julia Domna is herself Ἄκκυρή Κυθήρεια καὶ οὐ λείπουσα Cελήνη (Cyn. 1,7). Both poets stress the conformity of the ruler to his great parent by repetition, not just of words, but of the same metrical unit in different parts of a hexameter:

*cè δ', αἰχμητὰ Πτολεμαίε,
 αἰχμητᾶι Πτολεμαίωι ἀρίζηλος Βερενίκα
 (Theocritus 17,56-57)*

*τὸν μεγάλη μεγάληι φιτύσατο Δόμνα Cεβήρωι,
 ὀλβίωι εὐνηθεία καὶ ὄλβιον ὠδίνασα
 (Cyn. 1,4-5).*

Both rulers have seemingly universal domination over land and sea:²¹

*θάλασσα δὲ πᾶσα καὶ αἶα
 καὶ ποταμοὶ κελάδοντες ἀνάσσονται Πτολεμαίωι
 (Theocritus 17,91-92)*

but Caracalla does not merely rule land and sea - it seems that the whole of Nature is inspired by him and performs for his benefit.²²

*τῶι ῥα πατήρ μεγάληισι πονηράμενος παλάμησι
 δῶκεν ἔχειν πᾶσαν τραφερήν, πᾶσαν δὲ καὶ ὑγρήν.
 σοὶ μὲν γὰρ θαλέθουσα κύει πάνδωρος ἄρουρα,
 καὶ πάλιν εὐδιώωσα τρέφει κλυτὰ φύλα θάλασσα·*

¹⁹ For directing his praise at such an unworthy object [Oppian] at least had the excuse that Septimius Severus' dynasty was very strongly connected with Syria (Caracalla's mother, Julia Domna, came from Emesa).

²⁰ Compare e.g. Antipater of Thessalonica, 47 Gow-Page (Garland of Philip) = Anth. Pal. 9,297,1, where Gaius Caesar, grandson and adopted son of Augustus, is called Ζηνός τέκος.

²¹ For this motif, see A.Momigliano, 'Terra Marique', JRS 32, 1942, 53-64.

²² This kind of writing must already have been practised in the Hellenistic age. It seems to lie behind Virgil's quintessentially Hellenistic invocation of Octavian at the beginning of the First Georgic (e.g. 26-28 'te maximus orbis | auctorem frugum tempestatumque potentem | accipiat', for which Mynors compares the βασιλικὸς λόγος of Menander Rhetor).

κοὶ δέ τε πάντα νάουσιν ἀπ' Ὠκεανοῖο ῥέεθρα,
φαιδρὰ τε μειδιόωσα θέει κλυτὸς Ἡριγένεια

(Cyn. 1,10-15).

When then pass to a dialogue in distichs between the poet and Artemis (20ff.)²³ which ingeniously recalls Callimachus' Aetia-prologue (particularly Cyn. 1,20-21):

τρηχεῖαν ἐπιτεῖβωμεν ἀταρπὸν
τὴν μερόπων οὐπω τις ἔηκε ἐπάτησεν ἀοιδαῖς.²⁴

Epic subject-matter, including the γένος ἠρώων (1,28, cf. Call. fr. 1,5 ἥρωας) is rejected, though the poet slips in an honorific mention of Septimius Severus' campaign against the Parhians (1,31 ἐφρακάμην Πάρθων τε δύας καὶ Κτησιφόωντα).²⁵

The second passage comes from Cyn. 4 (230-319). Leopards, we are told, can be made drunk with wine, and so caught more easily. The reason is that leopards were originally women devotees of Dionysus,²⁶ who rescued the infant god from the enmity of Pentheus and conveyed him to Euboea where he was received and nurtured by Aristaeus.²⁷ Eventually Bacchus returns to Thebes to confront Pentheus, but the conclusion is not the one with which we are familiar. Pentheus is transformed into a bull (4,309-310).

Πενθέα μὲν δὴ ταῦρον ἐδείξατο φοῖνιον ὄμμα,
αὐχένα τ' ἠιώρησε κέρασ τ' ἀνέτειλε μετώπου.²⁸

The women become leopards (311-313), and the παραγμὸς takes place in these animal shapes (314-315). Any variant version which you might know is rejected as a deliberate falsehood of poets, with typically Hellenistic asperity²⁹ (313-319):

τοιάδ' αἰείδοιμεν, τοῖα φρεσὶ πιττεύοιμεν·
ὄσσα Κιθαιρῶνος δὲ κατὰ πτύχα ἔργα γυναικῶν,

²³ Gow on Theocritus 22,55-74 wrote 'The ensuing dialogue in stichomythia is without parallel elsewhere in epic narrative. At Op., Cyn. 1,20ff. there is an absurd dialogue in distichs between Oppian and Artemis which possibly suggests that dialogue interruptions of the kind were less rare than now appears.'

²⁴ ἐπιτεῖβωμεν and ἐπάτησεν are verbal echoes of πατέουσιν and τεῖβειν in Callimachus (fr. 1,25-26 Pf.), while τρηχεῖαν ... ἀταρπὸν recalls κελεύθουσι | ἀτρίπτουσι (fr. 1,27-28). Cyn. 1,17 τοῦτό με Καλλιόπη κέλεται perhaps suggests Callimachus' conversations with individual Muses (including Calliope) in Aetia bks. 1-2. So [Oppian] here has conflated Callimachus' reply to the Telchines, dialogue with Apollo, and conversation with the Muses.

²⁵ Is [Oppian] claiming already to have written a poem on this subject?

²⁶ Chuvin (n. 5) on the cover of his book (with the caption on the page facing his title-page) illustrates this legend by means of a bronze coin struck at Nicaea in the time of Vespasian.

²⁷ There follows a catalogue (268-272) of the inventions with which Aristaeus enriched country life; compare particularly Nonnus, Dionysiaca 5,229-279.

²⁸ Line 310 ('he ... arched his neck and made the horns spring from his forehead' (A.W.Mair, Loeb)) describes the transformations in what we might be tempted to call an 'Ovidian' manner (the same applies to several transformations in Nonnus' Dionysiaca - perhaps drawn from lost Hellenistic transformation poetry?) This transformation of Pentheus is not to be found in the book by P.M.C.Forbes Irving, Metamorphosis in Greek Myths, Oxford, 1990.

²⁹ In the spirit Callimachus, hymn 1,60 δηναῖοι δ' οὐ πάμπαν ἀληθέες ἦσαν ἀοιδοί.

ἦ μυκαρὰς κείνας, τὰς ἀλλοτρίας Διονύσου,
μητέρασ οὐχ ὀκίως ψευδηγορέουσιν ἄοιδοί.

This digression is 90 lines long, and full of the most unusual mythology.³⁰ Aristaeus was beloved of learned Hellenistic poets; we now have passages relating to him in Callimachus (fr. 75,33-35 and perhaps 58-59), Apollonius (2,506-527) and Euphorion (Suppl. Hell 443-4ff.), and he is a constant preoccupation of Nonnus. But it is not only the presence of Aristaeus which makes this passage the closest parallel in Greek didactic poetry to the Aristaeus/Orpheus epyllion in Virgil's Fourth Georgic.

Turning now to the passage glorifying Apamea on the Orontes (Cyn. 2,100-158), I would like to disentangle various elements of this, and, where possible, to trace them to their origins and dates. To start with the simplest, the name of the city, which is here called Pella (101, 114). This was given, as Strabo tells us (16,2,10) 'by the first Macedonians', i.e. it is pre-Seleucid, dating from about 330 B.C., after Alexander the Great had gained control of the area. The name, of course, was brought from Macedonian Pella, and with it came a re-naming of the river Orontes as Axios, from the river which flowed by Macedonian Pella. As J.D.Grainger says of such imported names (Cities of Seleucid Syria, Oxford, 1990, 42):

"Exact precision was clearly not required - the Axios flows south, but the Orontes north ... It is thus only the broad similarities which apply ... [Macedonian] Pella was sited by a lake [as was Syrian Pella] and by a major river."

The names Pella and Axios go together, and must surely have been transferred to Syria at the same time. Even though our first evidence for the re-naming of the Orontes comes 150 years later, on the bronze coinage of Antiochus IV,³¹ and the only other Greek mention (to my knowledge) of 'Apamea on the Axios' is in the ecclesiastical historian Sozomenus (fifth century A.D.),³² the name 'Axios' must have been in regular use locally, since it can apparently be recognized in the Arabic name for the Orontes.³³ One would expect [Oppian] to couple either Pella and Axios or Apamea and Orontes; instead we find Pella and Orontes - perhaps in both cases the less popular and more remote name to suit this context of the mythical past? I shall suggest that, although the name Axios does not occur in this passage of [Oppian], it may be relevant to some of the other mythology which we find here.

If you wished to construct a mythical past for a city of recent foundation, it would be a bonus to find some heroic myth, with a reputable literary ancestry, which was connected

³⁰ Line 267 may conceivably throw light on a damaged fragment of Callimachus' Aetia (fr. 75,58-59 Pf.); see ZPE 86, 1991, 12.

³¹ British Museum Catalogue, Seleucid Kings of Syria, p. 41 no. 81 (pl. XIII,4). AE, Obv. Head of Antiochus IV. Rev. Zeus, ΑΠΑΜΕΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΠΙΡΟΣ ΤΩΙ ΑΞΙΩΙ.

³² Patrologia Graeca 67, 1457 Ἀπαμείας τῆς πρὸς τῶι Ἀξίωι ποταμῶι.

³³ See Chuvin (n. 5), 171 with n. 61.

with the vicinity;³⁴ our poet has had just one such piece of good fortune. Among the many claimants to the grave of Memnon, son of Aurora, was Paltos on the Syrian coast, near Apamea and a little to the south of Laodicea. The sponsor was, in Greek terms, highly prestigious, no less than Simonides.³⁵ [Oppian] too mentions a shrine and cult of Memnon in this neighbourhood (152-153):³⁶

Μεμνόνιον περὶ νηόν, ὅθ' Ἀκκύριοι ναετῆρες
Μέμνονα κωκύουσι, κλυτὸν γόνον Ἡριγενείης.

In other respects our poet has not been so lucky, though I doubt whether he had to create much of the mythology for himself; most things probably go back to the earlier Hellenistic period, either to a poet or an ingenious local prose antiquarian. Particularly puzzling is 'Archippus, ruler of Pella' (114, Ἀρχίππῳ δ' ἑτάρωι, Πέλλης ἡγήτορι δίης), for whom Heracles performs this labour on the basis of friendship rather than compulsion (113-114). I expected to find the name Archippus among the Macedonian royalty or nobility in the fifth or fourth century B.C., but was disappointed.³⁷ Could the choice of this name allude to the fact that in the Hellenistic period, from the time of Seleucos I, Apamea was the centre of the Seleucid cavalry force (Strabo 16,2,10 speaks of λειμῶνας ... ἵπποβότους), or even³⁸ to Seleucus' office of hipparchos in the Macedonian army?

When Hellenistic poets celebrated the foundation, history or religious cults of a particular city, they would make a point of mentioning local geographical features which had seldom, if ever, been given a wider currency. Thus Callimachus in his Fifth Hymn speaks of the 'Creian mountain' (40-41) and 'the rocks now called Pallatides' (42) at Argos, for neither of which there is other certain evidence, and in the Second Hymn Apollo stands on a hill near Cyrene called Myrtoussa (91).³⁹ Similarly, [Oppian] alone names the

³⁴ Thus Apollonius Rhodius in his Foundation of Alexandria was able to bring in at least one link with heroic mythology - the flight over Egypt of Perseus bearing the Gorgon's head, producing poisonous snakes from the drops of blood which fell to the ground (fr. 4 Powell).

³⁵ Page, PMG 539.

³⁶ It is by no means clear that [Oppian] refers to Paltos - indeed lines 150-151 suggest a place nearer to the city, somewhere on the Apamean plain. Despite Simonides, Syria was not among the most popular sites for Memnon's grave; a second-century B.C. papyrus (Suppl. Hell. 983-984) gives us a riddling elegiac epigram, of which the first line is Μέμνονος Αἰθιοπῆος ὅπου χυτὸν ἥριον ἔστιν (983,1); a learned commentary (SH 984) attached to the epigram lists possible sites without including Syria. Josephus (BJ 2, 189) mentions a tomb of Memnon near Ptolemais in Galilee.

³⁷ We hear of an epistates called Archippus c. 180 B.C. in the reign of Philip V (Ἀρχ. Ἐφ. 1934-1935, 117ff.), but he does not seem important enough. The only (other) mythical Archippus is a recent discovery, from an Oxyrhynchus papyrus referring to the Heracleia of Rhianus (Suppl. Hell. 715) - a Heracle epic indeed, but that Archippus is Boeotian, and nothing suggests that he had a close connexion with Heracles.

³⁸ As suggested to me by Dr. Michael Whitby in St. Andrews. See J.D.Grainger, Seleukos Nikator, 1990, 18-20.

³⁹ In this case we do have some supporting evidence (see F.Williams ad loc.).

mountains which press on Apamea from East and West, Diocleion and Emblonos⁴⁰ (123-124):

ἦϊεν ἀντολίηθε Διόκλειον δέμας αἰπύ,
ἐκ δ' ἄρα δυσμάων λαὸν κέρασ Ἐμβλωνοῖο.

There may perhaps be another local name in line 149. After Heracles has diverted the river Orontes from the flooded plain, the earth re-emerges, and, in the best learned aetiological manner, the continuing fertility of the soil up to the poet's own time (εἰκέτι νῦν, 150)⁴¹ is ascribed to the hero's labour (148-151):

γαῖα δ' ἀνέπνευσεν μελανόχροος, οὐθατόεσσα,
κύματος ἐξαναδῦσα, νέον πέδον Ἡρακλῆος.
πάντη δ' εἰκέτι νῦν σταχυηκομέουσιν ἄρουραι,
πάντη δ' ἔργα βοῶν θαλερὰς βέβριθεν ἀλωάσ.

Although we lack other evidence to this effect, one could reasonably deduce from νέον πέδον Ἡρακλῆος (149) that part of the Apamean plain was known to the local Greeks as 'the Plain of Heracles'.⁴² This name might have prompted, or at least encouraged, the fanciful connexion between Syrian bulls and the cattle which Heracles captured from Geryon in the far West.

[Oppian] introduces this link with a line (109) which would not have disgraced one of the luminaries of the Alexandrian Museum:⁴³

κεῖνοι, τοὺς φάτις ἔσκε Διὸς γόνον Ἡρακλῆα ...

In Greek terms, however, to bring Heracles with the cattle of Geryon to the site of Syrian Apamea seems particularly implausible. To complete the Labour, Heracles should of course deliver the cattle to King Eurystheus, as he does in Apollodorus (2,5,10). After killing Geryon, Heracles was thought to have travelled with the cattle through Sicily, Italy, Gaul and Epirus. During that journey several attempts were made to steal the cattle (the best known by Cacus on the site of future Rome), and Hera also made them wander with a gad-fly. Consequently other breeds were alleged to descend from the cattle of Geryon.⁴⁴ But on

⁴⁰ The name Emblonos is of an unusual type, but I have not succeeded in casting any light on it. Could it have been brought from Macedon, like Pella and Axios (see above)? Alternatively, could it be eastern? Having discovered that there was a village called Blouné in the appropriate area (R.Mouterde, S.J., *A travers l'Apamène*, *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph*, Beyrouth, 28, 1949-50, 5) I wondered whether this might preserve a trace of the ancient name. My orientalist colleague, Dr. Sebastian Brock, kindly wrote 'I imagine the mountains must be peaks of the Jebel Ansariyeh, the North-South range to the West of the Orontes. I cannot think of a suitable semitic root for Emblonos. A connexion with the village Blouné does not seem very likely to me, but, I suppose, could be possible. Probably the peak that would have seemed most prominent would be Nebi Yonnes (the prophet Jonah): unfortunately I have not succeeded in discovering its earlier name!'

⁴¹ For εἰκέτι νῦν cf. e.g. Phanocles fr. 1,28 Powell, *Ap. Rh.* 1,1354, 2,717, etc.

⁴² With 'Heracles' no doubt representing an indigenous god.

⁴³ Note the spondaic fifth foot, and the stress on inherited tradition.

⁴⁴ E.g. the Thesprotian and Epirote in Aelian, *N.A.* 12,11.

every occasion Heracles made strenuous efforts to recover even single animals; in [Oppian], by contrast, it seems to be implied that he willingly deposited the whole herd in Syria (109-110). Elsewhere we find Heracles with the cattle as far afield as Thrace,⁴⁵ but to bring them to Syria is paradoxical; the poet suggests that in some sense this was 'destined' (ἔμελλεν 112, cf. 128). On the other hand, the notion of taking them east and giving them progeny there would please a Hellenistic poet who lived in those parts. Compare the case of Actaeon's dogs. An epic fragment⁴⁶ shows interest in what happened to them after their master's death, but it was Nicander of Colophon (fr. 97) who developed this further: they accompanied Dionysus to the East, were healed of their madness in the crossing of the Euphrates at Zeugma, and became the ancestors of the Indian dogs.

Although the presence of Heracles at Apamea does not fit well the classical version of his Labour to bring the cattle of Geryon to Eurystheus, Heracles does have numerous connexions with the East; e.g. he sacks Troy, and serves Omphale in Lydia. Sometimes he is identified with an eastern god or hero, as with Melkart in Tyre - Nonnus (Dion. 40,429ff.) has a detailed account of Starclad Heracles (ἀκτροχίτων) as founder and presiding deity of Tyre.⁴⁷ Heracles was also said to have been the original founder of Daphne, near Antioch⁴⁸ (later claimed by Seleucus I as the site of Apollo's pursuit of Daphne). And we are not so far from Nemrud Dagh, where in the mid-first century B.C. Antiochus I of Commagene portrayed himself on terms of warm friendship with Heracles,⁴⁹ as was Archippus in Cyn. 2,114. So perhaps the myth of Heracles at Apamea owes something to an eastern god or hero identified with Heracles; this seems particularly likely if, as suggested by line 149 (see above), part of the Apamean plain was known locally as 'the Plain of Heracles'. The smiting of rocks to open up a new channel for the river Orontes (128ff.) may be considered a typical work of Heracles. Leaving aside his least glorious Labour, to cleanse the Augean stables by diverting the river Alpheus, I suspect that this labour is based particularly on Heracles' opening up of the Vale of Temple to clear a path for the river Peneus, all for the benefit of the Greeks (Diodorus 4,18,7). The description of that work in Seneca, Hercules Furens 283-288

*dirutis qualis iugis
praeceps citato flumini quaerens iter*

⁴⁵ Apollodorus 2,5,10.

⁴⁶ P.Oxy. 2509. Many have ascribed this to the Hesiodic Catalogue, but Martin West strongly disagreed (CR N.S. 16, 1966, 22, 'The author of the Hesiodic Catalogue would turn in his grave if he knew that it had been attributed to him'), and the fragment was not included in Merkelbach and West, *Fragmenta Hesiodica*, Oxford, 1967. Subsequently we have discovered that the killing of Actaeon by his own dogs did appear in the Hesiodic Catalogue (Timothy Renner, HSCP 82, 1978, 282-287).

⁴⁷ See Chuvin (n. 5), 228ff.

⁴⁸ G.Downey, 82-83.

⁴⁹ See M.Colledge, *The Parthians*, London, 1967, Plate 30, or in Amélie Kuhrt and Susan Sherwin-White (edd.), *Hellenism in the East*, London, 1987, plate XIII.

quondam stetit, scissa cum vasto impetu
 patuere Tempe, pectore impulsus tuo
 huc mons et illuc cecidit, et rupto aggere
 nova cucurrit Thessalus torrens via

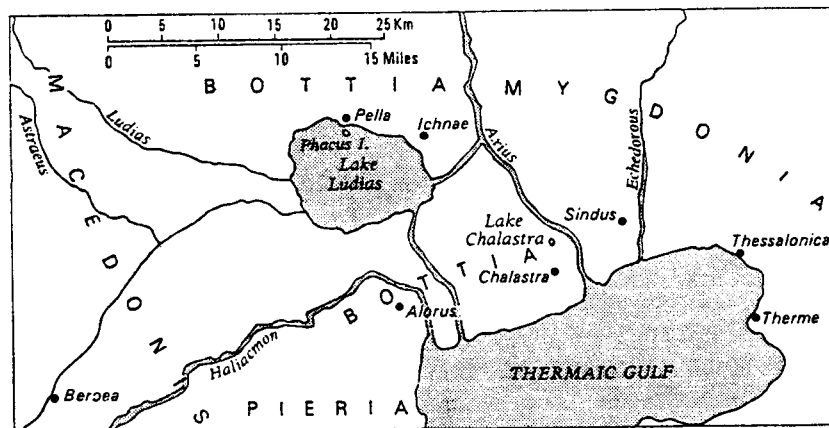
is very similar to Cyn. 2.132-137

ἔρξε δὲ πουλὸν ἄεθλον, ἐπεὶ στεφάνην διέκερκεν
 ἀμφιβόλων ὀρέων, λῦκεν δ' ἄπο λάϊνα δεσμά,
 καὶ ποταμὸν προέηκεν ἐρευγόμενον προμολῆσιν,
 ἄσχετα κυμαίνοντα καὶ ἄγρια μορμύροντα,
 ἴθυνεν δ' ἐπὶ θίνα· ὁ δ' ἔβραχεν ἠπύτα πόντος
 καὶ Κυρίου κονάβησε μέλαν⁵⁰ δέμας αἰγιαλοῖο.

This leads us to the mythology associated with the river Orontes, which is overflowing and joining its water to that of the Apamean lake, thus threatening to engulf the city (127). Heracles makes separate channels through which the waters of the river and of the lake can reach the sea (130-131):

ὔδατα δ' ἐκ πεδίοιο διακριδὸν ἰθύνεσθαι
 εὐπλοκάμου λίμνης ἢ δ' εὐτροχάλου ποταμοῖο.

Since, as we have seen, the Orontes in the vicinity of Apamea was also called Axios, in harmony with the name Pella (which preceded Apamea), it is worth glancing at a map of Macedonian Pella and the Macedonians Axios, as they may have been shortly before the first Macedonians left to settle in Syria:⁵¹



⁵⁰ One might think that μέγαν for μέλαν in the Loeb was a simple misprint, but for the fact that A.W.Mair translated 'the mighty body of the Syrian shore'.

⁵¹ From N.G.L.Hammond, *A History of Macedonia*, vol. I, Oxford, 1972, 150, Map 16. There is a photograph of the acropolis of Apamea, seen from the lake, and of the modern village of Qal'at el-Muḏīq, in J. and J.Ch.Balty (n. 3, above), *Planche II*, 1.

You will see on the Macedonian map too a subsidiary channel from the Axios to the lake, and an outlet from the lake to the sea. [Oppian] presents the situation in mythological terms: Orontes was desperately in love with the nymph of the lake, Meliboea (named in 120), daughter of Oceanos, and hence forgot about the sea (117-118):

χαροποῦ δ' ἐπελήθετο πόντου,
δαιόμενος Νύμφης κυανώπιδος Ὠκεανίνης.

This mythology is unparalleled and unexplained. If, however, we allow that the name Meliboea (129) may be a minor variation for Periboea,⁵² then it is possible to suggest an origin for the myth - an origin more probably due to a learned poet than to the soldiers of Alexander the Great who first called their Syrian settlement Pella. In Iliad 21,141-143 the river-god Axios loves, and has a child by, a water-nymph called Periboea:⁵³

τὸν δ' Ἀξιὸς εὐρυρέεθρος
γείνατο καὶ Περίβοια, Ἀκεσσαμενοῖο θυγατρῶν
πρεσβυτάτη· τῆι γὰρ ῥα μίγη ποταμὸς βαθυδίνης.

Supposing that Periboea could stand for Meliboea in another text, we may be able to find the same local mythology (or something very like it) still alive more than two centuries after [Oppian]'s time. Much the most promising place to look for it is in the Dionysiaca of Nonnus, a rich source for the hellenized myths of Syria and Asia Minor. In Dion. 17,262-314 we hear how the Indian⁵⁴ chief Orontes is defeated by Dionysus, stabs himself, falls into the river to which he gives his name and is buried by the nymphs (17,310). The mention of Daphne in Dion. 40,134 and 149 shows that this burial took place near the future Antioch. In 40,113ff. Protonoe, widow of Orontes, bewails her husband's death. She asks to be transformed into a stream (138) or a fountain (139), so that she can have a watery reunion with Orontes. Then she adds (146-148)

οὐ μὲν ἐγὼ ποθέουσα παρέρχομαι ἠδὲν Ὀρόντην,
οἶα φυγὰς Περίβοια, καὶ οὐ ποτε καμπύλον ὕδωρ
ἄψ ἀναχειράζουσα φυλάξομαι ὑγρὸν ἀκοίτην.⁵⁵

Chuvin⁵⁶ says that Nonnus does not name Periboea's would-be husband. But look again at lines 146-147. A very natural interpretation (indeed, the most natural) is surely that

⁵² The same variation between Meliboea and Periboea occurs in the name of Ajax's mother. I doubt whether the entry in P.-W. s.v. Meliboea 4 is relevant to [Oppian].

⁵³ For discussion of this Periboea, see Hammond (n. 51, above), 297. Chuvin (n. 5, above), 169 n. 48 notes that Periboea is a name often associated with water in one way or another.

⁵⁴ One may be surprised to find an Indian chief in Syria. As Chuvin (n. 5), 281 puts it, 'L'absence de la Mésopotamie et de l'Iran dans le trajet de Dionysos constitue sans aucun doute une des aberrations géographiques les plus frappantes des Dionysiaques. Parti d'une Assyrie et d'une Arabie qui se ramènent en fait à la Phénicie et à la Syrie, Dionysos n'a qu'à franchir le Caucase pour arriver en Inde.'

⁵⁵ 'I am not like runaway Periboea; I will not pass charming Orontes whom I love, I will not draw back my winding water and avoid a watery spouse' (A.W.Mair, Loeb).

⁵⁶ (n.5), 170, n. 49. I said the same in CQ N.S. 26, 1976, 148.

Periboea's lover was none other than Orontes himself. Then there would be a typically Nonnian touch of malicious humour: Periboea had the bad taste to reject the love of Orontes, but Protonoe, if only she were given the same opportunity, would not make the same mistake. So in [Oppian] Orontes suffers from a fruitless passion (δυσέρωτα πόθον, 120) for the water-nymph Meliboea, while, according to Nonnus, in much the same region he vainly loves the water-nymph Periboea. It seems economical to regard them as minor variants of the same myth. I would guess, however, that Nonnus' source is not [Oppian]. Apart from the slight difference of name, Meliboea in [Oppian] is clearly a lake-nymph (131, εὐπλοκάμου λίμνης), while Nonnus' Periboea seems to be a river-nymph. Dion. 40,147-148 καμπύλον ὕδωρ | ἄψ ἀναχειράζουσα suggests to me a myth which purports to explain the peculiar windings of a river's course. There is a certain (not uncharacteristic) awkwardness in Nonnus: if Orontes has only just died, he has not had much time to fall in love with, and be rejected by, the water-nymph. This would hardly have troubled Nonnus, who is combining a timeless myth (the river-god's love for a water-nymph) with his narrative of the Indian war in which Orontes is one of Dionysus' enemies.

While the naming of the Syrian city as Pella, and its nearby river as the Axios, can be confidently ascribed to the first Macedonian settlers in the time of Alexander the Great, the river-god's passion for Periboea or Meliboea (perhaps taking a hint from the Iliad where, by contrast, Axios' love for Periboea is successfully consummated) suggests either an ingenious prose chronicler or a learned poet. In the Hellenistic age there were close connexions between the two, as we can see from the case of Callimachus' Aetia, which derived almost all of its subject matter from local chroniclers, several of whom are mentioned by name in the poem itself.⁵⁷ The desire to connect the Syrian bulls with those which Heracles captured from Geryon has the same flavour. Is there any reason to think that a Hellenistic poet might have been specially interested in the myths of Apamea on the Orontes?

As it happens, there is. This poet would have been one of the biggest names around at the time when Antiochus III (the Great) succeeded to the throne in 223 B.C. By then the greatest age of Hellenistic poetry had passed, but there were still figures of substance to be hired. We hear of several men of letters connected with Antiochus III, and to the post of Public Librarian (which would inevitably invite comparison with the Librarianship at Alexandria) he invited the scholar-poet Euphorion of Chalcis, who would probably have been in his early fifties at the time, and perhaps was living in Athens.⁵⁸ Although

⁵⁷See G.O.Hutchinson, *Hellenistic Poetry*, Oxford, 1988, 41 with n. 30. Another place where prose chroniclers and learned poets rub shoulders is in the sources quoted at the head of each chapter for the myths in Parthenius' *Ἐρωτικά Παθήματα*.

⁵⁸B.A. van Groningen, *Euphorion*, Amsterdam, 1977, 250. Some twenty-five years earlier Eratosthenes had been summoned from Athens to the Librarianship at Alexandria (P.M.Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, Oxford, 1972, vol. I, 308 and 332).

Euphorion's poetry was strongly influenced by that of Callimachus, we have no evidence that the former was ever connected with Alexandria, and so he might be quite willing to join a rival court. It is a natural assumption that Antiochus' Library was situated in his capital, Antioch.⁵⁹ Perhaps, after working there, Euphorion retired to live in Apamea on the Orontes; at any rate, the majority opinion, recorded in the Suda (ε 3801 Adler), was that he was buried in Apamea:

Εὐφορίων· ... ἦλθε πρὸς Ἀντίοχον τὸν Μέγαν ἐν Κυρία βασιλεύοντα καὶ προέστη ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τῆς ἐκεῖσε δημοσίας βιβλιοθήκης. καὶ τελευτήσας ἐκεῖσε τέθασται ἐν Ἀπαμείαι, ὡς δέ τινες ἐν Ἀντιοχείαι.

Euphorion was certainly interested in the Labours of Heracles,⁶⁰ in the hero's journey to the far west⁶¹ and in his return with the cattle of Geryon - the line-ending of fr. 52 Powell χαλκείης ἀκάτωι βουπληθέος ἐξ Ἐρυθρίης is repeated in Cyn. 2,110.⁶²

It would be interesting to know how much poetry, and of what kind, Euphorion continued to write after his migration to the Seleucid realm.⁶³ Only one clear piece of evidence survives. Fr. 174 Powell alludes to a dream which indicated to Laodice, mother of the first Seleucus, that her son would become ruler of Asia:⁶⁴

'Seleuco regnum Asiae Laodice mater nondum eum enixa providit; Euphorion provulgavit.'

Seleucus I had been dead for some sixty years when Euphorion came to Syria. No doubt Antiochus the Great still liked to be reminded of the origin of his dynasty,⁶⁵ but perhaps it

⁵⁹ Thus Downey (n. 7), 94. If the Library was in Antioch, and Euphorion had worked there before moving to Apamea, that might account for the alternative opinion recorded in the Suda (below) that he died in Antioch.

⁶⁰ Frs. 24, 37 and 51 Powell all concern Cerberus.

⁶¹ Fr. 166 (the Pillars of Heracles, previously called after Briareus).

⁶² For another link between Euphorion (SH 418,42) and [Oppian] (Cyn. 2,9) see p. 155 above. There is in fact a papyrus fragment of Euphorion (Suppl. Hell. 429) in which a Periboea is wooed or wedded (429,4) in watery surroundings, but I lay absolutely no stress on this, since only the first half of the lines is preserved; nothing suggests any connexion with Apamea, and the whole context is totally obscure. Euphorion may be hopping from one myth to another, as he does frequently.

⁶³ The surviving fragments of Euphorion contain many geographical references to Asia Minor, but, of course, he could have made these while living in Chalcis or Athens. H.W.Parke, *The Oracles of Apollo in Asia Minor*, 1985, 173, suggested (not very plausibly, to my mind) that Euphorion's account of the Grynean Grove (fr. 97 Powell) was meant to gain the favour of the Attalids.

⁶⁴ Preserved in Tertullian, of all places. Van Groningen (n. 58 above) is inclined to attribute this to a prose work (his fr. 183), but I would have thought a poem more likely. There are several other references to such a dream, which also showed that the father of Laodice's son was Apollo. Appian (Syr. 56) and Justin (15,4) mention a ring with an anchor engraved upon it, a gift from the god. Already in 1843 A.Meineke, commenting on this fragment of Euphorion (his Euphorion 45 in *Analecta Alexandrina*, p. 77), noted the relevance of the anchor which often appears on early Seleucid coins. Robert A.Hadley, 'Hieronymus of Cardia and Early Seleucid Mythology', *Historia* 18, 1969, 142-152, did not include the testimony to Euphorion.

⁶⁵ The 'regnum Asiae' of Seleucus I would also be of special concern to Antiochus III, since the latter made strenuous efforts to regain control of the eastern territories (Parthia and Bactria) which had been lost in the intervening period.

is worth raising the possibility that Euphorion was concerned with the city which Seleucus I founded to commemorate his mother, and that was Laodicea on Sea, one of the sister foundations of Apamea on the Orontes. Laodicea contained an object which would certainly have interested Euphorion - the statue of Artemis supposedly brought by Orestes and Iphigenia from Tauris to Brauron in Attica.⁶⁶ So Euphorion would have found congenial topics connected with Apamea and its district; as a known mythological innovator,⁶⁷ he himself may have played a part in the formation of local myths. If I am right that Nonnus knows a myth of Orontes' love for an Apamean water-nymph which is almost, but not quite, identical to what we find in [Oppian], Cyn. 2, then Euphorion, as one of Nonnus' favourite models, would be an appropriate source for Dion. 40,146-148.⁶⁸

Oxford

A.S. Hollis

⁶⁶ This had been captured by the Persians and, in due course, presented by Seleucus I to his newly-founded city of Laodicea on Sea, where it appeared on the coinage and was still preserved in the time of Pausanias (3,16,8).

⁶⁷ Pausanias (10,26,8) considers Euphorion's account of the Trojan princess Laodice (cf. fr. 72 Powell - one need not deduce that the Atridae treated her badly) to be too farfetched to be worth mentioning.

⁶⁸ In CQ N.S. 26, 1976, 148, I very rashly brought Dion. 40,146ff. into relationship with what is now Euphorion, Suppl. Hell. 429 (see n. 62 above).

This article is based upon a paper read to the St. Andrews University Classics Research Seminar in April 1993. I am grateful to the most agreeable hospitality and the comments of the audience on that occasion.