

Historia Illustrius Itinerus

First Degree Composite of Work

Patchworking

Jason and the Argonauts Study

I chose this story at the weekend of my initiation ceremony in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, (July 14th 2018). I remember having a deep profound feeling and insight at the time about why I chose this particular story. Sadly, I have long since forgotten that unconscious insight and even though I could have made the patchworking exercise easier for myself, I have no regrets about choosing this particular story to study. It is a classic, written by Apollonius of Greece, who in his day was an esteemed ancient Greek scholar.

I have had a fear of water for a greater part of my life. Sometimes actual; an almost drowning incident when I was about eight in a swimming pool. Watching the Onedin Line film as a three year old. (The boat sinks, people die, somebody gets trapped and their loved one will not leave their side). My parents let me watch it because they thought I wouldn't understand, but I did, with unrivalled empathic abilities. I remember thinking that I was actually in the ship, I had no cognitive filter yet for separating my little self from the television. Other times metaphorical, (and equally scary); drowning in dreams, being capsized or in other various life threatening situations with water. So, this is a sailing journey, (albeit a masculine hero journey) and I was curious as to how with Apollonius' imagination the heroes survived their trials and tests on the open scary seas. Maybe I could learn coping skills and or heroes tricks for such future encounters with water.

And I say albeit a masculine hero's journey, because they are the most prevalent ones available to mainstream culture. My next patchworking study may be Joan of Arc or Bodicea or Dorothy from the Wizard of OZ.

I begin this exercise with a Pre-History to why the Argonauts sailed on such a dangerous journey. This is not part of the expected patchworking exercise, but I think it will help you understand the story and give it its proper context.

Pre-History

The Reason for their Quest to find the Golden Fleece

The Argo is the ship. The vessel. The Argonauts are a collection of brave demi-god heroes especially chosen for their varied skills and capabilities for the journey. They are all of blood line from the Gods. The quest is to assist Jason in finding the Golden Fleece and return it to his homeland, Thessalian Iolkos. Only when he has proven himself worthy can he claim his rightful bloodline inheritance and be King and rightful heir to the land of Aiolos.

The story is written by Apollonius of Rhodes who was a scholar of the time in ancient Greece. The story is a set of four books and was written in Alexandria which at the time provided an overlap between Egyptian and Greek cultures.

The whole pre-text relies upon their having been two branches of descendants from Aiolos. King Athamas and his wife Nephele had two children Phrixos and Helle.

Then he married Ino who plotted against her step-children Phrixos and Helle. She tricked her husband King Athamas into believing he had to sacrifice his children in order for the God Zeus to save them from famine.

Phrixos and Helle were saved by the God Hermes and they flew eastwards on a magical golden ram i.e The Golden Fleece. On their flight Helle fell and died over Hellesport, hence its namesake.

When Phrixos landed in Aia, the land in the East, he sacrificed the Golden ram and hung its fleece in a grove sacred to Ares.

The King of Aia, Aites gave his daughter Chalkiope to Phrixos in marriage.

The other Aeolian family tree is located in Thessalian Iolkos, Jason's homeland, where his grandfather Kretheus was King. Jason's father Aison didn't inherit the throne, instead it was passed to Pelias who was Kretheus' step son to his wife Tyro and the God Poseidon.

Athamas and Kretheus are half brothers. As far as I can understand Kretheus was married to his niece Tyro who had had two children to Poseidon. Jason's father Aison and Tyro are cousins. Jason and Pelias are distant cousins through Salmoneous, half brother of Athamas and Kretheus.

That is the mind boggling bit, it all gets easier from here on...

So, to summarise; Pelias is challenged and rivalled by Jason for the Kingdom of Aiolos.

Pelias had always seen Jason as a threat to his throne and Jason was brought up in the countryside to be far from harms way.

The Sign

Pelias had incurred the wrath of the Goddess Hera, because he had killed his step mother at her altar. He received an oracle that he Pelias should beware of a man wearing only one sandal. Jason arrived to him this way after losing a sandal in mud.

To assuage Zeus' anger for killing his step-mother he offered his throne up to Jason after he recovers the Golden Fleece from Aiolos. It is an impossible task, or so Pelias believes.

The Archetype of

The Hero's Journey or

The Noble Quest.

The young man is challenged to a gruelling quest of initiation, fraught with danger and many impossible challenges, he is to prove his worth and heroism to his peers/people/family – and also in this case –The Gods.

The Crew

According to Wiki the Argonauts crew was made of fifty men, including Jason. They are all demi-gods, sons, nephews, grandsons of the Gods, hybrids between human and God. They are chosen for their various diversity in skill and ability. Their roles too, are arguably archetypical, here are a few examples so you can get the gist;

Orpheus – The Bard

Polyphemos – A Ready Spirit

Erytos & Echion - Sons of Hermes.

Koronos – A Good Warrior

Titaresian – Diviner of Birds

Oileous – Skilled at Ambush

Phaleros – The Sturdy Spear

Tiphys – Foreteller of the Sea/Navigator

Herakles – THE Herakles

Idas – Violent

Periklymenos – Shapeshifter

Ankaios – Axe Man in a Bear Skin

Etc, etc

A Closer Examination of the Relevant Etymologies so far....

And their Relevance to HI and Archetypes

Argo - Greek Mythology The ship in which Jason sailed in search of the Golden Fleece.

(Formerly, a constellation in the Southern Hemisphere, lying between Canis Major and the Southern Cross, now divided into four smaller constellations, Carina, Puppis, Pyxis, and Vela).

Argonauts – sailors of the Argo.

Naut – derived from nautical – concerning navigation, sailing, of the sea.

Alexandria – an Egyptian city on the Mediterranean coast, influenced with Greek culture.

Aiolos – The Land to the East – alludes to a Sun God – East being a direction in the HI.

Phrixos – the child who escaped on the Golden Ram. His name meaning 'curly hair' like a ram/sheep. (Brilliant metaphorical analogy connecting the character and the ram and the quest)

Zeus - Zeus is the Greek continuation of Dies the name of the Proto-Indo-European god of the daytime sky, also called ("Sky Father"). The god is known under this name in Jupiter from *Iuppiter*, deriving from the root *dyeu-* ("to shine", and in its many derivatives, "sky, heaven, god").

Hera - Hera is the goddess of women, marriage, family, and childbirth in ancient Greek religion and myth. Hera rules over Mount Olympus as queen of the gods. A matronly figure, Hera served as both the patroness and protectress of married women, presiding over weddings and blessing marital unions. One of Hera's defining characteristics is her jealous and vengeful nature against Zeus' numerous lovers and illegitimate offspring, as well as the mortals who cross her.

Aha! Corresponds with card no. 17, the Star & the Roman Goddess Juno.

Poseidon - He is god of the Sea and other waters; of earthquakes; and of horses.

Zeus, Hera, Poseidon and Ares are all anthropomorphic entities/representations of the sky/fertility, the sea and war.

Ares - is the Greek God of war, the son of Zeus and Hera In Greek Literature, he often represents the physical or violent and untamed aspect of war. Ares corresponds to Mars in Roman mythology and the constellation of Aries, depicted by a ram, (like the Golden Fleece) in Zodiac terms.

Herakles - The glory and pride of the Goddess Hera and a divine hero in Greek Mythology. Son of Zeus and the greatest of the Greek heroes, a paragon of masculinity, the ancestor of royal clans, and a champion of the Olympian order. (In Rome and the west, he is known as **Hercules**).

Apollo - Apollo has been variously recognized as a god of music, truth and prophecy, healing, the sun and light, plague, poetry, and more. Apollo is the son of Zeus and Leto, and has a twin sister, the chaste huntress Artemis. In the Argonauts story he is also the God of Embarkation.

Orpheus is a legendary musician, poet, and prophet in ancient Greek religion and myth. The major stories about him are centered on his ability to charm all living things and even stones with his divine music.

Libations - a drink poured out as an offering to a deity.