CALLIMACHEAN ISTRUS AND THE LAND OF THE PEARSS

In the first book of the *Iliad* (270) we find Homer using the phrase τηλόθεν εξ ἀπίης γαίης: ‘from a distant land afar’. The word ἀπίης is generally understood to derive from ἄπο so that the phrase εξ ἀπίης γαίης explains τηλόθεν. It should also be noted that the speaker is Nestor who hailed from the Peloponnese, as he himself reminds us in the preceding line καὶ μὲν τοῖς ἐγὼ μεθομίλεον ἐκ Πύλου ἔλθον: ‘and I talked with them having come from Pylos’. Homer uses the phrase εξ ἀπίης γαίης again at *Iliad* 3.49, but this time without the τηλόθεν. Again, however, the context is concerned with someone (Helen) who hailed from the Peloponnese. In the *Odyssey* the phrase εξ ἀπίης γαίης appears twice (7,25; 16,18), once preceded by τηλόθεν (7,25) and once appearing without it (16,18), and on both occasions it seems to require the meaning ‘distant’, although, interestingly, at 16,18 Telemachus, who is compared to a son returning home ‘from a distant land’, has just arrived from the Peloponnese.

Aeschylus (Supp. 260 ff.) refers to the Argolid as ‘Apia’, named, apparently, after a healer and seer called Apis, son of Apollo, who came from Naupactus and, with his drugs and rituals, cleansed the land of Argos from man-eating animals and plague. A further reference to the Argolid as ‘Apia’ appears at line 777 of the same play, and Aeschylus again applies the term to the Argolid at *Ag. 256*. We also find a similar application in Sophocles *O.C.* 1303.

In this, the tragedians may well have been following οἱ νεώτεροι. This is the term used by the Alexandrian scholars to describe poets later than Homer (Σ Αρχ/Α. II. 16,574; 24,257). οἱ νεώτεροι assumed that Homer was giving the name of the land. According to Aristonicus¹: ὃτι παραλλήλος τηλόθεν εξ ἀπίης· οἱ δὲ νεώτεροι εξεδέξαντο τὴν Πελοπόννησον²). But the Alexandrian scholars contend that οἱ νεώτεροι were in error here. The reason for this contention may well be found in the annotation of Eustathius on *Il. 1*, 270 (I p. 161. 2-8 vdV):

ὁτι ἀπιαν τὴν γῆν ἐνταῦθα νοητέον ἦ τὴν ἄλλοδαπῆν καὶ μακρὰν ἐκ τοῦ ἀπο ἧ, ὡς καὶ Σορόκλης λέγετ, τὴν Πελοπόννησον ἀπὸ Ἀπίδος, . . . δήλον δὲ ὅτι Πελοπόννησος ὁ Νέστωρ ὡς Πύλος· ἐντὸς γάρ Πελοπόννησον ἦ Πύλος. εὑρεθήσεται δὲ ποιν παρ’ Ὀμήρῳ ἀπία ἦ γῆ μη δυναμένῃ εἰς Πελοπόννησιν λαμβάνεθαι.

vdV ad 1. εὑρεθήσεται . . . λαμβάνειν ἦ 25.

In other words, because there is one occurrence (*Od. 7,25*) out of four when εξ ἀπίης γαίης cannot refer to the Peloponnese, Aristarchus may well have declined to accept the equation with the Peloponnese of the other three occurrences.

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Certainly, though, the Alexandrians thought of Apia as the Peloponnese. Rhianus, in the second book of his Achaean history (F 13 Powell = Steph. Byz. s.v. 'Ἀπία'), gives a brief genealogy of the eponymous river Apis:

'Ὑμετέρη τοι, τέκνα, Φορονέος Ἰναχίδαο
ἀρχίθεν γενεὴ· τοῦ δὲ κλυτῶς ἐκχένετ· Ἀπίς.
ος ἐ ὁ Ἀπίην ἔφατιζε καὶ ὀνέρας Ἀπιδονήμας.

Inachus and Phoroneus were both Peloponnesian rivers too. So, clearly, the Peloponnes, or at least part of it, is being referred to here. Rhianus, it will be noted, describes the people of Apia as Apidaneans. For Callimachus the Apidaneans were the Arcadians (Zeus 13 and Σ ad loc.), and the same applies for Apollonius of Rhodes at Arg. 4,263, where the scholiast explains that the Peloponnesians were descended from Apis the son of Phoroneus. Eratosthenes (F 5 Powell = Steph. Byz. s.v. 'Ἀπία'), in his Hermes, calls the Peloponnesian 'Apis' using a feminine adjectival form of the eponymous river's name.

All of which, surely, has nothing to do with the Naupactian Apis of Aeschylus. What does seem more likely, when we consider the genealogy of the rivers, is that we are looking at something of a Hesiodic nature, the influence of which on the Alexandrian poets would not surprise us. The name Apis does not appear in those extant Fragmenta Hesiodica which catalogue the Inachi Progenies (FF 334 H 39a = Athen. 14, 63 p. 650 B) but we may reasonably assume from the words of Apollodorus (Bibl. 2,1) that Apis was part of the Inachid genealogy which appeared in book 2 (-3?) of the Hesiodic Ehoiai. Apollodorus tells us that Phoroneus was the son of Inachus and the father of Apis. He also says that the Peloponnes was named after Apis, hence Apia, and that Apis' sister gave birth to Argos.

It is interesting to note that in all of this nobody has considered the thoughts of Istrus, Callimachus' amanuensis and pupil, who wrote what seems to have been a considerable work of both quantity and importance: the Argolica. In this work, according to Athenaeus, Istrus records (FGH 334 H 39a = Athen. 14, 63 p. 650 B) that the Peloponnes got its name from the word for a cultivated pear: apion. This, Istrus says, was because the trees there were covered in these pears:

ἐξῆς οὖν λέξος περὶ τῶν παρακείμενων ἄπιων, ἐπεὶ ἀπ’ αὐτῶν καὶ ἡ Πελοπόννησος Ἀπία ἐκλήθη διὰ τὸ ἐπιδαπηλεύειν ἐν αὐτῇ τὸ φυτόν, φησίν Ἰστρος ἐν τοῖς Ἀργολικοῖς.

Plutarch, who we know used Istrus, discusses the following curious piece of aetiology (Quaest. Gr. 51): 'Why', he asks, 'do Argive children, while playing at a certain festival, call themselves Ballachrades (wild-pear throwers)? They say that it is because, when they were first brought down from the mountains to the plain by Inachus, they were nourished on wild-pears. It was then for the first time that wild-pears appeared to the Greeks, when that countryside was still called Apian country. Consequently the wild-pears (achrades) became cultivated-pears (apia):

διὰ τὸ βαλλαχράδας ἐκαυτοὺς Ἀργείων παίδες ἐν ἑορτή ἄναυζοντες ἀποκαλοῦσι; ἢ ὅτι τοὺς πρῶτον ὑπ’ Ἕναχον καταγεννήσας ἐκ τῶν ἄκρων εἰς τὰ πεδία