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SOUTHWESTERN AND CENTRAL SLOVENIA. NAUPOORTUS: THE ARGONAUTIC LEGEND – THE ROMANS GO EAST

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on 1) the bifurcation of the Danube in the Argonautica by Apollonius of Rhodes, and on 2) the rejection of this notion by Pompeius Trogus and Pliny the Elder. Both writers promoted instead the concept of two rivers, the first one ending in the centre of present day Slovenia and the other one leading the Argonauts southwest to the coast of the northeastern Adriatic. The intermediate terrain of today's central and southwestern Slovenia was obviously – in spite of its mountainous nature – so highly valued in the first centuries BC and AD as a transitional territory between Italy and the rivers leading to the Danube region that both writers mentioned it in association with the Argonautic legend.

Keywords: return of the Argonauts, Apollonius of Rhodes, bifurcation of the Danube, Pliny the Elder, Pompeius Trogus, Strabo

SLOVENIA SUD OCCIDENTALE E CENTRALE. NAUPOORTUS: LA LEGGENDA DEGLI ARGONAUTI – I ROMANI VANNO VERSO EST

SINTESI

L'articolo si concentra 1) sulla biforcazione del Danubio nell'Argonautica di Apollonio di Rodi e 2) sul rigetto di questa nozione da parte di Pompeo Trogo e Plinio il Vecchio. Entrambi promuovevano invece il concetto di due fiumi, uno con il termine nell'odierna Slovenia centrale e l'altro che avrebbe guidato gli Argonauti verso sud ovest fino alla costa nord orientale dell'Adriatico. Il terreno intermedio dell'odierna Slovenia centrale e sud occidentale era chiaramente – nonostante la sua natura montagnosa – molto apprezzato nei primi secoli prima e dopo Cristo come un territorio di transizione tra l'Italia e la regione del Danubio che i due autori l'avevano menzionato in connessione con la leggenda degli Argonauti.

Parole chiave: ritorno degli Argonauti, Apollonio di Rodi, biforcazione del Danubio, Plinio il Vecchio, Pompeo Trogo, Strabone

THE DANUBE-ADRIATIC ESCAPE ROUTE IN THE ARGONAUTICA – THE PTOLEMIES OF EGYPT IN SEARCH OF THEIR ROOTS

The Argonautic legend, a spicy mixture of romance, crime and passion, has been, as shown by Jason Colavito's stimulating book *Jason and the Argonauts Through the Ages*, something of an evergreen.¹ The outward voyage of the Argonauts from Greece to Colchis through Bosphorus and Dardanelles, triggered by Jason's determination to take possession of the enigmatic Golden Fleece, and controversial methods of its acquisition are all common knowledge in western tradition. Their homeward journey, by contrast, seems to have been a far more elusive affair, as suggested by preserved scholarly accounts of various return routes, allegedly taken by the Argonauts on their return to Greece (Šašel Kos, 2009, 120–122; Wehrli, 1955, 154–157; Kalachanis, 2017). The version of their homeward journey which in antiquity eventually eclipsed all other rival accounts was promoted in the *Argonautica* by Apollonius of Rhodes (Zahrnt, 2012, 96–97), the head of the famous library in Alexandria, Egypt, who was active in the first half of the 3rd century BC under the Ptolemaic dynasty. The impact of the Ptolemaic ideology on Apollonius' poem will be examined later in this chapter, but at present the focus is on the fourth book of his poem which is preoccupied with the return route of the Argonauts. According to the poem, the Argonauts did not return to Greece through Bosphorus and Dardanelles after the theft of the Golden Fleece, sailing instead from the Black Sea into one of the mouths of the Danube, also called the Ister in its lower course, and then they continued their journey upstream the same river, one influx of which, according to Apollonius, lead them directly into the Sea of Cronus (the Adriatic). Apollonius' account of the Danube-Adriatic escape route was based on the theory of the bifurcation of the Danube (Endsjø, 1997, 374, fn. 5), which according to the *Argonautica* has its source in the Rhipaeian mountains,² whence it flows down to the border between Thrace and Scythia, where it is split into two streams, with one stream running into the Black Sea and the other discharging itself into the Adriatic. In the *Argonautica*, the Argonauts sailed along the Danube past the mount Angurum, the cliff of Cauliacus and the Laurian plain, until they eventually reached the eastern Adriatic coast.³ Apsyrtus, Medea's brother, and the Colchians pursued the Argonauts along the Danube, sailing up into the river through a different river mouth, but in all other respects taking the same route as the Argonauts. They had reached the Adriatic coast ahead of the Argonauts and blocked it entirely,

1 For the historical background of the myth, see Matthews, 1965.

2 On the identity of the Rhipaeian Mountains, see Dilke, 1984: "By 500 BE, Hecataeus of Miletus described the idea of an encircling ocean, with the Rhipaeian mountains north of the Danube" (p. 347), another option: "Pamponius Mela believed that the Rhiphaean [sic] mountain or mountains were in a very northerly part of Asia, near the source of the Don" (p. 348). See also van Donzel et al., 2009, Caucasus (p. 7), and Solàrion, 2001, the Alps and Pyrenees.

3 Thrace (the southeastern Balkan region south of the Danube), Scythia (huge territories north of the Danube), the mount Angurum (the mountain where the Ister is divided into two streams, the confluence of the Danube and the Sava, Avala), the cliff of Cauliacus (Kalemegdan) (Boškov, 2015, 47–48). For the Laurian plain (Deliblatska peščara in Banat), see Domić Kunić, 2006a, 88.

leaving unoccupied only the two Brygean islands, which have been identified by the scholars as Cres and Lošinj in the Kvarner Gulf, while occupying all other islands down to the river Salangon (the river Jadra) and the Nestian land (the Nest – the river Cetina), thus preventing the escape of the Argonauts. In order to avoid falling into the captivity, Jason and Medea resorted to murdering Apsyrtus (Nadareishvili, 2010–2011, 60–72). After the death of their commander, the demoralized Colchians decided not to return to their homeland, settling instead on the shores of the eastern Adriatic, especially in Istria (Oppermann & Koblmüller, 2012, 1–7) and Dalmatia.⁴ The other group of Colchians, also pursuing the Argonauts, sailed from the Symplegades (the Bosphorus) into the Aegean and landed on the island of Corfu (Drepane) where they encountered the Argonauts, claimed Medea as determedly as the first group of their fellow countrymen and lost her for good, which prompted them to settle on Corfu, from which they later colonized the southeastern Adriatic coast.⁵ The Argonauts, by contrast, were in a hurry to arrive in Greece, sailing in the meantime past numerous Adriatic islands, as reported by Apollonius:

... the Hyllean land (peninsula Ploče), and they left behind all the islands that were beforetime thronged by the Colchians — the Liburnian isles, isle after isle, Issa (Vis), Dysceladus (Brač, Zaninović, 2008, 149–150), and lovely Pityeia (Zaninović, Hvar). Next after them they came to Corcyra, where Poseidon settled the daughter of Aso-pus, fair-haired Corcyra, far from the land of Phlius, whence he had carried her off through love; and sailors beholding it from the sea, all black with its sombre woods, call it Corcyra the Black (Korčula). And next they passed Melite (Mljet), rejoicing in the soft-blowing breeze, and steep Cerossus, and Nymphaea at a distance, where lady Calypso, daughter of Atlas (Ogygia), dwelt; and they deemed they saw the misty mountains of Thunder (Ceraunian mountains) (The Argonautica by Apollonius Rhodius, 2008, II, 557–591).

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- 4 Apollonius: “Some [Colchians] set foot on those very islands where the heroes had stayed, and they still dwell there, bearing a name derived from Apsyrtus (Osor on Cres, Brezak et. al., 2016, 43); and others built a fenced city by the dark deep Illyrian river (options: Boka Kotorska, the river Rizon, the Neretva, Raguza, another name for Dubrovnik, Brezak et. al., 2016, 165), where is the tomb of Harmonia and Cadmus (also the Bojana river, the Drilon – Drim, the Auos – Vijöse or Vojuša, Šašel Kos, 1993, 122), dwelling among the Encheleans (surroundings of Ohrid, Brezak et al., 2016, 165); and others live amid the mountains which are called the Thunders (the Ceraunian mountains on the southwestern coast of Albania, Preston, 1822, 241), from the day when the thunders of Zeus, son of Cronos, prevented them from crossing over to the island opposite (ll. 507–521).”
- 5 Apollonius: “So when the Colchians learnt that they were beseeching in vain and he bade them either observe his judgements or hold their ships away from his harbours and land, then they began to dread the threats of their own king and besought Alcinous to receive them as comrades; and there in the island long time they dwelt with the Phaeacians, until in the course of years, the Bacchiadae (the ruling dynasty from Coryth in the 8th c. BC), a race sprung from Ephyra, settled among them; and the Colchians passed to an island opposite; and thence they were destined to reach the Ceraunian hills of the Abantes, and the Nestaeans and Oricum; but all this was fulfilled after long ages had passed.” (ll. 1170–1227) (The Argonautica by Apollonius Rhodius, 2008). According to later traditions, they built Ulcinj (Colchinium) and Oricum (an ancient Greek city in the northern part of Epirus) at the foot the Ceraunian Mountains in Epir (Gordeziani, 2010–2011, 48–49).



Fig. 1: Route of the Argonauts as described in Apollonius (with the permission of Jason Colavito[©]).

However, before actually reaching their homeland, they had to undertake an incredibly arduous and lengthy journey leading them along the eastern and western coast of Italy, to Corfu, Lybia, and various Greek islands.⁶

Modern scholars regard this incredibly long and geographically puzzling return journey encompassing the Black Sea, the Danube, the Adriatic, the alleged confluence of the Eridanus, the Rhône and the Rhine (Morgan, 2016, 63–67), the western Italian coast,⁷ Lybia, Cyrenaica,⁸ Crete, Thera etc. as something of an intellectual

6 Argonautica: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argonautica#Itinerary>, retrieved (29. 12. 2018).

7 Jason is believed to have founded a sanctuary in Foce del Sele, Salerno, on the western coast of Italy (Strabo, *The Geography*. 6.1. [1]), but in general the myth of the Argonauts is confined to the Adriatic coast. For a more detailed account of the Argonauts' whereabouts, see Scott Smith, 2017, 102. For the links between the Ptolemaic dynasty and Rome, see Roller, 2010.

8 Various Greek authors attributed the colonization of Cyrenaica to the descendants of the Argonauts, see Golinski, 2016, 99–101; Stephens, 2008, 101–103.

challenge, food for thought, trying to provide the rationale hidden behind Apollonius' elaborate itinerary. Some of them, for example, argue that the Argonautic legend provides an insight into the mentality of ancient Greek writers who presented the journey of the Argonauts, both outward and homeward, as a kind of colonizing activity, undertaken by mythological Greek heroes who left a permanent mark on the landscapes and the most notable phenomena of the Mediterranean. Consequently, the Argonauts, Greeks, are seen by ancient Greek writers as pioneers, a civilizing force which rationalized and tamed the wilderness associated with the exotic, primeval non-Greek spaces, making thus the Mediterranean accessible to ordinary travellers (Endsjø, 1997, 380–383) and, even more importantly, to Greek colonists many generations after the expedition of the Argonauts (Stephens, 2012, 14–15). Apart from that, scholars view the *Argonautica* as an efficient and highly sophisticated medium for voicing the ambitions of the Ptolemaic dynasty of Egypt in the early third century BC, interpreting the *Argonautica*'s version of the myth as a reflection of the dynasty's geographical and political ambitions. Apollonius' elaborate itinerary encompassing the entire Mediterranean therefore implies that even though Egypt presented the nucleus of the Ptolemaic empire, political, economic and cultural ambitions of the dynasty went far beyond the boundaries of their kingdom (Crisuolo, 2013, 160–171).

The scholars have often commented on the parvenu nature of this dynasty who belonged to the Macedonian nobility, not to the Argead dynasty of the Macedon kings, such as Philip II (359–336 BC) and his son Alexander the Great (332–323 BC). The first Ptolemaic king, Ptolemy I (305–282 BC), took part in the wars of Alexander the Great as one of his generals and close companions who after Alexander's death partitioned the empire and founded various Hellenistic kingdoms in the Mediterranean. Ptolemy I managed to acquire Egypt and the royal title in the partition process, nevertheless, he and his immediate descendants seemed to be aware of their rather dubious status and the novelty of their royal position. In addition, their capital of Alexandria, founded only recently by Alexander the Great after 332 BC, could not claim the venerable age, historical, cultural and intellectual traditions which distinguished Athens in particular. Apart from that, the nucleus of the Ptolemaic kingdom was Egypt, which, even though rich, ancient, sophisticated, highly civilized and advanced, was regarded as being inferior and barbarian in the eyes of the Greeks who looked down on the predominantly non-Greek population in Egypt. Finally, Egypt was part of Africa, culturally connected to the Greek mainland only by an insignificant number of Greek colonies in the Nile delta and in nearby Cyrenaica (Maver, 2018, 141). To summarize, the early Ptolemies faced a formidable challenge: how to prove that even though they ruled over only a few Greek colonies, their kingdom was nevertheless an integral and influential part of the Greek world.

The early Ptolemies, however, were up to the task. Ptolemy I, his son Ptolemy II (283 to 246 BC) and his grandson Ptolemy III (246 to 222 BC) turned out to be exceptionally competent and far-sighted rulers who changed their kingdom into a first-rate political factor in the eastern Mediterranean (Wasson, 2016). In addition

to carving up a leading position for themselves in this part of the world, backed by significant military and economic resources, the early Ptolemies left a permanent cultural and intellectual mark on the Greco-Hellenistic world by establishing the famous library and the Museum in Alexandria. It was the library in the first place which transformed the new capital of Egypt into a leading intellectual centre of the Hellenistic world which equalled and even surpassed Athens (Klooster, 2015, 162), being sustained by huge and efficient intellectual machinery consisting of the most brilliant scientists and men of letters of the age (Koutoupas, 2015, 51–52). Apollonius himself was the head of this prestigious institution, and the 'victory' of his version of the Argonautic return route over other related accounts evidences the strength of the scientific, intellectual and literary appeal of the Alexandrian Library (do Céu Fialho, 2011, 147).

There is also a considerable scholarly consensus that the Ptolemaic dynasty utilized the myth of the Argonauts, the most active explorers and colonizers in the ancient Greek mythology, as a basis for its territorial and dynastic aspirations (Stephens, 2007, 4). Just as the Ptolemies succeeded in expanding their empire especially in the eastern Mediterranean, the Argonauts had symbolically colonized the same geographical space many generations ago. Even though the Argonauts did not occupy the locations in question, regarding Greece as being their point of departure and return at all times, they either left behind the descendants they had begotten with local women or Apollonius implied that these places would be permanently colonized many generations later by their descendants, i. e. the Greeks. As the Black Sea, the Danube and the Adriatic are all incorporated into Apollonius' itinerary, their place and function in this tightly knit web of Ptolemaic dynastic and territorial ambitions undoubtedly deserve further scholarly consideration.

The Black Sea region and Egypt under the Ptolemies were commercially and culturally connected, as confirmed by commercial links between both geographical entities and by the cults of Egyptian gods attested there (Petras, 2013–2014, 20–21). Apart from that, Ptolemies displayed their political interest in the region, as shown by the involvement of Ptolemy II in the Second Syrian War (260–253 BC), in which Egypt supported Byzantium against the Seleucids of Syria in 254 BC. This Ptolemaic interest in the Black Sea must have been further stimulated by the accounts in ancient historiography, which linked the Black Sea and Egypt. Thus according to the second book of Herodotus' *Histories* (ca. 485–420 BC), the legendary Egyptian king Sesostris, the twelfth dynasty king Senwosre I (1962–1928 BC), conquered the territories around the Black Sea and up to the Danube river (Burstein, 1996, 9, 12–14). Even more importantly, the Colchians were supposed to be the descendants of the Egyptians, who had arrived with Sesostris in the Black Sea region. The Egyptian ancestry of the Colchians consequently turned out to be the most valuable tool for legitimizing the Ptolemaic hold on Egypt as Jason - by marrying the Colchian-Egyptian Medea - could have claimed by implication the land of her ancestors, Egypt, as her dowry and if he didn't do it, it was the Ptolemies, Greeks, descendants of the Argonauts who simply completed Jason's work by taking over Egypt many generations later (Stephens, 2007, 14).

Apollonius' choice of the Danube, the alleged fluvial border of ancient Egypt under Sesostris, as the escape route of the Argonauts can be therefore understood as a flattering reference to the Egyptian ancestors of the Ptolemies who by having reached the Danube actually consolidated the borders of the civilized world. In addition, the Danube must have had an even more contemporary appeal for the Ptolemaic dynasty. In the fourth century BC, Philip II and Alexander the Great were fighting successfully with the peoples settled along the Danube, and consequently, they both greatly contributed to the Greek notion of the Danube as a hydrographical frontier between the so-called civilized and uncivilized world (Mihajlović, 2018, 753). Apart from that, Philip and Alexander's military encounters must have reminded the Ptolemies of their Macedonian origins and the biological and familial links, which they claimed to have had with the extinguished dynasty of Alexander the Great, no matter how dubious and far-fetched such notions were in reality (Stephens, 2012, 9).

And finally, in the *Argonautica* the Danube functions as a route to the Adriatic Sea, another region rich in mythological and historical associations which could be used for legitimizing the Ptolemaic royal status. The Illyrian kings, controlling the southern Adriatic, the territory of today's northern Albania, tended both to intermarry (Jackson, 2014)⁹ and fight with the Argead dynasty of Alexander the Great (Dzino, 2014, 51–52). As a result of the intermarriages, Alexander's dynasty was partly Illyrian, which must have been a source of enormous prestige to the Macedonian royal family. Why? Because the Illyrian kings traced their genealogy back to some most notable mythological figures, regarding themselves as the descendants of Illyricus, the son of the Phoenician prince Cadmus and his Greek wife Harmonia, the daughter of Ares and Afrodite, which went hand in hand with the Ptolemaic essential need for Greekness as well as with their rulership over Phoenicia.¹⁰ In addition, the Illyrians were believed to have merged with the Egyptians-Colchians, who after their aborted attempt to reclaim Medea from the Argonauts, settled first on the island of Corfu and later on the Adriatic coast opposite the island, in the land of Illyrians. It was this Egyptian-Colchian element inherited by Alexander's dynasty through its intermarriages with the Illyrian kings which must have had a special appeal for the Ptolemies who saw themselves as biological relatives and heirs of the extinguished Macedonian Argead royals. It can be argued that the Ptolemies based their rulership over Egypt on two premises. First, they could claim Egypt on the basis of their alleged Argonautic ancestry, feeling entitled as such to seize the kingdom as Medea's marriage portion (Stephens, 2007, 21), and second, they could make use of more recent Macedonian Argead associations with Egypt, regarding themselves as being the heirs of Alexander the Great who had conquered Egypt in 332 BC. In view of all these intricate mythological and dynastic associations, concentrated on the Adriatic coast, the Danube-Adriatic route cannot be regarded as a random choice in the *Argonautica*. Even though the Greeks, Argonauts, are

9 For Illyrian influences on the Macedonian kings and later the Ptolemies, see also Müller, 2009, 220–221, 384.

10 Ptolemaic Period (332–30 BC): <http://www.aldokkan.com/egypt/ptolemaic.htm>, retrieved (27. 12. 2018).

the champions in the poem, laying the foundations for the future Ptolemaic empire, the Colchians-Egyptians are nevertheless credited with an impressive territorial influence over the Black Sea, the Danube and the eastern Adriatic, providing an urgently needed non-Greek dimension in the Ptolemaic rule to achieve a balance between Greekness and non-Greekness in their royal ideology, between their need to be the leaders of the Greek world, and their need to oblige the non-Greek majority in Egypt. The *Argonautica* therefore reveals the eclectic nature of the Ptolemaic intellectual milieu, which, even though predominantly and consciously Greek, knew how to utilise those non-Greek elements which would legitimize the Ptolemaic rule over Egypt.¹¹ In fact, the most fundamental and the most numerous references to a complex and complicated web of Macedonian, Greek, Illyrian and Egyptian royal traditions appropriated by this parvenu, but highly intelligent and visionary royal family (Osowski, 2014, 1–9) are in the *Argonautica* concentrated on the eastern Adriatic coast and this fact deserves further scholarly attention.

THE ROMAN REVISION OF THE ARGONAUTIC LEGEND: THE NORTHEASTERN ADRIATIC AND ITS HINTERLAND DESERVE A PLACE ON THE MYTHOLOGICAL MAP

Apollonius made, as seen before, numerous references to the rivers, islands and mythological figures associated with the eastern Adriatic. However, he hardly ever refers to the voyage of the Argonauts along the Danube and its duration is unclear (Morgan, 2016, 60–61). In addition, only a few sites along the Danube can be identified with so much precision as to enable the modern reader to realize that the offshoot of the Danube which supposedly lead the Argonauts towards the Adriatic is, unknown to Apollonius, in fact the Sava river (Domić Kunić, 2006b, 67–68; Boškov, 2015, 45–46) which, of course, does not discharge itself into the Adriatic. The hinterland of the eastern Adriatic fares even worse in the *Argonautica*, being completely passed over in silence, and it was this silence which in the centuries to come encouraged various scholarly attempts to fill in this gap, which led to corresponding modifications of the Argonautic legend.

The notion which underwent a radical revision was the idea of the bifurcation of the Danube. This concept, so cleverly utilized in the *Argonautica*, was rejected in the following centuries when geographical knowledge made rapid progress, triggered by the Roman occupation of the coast of Illyria, the annexation of Istria, the subjection of the western Balkans, Dalmatia, Pannonia and the Alpine region. Thus the Greek geographer Diodorus Siculus (fl. in the 1st century BC) argued in his *Bibliotheca historica*, universal history, with reference to the Black Sea-Adriatic return journey of the Argonauts that there were in fact two Ister rivers, the Danube flowing into the

11 For the multiple forms of self-representation of the Ptolemies: their reliance on their Macedonian origins, Greek traditions, their alleged links with Dionysius and Hercules and their tendency to imitate the Egyptian pharaohs, see Pfeiffer, 2016.

Black Sea and the other Ister discharging itself into the eastern Adriatic somewhere in the land of the Histri, i.e. in the peninsula of Istria, the river “having its source only 40 stades from the sea”,¹² the notion which was undoubtedly based on a better knowledge of Istria after the end of the Istrian wars in the second century BC, when the Romans had a good opportunity to examine the occupied peninsula. Apart from that, the sources of another Ister, the Danube, were discovered during Tiberius’ expedition into the regions north of the Alps in 15 BC (Sonnabend, 2007, 83), and all these new discoveries enabled contemporary scholars to reject the bifurcation of the Danube for good.

This rejection, however, has created another problem. Which river could be the other Ister discharging itself into the Adriatic somewhere in Istria? The Croatian scholarship in particular favours the Raša, Arsia (Brezak et al., 2016, 27), which runs into the Kvarner Gulf, opposite the so-called Brygean islands mentioned in the *Argonautica*. Sénac, by contrast, has singled out the river Kolpa as the fluvial route which allegedly led the Argonauts towards the Adriatic coast. According to Sénac, the Argonauts sailed first along the Danube to the confluence of the Danube and the Sava, at the site of modern Belgrade, where they sailed into the Sava, then at the confluence of the Sava and the Kolpa at Siscia (Sisak) they sailed down into the Kolpa towards the Adriatic and after the end of the river’s course they continued their way on land, ca. 35 kilometres, until they came out somewhere near modern Rijeka in the Kvarner Gulf (Sénac, 1965, 458).

Unlike the Greeks, who apparently showed no interest in colonizing the hinterland of the eastern Adriatic, focusing instead on the mainland coast and the islands, mostly in the fourth century BC (Dzino, 2014, 51–52; Čače, 2015, 17), the Roman authorities adopted a far more thorough approach towards the targeted territories, bending to their will both the coast and the interior. The Roman interest in the hinterland areas had important implications for further development of this section of

12 For different lengths of one stade, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stadion_\(unit\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stadion_(unit)), retrieved (20. 8. 2018). Diodorus Siculus (IV, 56, 7–8): We must not leave unrefuted the account of those who state that the Argonauts sailed up the Ister river as far as its sources and then, by its arm which flows in the opposite direction, descended to the Adriatic Gulf. For time has refuted those who assumed that the Ister which empties by several mouths into the Pontus and the Ister which issues into the Adriatic flow from the same regions. As a matter of fact, when the Romans subdued the nation of the Istrians it was discovered that the latter river has its sources only forty stades from the sea. But the cause of the error on the part of the historians was, they say, the identity in name of the two rivers (*The Library*, tr. Oldfather, p. 527, 1935; http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Diodorus_Siculus/4C*.html#ref35, retrieved 21. 1. 2018). For a similar rejection of the bifurcation of the Danube, see Strabo (*The geography*, tr. and ed. Hamilton, Falconer, 1854–1857; <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0239%3Abook%3D1%3Achapter%3D3%3Asection%3D15>, retrieved 8. 3. 2019). But neither [Danube] does the Ister rise in the Pontus regions (on the contrary, it rises in the mountains above the Adriatic), nor does it flow into both seas, but into the Pontus alone, and it branches off near its mouths only. However, this mistake of Hipparchus is shared with him by some of his predecessors, who supposed that there was a river of the same name as the Ister, which branched off from it and emptied into the Adriatic, and that the tribe of Istrians, through whose territory this Ister flows, got their appellation from it, and that it was by this route that Jason made his return voyage from the land of the Colchians (Book I, Ch. 3, 15).

the Argonautic legend which deals with the landing of the Argonauts on the coast of the eastern Adriatic. The Roman writers of the first centuries BC and AD took a far more systematic and detailed view of this hitherto neglected mainland area and its fluvial potential. As due to the emergence of new geographical facts the bifurcation of the Danube and consequently an uninterrupted fluvial route between the Black Sea and the eastern Adriatic were no longer an option, the scholars adopted the idea of two rivers and a transitional overland territory between them. It is the two Roman writers, Gnaeus Pompeius Trogus (fl. first century BC) and Gaius Plinius Secundus, Pliny the Elder (23–79 AD), who both underlined the transitional and mountainous nature of the northeastern Adriatic hinterland which the Argonauts had to cross before resuming travelling on water. Trogus owes his recognizability to his *Historiae Philippicae et Totius Mundi Origines et Terrae Situs* (*Philippic Histories and the Origin of the Whole World and the Places of the Earth*) which was only partially preserved by M. Iunianus Iustinus, active in the third century AD, in his *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*. Even though the principal topic of his book is the Macedonian empire under Philip II and Alexander the Great, his work also provides extensive geographical and ethnographical digressions. One of such digressions is dedicated to the origins of the Histri, the alleged descendants of Colchians, who, according to tradition, settled in Istria after their aborted attempt to reclaim Medea from the Argonauts. Trogus (XXXII, III, 13–15) provides the following account:

*The Istrians, it is reported, derive their origin from those Colchians who were sent by king Aeeetes in pursuit of the Argonauts, that had carried off his daughter, who, after they had sailed from the Pontus Euxinus into the Ister, and had proceeded far up the channel of the river Save, pursuing the track of the Argonauts, conveyed their vessels upon their shoulders over the tops of the mountains, as far as the shores of the Adriatic sea, knowing that the Argonauts must have done the same before them, because of the size of their ship. These Colchians, not overtaking the Argonauts, who had sailed off, remained, whether from fear of their king or from weariness of so long a voyage, near Aquileia, and were called Istrians from the name of the river up which they sailed out of the sea.*¹³

Even though this digression focuses primarily on the Colchians and the reasons for their settlement in Istria, Trogus is probably the first ancient writer who focuses

13 *Epitome*, tr. and ed. Watson, 1853; <https://www.forumromanum.org/literature/justin/english/trans32.html>, retrieved (26. 11. 2019). Latin original: 13 *Histororum gentem fama est originem a Colchis ducere, missis ab Aeëta rege ad Argonautas, raptos filiae, persequendos; 14 qui ut a Ponto intraverunt Istrum, alveo Savi fluminis penitus inuicta uestigia Argonautarum insequentes naues suas umeris per iuga montium usque ad litus Adriatici maris transtulerunt, cognito quod Argonautae idem propter magnitudinem nauis priores fecissent; 15 quos ut auctos Colchi non reppererunt, siue metu regis siue taedio longae nauigationis iuxta Aquileiam consedere Histricos ex uocabulo amnis quo a mari concesserant, appellati* (*Epitoma*, ed. Arnaud-Lindet, 2003; <https://www.forumromanum.org/literature/justin/texte32.html>, retrieved 26. 11. 2019).

on present day central and southwestern Slovenia. According to Trogus, the Colchians begin their march on land when the size of their ships no longer allows them to sail along the Sava, thus implying that both the Colchians and the Argonauts ahead of them may have temporarily given up their riverine journey somewhere in central Slovenia or even further north where the riverbed of the Sava is sufficiently narrow to make the Argonauts and Colchians discontinue the voyage. The report is far from being precise, nevertheless, it makes some relevant points. Apart from rejecting the bifurcation of the Danube and using instead the notion of the second Ister originating in Istria, Trogus' attention is directed towards the hinterland of the northeastern Adriatic, the Sava river in its upper course and the mountainous terrain which the Argonauts had to overcome before reaching the other, unidentified Ister discharging itself into the Adriatic. And finally, the mention of Aquileia (Oglej), an influential and immensely wealthy river port, located only ten kilometres from the northeastern Adriatic, on the river Natissa, in association with the Colchians suggests that the Argonauts must have travelled southwest in search of another navigable river which would lead them into the Adriatic. The mention of Aquileia leaves no doubt that in Trogus' account it is the northeastern nook of the Adriatic which functions as a point of departure for the voyage of the Argonauts along the eastern Adriatic coast. By associating Aquileia with the Argonautic legend, Trogus greatly enhanced the prestige of this part of Italy and the idea that the Argonauts may have temporarily discontinued their voyage somewhere in mod. Slovenia presents beyond doubt a significant innovation in the Argonautic legend.

This innovation, however, is further developed by Pliny the Elder. If in Trogus, with the exception of the Sava river, no concrete geographical names are given in association with the hinterland, Pliny the Elder's *Historia naturalis* singles out Vrhnika (Nauportus) as the location where the fluvial route of the Argonauts ends and the land route towards another navigable river, which Pliny could not identify¹⁴, begins (NH. 3. 22. 18). He argues that the Argonauts sailed along the Danube and the Sava to Nauportus from where they transported their ship *Argo* across the Alps until they found a navigable river and sailed down into the Adriatic Sea, coming out somewhere near Trieste (Trst): "... the ship *Argo* came down some river into the Adriatic sea, not far from Tergeste; but what river that was is now unknown. The most careful writers say that the ship was carried across the Alps on men's shoulders, having passed along the Ister, then along the Savus, and so from Nauportus, which place, lying between *Amona* and the Alps, from that circumstance derives its name."¹⁵

14 Potential candidates for Pliny's river: Raša, Mirna, Timav (Šašel Kos, 2006, 16).

15 The Natural History, tr. Bostock, Riley, pp. 250–251, 1855; <https://ia802702.us.archive.org/30/items/naturalhistoryp00bostgoog/naturalhistoryp00bostgoog.pdf>, retrieved 5. 1. 2019). In Latin: "... quoniam argo navis flumine in mare hadriaticum descendit non procultergeste, nec iam constat quo flumine, umeris tractam alpis diligentiores tradunt, subisse autem histro, dein savo, dein nauporto, cui nomen ex ea causa est inter emonam alpisque exorienti..." (Liber III, Ch. 49) (*Naturalis Historia*, ed. Mayhoff, 1906); <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0138%3Abook%3D3%3Achapter%3D49> (retrieved 26. 11. 2019).

Both Trogus and Pliny the Elder recognized a transitional quality of present day central Slovenia, namely, that in this area the fluvial route stretching from the Black Sea along the Danube and its tributaries, direct and indirect, ends and then after a relatively short, but mountainous stretch of dry land another web of rivers in the southwest begins, discharging themselves into the nearby Adriatic. The value of this intermediate territory is in both accounts further enhanced by the implication that the distance between both fluvial areas is relatively short and that this other river leads the Argonauts southwest towards strategically important Trieste and Aquileia in northeastern Italy, the Roman eastern frontier in the second and the first centuries BC.

The Greek Strabo (64/63 BC – ca. 24 AD), another important contemporary scholar, provides additional details which help us understand why Pliny associated Nauportus with the Argonauts. Strabo recognized a superior position of Nauportus, which he refers to as Pamportus,¹⁶ within a highly lucrative commercial trade route starting in Aquileia and continuing along the Ljubljanska, the Sava and the Danube.¹⁷ We are also indebted to Strabo for two additional details with reference to the alleged route of the Argonauts from Nauportus to the Adriatic. First, the distance between Nauportus and Aquileia is ca. 400 stadia, which is ca. 90 km by road (Rutar, 1890, 74), and Trogus' unnamed mountains and Pliny's Alps are in fact the non-Alpine Dinaric mountain range on Slovenia's border with Italy, separating central Slovenia from the Littoral region (Primorska). However, it must not be forgotten that the merchants had been making use of this ancient, pre-historic trade route stretching from the Adriatic to the Black Sea centuries ago before the foundation of Aquileia in 181 BC, or as Wilkes succinctly explains: "The fantastic story of the return voyage of the Argo may echo voyages by Greeks in the remote past, venturing far beyond the known limits of their world. That they should return via the distant Adriatic may derive from the route of a known trade link with Central Europe" (Wilkes, 1996, 102; Rutar, 1890, 72–73; Knezović, 2010, 191). Even though Strabo does not mention the Argonauts in association with Nauportus, his account nevertheless helps to provide a more mundane explanation why the accounts of the Argonauts allegedly making a stop on the territory of central Slovenia and continuing their way southwest towards the northeastern nook of the Adriatic began to circulate in the

16 For an older settlement, existing as early as the late bronze age on nearby Tičnica, see Gaspari & Masaryk, 2009.

17 Strabo provides the following account (4.6.10): Odra (Razdrto) forms the lowest portion of the Alps, where they approach the territory of the Carni, and through which they convey the merchandise of Aquileia in wagons to Pamportus [Ober-Laibach in Krain]. This route is not more than 400 stadia. From thence they convey it by the rivers as far as the Danube and surrounding districts, for a navigable river [the river Laibach] which flows out of Illyria, passes by Pamportus, and discharges itself into the Save, so that the merchandise may easily be carried down both to Segesta, and to the Pannonians, and Taurisci (*The geography*, tr. Hamilton, Falconer, 1854–1857; <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0239%3A-book%3D4%3Achapter%3D6>, retrieved 21. 1. 2019). Strabo's account has been further explored by Slovene scholars who recognized the significance of the Odra Pass (Razdrto) below Mt. Nanos (the Roman Odra Mons) (Horvat & Bavdek, 2009, 19–22), the Ljubljanska (Kožuh, 2016, 5–6) and the Sava, the rivers which lead to Illyricum, Pannonia, and further east to the Danube region (Dan, 2013, 136–137).

late Roman republic and the early imperial period. Namely, the revised Argonautic legend reflects a growing importance of the southwestern and central territory of today's Slovenia for the Romans in the first centuries BC and AD (Zlobec, 1999, 24–27; Ogrin, 2017, 109–110) in terms of commerce and even more importantly, as a military base for further Roman incursions into the regions east of Italy.

Apart from being an exceptionally wealthy centre of commerce, Aquileia was the most important fortification on the Roman eastern frontier (Braccini, 2011, 107; Šašel Kos, 2006, 16–17), constructed with the purpose of checking the advances of the Carni to the northeast and functioning as a military base for the wars with the Histri to the southeast (Ormenrod, 1934, 181), fighting at the same time with the Iapydes who controlled Ocra (Horvat, 2009, 358–359), and the Taurisci, in charge of the area around mod. Vrhnika. The Romans had numerous military encounters with the tribes in question in the second century BC (Nestorović, 2012, 7; Tutta, 2015, 5; Guštin, 2015, 203–204). Thus they waged war against Taurisci in 115 BC, annexed Nauportus and included it in Cisalpine Gaul, and later in the early mid 1st century BC they founded a Roman trade settlement in Nauportus, predating Caesar's administration of Cisalpine Gaul (Dzino, 2005, 67–68). One century later Aquileia was used again for military purposes, serving as a military base from which Octavian defeated the Carni and Taurisci for good (Šašel Kos, 2014b, 42) before embarking on the siege of Siscia in 35 BC, the capture of Promona in modern Knin and the restoration of the Roman authority in Dalmatia, completing thus the first stage of the Roman conquest of the western Balkans (Bratož, 2007, 168), this first stage being followed two decades later in 12–8 BC by the Pannonian war which led to the annexation of the central part of the future provinces of Pannonia and Dalmatia.

In the first century BC the Romans were bent on conquering the hinterland of the eastern Adriatic, which naturally led them into the heart of the western Balkans, and the territory of southwestern and central Slovenia presented the fastest route towards the targeted regions. Modern southwestern Slovenia functioned as a bridge between Aquileia and central Slovenia whose rich fluvial potential was systematically exploited by the Roman army for its penetration into the future province of Illyricum, encompassing both Pannonia and Dalmatia. Confrontations with the tribes living along the Sava and the Kolpa were particularly brutal during Octavian's campaigns against the Illyrians (35–33 BC) (Šašel Kos, 2014b, 44–46), with Nauportus having a vital function in these military operations as a river port (Šašel Kos, 2011, 112–113; 2013, 193–194; 2012b, 97; Istenič, 2009, 860–861).

NAUPORTUS IN 6–9 AD AND IN 14 AD – FEAR HATH A HUNDRED EYES

Nauportus is briefly, but pointedly referred to in two historical sources, in the *Historiae Romanae* by Marcus Velleius Paterculus (ca. 19 BC – ca. AD 31) and in Tacitus' *Annales* (I. 20) which both focus on the early years of the first century AD. In this period, Rome faced two serious challenges in the province of Illyricum, which, even though successfully handled, nevertheless revealed the vulnerability

of the Italian eastern border. In both accounts, Nauportus tends to be a source for concern, being seen as a potential springboard for hostile incursions into Italy. The first challenge was *Bellum Batonianum* or the Pannonian–Dalmatian revolt in 6–9 AD (Domić Kunić, 2012, 40–41) dealt with in the *Historiae Romanae* (Liber II: Capitula 94–131). Paterculus speaks highly of Tiberius' contribution to the Roman victory over the coalition of Pannonian, Dalmatian and Illyrian tribes whose rebellion required nearly four years and two thirds of the Roman army to be quelled (Doyle, 2007, 14–16). According to Paterculus, who took part in the military operations, being therefore an eyewitness, the rebels divided their forces into three parts, one was to invade Italy via Nauportus and Trieste (2.110.4) (Bratož, 2007, 210; Šašel Kos, 2015, 71, 79),¹⁸ the other was to attack the Roman province of Macedonia and the third part was expected to fight in their own regions. The mention of Nauportus in this context implies that the rebels, many of whom were trained in the Roman army and spoke Latin, recognized a strategic position of Nauportus as the fastest route towards Italy. Theoretically, by invading Italy, the rebels would have transferred the war to the enemies' territory and struck at the heart of the Roman power. The suggestion which is brilliant beyond doubt did not come to fruition,¹⁹ but the very idea of such a possibility must have sufficed to instill fear into the inhabitants of Italy who were aware of the vulnerability of their country due to its central position within the empire (Turner, 2015, 274–275). Nauportus, which must have been in the first century BC associated with a successful Roman expansionist policy, was in the early first century AD recognized by Paterculus as something of Achilles' heel, as a base from which the eastern tribes might molest the Romans in an equal measure as they themselves were molested by the Romans only a few decades ago. Measure for measure.

Nauportus is mentioned for a second time by Publius (or Gaius) Cornelius Tacitus (56–120 AD), who at the end of the first century AD wrote in his *Annales* about the mutiny of the Pannonian and Germanic legions taking place in 14 AD, immediately after Tiberius' accession (I. 16–30). The problems which caused general dissatisfaction among the soldiers were well known. Tiberius' predecessor Octavian Augustus conducted military operations on an unprecedented scale, adding to the empire the future provinces of Moesia, Illyricum, Noricum, Raetia, Alpes Cottiae, Alpes Maritimae and Egypt. He also pacified Dalmatia, eradicated piracy in the Adriatic, conquered Alpine tribes, consolidated the Roman hold on Gaul etc., all these actions being taken with the purpose of protecting Italy from all sides. The *Bellum Batonianum* or the Pannonian–Dalmatian revolt, even though brutally suppressed, took its toll on the Roman army, resulting in a critical shortage of manpower, and after the disaster at Teutoburg Forest in 9 AD the Roman army was seriously weakened. In order to alleviate the problem, Octavian Augustus resorted to drastic measures: "Augustus had to resort to conscriptions of men and nobody wanted to

18 In chapter 110 he refers to the rebellion: Cuius immensae multitudinis, parentis acerrimis ac peritissimis ducibus, pars petere Italiam decreverat iunctam sibi Nauporti ac Tergestis confinio, pars in Macedoniam se effuderat, pars suis sedibus praesidium esse destinaverat (*Historiae Romanae*, ed. and tr. Shipley, 1924, 278; http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Velleius_Paterculus/1*.html, retrieved 25. 11. 2019).

19 For a rather sceptical view of this plan to invade Italy via Nauportus and Trieste, see Mesihović, 2011, 216.

be conscripted. Augustus made the men draw lots with twenty percent of those under the age of thirty-five and ten percent of those older conscripted into the army. When people still were not excited enough to be conscripted Augustus had several men executed. Augustus also called up veterans and conscripted freedmen and put them into service. He sent the whole group to Germany with Tiberius to reinforce the border” (Doyle, 2007, 22). After his death, frustrated soldiers could no longer be ignored. It is not a coincidence either that it was the Pannonian and Germanic legions which mutinied because their trials were the hardest. They were unhappy with the duration of military service, the pay and the land they were assigned upon discharge, as it was, as they claimed, often swampy, hilly and unsuitable for farming, but neither Augustus nor Tiberius could respond in a positive manner to the demands raised by the soldiers because the concessions given to the army would have triggered a financial crisis and weakened the defense of the borders (Karge, 1973, 102–103). If Tiberius’ nephew Germanicus was responsible for the pacification of Germanic legions, Tiberius’ son Drusus was entrusted with the task of quelling the mutiny of the Pannonian legions, the legio VIII Augusta, IX Hispana and the legio XV Apollinaris in their summer camp, which he successfully accomplished. He executed the ringleaders, being greatly assisted in the suppression of the rebellion by a lunar eclipse taking place on 27 September. The exact location of the summer camp is not given by Tacitus, but the permanent winter camps of the legio VIII Augusta and IX Hispana are known: the VIIIth legion was stationed at Poetovio and the IXth legion at Siscia, while the site of the permanent camp of the XVth legion remains unclear (Mallan, 2015, 107–108). At Nauportus, an important and fortified Aquileian vicus (Šašel Kos, 2002, 377), where Drusus may have made a stop on his way to the summer camp, there was a contingent of soldiers engaged in construction works, building roads and bridges (Bratož, 2007, 227; Šašel Kos, 2012a, 90; 2014a, 83–85). According to Tacitus (I. 20), the soldiers at Nauportus also mutinied, burning Nauportus and other *vici* before leaving the area for the summer camp and where their arrival additionally intensified the rebellious spirit of the soldiers stationed there (Karge, 1973, 181–182).²⁰ Tacitus’ reference to Nauportus underlines his preoccupation with Italy and its safety, and for that reason the mutiny at the edge of Italy must have been such a sensational event in Tacitus’ eyes that he even mentions the name of the vicus, where this event took place, while the location of the summer camp of the three Pannonian legions which were stationed together – an extremely dangerous situation – and which threatened to rise in revolt somewhere in the province of Illyricum is not given. If in the *Historiae Romanae* Nauportus is presented as a potential target for rebellious tribes from the east, in the *Annales* Nauportus is in fact burnt down by its own soldiers, suggesting that Italy had to fear an enemy from within, who, what was even worse, was in touch with the dissatisfied soldiery from the rebellious province of Illyricum which had been pacified only a few years ago,²¹ as recorded by Paterculus.

20 Tacitus, ed. and tr. Moore, Jackson, 1931, 273–297; http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Tacitus/Annals/1B*.html, retrieved (12. 3. 2019).

21 For further information, see Mallan, 2015, 155–156.

CONCLUSION

Trogus and Pliny substantially contributed to the evolvement of the Argonautic legend by providing an alternative solution to the lacuna created by Apollonius of Rhodes' total neglect of the eastern Adriatic hinterland. Both writers focused on the northeastern Adriatic coast where they enhanced the prestige of Trieste and Aquileia respectively as points of departure for the Argonautic voyage along the eastern Adriatic coast. Even more importantly, both writers took notice of a stretch of land between the two rivers allegedly used by the Argonauts on their voyage from the Black Sea to the Adriatic, and if Trogus' account dating from the first century BC is still rather vague as to the locale of the Argonautic whereabouts in the interior of present day Slovenia, Pliny's version makes it clear beyond doubt that the Argonauts landed at Vrhnika (Nauportus) and travelled southwest towards Trieste. The decision taken by both writers to place the territory of today's central and southwestern Slovenia on the mythological map of the ancient world reflects the increasing importance of this part of the world for the Romans in the first centuries BC and AD as a base for commercial and military expansions to the western Balkans and further east towards Pannonia and the Danube region. Nauportus, however, has a central role in most of these accounts. Apart from being mentioned by Pliny and Strabo, it is referred to in two other historical sources as well, in the *Historiae Romanae* by Paterculus and in the *Annales* by Tacitus. In both cases it is associated with the early first c. AD when the Romans faced a severe crisis in the province of Illyricum. In 6–9 AD they had to quench a rebellion of the united forces of Illyrians, Pannonians and Dalmatians and in 14 AD Tiberius managed to quell a mutiny of the soldiers stationed in an unnamed summer camp in the same province. In both cases Nauportus turned out to be part of a problem, presenting the fastest route for potential invaders from the east towards Italy. Italy, however, was not invaded, nevertheless the mentioning of Nauportus in this context implies a Roman awareness of Italy's vulnerability on its eastern frontier.

The references to today's southwestern and central Slovenia and Nauportus in particular, made by the written sources of the first centuries BC and AD, are scanty, nevertheless, they reflect the multi-faceted nature of Nauportus and the central and southwestern territory of present day Slovenia: the locale for the Argonautic legend, a valuable link in a vibrant commercial activity undertaken along a lucrative prehistoric trade route stretching from the northeastern nook of the Adriatic to the Black Sea, a military base for the Roman expansion towards the western Balkans and further east as well as the fastest route towards Italy in the opposite direction. As such, this part of the world turned out to be both a blessing and a curse for Italy in the centuries to come, which, however, is a topic to be covered by some other paper.

JUGOZAHODNA IN OSREDNJA SLOVENIJA. NAVPORT: LEGENDA O ARGONAVTIH – RIMLJANI GREDO NA VZHOD

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POVZETEK

Argonautica Apolonija Rodoškega iz 3. stol. pr. Kr. izpostavlja donavsko-jadransko verzijo vrnitve Argonavtov v Grčijo po njihovi uspešni prisvojitvi Zlatega runa v Kolhidi ob Črnem morju. Toda rimska pisca Gnaeus Pompeius Trogus (1. stol. pr. Kr.) in Gaius Plinius Secundus, Plinij starejši (23–79 po Kr.), sta opazno spremenila vzhodnojadranski odsek te vrnitve: na osnovi tedanjega geografskega znanja sta nadomestila bifurkacijo Donave z dvema plovnima rekama, ki se izlivata ena v Črno in druga v Jadransko morje. Razen tega Argonavti izplujejo iz druge reke v Jadran bodisi v bližini Akvileje (Trogus) bodisi v bližini Trsta (Plinij), in ne nazadnje, pozornost obeh piscev je usmerjena na zaledje severovzhodnega Jadrana, ali natančneje, na kos kopnega med obema rekama, ki ga morajo Argonavti premagati med iskanjem druge plovne poti. Trogov zapis omogoča sklepanje, da so Argonavti zaključili prvo rečno pot nekje v osrednji Sloveniji, medtem ko Plinij izpostavi Navport kot konec prve rečne poti. Argonavtska legenda, tako kot je predstavljena pri Pliniju in Trogu, odseva rimsko poznavanje obale in zaledja severovzhodnega Jadrana v prvih stoletjih pred Kristusom in po njem. To znanje je bilo rezultat dokončne rimske priključitve jugozahodnega in osrednjega dela današnje Slovenije, ki je predstavljala najkrajšo pot za rimsko širjenje proti zahodnemu Balkanu in še naprej, v 1. stol. pr. Kr.

Navport omenja tudi Strabon (64/63 pr. Kr. – 24 p. Kr.), čigar zapis podčrtava strateško vlogo te naselbine na trgovske poti, ki se je raztezala od Akvileje preko Razdrtega do Navporta po kopnem, nato pa od tam in do Siscie (Siska) ter naprej na vzhod v Panonijo in Podonavje po pritokih Donave. Razen pri Pliniju in Strabonu se Navport pojavi na kratko še v dveh zgodovinskih virih, pri Marku Paterkulu Veleju (ca. 19 pr. Kr. – ca. 31 p. Kr.) in v Analih pri Publiju (or Gaju) Korneliju Tacitu (ca. 56–120 p. Kr.). Paterkul podaja poročilo o zatrtju zloglasnega panonsko-dalmatinskega upora v provinci Ilirik v letih 6–9 kot očevidec in udeleženec dogajanja. Omeni načrt upornikov, po katerem bi poslali tretjino svojih sil nad Italijo, in sicer po poti Navport–Trst, kar podčrtava strateški pomenu Navporta, istočasno pa razkriva, da so Rimljani prepoznali Navport kot bližnjico, ki jo utegnejo izkoristiti rimski sovražniki iz uporniške province na zahodnem Balkanu za napad na Italijo. Z drugimi besedami, Navport, ki je v prvem stoletju pr. Kr. služil kot rečno pristanišče, od koder so Rimljani sistematično in brezobzirno prodirali na zahodni Balkan in še naprej na vzhod, je sedaj nenadoma prepoznan kot rimska šibka točka in morebitna grožnja Italiji.

Tacit v svojih Analih omenja Navport kot naselje, ki je občutilo jezo uporniških vojakov l. 14 po Kr. Njihov upor je bil del širšega upora, ki je izbruhnil med german-skimi in panonskimi legijami, ki so bile izčrpane po panonsko-dalmatinskem uporu in

rimskem porazu pri Tevtoburškem gozdu l. 9 po Kr. Po Tacitu je upor panonskih legij učinkovito zatrl Tiberijev sin Druz. Čeprav Tacit piše o dogodku iz časovne razdalje mnogih desetletij, z Anali se je verjetno ukvarjal ob koncu I. stol., je občutek zaskrbljenosti še vedno prisoten v njegovem delu. Omemba Navporta daje slutiti, da ga je skrbelo varnost Italije in da je prepoznal kratko razdaljo med Navportom in Italijo v tem primeru kot grožnjo. Posledično se mu zdi pomembno omeniti ime akvilejske vasi na meji Italije, kar je bil tedaj Navport, kjer se je uprl oddelek vojakov, medtem ko ne pove, kje v provinci Ilirik se je nahajal vojaški poletni tabor, čeprav se je tam kuhal upor kar treh legij. Ilirik je bil namreč relativno daleč stran od Italije, medtem ko je bil Navport v njeni neposredni bližini.

Na osnovi zapisov iz prvih stoletij pr. in po Kr., o katerih razpravlja ta članek, je mogoče trditi, da je bil v očeh Rimljanov položaj jugozahodne in osrednje Slovenije z Navportom kot njegovo najbolj izpostavljeno točko brez dvoma dvoumen. Če argonavtska legenda odseva rastoče rimsko poznavanje tega dela sveta in če Strabon podčrtava blaginjo Navporta, Paterkul in Tacit prepoznavata njegovo dvoumno naravo. Namreč, v njunih zapisih se Navport pokaže kot vir skrbi v kriznih časih. Če povzamemo, obravnavani zapisi, čeprav redki, vendarle odsevajo večstransko in spremenljivo naravo tega dela sveta: prednost v času ozemeljskega širjenja in zadrega v časih težav. Blagoslov in prekletstvo, dvorezen meč ter po zaslugi Rimljanov nova, trajna točka na mitološkem zemljevidu antičnega sveta.

Ključne besede: povratak Argonavtov, Apolonij Rodoški, bifurkacija Donave, Plinij starejši, Pompeius Trogus, Strabon

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