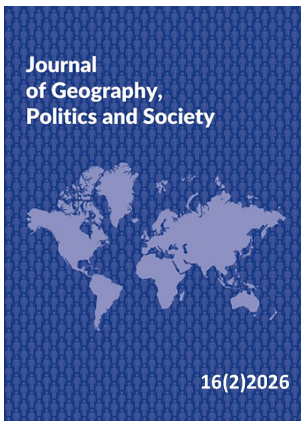




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THE ARGONAUTIC EXPEDITION AND THE ARCHETYPE OF STRATEGIC COORDINATION ON THE CAUCASIAN FRONTIER

Maksym Lepskiy¹, Nataliia Lepska², Alexander Rusetsky³

¹Department of Sociology, Zaporizhzhia National University, 66 Zhukovskoho Street, 69600 Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine. ORCID: 0000-0001-5604-641X
e-mail: waysensey@gmail.com (corresponding author)

²Department of Political Science, Zaporizhzhia National University, 66 Zhukovskoho Street, 69600 Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine. ORCID: 0000-0001-6010-423X
e-mail: lepskanv@gmail.com

³Department of Archaeology and History of Georgia, Georgian Technical University, 77 Merab Kostava Street, 0160 Tbilisi, Georgia; Laboratory of Metacognitive Archaeology, International University for Peace, Tbilisi, Georgia. ORCID: 0000-0003-2646-1625
e-mail: alex_scirs@yahoo.com

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Abstract

This article reinterprets the myth of Jason's expedition to Colchis through an interdisciplinary framework combining archetypal analysis, frontier studies, political sociology, coalition theory, collaborative governance, and strategic leadership. Its aim is to reconstruct the Argonautic expedition as an archetypal model of strategic coordination and collective action within a frontier environment marked by uncertainty, cultural diversity, and political complexity.

The analysis shows that Colchis and the Caucasus function in the narrative as an archetypal frontier at the edge of the ancient oikoumene, creating structural conditions that make cooperation among actors with complementary capabilities necessary. The expedition is therefore interpreted as a strategic coalition integrating navigation, intelligence, forecasting, military capability, communication, symbolic legitimacy, diplomacy, engineering expertise, and local knowledge. Jason emerges not as a hero defined by individual superiority but as a strategic coordinator whose authority depends primarily on coalition-building, resource integration, and adaptive leadership.

A binocular reading that juxtaposes Hellenic and Colchian-Caucasian perspectives also reveals the shadow dimensions of this model, including ethical ambiguity, political violence, competing claims to legitimacy, the agency and instrumentalisation of Medea, the death of Apsyrtus, and divine intervention as a force shaping strategic outcomes. The study argues that classical myth retains analytical value for understanding strategic leadership, frontier dynamics, and complex multi-actor systems.

Key words

Caucasian frontier; strategic leadership; strategic coordination; coalition theory; archetypal analysis.

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1. Introduction

Ancient myths are among the principal cultural forms through which societies have interpreted power, space, order, conflict, and collective action. Beyond their religious and symbolic significance, they preserve models of cooperation, leadership, adaptation, and the pursuit of shared goals under conditions of uncertainty. As repositories of collective experience, mythological narratives provide insight into how communities conceptualise authority, legitimacy, and coordinated action.

Among ancient mythological narratives, the Argonautic cycle occupies a distinctive position because it combines long-distance travel, frontier encounter, collective decision-making, and the pursuit of a strategic objective. Unlike heroic traditions centred mainly on individual achievement, the expedition of the Argonauts unfolds through the coordinated action of multiple participants with differentiated capabilities and functions. It therefore provides a productive framework for examining how ancient cultures imagined cooperation, leadership, and collective enterprise.

The Argonautic myth has generated extensive scholarship on its literary sources, historical origins, symbolic structures, connections with Greek colonisation, and archetypal patterns of heroic transformation, initiation, and quest. Its political, organisational, and social dimensions, however, have often remained secondary to analyses of narrative structure, symbolism, and individual characters. The mechanisms through which the expedition coordinates diverse actors and achieves a common objective therefore require further conceptualisation.

The spatial dimension of the narrative is especially significant. Colchis, located on the eastern coast of the Black Sea within the Caucasian region, occupies a frontier position between the Hellenic *oikoumene* and the world beyond it. In geographical and symbolic terms, the Caucasus and Colchis function as borderlands where different political, cultural, and social systems intersect. Such characteristics correspond to contemporary frontier studies, which conceptualise frontiers as environments of interaction, uncertainty, adaptation, and emergent cooperation.

At the same time, contemporary social and political research increasingly focuses on multi-actor systems, networked forms of organisation, coalition-building, collaborative governance, and strategic leadership. Central concerns include the coordination

of autonomous actors, the integration of distributed resources, and the achievement of collective objectives in environments characterised by uncertainty and limited hierarchical control. These perspectives create an opportunity to reinterpret the Argonautic cycle as a symbolic model of collective action operating within a frontier environment.

This interpretation also requires a binocular perspective. From the Hellenic viewpoint, Jason's expedition may be read as a heroic voyage and a successful act of strategic coordination. From the Colchian and Caucasian viewpoint, the same narrative may reveal a shadow dimension: external intrusion, appropriation of a sacred resource, instrumentalisation of Medea, dynastic disruption, and ethical transgression. The article therefore examines both the integrative and the problematic dimensions of Jason's leadership.

Despite extensive scholarship, the relationship between the frontier character of the Caucasus and Colchis, the coalition structure of the expedition, and Jason's leadership functions remains insufficiently conceptualised. Existing interpretations tend to examine these dimensions separately: space as geographical background, the expedition as heroic adventure, and Jason as an individual protagonist. Such fragmentation obscures the internal logic through which frontier conditions shape coalition formation, collective action, and leadership practices.

The aim of this article is to reconstruct the archetype of strategic coordination within the Argonautic cycle by analysing the relationship between the Caucasian frontier, the coalition structure of the expedition, and Jason's leadership functions. To achieve this aim, the study integrates archetypal analysis, frontier studies, coalition theory, collaborative governance, and strategic leadership within a unified analytical framework.

The contribution of the study is threefold. Conceptually, the Argonautic cycle is interpreted as a multi-actor system operating within a frontier environment. Theoretically, the study combines archetypal studies, frontier studies, coalition theory, collaborative governance, and strategic leadership within a single analytical model. Methodologically, it proposes a framework for reconstructing archetypes through the interaction of space, coalition organisation, leadership functions, and their shadow effects. In doing so, the article demonstrates how mythological narratives can be examined as symbolic models of strategic coordination, collective action, and contested frontier memory.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Archetypal Approach

The archetypal approach assumes that mythological narratives preserve enduring patterns of collective experience that recur across cultures and historical periods. Within analytical psychology, archetypes are understood as symbolic structures of the collective unconscious manifested through myths, narratives, and cultural symbols (Jung, 1968). Subsequent developments in archetypal scholarship extended this perspective beyond individual psychology, emphasising the role of myths in shaping collective understandings of authority, legitimacy, social organisation, and interaction.

Campbell (2004) demonstrated that many mythological narratives are organised around recurring patterns of departure, trial, transformation, and return. Within this framework, the Argonautic expedition represents a quest narrative in which the acquisition of a sacred object is associated with transformation and the restoration of order. At the same time, the Argonautica differs from many heroic narratives because success depends on the coordinated action of multiple participants rather than on the achievements of a single hero.

This interpretation corresponds to Eliade's (1963) understanding of myth as a source of paradigmatic models of behaviour and social order. Durand (1999) further emphasised that myths function as symbolic systems through which societies organise representations of power, space, identity, danger, and cooperation. Contemporary archetypal studies have extended this perspective by examining how cultural complexes shape collective identities and shared systems of meaning (Singer, 2020).

Archetypal analysis additionally assumes that archetypes possess both constructive and shadow manifestations. Archetypes may generate cooperation, legitimacy, and integration, while simultaneously reproducing domination, exclusion, manipulation, and conflict. Mythological narratives therefore frequently preserve competing interpretations of the same symbolic structure depending on the position of the observer within the social and cultural system (Jung, 1968; Durand, 1999; Singer, 2020).

Within the present study, the archetypal approach is applied not to reconstruct the psychology of individual characters but to identify enduring models of collective organisation embedded in the Argonautic cycle. Jason is interpreted as a symbolic embodiment of strategic coordination whose significance derives from the

capacity to integrate diverse actors, resources, and competencies into a coherent collective enterprise (Jung, 1968; Campbell, 2004; Eliade, 1963; Durand, 1999; Singer, 2020).

2.2. Frontier Studies

Contemporary frontier studies conceptualise frontiers not as peripheral territories but as dynamic spaces of interaction among different social, cultural, and political systems (Donnan & Wilson, 1999). Rather than functioning as fixed boundaries, frontiers are characterised by uncertainty, adaptation, negotiation, and multiple forms of authority. White (1991) described such environments as a "middle ground" in which social order emerges through interaction, accommodation, and exchange rather than through unilateral control.

The Caucasus represents one of the most significant historical examples of such a frontier environment. Located between major political, economic, and cultural systems, the region historically functioned as a crossroads connecting empires, trade routes, and civilisations (King, 2008). Within ancient traditions, Colchis occupied a liminal position between the Hellenic oikoumene and territories beyond the familiar world. As a result, the region became associated with discovery, danger, wealth, transformation, and intercultural encounter (Braund, 1994; Yemelianova & Broers, 2020).

Contemporary scholarship on the Caucasus reinforces the interpretation of Colchis as a frontier environment situated beyond the familiar boundaries of the Greek world. According to Yemelianova and Broers (2020), the Caucasus' "frontier location" contributed to its exceptional ethno-linguistic, cultural, and socio-political diversity. The authors further note that, from antiquity onward, the region was frequently imagined as a realm lying "beyond the known and familiar," a space simultaneously associated with danger, wealth, knowledge, and transformation. Significantly, they identify the myth of the Golden Fleece as one of the foundational narratives through which these frontier characteristics were articulated, observing that the themes of danger and the seductive power of wealth and knowledge converge in Jason's expedition to Colchis. This interpretation supports the view that the Argonautic cycle should be understood not merely as a heroic adventure but as a symbolic narrative of engagement with a frontier zone characterised by uncertainty, intercultural encounter, and strategic opportunity (Yemelianova & Broers, 2020, p. 5).

The myth of the Golden Fleece reflects this frontier logic. Jason's expedition combines exploration, uncertainty, knowledge acquisition, alliance formation, and adaptation to unfamiliar environments. Historical studies likewise demonstrate that Colchis occupied a frontier position in relation to Greek trade, settlement, and political influence (Braund, 1994). Consequently, the expedition may be interpreted as an encounter with a politically and culturally distinct frontier space whose complexity required forms of cooperation, adaptation, and leadership unavailable within the familiar environment of the Greek world.

From this perspective, the frontier functions as both a geographical and social condition that generates uncertainty, intercultural interaction, and the need for cooperation among actors possessing different resources and interests. The Caucasus and Colchis therefore provide the spatial foundation for understanding the Argonautic expedition as a multi-actor system whose success depends upon coalition-building, strategic adaptation, and coordinated action (White, 1991; Donnan & Wilson, 1999; Braund, 1994; King, 2008; Yemelianova & Broers, 2020).

3. Literature Review and Research Gap

The Argonautic cycle has generated a long and diverse scholarly tradition extending from antiquity to contemporary interdisciplinary research. Existing scholarship may be grouped into several interconnected directions that collectively illuminate the literary, historical, mythological, archetypal, political, and frontier dimensions of Jason's expedition.

The foundations of the tradition are found in ancient Greek and Roman sources. Homer (1996) and Hesiod (2006) established many of the cosmological, heroic, and genealogical structures that later informed the Argonautic tradition. Herodotus (1998) contributed geographical and ethnographic descriptions of the Black Sea region and Colchis, while Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* remains the principal literary source for reconstructing the expedition itself (Apollonius Rhodius, 1912). Through the Hellenistic transformation of earlier mythological material, Apollonius created a narrative combining exploration, leadership, cooperation, divine intervention, and intercultural encounter. Later mythographic traditions synthesised and expanded these narratives, preserving the story of Jason and the Golden Fleece within broader systems of Greek mythology (Graves, 2017).

A second direction consists of comparative mythological and anthropological interpretations. Frazer (1922) examined myths as symbolic expressions of ritual, kingship, and sacral power, while Lévi-Strauss (1963) approached mythology as a system of underlying cultural structures and binary oppositions. Campbell (2004) interpreted heroic narratives through the framework of the monomyth, emphasising recurring patterns of departure, initiation, transformation, and return. Eliade (1963) further argued that myths function as paradigmatic models of behaviour and social order. Together, these studies established the basis for understanding the Argonautic cycle as more than a literary narrative: it can also be read as a symbolic representation of collective cultural experience.

Archetypal approaches provide an additional theoretical foundation for the study of the expedition. C. G. Jung (1968) interpreted myths as manifestations of archetypal structures embedded within the collective unconscious, while G. Durand (1999) emphasised their role as symbolic systems through which societies organise representations of power, identity, danger, cooperation, and transformation. These perspectives make it possible to analyse the Argonautic cycle as a symbolic model of leadership, collective action, and frontier interaction.

A substantial body of scholarship has focused on the literary structure of the *Argonautica* and the characterisation of Jason. Clauss (1993) demonstrated that Apollonius redefined the heroic ideal by presenting a protagonist whose success depends on cooperation rather than individual martial excellence. Hunter (1988, 1993) emphasised Jason's uncertainty, dependence on others, and distance from traditional heroic models, while Beye (1969) interpreted him as a "love-hero" whose achievements are inseparable from his relationship with Medea. Klein (1983) highlighted the moral ambiguity of Jason's character by portraying him simultaneously as hero and opportunist. More recent literary studies have further refined analyses of characterisation and narrative construction within Hellenistic epic (Klooster, 2018; Lovatt, 2021). Collectively, this literature reveals a complex and contested image of leadership that differs significantly from the archetype of the solitary warrior hero.

Historical and regional scholarship has substantially revised earlier understandings of Colchis and the Caucasus. D. Braund (1994) demonstrated that Colchis was a politically and economically significant society integrated into wider Black Sea networks and occupying an important position within the frontier zone connecting the

Greek world, Anatolia, and the Caucasus. M. L. West (2007) reexamined the geographical traditions associated with Phasis and Aia, while G. Gamkrelidze (2012) emphasised the archaeological and historical complexity of ancient Georgian and Caucasian societies. These studies reconsider earlier Eurocentric interpretations by recognising Colchis as an autonomous political and cultural actor with its own structures of authority, interests, and historical agency.

The spatial dimension of the expedition has been further developed within frontier and borderland studies. H. Donnan and T. M. Wilson (1999) conceptualised frontiers as dynamic zones of interaction rather than fixed territorial boundaries. C. King (2008) demonstrated the historical role of the Caucasus as a crossroads linking civilisations, empires, trade routes, and competing political systems. Such perspectives support the interpretation of Colchis as a frontier environment characterised by uncertainty, intercultural contact, adaptation, and competing forms of authority. Within this framework, the Argonautic expedition may be understood as a process of interaction between distinct political and cultural worlds rather than as a simple heroic journey.

Recent scholarship has increasingly focused on questions of agency, emotion, and power. A. Mori (2012) examined the relationship between mediation, force, and female agency in the Argonautica, while M. Pavlou (2009) explored the symbolic transformation of Medea's identity. E. Sanders (2021) demonstrated the importance of emotional dynamics—including love, fear, grief, and shame—in shaping Medea's decisions and the broader trajectory of the narrative. These studies reveal the extent to which the success of the expedition depends upon actors whose contributions challenge traditional heroic and patriarchal interpretations.

A further critical perspective emerges from studies that reconsider the ethical and political consequences of the expedition. Nadareishvili's (2010–2011) analysis of the Apsyrtus episode demonstrates the diversity of ancient traditions concerning the circumstances, agents, and geographical setting of his death, while also drawing attention to the relevance of these variants for understanding Colchian-Aegean relations. Such approaches shift attention from heroic achievement towards questions of violence, legitimacy, dynastic succession, and contested memory, thereby supporting a binocular perspective that incorporates both Greek and Colchian viewpoints.

In addition to mythological and historical scholarship, contemporary theories of cooperation, coalition formation, governance, and leadership provide important analytical tools for interpreting the expedition. Axelrod (1984) demonstrated how cooperation may emerge among actors pursuing different interests, while Ansell and Gash (2008) and Emerson et al. (2012) developed influential models of collaborative governance emphasising coordination, trust-building, and collective decision-making. These approaches allow the Argonautic expedition to be interpreted as a multi-actor coalition whose effectiveness depends on the integration of differentiated competencies, distributed knowledge, and adaptive forms of leadership.

Despite the richness of existing scholarship, important gaps remain. Literary, archetypal, historical, frontier, and gender-oriented studies have generated substantial insights into individual dimensions of the Argonautic cycle, yet these approaches have rarely been integrated into a common analytical framework. Existing research seldom examines the relationship between frontier conditions, coalition organisation, strategic leadership, collaborative governance, and their constructive and shadow manifestations. Moreover, although Hellenic perspectives dominate much of the literature, Colchian and Caucasian viewpoints remain comparatively underrepresented despite their importance for understanding the political and cultural setting of the narrative.

The present study addresses this gap by integrating archetypal analysis, frontier studies, coalition theory, collaborative governance, and strategic leadership within a unified analytical framework. It further adopts a binocular perspective that considers both Hellenic and Colchian viewpoints while examining the constructive and shadow dimensions of Jason's leadership and the Argonautic expedition. Such an approach makes it possible to reinterpret the myth not merely as a heroic narrative but as a complex symbolic model of cooperation, power, frontier interaction, and contested historical memory.

The primary source base consists of ancient literary accounts of the Argonautic expedition, particularly Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*, supplemented by relevant Greek and Roman traditions concerning Jason, Medea, Colchis, and the Golden Fleece. These sources are analysed as cultural representations that preserve symbolic models of leadership, cooperation, conflict, and interaction across social and political boundaries.

The archetypal component of the methodology draws upon analytical psychology and contemporary archetypal studies, which treat myths as repositories of recurring patterns of collective experience and social organisation (Jung, 1968; Campbell, 2004; Durand, 1999; Singer, 2020). Rather than reconstructing the psychology of individual characters, the analysis focuses on archetypal configurations of leadership, coalition formation, frontier encounter, and collective action embedded within the narrative structure of the myth.

The frontier perspective conceptualises Colchis and the Caucasus as a contact zone characterised by interaction among different political, cultural, and symbolic systems (Donnan & Wilson, 1999; White, 1991; King, 2008). This approach allows the expedition to be interpreted within a broader framework of frontier dynamics, including uncertainty, adaptation, alliance formation, exchange, and competition.

To examine the organisational dimension of the expedition, the study draws on concepts from coalition theory, collaborative governance, cross-sector collaboration, and complexity leadership. Particular attention is devoted to the coordination of autonomous actors, the integration of complementary resources and competencies, collective decision-making, and the management of uncertainty within a multi-actor environment (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bryson et al., 2015; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

The study additionally adopts a binocular interpretive strategy that combines internal and external perspectives on the Argonautic cycle. The internal perspective reflects the Hellenic narrative tradition in which the expedition appears as a heroic enterprise and a successful act of strategic coordination. The external perspective reconstructs a Colchian and Caucasian viewpoint, drawing attention to intrusion, resource appropriation, dynastic disruption, ethical transgression, and contested memory (Braund, 1994; Gamkrelidze, 2012; Nadareishvili, 2010–2011). The purpose of this approach is neither heroisation nor retrospective moral condemnation, but the identification of competing symbolic interpretations embedded within the same mythological narrative.

Methodologically, the analysis proceeds through three interconnected levels. The first level examines Colchis and the Caucasus as an archetypal frontier. The second reconstructs the Argonautic expedition as a coalition composed of actors performing differentiated strategic functions. The third analyzes Jason as a symbolic model of strategic coordination within a multi-actor system. These levels are

subsequently considered from both constructive and shadow perspectives in order to reveal the ambivalent nature of leadership, cooperation, and frontier interaction preserved in the myth.

Such an approach makes it possible to connect archetypal structures, spatial conditions, organisational arrangements, and leadership functions within a unified analytical framework. At the same time, it allows the study to account for the plurality of historical memories and symbolic meanings associated with the Argonautic cycle and its enduring significance within European and Caucasian cultural traditions.

4. Methodology

The study employs an interdisciplinary qualitative research design combining archetypal analysis, frontier studies, coalition theory, collaborative governance, and strategic leadership studies. This approach enables the Argonautic cycle to be examined as a symbolic model of collective action within a frontier environment.

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5. Findings

5.1. Colchis and the Caucasus as an Archetypal Frontier of the Ancient Oikoumene

The frontier constitutes one of the fundamental structural foundations of the Argonautic cycle. The logic of the expedition unfolds through a movement

beyond the ordered space of the Hellenic oikoumene toward an environment in which familiar social, political, and cultural reference points lose their certainty. In this context, the Caucasus and Colchis function as symbolic frontier spaces through which the ancient world defined the boundaries of the oikoumene, interpreted encounters with other communities, and confronted the uncertainties of the unknown.

Ancient geographical tradition associated Colchis with the outer limits of the known world. Strabo observed that Homer's geographical horizon extended as far as the region connected with Jason's expedition:

"Homer, besides the boundaries of the earth, which he fully describes, was likewise well acquainted with the Mediterranean. Starting from the Pillars, this sea is encompassed by Libya, Egypt, and Phoenicia, then by the coasts opposite Cyprus, the Solymi, Lycia, and Caria, and then by the shore which stretches between Mycale and Troas, and the adjacent islands, every one of which he mentions, as well as those of the Propontis and the Euxine, as far as Colchis, and the locality of Jason's expedition. Furthermore, he was acquainted with the Cimmerian Bosphorus, having known the Cimmerians, and that not merely by name, but as being familiar with themselves" (Strabo, 1917, p. 8).

For the ancient Greeks, the oikoumene represented an ordered space of human habitation, political organisation, and cultural communication. Territories situated at its periphery combined empirical geographical knowledge with mythological imagination and were frequently perceived as arenas in which established forms of social order were tested and redefined. Herodotus (1998) located Colchis within a broader network of peoples inhabiting the Black Sea region, while later traditions associated the Caucasus with stories that marked the limits of ordinary human experience and the boundaries of political and cosmological order.

Within Greek mythological imagination, the Caucasus acquired the status of a symbolic frontier from an early period. It was here that the story of Prometheus was situated, linking the region with themes of transgression, punishment, knowledge, and mediation between different orders of existence. The Caucasus thus emerged as a liminal space situated between the familiar world and an uncertain external environment. For traditional societies, such frontier regions often occupied an intermediate position between the ordered world and the realm of uncertainty, a distinction that played a central role in mythological representations of space (Eliade, 1963). In archetypal terms, frontier environments

function as symbolic zones through which societies project representations of danger, transformation, encounter with the unknown, and the possibility of renewal (Durand, 1999).

This understanding corresponds closely to contemporary frontier studies, which conceptualise frontiers not as fixed lines separating political entities but as dynamic environments of interaction among different social, cultural, and political systems (Donnan & Wilson, 1999). Frontier zones are characterised by permeability, negotiation, adaptation, and the coexistence of multiple centres of authority. R. White (1991) similarly demonstrates that frontier environments generate forms of cooperation and accommodation that cannot be reduced to simple domination by one side or another. Such environments stimulate the formation of alliances, mechanisms of mediation, and new organisational arrangements capable of responding to uncertainty and complexity.

The geographical position of the Caucasus contributed significantly to this frontier character. Located between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, the region served as a corridor connecting the Mediterranean world, the Near East, and the Eurasian interior. Trade routes, migration flows, diplomatic contacts, and military campaigns intersected within this space, transforming it into one of the principal contact zones of antiquity (King, 2008). Consequently, the Caucasus became an environment in which different political systems, cultural traditions, and forms of authority encountered one another.

Within the structure of the Argonautic cycle, Colchis represents the frontier core of this wider environment. It serves as the destination of the expedition and concentrates many of the meanings associated with the relationship between centre and periphery. Unlike territories that function primarily as realms of chaos or monstrosity, Colchis appears in the narrative as a politically organised society possessing its own institutions, dynastic structures, and mechanisms of decision-making. The challenge confronting the Argonauts therefore consists not in confronting a lawless wilderness but in engaging with an alternative political order that possesses its own legitimacy and internal coherence (Apollonius Rhodius, 1912).

Strabo further emphasised the enduring association between Colchis, Medea, and the wider geographical memory of the Argonautic expedition:

“Being acquainted with Colchis, and the voyage of Jason to Æa, and also with the historical and fabulous relations concerning Circe and Medea, their enchantments and their various other points of

resemblance, he feigns there was a relationship between them, notwithstanding the vast distance by which they were separated, the one dwelling in an inland creek of the Euxine, and the other in Italy, and both of them beyond the ocean. It is possible that Jason himself wandered as far as Italy, for traces of the Argonautic expedition are pointed out near the Ceraunian mountains, by the Adriatic, at the Possidonian Gulf, and the isles adjacent to Tyrrhenia” (Strabo, 1917, p. 31).

Historical scholarship has reinforced this interpretation. As Braund (1994, p. 14) notes, “Georgia was located on the periphery, at the frontier, of Greek trade and settlement.” Colchis therefore occupied a position simultaneously external to and connected with the Greek world. It functioned as a frontier zone characterised by distance, uncertainty, and intercultural encounter while remaining integrated into broader networks of communication, exchange, and political interaction (Braund, 1994; Gamkrelidze, 2012).

The frontier character of Colchis helps explain why the expedition assumes a coalition form. The uncertainty, distance, cultural complexity, and political autonomy of the region make the resources of any single hero insufficient and create a structural demand for cooperation among actors possessing complementary capabilities. The frontier therefore functions not merely as the destination of the expedition but as the principal factor shaping its organisational architecture and strategic logic. In this sense, the Caucasus and Colchis emerge as archetypal frontier environments whose complexity fosters coalition-building, mediation, adaptive leadership, and collective action.

5.2. The Argonautic Expedition as a Strategic Coalition

The frontier environment of Colchis determines the organisational logic of the expedition itself. Frontier conditions do not permit reliance upon a single resource, individual, or form of authority. Instead, they require the integration of diverse competencies capable of responding to uncertainty, risk, and complexity. The Argonautic expedition may therefore be interpreted as a strategic coalition whose effectiveness derives from functional differentiation, complementarity of resources, and coordinated collective action.

Apollonius presents the expedition not as a gathering of isolated heroes but as a deliberately assembled coalition united by a common strategic objective. The catalogue of Argonauts constitutes

one of the earliest literary representations of a complex multi-actor system in which different individuals contribute specialised competencies that become effective only when integrated within a common organisational framework (Apollonius Rhodius, 1912, Book I, ll. 23–233). The expedition's effectiveness derives from the interaction of differentiated functions rather than from the predominance of a single warrior. This interpretation corresponds closely to scholarly analyses that regard the Argonautica as a redefinition of heroic excellence through cooperation, interdependence, and collective capability rather than individual achievement (Clauss, 1993; Hunter, 1993).

At the centre of the coalition stands Jason, whose distinctive contribution is not extraordinary physical strength but the ability to assemble and coordinate autonomous actors around a shared strategic objective. His role resembles that of a strategic integrator responsible for maintaining cohesion, allocating responsibilities, managing relationships among powerful participants, and preserving the common direction of collective action.

The expedition incorporated several interconnected functional subsystems. Navigation was entrusted to Tiphys, who "skillfully handled the well-polished helm" and guided the Argo across uncertain maritime routes (Apollonius Rhodius, 1912, Book I, p. 41). Following his death, Ancaeus assumed navigational responsibilities, demonstrating organizational continuity and resilience. Intelligence, reconnaissance, and situational awareness were embodied by Lynceus, whose extraordinary powers of perception enabled him to "see all things that are beneath the earth" (Apollonius Rhodius, 1912, Book I). Strategic forecasting was represented by Idmon and Mopsus, whose prophetic abilities provided anticipatory knowledge concerning risks and future developments, while Phineus, though not a member of the expedition itself, functioned as an external strategic adviser whose guidance enabled the coalition to anticipate and overcome critical challenges.

The symbolic and communicative dimension of the mission was entrusted to Orpheus. Apollonius describes him as one who "by the music of his songs charmed the stubborn rocks upon the mountains and the course of rivers" (Apollonius Rhodius, 1912, Book I, p. 5), while also noting that "Such then was Orpheus whom Aeson's son welcomed to share his toils" (Apollonius Rhodius, 1912, Book I, p. 5). Orpheus embodied symbolic integration, ritual legitimacy, collective identity, and social cohesion. His presence demonstrates that successful collective

action requires not only force and expertise but also a shared symbolic order capable of uniting diverse actors around a common purpose.

Technical and engineering expertise was represented by Argus, builder of the Argo, whose craftsmanship supplied the technological foundation of the entire enterprise. The vessel itself functioned as the material platform through which cooperation among otherwise autonomous actors became possible. organisational discipline is further emphasised when Apollonius notes that the heroes took their places "as they had previously assigned for each to row in his place" (Apollonius Rhodius, 1912, Book I, p. 39), revealing prior planning, role allocation, and procedural coordination.

Military capability was distributed among a group of prominent warrior heroes. Heracles embodied overwhelming force, accumulated experience, and personal prestige; Telamon and Peleus contributed aristocratic authority, battlefield reliability, and political legitimacy; Castor strengthened mobility and expeditionary adaptability through his mastery of horsemanship, while Polydeuces provided elite combat capability. Idas, together with other warrior heroes such as Admetus, Periclymenus, Erginus, and Nauplius, reinforced the coalition's military potential and operational resilience. Yet one of the most significant political moments in the narrative occurs when Heracles declines leadership and instead proclaims:

"Let the hero who brought us together, himself be the leader of the host" (Apollonius Rhodius, 1912, Book I, p. 17).

This statement constitutes a foundational act of political legitimacy. Authority is transferred from the strongest warrior to the organiser of the coalition. Heracles embodies the archetype of heroic force, accumulated experience, and practical wisdom, whereas Jason represents the archetype of strategic coordination. Their relationship reflects not competition but the complementarity of two forms of leadership required for success in frontier conditions (Clauss, 1993; Hunter, 1988).

Operational flexibility and rapid-response capability were enhanced by Zetes and Calais, the winged sons of Boreas, whose pursuit of the Harpies demonstrated exceptional speed, reach, and intervention capacity. Euphemus strengthened communication, liaison, and connectivity across the coalition, facilitating coordination among dispersed actors and operational environments. Acastus, the son of Pelias, contributed an important element of political legitimacy by demonstrating that support for the expedition extended even into the ruling house that had initiated Jason's mission.

A particularly important role was played by actors who connected the expedition with the political and cultural realities of Colchis. The sons of Phrixus—Argus, Cytisorus, Melas, and Phrontis—possessed direct genealogical links to the ruling structures of the region and therefore functioned as intermediaries between the coalition and the frontier society it sought to engage. Their knowledge of local conditions, dynastic relationships, and geographical realities reduced uncertainty and facilitated communication across political and cultural boundaries. Phrontis contributed navigational and regional expertise, while Argus served as a bridge between Greek and Colchian worlds. Together, they supplied the coalition with local knowledge unavailable to most of the Argonauts themselves.

The strategic significance of bridging functions became even more evident in the role of Medea. Medea's contribution extended far beyond the conventional role of the heroic helper. Literary scholarship has repeatedly emphasised that Jason's success becomes inseparable from the resources, knowledge, and agency she provides. Her role combined local expertise, political access, intelligence, emotional commitment, and strategic mediation, thereby transforming her into one of the most consequential actors within the expedition itself (Beye, 1969; Pavlou, 2009; Mori, 2012; Sanders, 2021). Through Medea, the coalition gained access to information, capabilities, and opportunities that would otherwise remain inaccessible.

The organisational structure of the expedition closely resembles what contemporary theories describe as coalition formation and collaborative governance. Coalitions emerge when autonomous actors recognise their mutual dependence in achieving a shared objective and agree to coordinate resources despite differences in status, interests, and capabilities (Axelrod, 1984; Olson, 1965). The stability of such arrangements depends on trust, reciprocity, shared purpose, and mechanisms of coordination. The Argonauts do not surrender their autonomy; rather, they align their differentiated competencies within a common strategic framework. In this respect, the expedition anticipates principles later identified in theories of collaborative governance and multi-actor cooperation (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012).

In this sense, the Argonautic expedition may be interpreted as an archetypal representation of a multi-actor system in which differentiated resources, distributed expertise, and a shared strategic purpose are integrated into collective action. Navigation, intelligence, forecasting, engineering, symbolic

integration, communication, diplomacy, military force, political legitimacy, local knowledge, and adaptive leadership are distributed across multiple actors whose contributions become effective only when integrated into a coherent organisational framework. The expedition succeeds because it transforms diversity into coordinated action. The coalition therefore constitutes one of the central archetypal structures of the narrative and the principal mechanism through which collective action becomes possible within a frontier environment.

5.3. Jason and the Archetype of Strategic Coordination in a Frontier Environment

The organisational structure of the expedition reveals a form of leadership that differs significantly from the dominant heroic model of archaic epic. Traditional epic heroes derive authority primarily from exceptional martial strength, individual courage, or divine ancestry. Jason, by contrast, embodies a different logic. His effectiveness derives from his ability to assemble, coordinate, and sustain cooperation among autonomous actors operating within a complex and uncertain frontier environment. The *Argonautica* therefore presents one of the earliest literary reflections on leadership as a process of strategic integration rather than heroic domination.

From the outset, the expedition is presented as a collective undertaking requiring organisation, planning, and coordination. Jason's mission originates in the demand imposed by Pelias, transforming the quest for the Golden Fleece into a political challenge whose solution depends upon mobilising diverse human resources rather than relying solely upon individual heroism (Apollonius Rhodius, 1912, Book I, p. 3). The resulting enterprise requires the formation of a coalition capable of operating beyond the familiar structures of the Greek world and adapting to the uncertainties of a frontier environment.

The legitimacy of Jason's authority becomes evident during the selection of the expedition leader. Hunter (1988) demonstrates that Apollonius deliberately distances Jason from the traditional model of the epic warrior and repeatedly portrays him in situations characterised by uncertainty, hesitation, and dependence on external assistance. Similarly, Clauss (1993) argues that Jason's authority derives less from personal superiority than from his ability to mobilise collective resources and sustain cooperation among autonomous actors. Leadership in the *Argonautica* thus emerges through

coordination rather than domination.

The juxtaposition of Heracles and Jason forms one of the central symbolic oppositions of the epic. Heracles embodies the traditional archetype of heroic force, personal accomplishment, and accumulated experience. As the most celebrated warrior among the Argonauts, he possesses unquestioned military authority and prestige. Yet his refusal of leadership demonstrates a deeper form of heroic wisdom. Heracles recognises that the success of the mission requires a different type of authority than that associated with individual strength. By supporting Jason, he acknowledges that frontier challenges cannot be solved through force alone but require cooperation, organisation, and collective adaptation. Whereas Heracles represents the archetype of the warrior-hero, Jason embodies the archetype of the strategic coordinator. Their relationship reflects not a conflict between rival leaders but a transition between two complementary models of authority, both of which remain necessary for the success of the expedition (Clauss, 1993; Hunter, 1988).

Apollonius further emphasises this organisational dimension through the composition of the crew itself. Particularly revealing is the inclusion of Orpheus, whose role extends far beyond ritual performance. Jason deliberately recruits him because the expedition requires capacities that military force alone cannot provide. Apollonius writes:

"Such then was Orpheus whom Aeson's son welcomed to share his toils" (Apollonius Rhodius, 1912, Book I, p. 5).

Earlier in the narrative, Orpheus is described as one who "by the music of his songs charmed the stubborn rocks upon the mountains and the course of rivers" (Apollonius Rhodius, 1912, Book I, p. 5).

Orpheus therefore functions as a symbolic integrator of the coalition. His presence contributes to ritual legitimacy, collective identity, communication, and social cohesion. The episode demonstrates that successful leadership depends on the ability to sustain a shared symbolic and strategic framework among actors pursuing a common objective.

The collective nature of leadership becomes even more apparent during the departure of the Argo. Apollonius notes that the heroes took their places: "as they had previously assigned for each to row in his place" (Apollonius Rhodius, 1912, Book I, p. 39).

This seemingly minor detail reveals the existence of prior planning, role allocation, and procedural coordination. The expedition functions as an organised structure governed by agreed responsibilities rather than a spontaneous gathering

of heroic individuals. Leadership therefore manifests itself through the establishment of order, distribution of functions, and maintenance of cooperation.

The voyage itself further transforms the meaning of leadership. As the Argo departs from the familiar Greek world, Apollonius observes that "the misty land of the Pelasgians ... sank out of sight" (Apollonius Rhodius, 1912, Book I, p. 43).

The image symbolises more than geographical movement. It marks a transition from the ordered centre of the oikoumene toward a frontier environment characterised by uncertainty, cultural difference, and strategic ambiguity. Within such conditions, leadership can no longer rely exclusively upon established institutions, traditions, or forms of authority. The frontier requires adaptation, negotiation, and the capacity to integrate diverse actors into a coherent framework of action.

The role of Medea further illustrates this model of strategic coordination. Her significance extends beyond the conventional helper motif and reveals the importance of external partnerships in frontier environments. Medea functions as a bridge between different political, cultural, and informational systems. In her speech before Aeetes, she presents Jason through genealogy, alliance, and political utility rather than force alone, emphasising the value of cooperation with the Argonauts (Apollonius Rhodius, 1912, Book III, p. 219). Through Medea, the coalition gains access to local knowledge, political networks, intelligence, and capabilities unavailable within its original organisational structure.

Literary scholarship has repeatedly emphasised the centrality of Medea's contribution to the success of the expedition. C. R. Beye (1969) argued that Jason's heroic status becomes inseparable from his relationship with Medea, while M. Pavlou (2009), A. Mori (2012), and E. Sanders (2021) demonstrate the extent to which her actions emerge through the interaction of agency, emotion, political circumstance, and divine intervention. From the perspective of strategic leadership, Medea illustrates a broader principle: effective action in complex environments frequently depends upon the integration of actors located beyond the original boundaries of the coalition itself.

Jason's leadership therefore cannot be reduced to military command or personal heroism. His primary function consists in integrating differentiated competencies, maintaining cooperation among autonomous actors, mobilising external resources, and preserving the strategic coherence of collective action under conditions of uncertainty. Unlike traditional heroic figures who overcome obstacles

through superior force, Jason succeeds by coordinating capabilities distributed across a wider network of participants.

The Argonautica thus presents a distinctive archetype of leadership whose significance extends beyond the mythological narrative itself. Jason embodies leadership as strategic coordination, adaptive integration, and coalition management within a frontier environment. The expedition succeeds not because one hero possesses all necessary capacities, but because diverse actors are assembled into a functioning system capable of responding collectively to uncertainty, complexity, and change. In this respect, the Argonautic cycle preserves an enduring archetypal model of leadership grounded in cooperation, interdependence, and strategic coordination rather than domination alone.

5.4. The Shadow of Strategic Leadership: Colonial, Ethical, Psychological and Theological Critiques of Jason's Expedition

The interpretation of Jason as an archetype of strategic coordination reveals important dimensions of coalition-building, collective action, and adaptive leadership within a frontier environment. At the same time, archetypal analysis requires consideration not only of constructive manifestations of leadership but also of their shadow dimensions. Such an approach becomes particularly important in the case of the Argonautic cycle, where the same events may be interpreted differently depending upon the historical, cultural, and political perspective adopted by the observer. Consequently, the expedition can be viewed simultaneously as a heroic achievement and as a contested episode involving external intervention, appropriation of resources, political violence, and competing claims to legitimacy.

Soviet eA binocular perspective is especially valuable in this context. Within the dominant Hellenic tradition, the expedition appears as a collective heroic enterprise culminating in the acquisition of the Golden Fleece and the restoration of Jason's legitimate dynastic rights. From the perspective of Colchis and the Caucasian frontier, however, the same events may be interpreted differently. Historical research demonstrates that Colchis was not a mythical wilderness but a politically organised society integrated into broader Black Sea networks (Braund, 1994; Gamkrelidze, 2012). Consequently, the arrival of the Argonauts may be interpreted as the penetration of an external coalition into a sovereign political order. Within this

perspective, the Golden Fleece represents a strategic resource linked to legitimacy, dynastic continuity, and political authority, transforming the expedition from a heroic adventure into a contest over power and control (Braund, 1994; Thalmann, 2011).

Such a perspective opens the possibility of colonial, expansionist, and criminal interpretations of the expedition. Although the categories themselves belong to modern political vocabulary, they illuminate structural aspects of the narrative. The Argonauts enter a foreign polity without invitation, seek possession of a strategic object controlled by its ruler, establish covert alliances within the ruling family, remove the object from its place of custody, and eliminate pursuers during their withdrawal. From the viewpoint of the expedition these actions represent strategic necessity; from the viewpoint of the receiving society they may be interpreted as external intervention, resource extraction, and violations of political sovereignty. The frontier thus emerges as a space in which cooperation coexists with asymmetries of power and competing interpretations of legitimacy.

The shadow dimension of leadership is particularly evident in the figure of Jason himself. Unlike Heracles, whose authority rests upon visible strength and heroic accomplishment, Jason repeatedly appears in situations characterised by uncertainty, hesitation, and dependence upon the capabilities of others. R. L. Hunter (1988) notes that Apollonius consistently portrays Jason through states of *amechania*, emphasising his vulnerability rather than heroic self-sufficiency. From an archetypal-psychological perspective, Jason embodies not only the coordinator but also the uncertain leader whose authority depends upon the successful mobilisation of resources possessed by others. His effectiveness emerges through mediation, persuasion, and coalition management, yet these same qualities reveal a compensatory dimension of leadership rooted in awareness of personal limitations (Hunter, 1988; Clauss, 1993).

This interpretation also raises questions concerning manipulation, instrumental relationships, and emotional exhaustion. Throughout the narrative, Jason frequently relies upon actors whose contributions exceed his own capacity for action. The most significant example is Medea. While the expedition succeeds through collective effort, many decisive breakthroughs depend upon her knowledge, initiative, and intervention. From this perspective, leadership may appear less as autonomous agency and more as the ability to mobilise external resources. The psychological shadow of such leadership lies in the temptation to transform

relationships into instruments and to evaluate individuals primarily according to their strategic utility. The result is a persistent tension between cooperation and instrumentalisation, trust and exploitation, loyalty and expediency.

These tensions become most visible in the episode involving Apsyrtus. From the perspective of the Argonauts, his death removes the immediate threat to the expedition and enables its continuation. From a Colchian perspective, however, the event constitutes the killing of a royal heir and a rupture in dynastic continuity. Nadareishvili (2010–2011) demonstrates that ancient traditions preserve multiple versions of Apsyrtus' death and different geographical memories associated with it, underscoring the contested character of the episode. Strategic success and moral legitimacy therefore cease to coincide. The narrative itself acknowledges this tension through the subsequent need for purification, indicating that victory has been achieved at an ethical cost.

The figure of Medea occupies a similarly ambiguous position. Traditional interpretations often portray her as the indispensable helper whose actions enable the success of the expedition. Yet closer examination reveals a far more complex configuration of agency. Medea is simultaneously a member of the Colchian ruling house, a bearer of specialised knowledge, an autonomous political actor, and a participant influenced by divine intervention. C. R. Beye (1969) argued that Jason's heroic status becomes inseparable from his relationship with Medea, while A. Mori (2012), M. Pavlou (2009) and E. Sanders (2021) have demonstrated the extent to which her decisions emerge through the interaction of personal agency, emotional conflict, social obligations, and external pressures. She therefore cannot be reduced either to a mediator or to a passive victim. Instead, Medea occupies a liminal position between ally and instrument, participant and object of manipulation, strategic actor and target of forces beyond her control.

The theological dimension introduces an additional layer of complexity. Although Jason appears to lead the expedition, decisive developments repeatedly depend upon divine intervention. Hera and Athena create the framework within which the expedition becomes possible; Aphrodite and Eros initiate the emotional transformation that binds Medea to Jason; divine actors repeatedly alter the conditions under which human decisions are made. From this perspective, Jason is not the highest strategic actor within the narrative. The gods function as hidden architects of

events whose interventions shape opportunities, motivations, and outcomes (Hunter, 1993). Human leadership therefore operates within a broader configuration of forces that simultaneously enable and constrain individual agency.

Taken together, these perspectives reveal the shadow side of strategic leadership preserved within the Argonautic cycle. The expedition simultaneously represents cooperation and intrusion, coalition-building and exploitation, adaptation and transgression, strategic success and ethical ambiguity. Its significance lies not in the affirmation of a single heroic narrative but in the preservation of competing memories and alternative interpretations of the same events. For the Hellenic tradition, the expedition may symbolise achievement, exploration, and the restoration of legitimacy. For Colchis and the Caucasian frontier, it may equally represent loss, intervention, dynastic rupture, and the appropriation of a valued symbolic resource. The enduring power of the myth derives precisely from its ability to preserve these competing perspectives within a single narrative structure, thereby revealing both the constructive and the shadow dimensions of leadership in frontier environments.

6. Discussion

The analysis demonstrates that the Argonautic cycle may be interpreted as a symbolic model of strategic coordination operating within a frontier environment. While previous scholarship has primarily examined the myth through literary, historical, archetypal, or gender-oriented perspectives, the present study integrates these approaches with frontier studies, coalition theory, collaborative governance, and strategic leadership. This synthesis reinterprets the expedition as a multi-actor system whose coherence and effectiveness depend upon the coordination of differentiated capabilities under conditions of uncertainty.

The study further suggests that Jason represents a distinctive archetype of leadership whose significance lies in strategic integration rather than heroic domination. Unlike traditional warrior heroes, he succeeds by connecting actors, coordinating resources, and maintaining cooperation among individuals possessing different competencies and interests. This interpretation contributes to contemporary discussions of distributed and complexity-oriented leadership, suggesting that ancient mythological narratives can preserve symbolic models of coordination that remain analytically useful for understanding complex organisational systems (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

At the same time, the binocular perspective adopted in this study demonstrates that strategic coordination possesses an inherently ambivalent character. The same organisational mechanisms that enable cooperation may also generate asymmetrical power relations, dependency upon external actors, contested forms of legitimacy, and unequal recognition of contributions. Such tensions become visible when the expedition is examined simultaneously from Hellenic and Colchian perspectives.

From the Hellenic viewpoint, the expedition appears as a successful act of collective achievement culminating in the acquisition of the Golden Fleece and the restoration of Jason's dynastic claims. From the perspective of Colchis and the Caucasus, however, the same events may be interpreted as the penetration of an external coalition into an autonomous political space, the appropriation of a symbolic resource, and the disruption of an existing dynastic order. This duality demonstrates that frontier narratives often generate competing historical memories and alternative interpretations of legitimacy (Braund, 1994; Gamkrelidze, 2012).

The figure of Medea illustrates this ambivalence particularly clearly. She simultaneously functions as an indispensable ally, a member of the Colchian ruling house, a participant shaped by divine intervention, and a figure whose contributions remain inseparable from questions of agency, loyalty, and power. Her role reveals that successful coalitions frequently depend upon actors located beyond their original organisational boundaries and that the incorporation of such actors may produce enduring ethical and political tensions (Mori, 2012; Pavlou, 2009; Sanders, 2021).

The episode of Apsyrtus further demonstrates that strategic success and ethical legitimacy do not necessarily coincide. Although the survival of the expedition is narrated as depending on his elimination, the act simultaneously generates guilt, moral contamination, and contested memory. The diversity of ancient traditions concerning Apsyrtus' death and its geographical setting reinforces the interpretation of the episode as a site of competing memories and moral meanings (Nadareishvili, 2010–2011).

The theological dimension reinforces this interpretation by revealing that leadership operates within structures extending beyond individual agency. The interventions of Hera, Athena, Aphrodite, and Eros shape the motivations and opportunities of human actors throughout the narrative. Consequently, Jason appears not as an

autonomous architect of success but as a participant in a broader configuration of social, political, psychological, and divine forces (Hunter, 1993). This perspective challenges purely individualistic understandings of leadership and highlights the importance of larger systems that enable, constrain, and direct collective action.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the enduring significance of the Argonautic cycle lies in its capacity to preserve both constructive and shadow dimensions of strategic leadership. The myth simultaneously depicts cooperation and conflict, coalition-building and exclusion, adaptation and disruption, legitimacy and transgression. Its value for contemporary scholarship derives precisely from this complexity. Rather than offering a simple model of heroic success, the Argonautic narrative provides a sophisticated reflection on the possibilities, limitations, and consequences of collective action within frontier environments characterised by uncertainty, diversity, and competing claims to legitimacy.

7. Conclusions

This study has examined the Argonautic cycle as an archetypal model of strategic coordination operating within the frontier environment of Colchis and the Caucasus. The integration of archetypal analysis, frontier studies, coalition theory, collaborative governance, and strategic leadership allows the expedition to be understood as a symbolic representation of collective action within a complex multi-actor system.

The analysis has shown that Colchis and the Caucasus function as an archetypal frontier where uncertainty, intercultural interaction, and political complexity create conditions that require cooperation among actors possessing differentiated capabilities and resources. Within this environment, the expedition emerges as a coalition whose effectiveness depends upon the integration of navigation, intelligence, forecasting, diplomacy, symbolic authority, military force, local knowledge, and adaptive decision-making. The Argonautic cycle preserves a symbolic model of coalition organisation grounded in distributed capabilities, strategic coordination, and collective action.

The study has further demonstrated that Jason represents a distinctive archetype of strategic leadership. Unlike traditional heroic figures whose authority derives primarily from physical superiority or military prowess, his effectiveness rests upon

coordination, mediation, alliance-building, and the integration of complementary competencies. His role is not to replace the capabilities of others but to organise them into a coherent system capable of achieving a shared objective. In this respect, the myth preserves an early symbolic representation of leadership as strategic integration rather than domination.

The binocular perspective adopted in this study has also revealed the ambivalent nature of the archetype. From the Hellenic perspective, the expedition appears as a successful act of collective achievement and frontier adaptation. From the perspective of Colchis and the Caucasus, the same events may be interpreted as external intervention, appropriation of a symbolic resource, dynastic disruption, and contested memory. The figure of Medea, the episode of Apsyrtus, and the role of divine agency demonstrate that strategic success is accompanied by ethical costs, asymmetrical power relations, and competing interpretations of legitimacy. The Argonautic cycle preserves both constructive and shadow dimensions of strategic leadership within a single symbolic structure.

The theoretical contribution of the study lies in integrating archetypal studies, frontier studies,

coalition theory, collaborative governance, and leadership studies within a unified analytical framework. Methodologically, the research introduces a binocular approach that combines internal and external perspectives on mythological narratives and enables the reconstruction of both constructive and shadow manifestations of archetypal structures. Substantively, the study reinterprets the Argonautic expedition as a multi-actor system whose dynamics illuminate broader questions of cooperation, leadership, frontier interaction, and collective action.

The findings suggest several directions for further research. Comparative analyses of other mythological expeditions, frontier narratives, and coalition-based heroic traditions may contribute to a broader understanding of archetypal models of leadership and collective action across cultures. Future studies may also explore how frontier environments shape the emergence of cooperative structures, contested memories, and competing narratives of legitimacy in both mythological and historical contexts. Such research would further clarify the continuing relevance of mythological narratives for the study of leadership, governance, conflict, and social organisation.

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