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WHICH MAGIC? WHICH EROS? APOLLONIUS'  
*ARGONAUTICA* AND THE DIFFERENT NARRATIVE  
ROLES OF MEDEA AS A SORCERESS IN LOVE\*

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Just before the Argonauts enter the Clashing Rocks, Phineus prophesies to them (as well as to the readers of Apollonius' *Argonautica*) that they must look to the deceitful help of the goddess Cypris in order to carry out their task (2.424 f.): φράζεσθε θεᾶς δολόεσσαν ἀρωγῆν/Κύπριδος. ἐν γὰρ τῇ κλυτὰ πείρατα κεῖται ἀέθλον. It is an unavoidable anchor of the Argonautic myth that the help Medea provided to Jason because she fell in love with him was the condition of his success in the capture of the Golden Fleece.

Yet, there were subtle variations within the myth, as Pindar's Medea, for instance, and Apollonius' Medea do not fall in love with Jason for the same reason. In *Pylh.* 4.213–222, Aphrodite intervenes and teaches Jason how to use magic in order to make Medea fall in love with him (or more precisely with “Greece”, with Jason just as the representative of the Greek expedition).<sup>1</sup> This intervention is the preliminary basis for the magical practices through which Medea will help Jason to overcome his trials and is the first instance of the love incantations that would be made famous by Theocritus *Id.* 2:

πότνια δ' ὄξυτάων βελέων  
ποικίλαν ἰύγγα τετράκναμον Οὐλυμπόθεν  
ἐν ἀλύτῳ ζεύξαισα ψήφῳ  
μαινάδ' ὄρνιν Κυπρογένεια φέρειν  
πρῶτον ἀνθρώποισι λιτάς τ' ἐπαιδιάς  
ἐκδιδάσκησεν σοφὸν Αἰσονίδα·  
ὄφρα Μηδείας τοκέων ἀφέλοιτ' αἰ-  
δῶ, ποθεῖνὰ δ' Ἑλλάς αὐτάν

□ ΚΥΚ

\* This paper profited from some suggestions from Radcliffe G. Edmonds III, Richard Hunter, and Theodore Papanghelis. Sophia Bender and Theodore Papanghelis also helped to improve the quality of the English form.

<sup>1</sup> Pindar does not directly ascribe her love to physical attraction for Jason, but her πόθος is for Ἑλλάς, so that “sexual desire is bent to the divine purpose of heroic achievement; female longing is subordinated to a collective embodiment of Hellenic glory” (Segal [1986] 53).



ἐν φρασί καιομέναν δονέοι μάλιστα Πειθοῦς,  
καὶ τάχα πείρατ' ἀέθλων δείκνυεν πατρῶων  
σὺν δ' ἑλαίῳ φαρμακώσασθ'  
ἀντίτομα στερεῶν ὀδυνῶν  
δῶκε χρίεσθαι.

The Cyprus-born queen of sharpest arrows bound the dappled *ἴνυξ* to the four spokes of the inescapable wheel and brought from Olympus that bird of madness for the first time to men, and she taught the son of Aison to be skillful in prayers and charms, so that he might take away Medea's respect for her parents, and so that desire for Hellas might set her mind afire and drive her with the whip of Persuasion. And right away she showed him the ways to accomplish her father's trials, and she concocted with oil antidotes for terrible pains and gave them to him for anointing.

(trans. W.H. Race)

Though framed in markedly poetic terms, such as the *aition* of the *ἴνυξ* love charm, Aphrodite's action displays a strong realistic taste and reflects the actual use of *agoge* spells in classical Greece, as has been convincingly demonstrated by Faraone.<sup>2</sup>

We have no sure evidence for other versions of the myth in which Medea's love for Jason was brought about through magic,<sup>3</sup> but Euripides' Jason also disagrees with Medea's assertion that her help was freely given, by claiming that Aphrodite is the "only one, among gods and men" who has helped him (*Med.* 527–528 Κύπριν νομιζῶ τῆς ἑμῆς ναυκληρίας / σώτειραν εἶναι θεῶν τε κἀνθρώπων μόνην). Even to ancient readers Jason's statement appeared out of sync with the standard version of the Argonautic myth, attested from Apollonius onwards, that Athena collaborated in the construction of the ship and Hera in the crossing of the Clashing Rocks.<sup>4</sup> While Euripides' passage does not explicitly claim that Aphrodite's help was forcing Medea to fall in love with Jason, nor that her intervention with Medea consisted of the same magical incantation described by Pindar, nevertheless, the exclusive role of Aphrodite resonates with Pindar's version. One might then suspect

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Faraone (1999) 57–69.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Johnston (1995) 204 for the hypothesis that Pindar may have inherited this detail from the herb *μῶλον* which Hermes gave Odysseus in order to seduce Circe in the *Odyssey*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *sch. ad loc.* μόνην φησὶ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην σεσωκέναι αὐτὸν καὶ οὐδένα ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ θεῶν. τοῦτο δὲ ψεῦδος φαίνεται γὰρ τὴν Ἥραν προστάτην ἐσχηκώς ἐξ ἀρχῆς διόλου καὶ ὑπὸ ταύτης παρορηθεῖς εἰς τὸν ἄθλον ... ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἡ Ἀθηνᾶ κινδυνεύουσαν τὴν ναῦν προσρηγῆναι ταῖς πέτραις ἀνεσώσατο. Mastronarde (2002) 260 comments on Jason's statement concerning the exclusive help from Aphrodite that it "is an extreme claim ... typical of eristic rhetoric".

that Euripides presupposed Pindar's version of Medea's love having a magical causation.

Thus the Argonautic tradition offered Apollonius a more or less consolidated version in which magic intervened in Medea's personal story even before she actively used it in order to help Jason in the trials prescribed by Aietes, as she would have also been affected passively by a magic incantation organized by Aphrodite. Indeed the expression of Apollonius' Phineus in 2.424f. (quoted above: θεᾶς δολόεσσαν ἄρωγῆν Κύπριδος) anticipates the erotic component in the success of the Argonautic enterprise in a way which may have been purposefully ambiguous in presenting this "amatory but not necessarily a magical context";<sup>5</sup> so as to also allow the reader the false expectation that Apollonius will follow Pindar in ascribing Medea's love to the magical incantation of Cyprus. The expectation is made especially strong in Apollonius' next phrase—2.425 ἐν γὰρ τῇ (scil. Cyprus) κλυτὰ πείρατα κεῖται ἀέθλων— which seems to allude to Pindar's l. 220 τάχα πείρατ' ἀέθλων δείκνυεν πατρῶων (with Medea as the subject, under the effect of Cyprus' incantation).

Nonetheless, Apollonius does not follow Pindar's precedent, despite his possible allusions to it. The *Argonautica's* Medea falls in love both more conventionally and more painfully. In this case, Hera and Athena make a decision to summon Eros to shoot her in the famous and exquisite scene of Olympian daily life at the beginning of Book 3. The topical image of Eros' shooting was almost only a catachrestic metaphor to designate the psychological process of falling in love, and as such it was commonplace in both erotic and non-erotic Greek poetry. It involved a limited conditioning of the individual by one's own feelings, certainly not the automatic conditioning of Medea's mind and decisions which would have been expected as an effect of binding magic. Thus the choice of yielding to passion as well as not yielding was a debatable one for Apollonius' Medea—she certainly did not yield to passion τάχα, as Pindar's Medea by contrast does under the effect of Aphrodite's ἔργε.

On its own, Apollonius' choice not to make Aphrodite's magic love charm the origin of Medea's love does not reveal much about Apollonius' literary (or ethical) appraisal of the motif of magic. In this specific case, perhaps, Apollonius' exploration of a causation different from that

<sup>5</sup> Clare (2002) 243.

of Pindar's might only have served to allow a freer investigation of the psychological processes which Medea undergoes through several different and contrasting steps marked by her famous monologues in the *Argonautica*, before finally falling in love: Apollonius is thus able to display the inconsistency of an immature and helpless Medea who is at the same time the skilled and fearless priestess of Hecate.<sup>6</sup> However, as we will see, magic is not only excluded from the beginning of the story of the Argonauts, but also from the end, namely on their long trip back after the fulfilment of the love between Medea and Jason and the capture of the fleece. There is thus room for suspecting that Apollonius' poetics may have reacted in a thoughtfully complex way to this motif, according to the different narrative stages of the story.

Omniscient gods (and well-read readers) know from the beginning what Phineus can only utter in an indistinct oracular way, and for that reason at the beginning of Book 3 Hera and Athena decide to ask Cypris to persuade Eros to shoot at the κόυρη πολυφάρμακος who can help Jason in his enterprise thanks to her ἐννεοσία (3.25–29):

Δεῦρ' ἴομεν μετὰ Κύπριν ἐπιπλόμεναι δέ μιν ἄμφω  
 παιδί ἐφ' εἰπεῖν ὀτρύνομεν, αἶ κε πείθεται  
 κόυρην Αἰήτῳ πολυφάρμακον οἷσι βέλεσσι  
 θέλξει ὀυστεύσας ἐπ' Ἰήσονι τὸν δ' ἂν δῶ  
 κείνης ἐννεοίῃσιν ἐς Ἑλλάδα κῶας ἀνάξειν.

Let us go to find Cypris! Let us confront her and urge her to speak to her son, in the hope that he can be persuaded to fire his arrows at the daughter of Aietes, the mistress of drugs, and so bewitch her with love for Jason. With her assistance I think that he will bring the fleece to Hellas.<sup>7</sup>

The rare epithet πολυφάρμακος connects the first appearance of the "daughter of Aietes", as yet unnamed, with the precedent of Circe πολυφάρμακος (*Od.* 10.276), and of Pindar's Medea παμφάρμακος (*Pyth.* 4.233). Furthermore, it will be re-used for Medea in her last appearance in the *Argonautica* (4.1677) when she kills the giant Talos. This repetition is a clear case of ring composition that stresses the identity of the character precisely as a sorceress, but also highlights two very different aspects of her character.<sup>8</sup> This first mention of Medea introduces her

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Collard (1975) 138–139.

<sup>7</sup> All translations from Apollonius are from Hunter (1993b), and the Greek texts from Vian (1974a, 1980, 1981), with only a modification in the case of 4.59, for which I have printed my own text.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Belloni (1981) and Holmberg (1998) 146f.

as the 'passive helper' who, as soon as her mind is dominated by Eros, must bestow her magic skills upon the Argonauts, playing the role willed for her by the Olympian goddesses. On the contrary her last appearance features (as we will see) her own destructive initiative in a sinister, unsolicited display of magic power—she is in that case a sorceress not only more powerful but also more proactive than ever. At that point she deserves the author's distressed appeal to the Olympian Zeus against her sinister grip over mortal minds.

In 3.477–479, after a terrified Jason has heard the insurmountable trials Aietes has set up for him, Argos hints at the possibility of Medea's help:

κούρην δὴ τινα πρόσθεν ἐπέκλυες αὐτὸς ἐμεῖο  
 φαρμάσσειν Ἑκάτης Περσηίδος ἐννεοίῃσιν.  
 τὴν εἴ κεν πεπίθοιμεν, οἴομαι, οὐκέτι τάρβος  
 ἔσσειτ' ἀεθλεύοντα δαμήμεναι.

There is a young girl—you have already heard me tell you how Hecate, daughter of Perses, inspires her powers with magic drugs; if we can win her over, I do believe that we need no longer worry about defeat in the contest.

This is the first point where any protagonist of the story (apart from the goddesses Athena, Hera, and Cypris) presupposes that Medea may be very useful for the capture of the fleece because of her skills as a magician. Yet, as he is not endowed with divine superior knowledge, Argos does not know or suspect that she may fall in love with Jason, and still believes that in order to πείθειν her they should rely on their mother Chalcioppe, who is also Medea's older sister (3.479–480). Curiously enough, Argo mentions that he has already recommended Medea to Jason as a possible aid (3.477 ἐπέκλυες αὐτὸς ἐμεῖο). However, in our text of the *Argonautica*, Argo has not spoken about Medea as yet. In fact, only Hera has defined her role as a magician, in 3.27 quoted above. Whatever literary interpretation we wish to give regarding the purpose of this device,<sup>9</sup> it increases the impression of déjà vu about Medea's potentialities. A few lines later, when Argo resumes his proposal and itemizes it for the sake of the Argonauts, the role of Medea is better focused (3.528–533):

<sup>9</sup> For three different interpretations, see Fusillo (1985) 25–27; Paduano–Fusillo (1986) 441; Hunter (1989a) 150. That this 'false' reference is a mistake by Apollonius (e.g. that Hera's consideration is wrongly ascribed to Argos), is of course the last exegesis to be attempted for a learned and thoughtful author like Apollonius.



κούρη τις μεγάροισιν ἐντρέφετ' Αἰήταο,  
τὴν Ἐκάτη περιάλλα θεὰ δάε τεχνήσασθαι  
φάρμαχ' ὅσ' ἤπειρός τε φύει καὶ νήχυτον ὕδωρ  
τοῖσι καὶ ἀκαμάτοιο πυρός μελίσσειτ' ἀυτηνὴν  
καὶ ποταμοὺς ἴσθησιν ἄφαρ κελαιδινὰ θέοντας,  
ἄστρα τε καὶ μῆνης ἱερὰς ἐπέδησε κελεύθους.

There is a young girl who lives in Aietes' palace; the goddess Hecate has taught her extraordinary skills in handling all the drugs which the dry land and the boundless waters produce. With these she charms the blast of unwearying fire, stops still the flow of crashing rivers, and puts bonds on the stars and the holy paths of the moon.

Medea is again presented as a magician, but the details of her professional skills are only in part topical and generic; at least one point is most pointedly oriented towards the relevant concern of the Argonautic enterprise. Interestingly, the second and the third of the magician's powers mentioned by Argos feature in at least some (the second) or in almost all (the third) of the conventional lists of the skills of magicians found in literary texts from Hippocrates onwards. The ability to deflect the stars and the Moon from their course in the sky is already attested in Hippocrates' *De morbo sacro* 4 and later consistently included in a long series of lists of the magicians' powers in Latin authors from Virgil to Apuleius.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the magicians' ability to stop or turn back river currents is attested in most of the same Latin authors.<sup>11</sup> Yet, the first of the magician's skills Argos mentions—smoothing the blaze of the fire—is not topical at all. And I cannot find a reason for its inclusion except as an anticipation of the first and vital role Medea's powers will have within the narrative of the *Argonautica*. Namely, her drugs will protect Jason from the blaze of the fire-breathing bulls (3.1303–1305):

... ὡς ἄρα τῷ γε θοῖν φλόγα φυσιάωντες  
ἐκ στομάτων ὀμάδευν, τὸν δ' ἄμφεπε δῆμιον αἴθος  
βάλλον ἅ τε στεροπῆ· κούρης δὲ ἔ φάρμαχ' ἔρυτο.<sup>12</sup>

... so was the noise as fiery flame flashed forth from the bull's mouths, and burning heat enveloped Jason, striking him like the lightning bolt; but the maiden's drugs protected him.

<sup>10</sup> See Verg. *Aen.* 4.289; Prop. 1.1.23f.; Tibull. 1.2.43, 1.8.21; Ovid. *Am.* 2.1.23f., *Her.* 6.85f., *Rem.* 258f., *Met.* 207–209; Lucan 6.462–465; Sil. 8.500; Apul. *Met.* 1.3, 1.8, 3.15; Ps.-Quint. *Decl.* 10.15.

<sup>11</sup> Verg. *loc.cit.*; Tibull. 1.2.46; Prop. 1.1.23f.; Ovid. *Am.* 1.8.5f., 2.1.26, *Her.* 6.88, *Rem.* 257, *Met.* 7.153f. and 199f., *Pont.* 45f.; Lucan 6.473f.; Sen. *HO* 573, *Ph.* 85f.; Sil. 8.500f.; Apul. *Met.* 1.3 and 1.8; Ps.-Quint. *Decl. loc.cit.*

<sup>12</sup> The same phase of Jason's trials had been already presented as the high point (the

As the description of Medea's magic powers would thus become oriented towards the narrative itself, it is tempting to see in this shaping of Argo's list a sort of meta-literary statement that Medea's role as a magician is fully integrated in the story of the Argonauts—a controllable and controlled 'function' of that story.

In any case, despite the abundance of lists of the magician's skills especially in the classical Latin literature of the 1st cent. B.C. and 1st cent. A.D., this specific power is featured nowhere else, and thus it appears here as a specific "reading" of magic in the light of and for the sake of the narrative role which magic will have in Apollonius' *Argonautica*. The only parallel I could find for this specific detail comes from an Ovidian passage also concerning Medea, a passage which is probably indebted to Apollonius, though Ovid vastly expands it by keeping it consistent with his presentation of Medea as a witch who can bend all nature to her will.<sup>13</sup> But Ovid also tellingly shifts the setting of our detail. In *Met.* 7.179–219 Jason asks Medea to produce a potion that will take some years from his life and give them to his father so that he can be rejuvenated; Medea then approaches the Night and the Moon and asks them to provide her with the appropriate philtre. Her prayer is articulated in two sections, in which she narrates the successes she has achieved as a magician with the help of the Night and the Moon. In her list, Medea combines the two powers of changing river currents and dislocating the stars from their normal course in the sky as her routine activities as a sorceress. In a different way, she presents the fact that the Moon and the other gods of the night "dulled the bulls' flames" for her under a different agenda, as a specific part of the Argonautic story. Indeed, immediately after this detail, she proceeds to evoke a summary of Jason's trials, namely how the Moon "pressed the necks that had never felt a burden under the curved plough" for her, "gave the serpent-born cruel wars against themselves", and "stupefied the rough guardian with sleep", with the result that "you sent the gold (= the Golden Fleece) to the cities of Greece" (ll. 210–213). Ovid's differentiation thus highlights the peculiarity of Argo's list of the magician's powers.

Just after introducing Medea's general role as a helper of the Argonauts, and informing the reader in advance about one of her future concrete achievements as a sorceress within the Argonautic story, Apol-

only point) of the trials in the brief narrative of Pindar: cf. *Pyth.* 4.233 πῦρ δὲ νῦν οὐκ ἔδλει παμφαριμάκου ξείνας ἐφειμισί.

<sup>13</sup> See Kenney, this volume, p. 383, and Newlands (1997) 187–190.

Ionius makes eventually clear that Medea will have to fall in love. Argos' speech to the Argonauts about Medea's potential aid, still supposed to be dependent on Chalcioppe's collaboration in influencing the sister (3.534–539), is immediately followed by the omen of the dove which takes refuge from a hawk in Jason's breast. Mopsus interprets this omen in the light of Phineus' prediction of Cypris' help, gets rid of the idea of Chalcioppe's mediation, and makes clear that Medea will make use of her magic in order to be helpful to Jason in his trials only after having been conditioned herself by Cypris (3.553f. *ἀλλά, φίλοι, Κυθέρειαν ἐπυλείοντες ἀμύνειν, / ἤδη νῦν Ἄργοιο παραφασίησι πίθεσθε*).

This presentation of Medea reflects the crucial role that magic plays in the erotic solution for the Argonautic enterprise, as Apollonius chooses to present it. Even in Medea's monologues, dominated by the erotic issue, her being a skillful magician is strongly intertwined with her erotic passion: she actively practices the good and sympathetic *θέλιξις* of magic for Jason because she herself is the passive victim of erotic *θέλιξις*<sup>14</sup>—it is this dimension of a helpless young victim of love who is consequently a coercively unswerving helper of the Argonautic enterprise that contributes to making readers sympathetic to her for the whole of Book 3.<sup>15</sup> For instance, not only the delivery of the philtre necessary for making Jason invulnerable predictably becomes the concrete subject of her active reflections about whether or not to yield to passion and run away with him (cf. 3.737–739, 765f., 780, 1014), but, in addition, the casket of poisonous lethal drugs which belongs to her as a magician becomes the protagonist of Medea's last and most intense monologue concerning her renunciative thoughts of suicide (3.807–810; also 4.20–23).

Furthermore, the magical rites surrounding the capture of the Golden Fleece are described in plenty of detail. This applies for example to the long excursus on the preparation of the *prometheion*, the potion presented by Medea to Jason in order to make him invulnerable (3.851–866), culminating in an evocation of the epiphany of Hecate/Brimo, in which Jason is “temporarily enlisted as an acolyte of Hecate”<sup>16</sup> (3.858–863):

<sup>14</sup> Clare (2002) ch. 6 develops an interesting comparison between the ‘good’ magic of Medea in the third book and Orpheus’ Olympian magic *θέλιξις*, sympathetically presented by Apollonius in 1.23–34, and points to the radical difference between this magic of Medea and Orpheus and the destructive, un-Olympian magic practised by Medea against Talos.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Natzel (1992) 45–49.

<sup>16</sup> Clare (2002) 249, who continues (*ibid.*): “even more telling as an indication of how

τῆς οἴην τ' ἐν ὄρεσσι κελαινὴν ἰκμάδα φηγοῦ  
Κασπίη ἐν κόχλῳ ἀμῆσατο φαρμάσσεσθαι,  
ἐπτά μὲν ἀενάοισι λοεσσαμένη ὑδάτεσσιν,  
ἐπτάκι δὲ Βρῖμῷ κουροτρόφον ἀγκαλέσασα,  
Βρῖμῷ νυκτιπόλον, χθονίην, ἐνέροισιν ἄνασσαν,  
λυγαίη ἐνὶ νυκτὶ σὺν ὄρφναίοις φαρέεσσι.

Like the dark moisture from an oak on the mountains, she had gathered its sap in a Caspian shell to work her magic, after having bathed seven times in ever-flowing water, and seven times having summoned up Brimo, nurse of children, Brimo the night-roamer, the infernal, the queen of the dead, in the thick gloom of night dressed in black robes.

This also applies to Medea's instruction about the rites that Jason has to accomplish on the land upon which his fight with the bulls will take place (3.1029–1041)—rites that Jason punctually accomplishes the night preceding the fight (3.1207–1220). In this case, the preparation consists of the careful description of a sacrifice to Hecate and the goddess' epiphany, for which Apollonius indulges himself quite a lot in its frightening aspects (3.1212–1220):

καὶ ῥ' ὁ μὲν ἀγκαλέσας πάλιν ἔστιχεν ἡ δ' αἰούσα  
κευθμῶν ἐξ ὑπάτων δεινὴ θεὸς ἀντεβόλησεν  
ἱοῖς Αἰσονίδαο. περίξ δέ μιν ἔστεφάνωντο  
σμερδαλέοι δρυῖνοισι μετὰ πτόρθοισι δράκοντες  
στράπτε δ' ἀπειρέσιον δαΐδων σέλας· ἀμφὶ δὲ τὴν γε  
ὄξειη ὕλαυῃ χθόνιοι κύνες ἐφθέγγοντο.  
πέισσα δ' ἔτρεψε πάντα κατὰ στίβον· αἱ δ' ὀλόλυξαν  
Νύμφαι ἐλειονόμοι ποταμηίδες, αἱ περὶ κείνην  
Φάσιδος ελαμενὴν Ἀμαραντίου εἰλίσσοντο.

Having summoned her, he retreated. Hearing the call, the dread goddess came from the furthest depths to accept the sacrifices of the son of Aison. Around her head was a garland of terrible snakes entwined with oak-branches, and her torches flashed out a blinding brightness; all around her was the piercing bark of hellish dogs. All the fields trembled at her approach; the marsh-dwelling nymphs of the river who dance around the meadow of the Amaranthian Phasis screamed aloud.

Again, at the beginning of Book 4 (ll. 143–161), Apollonius describes point by point Medea's intervention to put the dragon who watches the Golden Fleece to sleep by means of a drug she spreads over his eyes.

the pendulum has begun to swing towards worship of the chthonic powers is the precise manner in which the assistance of the goddess is invoked” (*ἐπαγωγὸς ἀέθλων* of 3.1211 reminds us of both Orpheus [1.32] and Cypris [2.423f., quoted above]).



Magic had not been involved in this last obstacle in the actual capture of the fleece in every version of the story preceding Apollonius: the *Argonautica* is consistent with Antimachus (fr. 63 Wyss = 73 Matthews), but at least Pherecydes (*FGH Hist* 3F31) and Herodorus (*FGH Hist* 31F52) had had Jason personally kill the dragon. Therefore Apollonius appears to structure his plot so that all the steps of the capture of the Golden Fleece are under the sign of Medea's magic. Moreover, precisely in exchange for this final act of assistance with the fleece, Medea asks Jason for a formal promise of marriage (4.87-91), and gets from him the solemn pledge (4.97): *κουριδίην σε δόμοισιν ἐπιστήσεσθαι ἄκοιτιν*. Although at this point of the Argonautic story Jason's promise seems to be the final seal on the love story between these two characters, in reality within Medea's story it also anticipates the future of destructive skills that Medea the sorceress will practice in Jason's δόμοι, as soon as she is repudiated as *κουριδίη ἄκοιτις*. No doubt that in this episode, as well as in the episode of Medea and Mene which just precedes it (see below p. 304), a glimpse surfaces at the future changeover from Medea the girl in love and helper of Jason to the lethal Medea infuriated by jealousy.

Immediately after the capture of the fleece, there is a substantial shift in Apollonius' presentation of Medea's magical skills. In striking contrast with the vast narrative role and legitimacy ascribed to magic up to the Argonauts' departure from Colchis, Apollonius' preterition with regard to the sacrifice to Hecate during their stop at Paphlagonia in the return trip sounds new (4.246-252):

ἢ γὰρ σφ' ἔξαποβάντας ἀρέσσασθαι θυέεσσι  
 ἠνώγει Ἐκάτην. καὶ δὴ τὰ μὲν ὅσσα θυηλὴν  
 κοῦρη πορσανέουσα τιτύσκετο—μήτε τις ἴστω  
 εἴη μήτ' ἐμὲ θυμὸς ἐποτρύνειεν αἰεδαίειν—  
 ἄζομαι αὐδῆσαι· τό γε μὴν ἔδος ἔξει κείνου,  
 ὃ ἅα θεῶν ἦρωες ἐπὶ ῥηγιῶσιν ἔδεμαν,  
 ἀνδράσιν ὀνηγόνοισι μένει καὶ τῆμος ἰδέσθαι.

For Medea had told them to disembark and offer propitiatory sacrifices to Hecate. All that was done as the maiden prepared the sacrifice—let no one know, may my heart not urge me to sing of it!—I forebear from telling. From that day, however, the shrine which the heroes built to the goddess on the shore stands still visible to later generations.

The verb with which the preterition is motivated (ἄζομαι) may lead us to suppose that it is a pious act of religious silence (εὐφημία) by

the author, as he wants to keep hidden the contents of the mysteries of Hecate, just as he had done for the Samothracian mysteries in 1.919-921.<sup>17</sup> Indeed Apollonius' silence has been generally interpreted in this way.<sup>18</sup> However, in the case of the sacrifice in Paphlagonia, this interpretation does not explain why on the other hand the sacrifice to Hecate that Jason had to accomplish to set the stage for his trial was described by Apollonius in such detail, as we have seen. Another explanation for Apollonius' silence might be that this magic rite is essentially irrelevant to the course of the action: in this context, it is nothing more than a thanksgiving for Hecate, and once the capture of the fleece is accomplished, it becomes a post eventum episode, not crucial to the fulfilment of the mission or the dynamics of the Argonautic enterprise.<sup>19</sup> Apollonius' mention of this episode would be thus simply a homage paid to the mythical tradition of the *aition* of the ἱερὸν (τέμενος?) of Demeter which was there, and as we know had already been mentioned by the historian Nymphis (*FGH Hist* 432F8).

A more complex stance, however, may be involved in this silence, as a similar lack of details and an indignant reaction by Apollonius also characterize the last two of Medea's interventions as a magician. When she spreads the drugs that will deceive Apsyrtos in the air so that he falls into the trap planned by her and Jason, this exploit of skillful sorcery is presented in a way which is quite different from the other cases of help provided by Medea to the Argonauts. It is preceded and motivated by the description of her "boiling with βαρὺς χόλος" (4.391), her threats to burn the ship Argo and immolate herself in the fires, as a Dido *ante litteram*, and her vehement reproach of Jason's ingratitude, when she discovers the Argonauts' plan to run away from Apsyrtos and leave her behind in a temple of Artemis in Colchis (4.331-420). In fact, Medea herself conceived of the whole μέγας δόλος (4.421; also 4.456) to ambush Apsyrtos completely in her own mind, unsolicited by the Argonauts. Jason had revealed to her, or pretended to,<sup>20</sup> that he was going to create a δόλος to get rid of him (4.404-405), but Medea then proposes and enforces her own ready-made δόλος, reminiscent of her future trickery against Creon and his daughter. Also her new insurmountable χόλος,

<sup>17</sup> On the literary mystic silence (seen especially through Herodotus and 5th cent. drama), cf. Mora (1987) 31 f.

<sup>18</sup> See Livrea (1973) 84; Vian (1981) 156; Paduano-Fusillo (1986) 565.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Valverde (1989) 232 f.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Hunter (1993a) 15.

which is provoked by Jason's ingratitude and can be easily connected to the speech by the Euripidean Medea to Jason in *Med.* 465–519, and besides her new intense drive for self-preservation, seen first in her decision to run away from Colchis,<sup>21</sup> are at the same time ominous anticipations of the future of her relationship with Jason and open allusions to Medea's past literary fortune as a tragic character.<sup>22</sup>

In the light of these manifest (though momentary) hints at Medea's sad and frightening future in Greece,<sup>23</sup> the magic δόλος against her brother has to be perceived as something different from Medea's other instances of assisting the Argonautic enterprise: it is the first exploit of an autonomous sorcery which is much darker than and different from her practices in Book 3: first of all because Medea operates this time not against monstrous bulls or a monstrous dragon, but against her brother, and also because this time she has Apsyrtos slaughtered through Jason's hands and not simply made asleep as the dragon was—differently from Euripides, *Med.* 480–482, according to whom Medea had killed the dragon. In connection with this shift in the presentation of Medea's sorcery, Apollonius also openly distances himself from Medea's eros. After a very brief, three-line description of her charm (4.442–444), a longer authorial comment follows, directed indignantly against Eros, which is the first strong expression of the author's personal feelings in the whole of *Argonautica*<sup>24</sup> (4.445–449):

Σχέτλι' Ἔρως, μέγα πῆμα, μέγα στύγος ἀνθρώποισιν,  
ἐκ σέθεν οὐλόμεναί τ' ἔριδες στοναχαί τε πόνοι τε,  
ἀλγέα τ' ἄλλ' ἐπὶ τοῖσιν ἀπειρονα τετρήχασι  
δυσμενέων ἐπὶ παισὶ κορύσσειο, δαίμιον, ἀερθεῖς,  
οἶος Μηδείη στυγερὴν φρεσὶν ἔμβαλες ἄτην.

Reckless Eros, great curse, greatly loathed by men, from you come deadly strifes and grieving and troubles, and countless other pains on top of these swirl up. Rear up, divine spirit, against my enemies' children as you were when you threw hateful folly into Medea's heart.

Medea's passion is thus stigmatized again as ἄτη in 4.449, after being called the same in the self-confession of 4.412. But Medea's love had

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Dick (1989) 456.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Hunter (1987) 131.

<sup>23</sup> Collard (1975) 139 perceptively remarks that "the behaviour of Medea later in the book is, against all reason, quite untouched by what we would think of as a shattering experience, at the very least destructive of any real trust between her and Jason". Of course the epic *nostos* of the Argonauts must be concluded, before the tragic sequel to her love story begins in Greece.

<sup>24</sup> As remarked by Fränkel (1968) 93.

already been called ἄτης πῆμα δυσάμερον by the narrator in the programmatic proem to Book 4 (4.5) and ἄτη from the external point of view of Mene (4.62, see below). This term, applying to Medea's bewilderment but also her ill-fate,<sup>25</sup> both stigmatizes her present sin of fratricide, and anticipates her permanent future in Greece. It thus appears to be an appropriate definition of her love only in Book 4, in a way which is quite strongly distinguished from the positive way Apollonius (and the readers, no less than the narrator) had seen her yielding to love for Jason in Book 3—starting from the proem, with the soft tone of its invocation to Erato (a speaking name, at least in this context, where Medea's ἔρως is promptly mentioned), and its lyric hint at the μελεδήματα through which Erato seduces the "unwed virgins" (quite different from the ἄτη and the φύζα ἀεκελίη constraining Medea's passion in the proem of Book 4). Indeed, in his indignant words against Eros, Apollonius does not portray the god any longer as the malicious but tender boy depicted at the beginning of the Book 3, whose collaboration in shooting Medea can be seen sympathetically as the necessary preface to the success of the Argonautic enterprise. The Eros now apostrophized by Apollonius is the terrible and tyrannic cosmic power evoked previously by Sophocles (*Ant.* 781–800) and Euripides (*Hipp.* 538–544), after the model of the corpus Theognideum 1231–1234. Indeed this shift in the features of the Eros/eros controlling Medea appears to me to be quite in line with Apollonius' new presentation of her magic. Medea's passion is no longer the feeling of a girl struck by love at first sight, exactly as her magic is no longer a profession nobly subservient to the capture of the fleece: the authorial apostrophe to the wickedness of Eros, prepared by the threats and the despair of a Medea already dubious of Jason's love, forebodes the future devastating ἄτη of the betrayed tragic Medea who will destroy Jason's family.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Fränkel (1968) 495.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Dyck (1989) 470: "in the course of Book 4 we see the wide-eyed Colchian girl of Book 3 who falls hopelessly in love with Jason at first sight become something like the Euripidean heroine"; also Natzel (1992) 101–104. Fusillo (1985) 379 may be correct in maintaining that Apollonius' emphasis on the terribleness of the Eros who drives Medea to kill her brother is intended to clear Medea as much as possible of the personal responsibility about the fratricide. But this narrative strategy of shifting the heaviness of the crime upon the god who personifies Medea's feelings would let the reader understand with even greater clarity how changed is Apollonius' view about the positive synthesis of eros and magic which had motivated Medea's operations in the capture of the fleece. On the special relation in ancient culture between brother (as



A similar reaction by the author can be found after the quasi-hypnotism through which Medea puts the evil eye on the giant Talos<sup>27</sup> in order to obscure his mind. The only risk Talos involved for the Argonauts was that they would not have been able to land on Crete for the night. Therefore this time Medea's help is not necessary at all for Jason's survival or the success of his enterprise (as it had been on the contrary in Book 3), nor does she operate for her own life (as she had still done with Apsyrtos). Here, she is not solicited by the Argonauts at all, who appear to back off from tackling the giant, and she is completely self-driven in her initiative. After a brief description of Medea's sorcery (4.1668–1672), presented as a casting of that *χόλος* of hers which was destined to perform terrible exploits after Jason's repudiation (*λευγαλέον δ' ἐπὶ οἷ πρῆεν χόλον, ἐκ δ' αἰδήλα / δείηλα προΐαλλον, ἐπιζάφελον κοτέουσα*, 4.1671 f.), Apollonius utters a prayer to the supreme god of Olympian religion, which combines fright and indignation for the way the sorcery operates; this is the first and only personal opinion stated by Apollonius about Medea's magic<sup>28</sup> (4.1673–1677):

Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἢ μέγα δὴ μοι ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θάμβος αἴηται,  
εἰ δὴ μὴ νοῦσοισι τυπήσοι τε μόνον δλεθρὸς  
ἀντάει, καὶ δὴ τις ἀπόπροθεν ἄμμε χαλέπτει,  
ὡς ὁ γε, χάλκειός περ ἑών, ὑπόειξε δαμῆναι  
Μηδείης βριήμη πολυφαρμάκτου.

Father Zeus, my mind is all aflutter with amazement, if it is true that death comes to us not only from disease and wounds, but someone far off can harm us, as that man, bronze though he was, yielded to destruction through the grim power of Medea, mistress of drugs.

In conclusion, in Book 4 Medea's magic is either silenced or criticized in increasingly negative terms, while the darker or sadder side of her eros is at the same time privileged, as it is clear at least from the author's apostrophe following her *δόλος* against Apsyrtos. It is plausible

responsible for his sister) and sister (as dependent on her brother), which must have made Medea's crime seem especially heinous, cf. Bremmer (1997) 83–100.

<sup>27</sup> For an analysis of Medea's technical procedure, cf. Dickie (1999).

<sup>28</sup> As remarked by Fränkel (1968) 615 f., according to whom this statement would reflect the author's personal (cf. ἄμμε 1675) scare at being exposed to sorceries which may take place without physical contact. But as we have seen, this appeal to Zeus comes in an ascending climax after the silencing of the rite to Hecate in Paphlagonia and after the invective against Eros as a cause of Medea's destructive magic against Apsyrtos. A more structural explanation may thus be involved.

that Apollonius *also* expresses in this way a kind of ethical rejection of Medea's fratricide, or, in the case of Talos, a broader humane or rationalistic rejection of the magic practices that can attack the human mind from a distance.<sup>29</sup> However, this explanation would hardly apply to the preterition regarding the sacrifice to Hecate in Paphlagonia. The common feature in all of these presentations of Medea's magic seems therefore to be Apollonius' desire to restrict the narrative (and ethical) legitimacy of Medea's magic to the specific task of the capture of the fleece, and to distance himself from it as soon as the target of the expedition is reached and as her erotic passions and magic start anticipating the later horrible post-Argonautic developments.<sup>30</sup>

Apollonius' thoughtful treatment of Medea's magic and his metaliterary awareness of the interaction between magic and love detailed in Book 3 comes out in the monologue of the Moon at the beginning of Book 4, immediately before Medea's last exploit as a magician to which Apollonius still directs his sympathetic narrative attention, namely the hypnotization of the dragon. This monologue is a quintessential reflection on the amusing paradox of a love-magician in love and aptly concludes the section of the poem in which Medea's eros and magic are put in the service of the Argonautic enterprise, thus receiving moral sympathy and substantial narrative attention from the author.

The night following Jason's trial Medea had feared that her father might become aware of her role in helping Jason: therefore, after briefly contemplating the hypothesis of suicide, which Hera prevents (4.20–23), she decides to leave her family and city in order to join him.<sup>31</sup> Due to her fear of being intercepted, she does not take the main road, but looks out for byways (*αἰδήλον ἀνὰ στίβον*, 4.47), in evident contrast to the *εὐρεῖα ἀμαξιτός* (3.874) on which Medea and her maidservants had

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Paduano (1970–1971); Fusillo (1985) 379–380; Paduano–Fusillo (1986) 711 and 713; also Fränkel quoted in n. 28.

<sup>30</sup> As Holmberg (1998) 156 correctly remarks, “the *μητις* of the males seems to maintain a balance and exhibit control, while the *μητις* of Medea eventually becomes entirely excessive. The necessity of Medea's *μητις* to the success of the heroic mission of the Argonauts, however, ensures its corollary status as a salvation. The salvational status of Medea's *μητις* and the establishment of Medea as an untraditional heroic female are consistently undermined and problematized by her dark brand of *μητις*—and vice-versa”.

<sup>31</sup> On the apparent connection between thoughts of death and marriage (and funeral and wedding rituals) in Medea's mind at the beginning of Book 4, cf. Nelis (2001) 169–172.

travelled to reach Jason the first time. This telling specification about her route aptly introduces Apollonius' comparison between Medea's former safe and competent routine as a magician and her present weak bewilderment as a woman in love—a bewilderment which, as the omniscient Moon and the readers know, is doomed to end up in a (self-)destructive folly (4.50–65):

... οὐ γὰρ αἰδώς  
 ἦεν ὀδῶν, θαμὰ καὶ πρὶν ἀλωμένη ἀμφὶ τε νεκροῦς  
 ἀμφὶ τε δυσπαλέας ῥίζας χθονός, οἷα γυναῖκες  
 φαρμακίδες· τρομερῶ δ' ὑπὸ δέϊματι πάλλετο θυμὸς.  
 τὴν δὲ νέον Τιτηνίς ἀνερχομένη περάτηθεν  
 φοιταλέην ἐσιδοῦσα θεὰ ἐπεχέρατο Μίην  
 ἀρπαλέως, καὶ τοῖα μετὰ φρεσὶν ἦσιν ἔειπεν·  
 "οὐκ ἄρ' ἐγὼ μούνη μετὰ Λάτμιον ἀντρον ἀλύσκω,  
 οὐδ' οἷη καλῶ περὶ δαίωμα Ἐνδυμίῳ.  
 ἢ θαμὰ δὴ καὶ σεῖο κλύον δολήσιν αἰοδαῖς  
 μνησαμένη φιλότητος, ἓνα σκοτιῆ ἐνὶ νυκτὶ  
 φαρμάσσης εὐκλήος, ἃ τοὶ φίλα ἔργα τέτυκται·  
 νῦν δὲ καὶ αὐτὴ δῆθεν ὁμοίης ἔμμορες ἄτης,  
 δῶκε δ' ἀνιτρόν τοι Ἰήσωνα πῆμα γενέσθαι  
 δαίμων ἀλγινόεις. ἀλλ' ἔρχεο, τέτλαθι δ' ἔμπης,  
 καὶ πινυτὴ περ' ἔοδσα, πολύστονον ἄλγος ἀείρειν".

She knew the roads well, as often in past days she had roamed in search of corpses and poisonous roots in the earth, as women who work in drugs do. Her heart trembled and quaked with fear. The daughter of Titan, the goddess Moon, was just rising from the horizon and saw her in her mad haste; she rejoiced with malicious pleasure as she reflected to herself: "I'm not the only one then to skulk off to the Latmian cave, nor is it only I who burn with desire for fair Endymion. Ah! How many times I listened to your treacherous incantations, my mind full of love, so that in the gloom of night and without disturbance you could work with your drugs in the way that brings you pleasure. But now you yourself, it would seem, are a victim of a madness like mine; a cruel god has given you Jason to cause you grief and pain. Be off then and for all your cleverness learn to put up with a misery that will bring you much lamentation."

We do not know what kind of rites Medea had accomplished in the past with the help of the Moon. If these rites were rites of erotic magic, Medea would have dealt with them for the sake of other women or (less probably) for herself when in love in the past; however, Apollonius may here also be alluding to different kinds of magic, such as the preparation of potions that she had ready-made for the *prometheion* for Jason (hence the roots of 4.52), or the evocation of the dead (cf. 4.51). Whatever the case, Medea's former routine practicing of her skills as a

powerful magician is compared to what she, hated and prosecuted by her father and frightened, must do now in consequence of her falling in love. Also in her subjective reaction to Medea's pains, Mene focuses on herself being compelled to "remember love" when she listened "to Medea's treacherous incantations" or when she listened "to Medea because of her treacherous incantations" (4.59 σεῖο κλύον δολήσιν αἰοδαῖς).<sup>32</sup> Even though Apollonius is not explicit, the asyndeton between the two circumstances/causes of Mene's compliance, δολήσιν αἰοδαῖς and μνησαμένη φιλότητος, leads us to think that the emotional sensibility of Mene could be conditioned by Medea's charms because the sorceress reminded the goddess of her own love sufferings with messages such as: "you who suffer so much for Endymion, help me now that I need your help".

This conditioning of the Moon through evocations of her love pains appears to be a realistic description of what the ἐρασταί really did, especially in the context of magic rites. According to the schol. to Theoc. 2.10, which explains the actual invocations to Selene by the φαρμακεῦτρα of that idyll, it was usual for women in love both to invoke Selene's help,<sup>33</sup> and to play on Selene's past emotional experience as a person in love.<sup>34</sup> In this way, at the apex of the description of Medea's 'initiation' nocturnal departure from her paternal palace towards the Argonauts' camp as an ἐραστὴς determined to fulfil her passion for Jason, the Moon's expression μνησαμένη φιλότητος introduces what seems a retrospective overview of a Medea fully in control of her professional skills as a sorceress (*inter alia* a love sorceress, though most probably not practising love magic for herself, yet). But soon after remembering her past of great professional powers, the comment of the Moon concludes with a statement which is not completely unjustifiable as a hyperbolic

<sup>32</sup> κλύον is the verbal form which in Fantuzzi (2007) I have suggested to introduce instead of the apostrophic κλύων or the verb κλύω of the *paradosis*, or Fränkel's κλύθων.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. sch. b Πίνδαρος φησιν (fr. 104 Machler) ἐν τοῖς κεχωρισμένοις τῶν Παρθενείων, ὅτι τῶν ἐραστῶν οἱ μὲν ἄνδρες εὐχονται (παρ)εῖναι Ἥλιον, αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες Σελήνην. The sch. c quotes another literary instance of these invocation from Euripides' *Hippolytus kalyptomenos*; another instance is clearly provided by Theoc. *Id.* 2. The same sch. c can thus generalize: ταῖς ἐρωτὶ κατεχομέναις τὴν Σελήνην ἀνακαλεῖσθαι σύνθετος. On the oxymoronic character involved in speaking of female ἐρασταί, cf. Faraone (1999) 140.

<sup>34</sup> Sch. c Theoc. 2.10 ἢ ὅτι καὶ ἡ Σελήνη περὶ ἐρωτικά τινα ἐνενοσήκει, παρὸ καὶ ταῖς τῷ αὐτῷ πάθει κεχορημέναις συμπράσσειν τὰ γὰρ περὶ Ἐνδυμίωνα πρόδηλα. Two poetic texts which may reflect this kind of prayers to the Moon are Philod. *AP* 5.123 = 14 Sider and Ovid. *Her.* 18.59–64, though in both cases their invocations do not take place in the context of magic rites.



comment on Medea's present fear and haste, but will have sounded to the ears of many readers as a general anticipation of the really great love pangs which Jason would bring upon Medea after their arrival in Greece: δῶκε δ' ἀνιηρόν τοι Ἰήσονα πῆμα γενέσθαι / δαίμων ἄλγινόεις, ἄλλ' ἔρχεο, τέτλαθι δ' ἔμπης, / καὶ πινυτή περ ἑοῦσα, πολύστονον ἄλγος ἀείρειν (4.63–65).

As we have seen above, Apollonius' interest in Medea's magic in Book 3 focuses on its functionality for the capture of the fleece, and therefore can in a way be considered one of the products of Medea's love for Jason, at the same time interacting with it and even changing together with it as soon as Medea's passion becomes disquieted and disquieting and anticipates its horrible destructive future. I suggest that the episode between Medea and Mene emphasizes the narrative shift from Medea the sweet, young sorceress in love and helper of the Argonautic enterprise to Medea the not yet desperate but certainly worried and suspicious, aggressive sorceress in love which will be featured from the sojourn in the temple of Artemis onwards: it would thus create a *mise en abyme* of the specific features of Apollonius' treatment of magic and love in Book 3, and a telling anticipation of his different future treatment in Book 4.

In the context of this metaliterary emphasis, I think that Apollonius takes the opportunity to explore another new potentiality—and thus advertises the many potentialities—of the specific idea of the 'pretty' helpful magic which the young sorceress-in-love has been practising in Book 3.

Mene's speech is constructed according to a specific erotic topos, which, in the simpler form "not only I am affected by love", is at least as old as Theognis (cf. his l. 696 τῶν δὲ καλῶν οὐ τι σὺ μόνος ἐρᾷς). Its most common consolatory form "not only to me human love, but also to the gods..." also goes back to the second book of the elegiac collection ascribed to Theognis (1345f. παιδοφιλεῖν δὲ τι τεργνόν, ἐπεὶ ποτε καὶ Γανυμήδους / ἤρατο καὶ Κρονίδης, ἀθανάτων βασιλεύς, κτλ.). However it is its reception in 5th century tragedy and in the Hellenistic age that was especially rich.<sup>35</sup> Theocritus certainly contributed to the game of variation of this topos by introducing a

<sup>35</sup> See e.g. Euripides, *Hippolytos kalyptomēnos*, TrGF (34)F431, or Sophocles, TrGF 684. The fortune of the topos in the Hellenistic epigram starts with Asclepiades, AP 12.50.2f., 5.64.5f., 5.167.6 (later AP 5.109 [Anüp.Thess.], 12.65 [Mel.], 12.101 [Mel.], 12.117 [Mel.], 5.100 [adesp.]).

doubly innovative variation of it in *Id.* 13 (an hexametric poem on an epic-erotic narrative). The proemial address (ll. 1–4 οὐχ ἄμιν τὸν Ἐρωτα μόνους ἔτεχε, κτλ.) to his friend Nicias proposes the episode of Heracles and Hylas, who is snatched away from homosexual to heterosexual love by the Nymphs, not only as a *consolatio*, but also most probably as a warning: we mortals must endure losing our *eromenoi*, when they come of age.<sup>36</sup> It has been argued, correctly I think, that Theocritus' poem was modelled on a reading of the episode of Heracles and Hylas in Book 1 of the *Argonautica*.<sup>37</sup> The relative chronology is, however, uncertain, and it cannot be ruled out that the relation between the two texts was the other way around. In any case, either author would have been impressed by the other author's treatment of an aspect of eros, namely the homosexual eros, to which epic poetry had paid little or no attention.<sup>38</sup> Indeed an hexametric/epic narrative of Heracles' love for Hylas would have come up against the prejudice that was ascribed, *in primis*, to Homer about the subject (as it is known, the *Iliad* is never explicit, for instance, about the homosexual relationship between Achilles and Patroclus); also, even more than Homer, the Alexandrian critics were prejudiced against this kind of content (they atheized Iliadic verses which might even hint at such a relationship between Achilles and Patroclus).<sup>39</sup>

Also the Moon's monologue in Book 4 of Apollonius' *Argonautica* might be participating in the intertextual, emulative play on the motif "not only to me mortal love, but also to the gods...". The establishment of a peculiar and emphatically magical atmosphere is, for the Medea/Mene episode, the preliminary condition for a radically new—and paradoxical in terms of the Olympian religion—version of the traditional erotic topos "not only to me mortal love, but also to

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Pretagostini (1984) 96–103 and Di Marco (1995) 126.

<sup>37</sup> This is the relative chronology accepted by many modern scholars: cf. Pretagostini (1984) and Di Marco (1995). Differently Köhnken, this volume.

<sup>38</sup> The first lines of the Theocritean dedication to Nicias, and in particular the phrase ὡς ἔδοξεμας, not only anticipate the contents of the poem, but also possibly reflect Theocritus' reaction to Apollonius' experiment: "We thought, oh Nicias, that the theme of the homoerotic passion regarded only human beings like ourselves, simple mortals [i.e. poetry that illustrates human affairs, like erotic poetry], and bared the heroes [i.e. heroic poetry]; now, instead, Apollonius' poem, with the episode of Heracles and Hylas, shows us the contrary". See Di Marco (1995) 132, with whom Hunter (1999) 266 has agreed.

<sup>39</sup> See my "Nocturnal Warriors", forthcoming in the proceedings of the conference "Greek Poetry in Italy" (Fiesole, June 11–12, 2007).

the gods...". In the traditional version, depending on the logic of Olympian religion, the *comparandus* of this motif had to be felt to be superior to the *comparatus*, but Apollonius' Mene establishes the opposite logic: "not only to me the goddess but also to you (= woman-sorceress) love...". This logic is only admissible and understandable within the world of magic: only in this world could the gods become equal to and even subdued by human magicians (the strategy of the λόγου ἐπαναγκαστικοί, e.g., included the presentation of the invoked goddess as if at the mercy of the magician).<sup>40</sup> Once the usual hierarchy of relationships between human beings and gods was inverted, one could conceive that the goddess Mene might find comfort in comparing her love experience with that of a mortal. In this perspective, Apollonius can establish his new perspective ("not only to me (a goddess) but also to you (a woman) love...") that changes the most common formulation of the topos ("not only to me mortal but also to the gods love..."), and is even more innovative than the innovative Theocritean variant ("not only to us humans but also to heroes love...").

At the same time, Apollonius subverts his readers' expectations from another point of view. After the mention of the magical opening of the doors when Medea goes by (4.41f.; the same phenomenon was recorded for a magician in the preliminaries to a real spell in Sophron's mime Ταί γυναῖκες αἱ τῶν θεῶν φαντι ἐξελαῖν, *PCG* 4, fr. a col. 1.10–12), and then after the mention of the common nocturnal practices of Medea the sorceress (vv. 50–53), readers might expect that Mene's mention in vv. 54f. would introduce a magical prayer by Medea in love to the Moon in the manner of ἐρασταί like the Phaedra of Euripides' *Hippolytos kalyptomenos* (see above, n. 33), or a common magic practice of ἐξελαῖν τῶν θεῶν. Instead we find ourselves witnessing an original change of direction in the usual communication between sorceresses and the Moon. We do not have a prayer of the sorceress to the Moon, or the magic coercion of the Moon, which would have been expected according to the literary tradition as well as the real-life experience of magic: what Apollonius proposes to us is an unexpected monologue of ironic revenge with which the Moon highlights the troubles of Medea's love and pays back the sorceress for the prayers that she had successfully addressed to her. In conclusion, on the one hand, magic makes possible the radically innovative reuse of the erotic topos, but

<sup>40</sup> Cf. the bibliography collected in Fantuzzi–Maltomini (1996) nn. 8 and 17; also Graf (1991) 194f.

on the other hand, the use of the erotic topos itself makes new and unpredictable what would have been in itself a predictable magical scenario. If Apollonius conceived of the Medea-Mene episode as a 'seal' to his treatment of Medea's love and magic in Book 3, as I believe, then the intersection of magic with a traditional erotic topos dating back to Theognis (maybe already resumed by the epic/erotic Theocr. *Id.* 13) would have been a felicitously telling way to structure the episode.

More than one reasons concerning the idiosyncratic attitudes of the man Apollonius of Rhodes, above all his humanism, often evoked in this connection by modern critics,<sup>41</sup> may have prevented him from introducing numerous scenes of sorcery in the Book 4. The new economy of the *nostos*-narrative may also have contributed to the same result: as the intervention of Medea's magic was not any longer 'unavoidable' for the conclusion of the enterprise, he may have been consequently motivated to de-emphasize the sacrifice to Hecate in Paphlagonia, and to conclude briefly the presentation of Medea's lethal magic against her brother and Talos.

But the monologue of the Moon concerning Medea should be read as a precise clue to Apollonius' metaliterary awareness of his appreciation of Medea's magic and eros, which had been a well integrated ingredient of his narrative recipe in the Book 3. A sort of *mise en abyme* of the synthesis of love element and magic which had been investigated in the actions and psychology of the young sorceress in love, this episode points once again and quintessentially at Medea as a helpless victim of love but skilled professional whose helpful talents have been fundamental for Jason's success. After all, it was precisely this phase of Medea's life and roles which Apollonius could feel as his personal 'discovery', or at least his epic re-discovery, after the treatments in tragedy of Medea's rejection by Jason and her erotic despair, and their aftermath of terrible destructive magic. This monologue would thus conclude the section of the *Argonautica* where the interactions between a special eros and a special magic of Medea interest Apollonius most, before a less confident passion, and an aggressive magic, disquietingly creep into Medea's mind and deeds, beyond the control of Apollonius and his Argonauts, and beyond the boundaries of the plot of the *Argonautica*.

<sup>41</sup> Above, n. 29.



The lesson taught by the variance between Apollonius' two epic Medeas may have been treasured by at least another epic poet. When Aeneas has decided to sail away, Dido, Virgil's own 'Medea',<sup>42</sup> fakes the opportunity of a magic rite to solve her mind from the passion for the foreigner who is abandoning her, and asks her sister to arrange for it. The rite would allegedly consist of burning on a pyre her and Aeneas' bed, and all the belongings of Aeneas; but on that pyre Dido is in fact going to immolate herself. In her speech to Anna Dido utters first of all a long list of the powers of the sorceress who would have advised her about the rite (4.478–491), where the emphasis on the professional skills of Dido's source<sup>43</sup> may have pointed that the queen—had she really wanted—could have relied on an 'alternative' to Medea who was not less effective than Medea.<sup>44</sup> But soon after Dido comments (4.492f.): *testor, cara, deos et te, germana, tuumque / dulce caput magicas invitam accingier artis.*

Magic practices are here introduced not as something normal and almost natural (as in Apollonius' Book 3), but as a "mysterious and secret rite to which Dido turns out as a last resource",<sup>45</sup> when the love story is unrecoverably over, and Dido's feelings for Aeneas have become a mix of hatred and despair. No doubt that the introduction of magic in Dido's words is indebted to the Apollonian model.<sup>46</sup> But why is it introduced, then, just in order to be promptly deprecated and refused?

According to E. Kraggerud<sup>47</sup> the display of this ineffectual magic would be a variation that replaces the faked religious ceremony which the widow Dido would have arranged according to a pre-Virgilian version of her story in Timaeus, *FGrHist* 566F82 and Iustinus 18.4–6 and 6.5–7, in order to get a pyre lighted for herself, and to escape through death on it the marriage to a Libyan king. Not very differently, S. Eitrem had suggested that a sudden shift from the new version focusing on Dido's love-story to the version of Dido's refusal of a new marriage and suicide (and thus from the idea of a pyre originally

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Hügi (1952) 79–99; Otis (1964) 62–96; Collard (1975).

<sup>43</sup> The adviser of Dido also *nocturnos ... movet Manes: mugire videbis / sub pedibus terram* (4.490f.): a detail which will have hinted at Dido's thoughts of death, but anyway displays a power which had never been contemplated for Apollonius' Medea.

<sup>44</sup> As correctly highlighted by Heinze (1993) 119 n. 56.

<sup>45</sup> So Henry (1930) 104.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. e.g. Hügi (1952) 64–66.

<sup>47</sup> Kraggerud (1999) 103–113.

conceived with love magic in mind to the funerary-suicidal pyre inherited from the traditional version), may have been underlying Dido's incongruous dealing with magic.<sup>48</sup> This perspective has been taken up and modified by A.-M. Tupet, according to whom despite her words Dido would have been consistently motivated by hatred for Aeneas, and would conceive of the pyre as a magic self-sacrifice comparable to the practice of the *devotio*, intended to draw misfortune upon Aeneas.<sup>49</sup>

All of these interpretive suggestions leave however open the problem why Dido utters her words of renunciation/execration of magic. Her speech to Anna seems definitely too long and emphatic in the economy of the narrative, just to hide her real intentions, and at the same time the disparaging reluctance she professes about resorting to magic in ll. 9.492f. hardly finds contextual motivations. It is also true that through this remark Virgil may "anachronistically reflect in Dido's feeling that of his own day, when magic was employed by the more ignorant classes but held in great disfavour by the respectable and intelligent" (so Pease *ad loc.*)—however Dido is conceived by Virgil not as a typical Roman woman but as a barbarian queen.<sup>50</sup> But Dido's fiction of a recourse to magic and her fictional disapproval of it also probably show that Apollonius' circumspection with Medea's magic in Book 4 taught a clear lesson to the epic possible 'Medeas' of the future, and their authors—when a woman in love becomes diffident about her beloved, dealing with magic turns her into a literary character aggressively dangerous and sinisterly pre-tragic, such as the prototypical Medea of Apollonius' Book 4. When she knows of Aeneas' decision to leave, despite her final threatening curses Dido consistently avoids the risk of the identification with the pre-tragic Medea. Not only does she never leave the Libyan shore in order to follow Aeneas. Not only does she enter the road of suicide, not taken but contemplated more than once by Medea. She also never really adopts the road of magic taken by Medea—not even just to console herself, as she maintains to be willing to do: also when pretending to resort to magic, she gets ready to deal with it not alone, but rather through the intermediacy of a practised helper.<sup>51</sup> By recalling in 4.492f. that she is aware of the

<sup>48</sup> Eitrem (1933).

<sup>49</sup> Tupet (1970).

<sup>50</sup> Cf. S. Ingallina, in *Enc. Virg.* 3 (1987) 313, s.v. "Magia".

<sup>51</sup> As remarked by Nelis (2001) 142.

existence of magic, but also emphatically distancing herself from it, Dido highlights how, after resembling the tender and helpful Medea in love of Apollonius' Book 3, she is not going to also become a new tragic Medea.