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THE UNFORGETTABLE FIRE: MEDEA'S DREAMS IN POXY 4712

"Tu che guardi verso di me / hai visto i tori nel sonno / ed hai lasciato Madrid.
Stai nei miei occhi e racconti / le Sirene e gli inganni / del tuo sogno che va"

(G. Nannini)

116 fragments of a papyrus roll written in the early first century have been masterfully edited by Giovan Battista d'Alessio three years ago. They have presented us with meagre remains of what seems to be a Hellenistic epic poem on an Argonautic theme. I shall briefly concentrate here on some details of reading and interpretation concerning frr. 1 and 2, virtually the only ones long enough to leave some room for speculation. Both seem to deal with a dream, in which Medea saw her beloved Jason being slaughtered by Aeetes' bulls – a scene very similar to the famous dream of Medea in Ap. Rhod. 3.616-636. Here is d'Alessio's text.

fr. 1.5-16

1 Apart from the evidence of fr. 1 and 2, an important clue in this direction is the occurrence of the name Φαέθων (the alternative name of Medea's brother Apsyrtos) in fr. 14.3. d'Alessio 2005, 57 rightly rules out the attribution of this papyrus to Apollonius' proekdosis of the Argonautica (on which see Fantuzzi 1988, 87-120 and Schade 2001, 30-33).

2 On this dream, one of the most debated passages in the entire Apollonius (and a well-known subject in antiquity, judging from the title of the Thessalian pantomime Μηδείας ἀνειρος: see Luc. salt. 53), see Fränkel 1957, 16-17. Hunter 1989, 163-167. Sansone 2000, 159-162. Walde 2001, 175-184 (with earlier bibliography).
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1. Ll. 6-10 of fr. 1 have one and the same subject, namely Medea. The sense we gather from the remains is the following: "Having uttered these words, she fell back on the bed 3; once she lay down... [something] 4 ... Then slowly on her eyelid(s)...[here we have the blank of l. 9] as if asleep."

3 I have not found any convincing solution for the second hemistich of l. 6, though I would incline to restore there an accusative depending on κατά, e. g. εὐνήν in the last foot, preceded by an adjective. Syntactically, this would match structures like e. g. Ap. Rhod. 3.927 πεδίον κατά στίβων; semantically, this would create with λέκτρων a hendiadys otherwise attested in tragedy, as Aesch. Pers. 543 λέκτρων εὐνής ἀβροχιτωμάς or Eur. Alc. 925 λέκτρων κοίτας ἐς ἐρήμας and Eur. Iph. Taur. 859 ἐς κλαίσαν λέκτρων δόλων; the difference between λέχων / λέκτρων (the underlying bed) and εὐνή (the sheets / blankets) is clear from many passages of Greek literature (e. g. the last couplet of Nonn. Dion. 25. 572-3 λαοῖ δένθα καὶ ἑνδὰ χαμαστρωμένων ἐπὶ λέκτρων / ἐσπερῆ μετὰ δόρμοι ὑρειάδα κάππασεν εὐνή). Should we take λέκτρων with either κατά or κάππασεν, I believe this would imply the
Let us take a look at line 9. I believe the first word, which d'Alessio did not identify, should be read as μένειν, imperfect from the verb μένω, "to close, esp. to close one's eyes (or mouth, or ears)", with an object as in ll. 24.637 οὐ γὰρ τω μύσαν δόσο ὑπὸ βλεφάροις ἐμοίσιν (of Priam's sleeplessness since the day of Hector's slaughter), or absolute4. What the first editor took as traces of a lambda preceded by a lost letter belong in fact to the second half of a my, in the very peculiar shape this letter has e.g. in l. 13, where d'Alessio himself remarked: "μ is traced in an anomalous way that could suggest λλ, but no doubt μ was meant." The hyspilon under the very evident circumflex accent had already been suggested by the first editor.

At the end of the line, the dot of ink after ny must belong, for metrical reasons, to a vowel: its high position rules out any other possibility except hyspilon. With ανυ, the most attractive integration is the rare adjective ἀνύστακτος, "sleepless", an adjective not attested before Gregory of Nyssa, and always connected with a word meaning "eye". Here, ἀνύστακτος might be connected to the lost dative in the first half of the line, and it might describe the state of Medea's eyes prior to this moment, in a sort of oxymoron heightening the salvific value of her present sleep. I have two suggestions for the lost dative: given that οξύθραμος is ruled out on palaeographical grounds (no trace of the high vertical of the φ can be detected on the

(implausible) image of Medea falling down from the bed (as e.g. in Od. 10. 559 ἀλλὰ κατανυκρύ τέγεος πέσειν; καταπίπτει is construed with several prepositions (πέρι + dat., ἐν + dat., ἐπὶ + dat. or acc., ἐς + acc., ἀμφί + acc.) or with the simple dative (see esp. Nonn. Dion. 24. 331 ἐρμημαδεί κατάπεσεν εἴνης; 34. 86 ἀσχαλῶν ἐπέρως καταφεί βάπτεσεν εἴνης), never with κατὰ + gen. For the latter construction I can find no parallel outside of Ps.-Luc. Ocypus 73 κεῖται κατεύθης ύππης βάλλεμένος (with a different verb, however). It is easy to imagine that a pregnant adjective should have qualified Medea's bed, the bed she kisses before leaving Colchis for good in Ap. Rhod. 4. 26, "the place of her virginity" (Beye 1982, 136), and one of the remote protagonists of Euripides' tragedy (cp. Boedeker 1997, 141).

The easiest solution for the sequence δετο is δέ το, whereby the most likely solution is a form of the adj. τόσος, probably referring to Medea's sorrow. de Stefani's conjecture τόσον κούφιζε μέριμναν implies a form of relief occurring upon her lying down in bed, as in Hom. Od. 18. 188-89 (but things differently e.g. in Od. 19. 524-29; see also by contrast Ap. Rhod. 3. 671-672 ἐκ βαθάμου βαθαμώδεις δαμπερές, ὡ ἐνι κούφι / κέκλητ' ακηχείμην, δρύσον δ' ἐκάτερθε παρείς; Theocr. 2. 86-7).

4 For a very interesting use of the verb μένω (not unknown to Hellenistic and later poetry: Nic. fr. 74. 56; Tryphiod. 15; Nonn. Dion. 26. 132) in the sense of "to close slowly one's eyes, as if in sleep" cp. e.g. Gal. in Hipp. epid. 3.17a.554, 3-5 K.: οὐ γὰρ ὃς ὦ κατὰ φύσιν ἐχοντες έκοιματο, ἀλλ' ἐицыρωσαν τής δυνάμεως ἄκων εμείνεω, ὡς μὴ δυνάμεως τοὺς ὁθολάμος ἀνεώγιτας έγεων, έκκειε ἐς τα φωιν καὶ σημάρα κατεκαμάτω.

5 Either ὀμβάθμος or ὄμμα: I refer to Greg. Nyss. in s. Ephr., PG 46.829.51; Theod. Stud. epist. 11. 47; Mich. Psell. theol. 101.74; enc. in matrem 518 Crisc.; Mich. Attal. hist. 196. 12. The only other possibility for our line would be a form of the verb ἀναγράνω, in a context similar to Ps.Luc. Amor. 3. 20 τοῦ ὀμμάτων αἱ βολαὶ τακερῶς ἀναγραφοῦντο; 14. 22 τακερῶν τί καὶ ρέων ἐν τοῖς ὄμμασι πάθος ἀναγράνων.
papyrus), one possibility is the diminutive ὀ[ματ]<ολοσυν, not unknown to Hellenistic poetry (see Call., SH 305.1), but a more intriguing one, powerfully backed by the aforementioned Homeric line (Il. 24. 637) is βλεφάροισιν, which also has interesting matches in Hellenistic and later poetry, particularly together with the noun ὀπωπαί, "eyeballs" or "pupils".

My tentative reading for ll. 9-10 thus runs:

μήλην ὑπὸ [βλεφάροισιν ἀνήστακτοισιν ὀπωπαίς
οἷα καθυπνώουσα.

"She closed her pupils under her sleepless eyelids, as falling asleep".

If this is accepted, we find ourselves confronted with l. 8, whose subject must be Medea: it is very unlikely that the same word βλεφάρον could be repeated in two subsequent lines; we might thus look for a different integration for the lacuna after ἤρέμα δὲ. While I have no really convincing suggestion for the second hemistich, I observe that d'Alessio's φ is littera incerta, only the top and the bottom of a long vertical being actually extant (these traces suit both φ and ψ). Therefore, I put forward very cautiously the hypothesis that here we might read

ἤρέμα δὲ βλέψασα καταπτή

The iunctura ἤρέμα βλέπειν, in the sense of "to see faintly", "to look with faint eye", is indeed very rare, but it occurs in three significant passages by Aristotle, all variously dealing with visions or dreams. It designates a

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8 Μήνεν in l. 9 syntactically rules out solution as βλεφάροισι καταπτήρος ἀμφηχάδη νυξ (for which see e. g. Q. Smyrn. 8. 313) or the like with ὑποιος as subject (on the model of e. g. Od. 23. 309 or Hes. fr. 294. 4 M.-W.: see Mosch. Eur. 3 and Bühler 1960, 50-51).

9 It should be noted in passing that the adv. ἤρέμα is far from common in hexametric poetry (which is why its meaning in the present context has been debated, either "a little" or "slowly", see de Stefani 2006). The only comparable instance I could find is Opp. cyn. 4. 343-4, where the leopards προφώτατα δὲς χόδα δέαν / ἤρέμα νευστάζουσι κάτω, and then fall asleep.

10 I have toyed for a while with the idea of the κατά πτύχας, as in Ap. Rhod. 2. 992 ἀλάσεως Ἀκρωτῷο κατά πτύχας εἰσήθεσα; but another possibility might be καταπτηδέσαν τε..., and no doubt many more can be found. One cannot help remarking the particular preference of our author for κατά, which recurs, as preposition or preverb, in ll. 6, 7, 8 and 10 of fr. 1: a preference not shared by Apollonius, as we learn from Redondo 2000, 143.

11 Arist. meteor. 3. 4.373b ἤρέμα καὶ οὐκ ἔξεν βλέπωτι (see also 1.6.343b παραβλέπουσι δ"Ηρέμα τὴν ὄξυν); and particularly Arist. insomn. 3.462a19-24 πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ἐνίος συμβαίνει καὶ αἰσθάνεσθαι πῆς καὶ πόσων καὶ φωτὸς καὶ χομοῦ καὶ ἀφῆς, ἀσθενικῶς μέντοι καὶ οἷον πόρρωθεν ἤκις γὰρ ἐν τῷ καθεύθειν ὑποβλέπουσες, ὅ
sort of weak visual perception, occurring either before a vision, or inside a dream as a remnant of the external world: it occurs in Aristotle when the philosopher is describing the first steps of the psychic processes leading to dreams, those still half-way between awakeness and sleep.\footnote{12}

Whatever we make of l. 8, we must remark that in his work De insomniis, probably the most important Greek treatise on the physiology of dreams (little is known of Theophrastus' and Demetrius of Phalerum's works on the subject), Aristotle believed that dreams were originated by the movement of perceptions (κινησις των αισθηματων) from the sense organs through the blood back to the "principle of perception" (ἀρχη της αισθησεως), namely the heart, which a tradition starting with the tragedians had consecrated as the true sedes of dreams.\footnote{13} It is thus no surprise that in l. 10 we find κραδιθη: the μενδηραι (a very rare word for φορτιδες, curae, "sorrows", see d'Alessio ad loc.) stand here for the "imaginative movements" (or κινησεις φανταστικαι) that run through (δια κραδιθης) or shake the heart (δια κραδιθην... σοβεςκου)\footnote{14} and mouth in the δοξα (an aorist form of the verb δοκεω most probably stood at the end of l. 11) of what we perceive as dreams.\footnote{15}

According to Plato's Timaeus, it is precisely by closing our eyelids that we are able to dream, which might also explain our author's detailed description in ll. 7-9.\footnote{16}

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{12}{For a detailed and extremely accurate discussion of Aristotle's often complicated and contradictory statements see van der Eijk 1994, 36-52. The vision described in de insomm. 3.462a19-24 is not listed by Aristotle among proper dreams, yet its mechanism is presented as entirely identical with that of dreams: see van der Eijk 1994, 44-45 and 244-246.}
\footnote{13}{See van der Eijk 1994, 46; van Lieshout 1980, 39-40.}
\footnote{14}{The verb σοβεσκω – totally unknown to poetical language – should perhaps be regarded as more or less equivalent to other verbs of shaking or violent motion: see e. g. Ap. Rhod. 3. 1104 (quoted foll. note); 4. 351 δια μιν θεσαν κραδιην ελεξην απαι; Maiist. 42-44 κακω 0'υπο δειμαι παισαι/να τε νυκτας τε περι κραδιην ελεξην/ταρτος θειοπολοκοι.}
\footnote{15}{Designating the dreamer's first "impression" about the vision that appears to him, δοξα is a terminus technicus in Aristotle's de insomniis: see van der Eijk 1994, 42-45. As for δοκεω + inf. see Ap. Rhod. 3. 619, 4. 666 and especially Ap. Rhod. 4. 1480, with the structure δοκειν λιθοσ, very similar to ours (see also McLennan 1973, 64). A possible solution for the end of l. 10 is δια κραδης διαλεγειαι: see e. g. Ap. Rhod. 3.1103 της διαλεγειαται κραδην ερεθθαυν απαι; also 3. 764 διαλεγειαταιν αρχας. I am not sure I understand the syntax behind de Stefani's infinitive εποροισαι. Magnelli 2006, 11, suggests δε οι αει (perhaps less likely in view of the other δει in l. 12).}
\footnote{16}{Plat. Tim. 45e-46a (see van Lieshout 1980, 120-121; in Tim. 45e the verb σομισω is used of the eyelids). Lulofs 1947, xxix believed in Plato's influence on Aristotle, whereas van der Eijk 1994, 48 note 20 is much more skeptical: on the issue see also Preus 1968. My impression is that the principles of perception theory in the two philosophers are of course very different, yet in some single images they might actually concur.}
\end{footnotesize}
But what does Medea actually dream? Ll. 11-14 guarantee that she dreams of Jason, and particularly of his slaughter either by the bulls' horns or by Aeetes' murderous swords. I shall simply append here some tentative reconstructions of these lines:

οἶα καθυπνώουσα· διὰ κραδίης δ’ ἀλεγείναι
μενεθήραι σοβέσεικοι· ἀπόπροθεν αὐτῶν ἔδωξεν
Αἰσιοῦδην ὁδάσσοις· ἀεί δ’ ἐνί κείτο πυρῆσιν
ὁ ξένος ἢ ταύροι[ι] πεπαρμένοις· ἥ μαχαίραις
ἀληθρφόνοις· γενετήρος· ὑπ’'[1]

If in l. 11 ἀπόπροθεν is right, then Medea perceives in the distance a vague resemblance of Jason: this fits in well with the dynamic of her dream, and particularly with the remarkable πόρρωθεν in Aristotle's passage quoted above note 11. Another possibility might be ἀπόπροθορώντα δ’ ἔδωξεν (or - ὑπ’ ἔδόκησεν) / Αἰσιοῦδην ὁδάσσοι, recalling Ap. Rhod. 3. 1280 νηὸς ἀποπροθορῶν, where the very Apollonian verb ἀποπροθώσκω is used precisely of Jason leaping off the ship in order to fight against Aeetes' bulls; but in our papyrus of course there is no room for νηὸς or the like. Again in l. 12, ἐνικ- cannot correspond to ἐνικάπτεσε (another Apollonian verb), for the good reason that ἀεί needs an imperfect. We thus have to separate ἐνι from κ-: one possibility (albeit little in keeping with our context) is to read something like ἐνι κύμασι (or καίμασι) πίπτεν / πίπτων, the other is to postulate that Medea sees Jason already dead, ἀεί δ’ ἐνι κείτο πυρῆσιν: the verb κείμαι is never composed with the preposition ἐνι, but this preposition is very common in new compound verbs created by Hellenistic poets, and is often used in similar syntactical Wendungen (e. g. Ap. Rhod. 3. 63 ἐνι σθένος ἔπλετο γυίοις; Mosch. Eur. 6 ἐνι κινώσουσα δόμοις). In ll. 13-4, despite the ἀνδροφόνοι ταύροι of Nonn. Dion. 11. 190 and 294, and despite Nonn. Dion. 36. 455 ταυρείοις κεράσσει πεπαρμένον ἄνδρα

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17 For ἀπόπροθεν with a verb of seeing see e. g. Q. Smyrn. 9.267; 12.477; 13.478. It is interesting that in Apollonius precisely this adverb is used to envisage the possibility of Jason's separation from Medea (3. 1065 – with ἀπόπροθεν – and 1111). On αὐτῶν reinforcing Αἰσιοῦδην see e. g. Ap. Rhod. 3. 169 and 1077.

18 Later conspicuously used by Arg. Orph. 545 νηὸς ἀπο προθορῶντα, ὃς ἐν φαβαδοῖς / κείται ἀποφθέγμονος. On Apollonius' fondness for this kind of compound verbs (e. g. 3. 267 ἀποπροθάπτεσε; 3. 1311 ἀποπροθαλῶν etc.) see Redondo 2000, 137.


20 The verb πίπτω is very often construed with ἐνι, see e. g. Ap. Rhod. 1. 506 ἐπεσον δ’ ἐνι κύμασιν Ὀσκειών, but also Ap. Rhod. 1. 1027; 2, 1012; 4, 1292. De Stefani 2006 suggests ἐνι κύμασι φιλεθεῖα.

21 See e. g., only in Apollonius' third book, 3. 413 ἐνιβάλλομαι; 528 ἐνιπρέφομαι; 655 ἐνικάπτεσεν; 973 ἐνιππεττῶ; 1185 ἐνισπείρα. 
δαμάζει (certainly reminiscent of this passage), it is safer to take ἀνδρόφωνος with a different noun than ταύροις: good guesses might be e. g. Magnelli’s Ἦ μαχαίραις or my Ἦ βελέσσιν. The following lines are too difficult to restore, but in l. 15 κεκ. . might in fact hide κεκομένει (limbs cut off from Jason's body?)

No speculation is possible on the dream's development, nor on its relationship with Medea's dream in Apollonius Rhodius 3. 616-636, where Medea intervenes to help Jason out of his toil. Indeed, comparisons can be established with other Apollonian passages: the alternative prospected in ll. 13-14, as noted by Magnelli, recalls Ap. Rhod. Arg. 3. 459-460 τάρβει δ’αμφ’αυτῷ, μή μιν βόδε Ἦ καὶ αὐτός / Αίήτης φθεισειν. A verbal echo links ll. 11-12 of our papyrus with the introduction to the first secret meeting between Jason and Medea, namely Ap. Rhod. 3. 960-961 ὡς ἁρα τῇ καλὸς μὲν ἐπῆλυθεν εἰσοράσσαθι / Λίσονίδης. κάματον δὲ δυσίμερον ὥσε φανταίς; this passage is also interesting because it is followed (ll. 962-65) by a sort of medical protocol describing Medea’s erotic emotion upon the apparition of the hero. It is unlikely that these analogies are accidental.

Our text belongs to a poem that paid great attention to the process of Medea’s falling asleep and starting to dream: this might have something to do with the general attention devoted to Medea’s eyes in extant literature, from Euripides (Med. 92-93 ὅμμα ταυρουμέννυ) to Apollonius (e. g. 3. 444-45; 886; 1008-1010; 1161 ὑγρα ὅ’νι βlefαροις ἐχεν ὅμματα; 4. 698-99), from Grillparzer down to Pasolini and Ariel Dorfman. But the wording might also be reminiscent of Aristoteles' physiological doctrine on dreams, which would be in keeping with the interest for natural sciences typical of Hellenistic epic, as witnessed chiefly by Apollonius himself in his Argonautica.

2. Let us come back for a moment to the first legible line of fr. 1: l. 5. "The Colchian women will pray..." As we learn from the subsequent formula ὡς φάμενη, this is clearly the last line of a monologue, where Medea envisions

22 See Q. Smyrn. 1. 348 ὅσποι δ’αμφ’ βέλεσα πεπαρμένοι δ’ ἐμλήσαν (cp. also 11. 307). Nonn. Dion. 28. 121 ἐκ κεφαλῆς βέλεσα πεπαρμένος εἰς πόδας ἄκρους. It is remarkable that the term ἀνδρόφωνος occurs only once in Apollonius’ Argonautica (4. 701), and implicitly refers to Jason and Medea after Apsyrtos’ murder.


25 Perhaps reminiscent of ll. 22. 460-1 ὡς φάμενη μεγάροι διέσπερυν μαυρᾶδι ἵππη / παλαιμένη κροᾶτην. See also Call. Hec. fr. 260.62-4 Pf. = SH 288.62-4 τῇ μὲν ἄρ’ ἄρ’
the malediction sent over her by the Colchian women. A perfect parallel, as noted by d'Alessio, is Ap. Rhod. 3. 794-795 καί κέν με διὰ στόματός φορέουσαι / Κολχίδες ἄλλης ἄλλαι ἄεικέα μωμήσουνται, where Medea thinks of the Colchians' blame in case she committed suicide after helping Jason against her father (3. 785-798)\(^{26}\).

Now, one interesting peculiarity of our passage is that Medea's monologue precedes the dream, whereas in Apollonius it follows. This is not a minor difference: it is well-known that Apollonius innovated on the literary form and narrative function of monologues, a merit on which he has been praised since the age of Sainte-Beuve\(^{27}\). On good grounds, Apollonius has been termed the "inventor of the interior monologue", and of the related literary device of "internal focalisation", by which Medea becomes the absolute protagonist of book 3 of the Argonautica\(^{28}\).

Medea's first monologue (3. 464-470) occurs when the character experiences a form of dreamlike extasis (3. 446-47) that leads her to dreadful – but growingly conscious – thoughts about Jason's imminent death (a very internally focalised section: 3. 451-462)\(^{29}\). The second monologue (3. 636-644) follows directly her famous dream about Jason's fate, and thus gives a rational frame to the heroine's inner conflicts, which the dream had presented in an ambiguous and yet revealing form\(^{30}\). In the pericope Ap. Rhod. 3. 744-824 the transition from a physiological and psychological level (insomnia, doubts, fear for Jason's death etc.) to a rationally verbalized level (the monologue) has been brilliantly detected and analysed by Barkhuizen\(^{31}\).

\(^{26}\) In our fragment, the choice of the verb ἄρθομαι in a negative sense (not a simple invocation or desire, as in most epic occurrences, cp. Hom. Il. 6.115; Od. 1. 164; Ap. Rhod. 1. 159; Opp. hal. 4. 577) might be reminiscent of another famous passage where a son thinks about the consequences of acting against his mother's will, namely Telemachus' words in Od. 2. 135 έπει μήτηρ στοιγείας ἀρήσετ' Ἐρινίς (if he marries her to a suitor without her consent; on Erinyes in Apollonius see Vagnone 1994). But of course in our passage ἄρθομαι might be construed with an infinitive in the preceding line or with a different clause (see e. g. ep. adesp. 3. 14 οὔδε γάρ ἀρχιείους θανέειν [ἀρησμαί αὐτή, and Il. 9. 172 ὄφα Δι' Κρονίδη ἀρησόμεθ' αί κε ἐθέλησθ]. In either case, I would prefer to read ὄμως (very frequent in this metrical sedes, see Ap. Rhod. 1. 99; 321; 896 etc.), perhaps in a structure like ὄμως ἐμὲ Χαλκόπην τε, οὗ ὄμως αὐτὰ τε καὶ ἀνδρεῖς.

\(^{27}\) Sainte-Beuve 1879.


\(^{29}\) See Fusillo 1985, 349-350; Fusillo 2001, 145: the movement from thoughts to words in this section is described by Barkhuizen 1979, 35. On 3. 446-47, see Walde 2001, 175-177.

\(^{30}\) See the brilliant analysis by Fusillo 1985, 350-351 and Paduano 1972, 38-39.

\(^{31}\) Barkhuizen 1979, 36-47. Paduano 1972, 40-41 rightly observes that the insomnia in 3.751 corresponds per oppositum to a sort of "struttura onirica" (see also below n. 39).
precisely the sequence dream + monologue that will enjoy the widest success in later authors, starting from the opening of Moschus' *Europa*.

Whereas Medea's monologues in the *Argonautica* are made of reflections on her dreams or on her unconscious thoughts, in our papyrus sleep and dream come at the end of Medea's *Qual*, and probably objectivate in vivid images the fears and anguish cumulated in the heroine's *Selbstgespräch*. This difference poses even more urgently the question of relationship and priority between our poem and Apollonius, but it should also affect our view on the one similar instance of a sequence monologue-dream in the (otherwise scanty) ancient Argonautic literature, namely Valerius Flaccus 7.141-145 (occurring right after Medea's monologue in 7.128-140):

Dixerat haec stratoque graves proiecerat artus
si veniat miserata quies, cum saevior ipse
aturbat agitque sopor; supplex hinc sternitur hospes,
hinc pater, illa nova rumpit formidine somnos
erigiturque toro.

The narrative structure of this passage – opened by a *dixerat haec* which closely recalls our ὅς φαμένη – has been read as a deliberate variation of the Apollonian model, obtained by eliminating any reference to the intervention of Argos. Yet our fragment might suggest that this arrangement in fact clings back to a Greek source other from Apollonius. It would be tempting to identify our poem with the lost work postulated by Quellenforscher such as Venzke and Vian as a source of Valerius Flaccus and the *Orphic Argonautica*, in all those cases where the plot of these two works coincides against Apollonius: a first step in this direction has already been made by d'Alessio, who compared the description of the bulls in our fragment with Val. Fl. 7.570ff.

The most remarkable of these *errores coniunctivi*, so to speak, concerns the handling of Medea's and Aeetes' prophetical dreams in

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33 It must be borne in mind that no other poem on the Argonauts is known between the age of Apollonius and the Orphic Argonautica: see Bowie 2000, 9-10.

34 See Perutelli 1997, 237.


36 d'Alessio 2005, 56 and 78.
an earlier stage of the narration, just after Jason's arrival at Colchis. And I must remind that d'Alessio has recently identified the lost Hellenistic Argonautica by Cleon of Kourion – about which more will be said in a moment – as a possible source for the eccentric itinerary of the Argonauts from Iolkos to Colchis in Valerius.

3.

Finally, a few words on fragment 2. It is so badly preserved that no restoration of its lines is possible beyond the intelligent supplements proposed by the first editor. That these lines dealt with the same dream as fr. 1 is likely given the mention of sleep (ὑπνο- ll. 6 and 12), bulls (ταῦρος- l. 3) and abductions (ἄφατον- l. 5); in l. 8, while the morphology and syntax of φεύγει(ε) remain no less mysterious to me than the (optative?) πλήσειε in l. 7, ἔλεος might belong to the idea of Medea's pity for Jason's feared death, cp. Ap. Rhod. 3.462 and 761, both passages occurring at the end of sad rêveries. Indeed, an interesting comparison can be issued with Ap. Rhod. 3.744-754, where ὑπνος occurs twice, and Medea's sleepless thought contemplates precisely Jason's slaughter by the bulls (cp. here ll. 15-17).

Are there any clues to unmask the structure of these lines? L. 9 ἐννέπτ most probably closed a direct speech (perhaps another monologue by Medea, or a dialogue in the dream?) and what follows must belong to the narrator's voice, as can be gathered from ll. 10, 13 and 14. In fact, I would take the πῦρ ἄφατον in l. 10 as referring not to a material, "unspeakable" fire, but rather as the usual metaphor for love (the adjective ἄφατος is conspicuously used of Eros in Ap. Rhod. 3.129). In l. 13 μέρμηρα, most probably in the plural, is a

37 See Venzke 1941, 105-108 (on Arg. Orph. 773-801 and Val. Fl. 5, 331-337), and 110-111. Venzke identified the common source as "wahrscheinlich einen Scholiasten oder Kommentator" (111). Vian 1987, 27-28, taking his cue precisely from Aeetes' and Medea's dreams, believes that the common source should be a poem earlier than Apollonius, known to both Apollonius himself and Valerius Flaccus. Dräger 2001, 53 (not knowing d'Alessio 2000) unconvincingly identifies the common source with Dionysios Scytobrachion.

38 d'Alessio 2000, 102-104.

39 See esp. 3. 751-755 ἀλλὰ μαλακῶν Μήδειαν ἐπὶ γλυκερὸς λάβειν ὑπνος· / πολλὰ γὰρ Αἰσιονίδαο πόθῳ μελέθημα· ἔγειρε / δειδύαν ταῖρων κρατέρων μένος, ὁσιν ἐμελλε· / φθείσαν ἀεικελή μοίρῃ κατὰ νείων Ἀρησ. / Ποικά δὲ οἱ κραδίε στηθέων ἐντεσθεῖν ἔδονέν. Aphrodite to Eros: τίπτ᾽ ἐπιμειδίάξη· ἄφατον κακὸν. On this adjective, and its possible connection to the Apollonian concept of ἀμφασία, see the intelligent words of Paduano 1972, 99. The metaphor of fire, very common in Hellenistic poetry (just think of Theocrit. 2.82 and
perfect pendant to μενθῆρα in fr. 1, 11\textsuperscript{42}. In l. 14 δείμα is a psychological state very common with dreams\textsuperscript{43}; and ἐκ κεφαλῆς – I believe – points to Medea pulling off her hair\textsuperscript{44}, out of desperation for what she is seeing (γάρ in l. 15; ll. 15-17 certainly depict the fire coming out of the bulls' jaws\textsuperscript{45}, a vision that comes to an end with Medea's definitive awakening in l. 20\textsuperscript{46}).

I shall not push my analysis so far as to affirm that fr. 2 depicts the last stages of Medea's sleep, namely the moment in which ὑπνος gives way to μέριμνα and δείμα, and the woman of Colchis starts screaming and tearing off her hair, frightened by her horrible vision. The textual basis for this very modern image of a nightmare's end – quite unparalleled in ancient literature – is very thin.

Yet, talking in general terms, I believe few will deny that the poem whose remains are preserved in POxy 4712 dealt at considerable length with genesis and contents of a dream by Medea, and shared some interesting features – on the structural and linguistic niveau – with passages from the third book of Apollonius' Argonautica. These two elements might be easy to reconcile with the elements we possess concerning the only other known Hellenistic poem on the Argonauts, namely the lost epic by Cleon of Kourion, which probably

\textsuperscript{42} See esp. Il. 2. 2-3 Δία δ'οίκ ἐξ ἥρμος ὑπνος / ἀλλ' ἄγε μεριμνεῖ. The sense of μεριμνα as "the cura occurring before sleep" is well discussed by d’Alessio 2005, 77.

\textsuperscript{43} See e. g. Maiist. 42 (quoted above note 14). Mosch. Eur. 16-17 ᾧ δ' ἄπο μέν στρωτῶν λέχεων βόρε δειμαίνουσα / παλαμομείνη κραδῆν. Ap. Rhod. 3. 695-6 τῆς δ'αἰνώς ἀπληστος ἐπέκλυσε θημάν ἄνή / δείματι, αἱ ἔσπακουσεν (Chalciope upon knowing of Medea's dreams); 3. 810; 4. 685 ὄποι δείματα πέμβεν ἀνέφου. Incidentally, δείμα will be the name of the statue dedicated to Medea's sons in Corinth: see Paus. 2.3.7 and Johnston 1997, 46-49 and 55-57.

\textsuperscript{44} The wording should be compared with Ap. Rhod. 3. 230-231 and 410 = 496 ταῦρῳ χαλκόποδοι στόματι φλόγα φυσιῶς. In l. 16 ἐκχυμένη must definitely refer to the φλοξ, see Paul. Sil. descr. S. Soph. 208-209 οὐχ οὕτως ἀκάχησεν ἀπ' ἀιθέρος ἐκχυμένη φλοξ / ἀνέφας.

\textsuperscript{45} On the linguistic implications of l. 20 ἐκ λέχεων ἀνέπαλτο, a phrasing that returns identical in Nonn. Dion. 7.156 (Semele after a nightmare; on Nonnus' imitations of book 3 of Apollonius' Argonautica see Vian 2001, 296-307), see d'Alessio 2005, 78; on the literary image of the "Erwachen" from dreams see Bühler 1960, 60-63. The image in ll. 18-19 of our fr. 2 is obscure, perhaps connected with the famous similitude of Medea's soul with sunbeams reflected by wavy water in a vessel (Ap. Rhod. 3.755-760; so tentatively d'Alessio), or perhaps with the fascinating comparison of dreams with reflections of images on a liquid surface, to be read in Arist. de insomn. 3.461a14-18.
made the object of a comparison with Apollonius' poem in the text of literary criticism badly preserved in PMich inv. 1316v (II cent. AD)\(^47\).

As d'Alessio has recently argued, the little we know about Cleon's poem from the scholia to Apollonius might well suggest that it deserved to be judged — in the terms used by the ancient commentator — as made up of "continuous and lengthy stories" (συνεχής καὶ πολύστιχος), in comparison with Apollonius' tighter narrative, certainly closer to Callimachean literary ideals\(^48\). This might hold true whether or not Cleon should be numbered among Callimachus' enemies in Aet. fr. 1 or be identified as the object of his satire in the 5th Iambus, as recent interpretations of (respectively) the Florentine scholia and the Milan diegesis might suggest\(^49\). In a word, Cleon perhaps used to describe at length, whereas Apollonius complied better with the French prescription: "on indique, on court, on sous-entend; on a la grâce, la discrétion, la finesse"\(^50\).

Even refraining from dealing closely with this issue here, I should like to mention three open questions that arise from POxy 4712:

1 — if the poem in our papyrus antedates Apollonius' Argonautica, should we really dismiss and minimize — as Wilamowitz did\(^51\) — the judgment of Asclepiades of Myrlea, according to whom Apollonius "took over everything" (τὰ πάντα μετήπερ γεγενν) from Cleon\(^52\)?

\(^{47}\) See Rusten 1982, 53-64; SH 339A; d'Alessio 2000, 97-109. The identification of Cleon as the poet compared with Apollonius goes back to Peter Parsons, and is particularly important in that it guarantees that Cleon's Argonautica were a poetical, not a prose work. The date of Cleon is very uncertain: according to Cameron 1995, 296 he "could have been pre-Hellenistic", but it is probably wiser to date him some time in the early 3th century, not too distant from Apollonius himself.

\(^{48}\) See d'Alessio 2005, 55, contra Rusten 1982, 56-57 and note 13, who identifies Apollonius as the author συνεχής and πολύστιχος (Rusten's treatment and edition of this difficult and badly flaked papyrus are nonetheless very valuable). On the literary background and purport of the discussion in the Michigan papyrus see also Hunter 2001, 108-112. One still unexplained feature of the text in PMich 1316v is the reference to "Medea's suitors" (Μηδείας μνηστήρας) in l. 24: Rusten 1982, 62-63 believes this to be a remnant of the plot of an earlier Argonaut story, surfacing also in the plot of Medea's dream with Jason coming to Colchis for her rather than for the Golden Fleece (3.619-623).

\(^{49}\) See d'Alessio 2000, 105-107 and Lehnus 2002, 12.

\(^{50}\) Sainte-Beuve 1879, 394-395.

\(^{51}\) Wilamowitz 1924, II, 189 n. 1: "allerdings wird es schwer an Argonautika vor Apollonios zu glauben und Asclepiades mochte sich hierin täuschen lassen". Similarly Weinberger 1921.

\(^{52}\) Schol. Ap. Rhod. 1.623-26a (SH 339): ὅτι δὲ ἐνθάδε Θόας ἐσώθη καὶ Κλέων ὁ Κούρεως ἱστορεῖ καὶ Ἀσκληπιάδης ὁ Μυρκεαῖος [FGH 697 F 5] δεικνύειν ὅτι παρὰ Κλέως τὰ πάντα μετήπερ γέγενν Ἀπολλώνιος: on this scholium, and on its importance for our knowledge of an ancient debate concerning the sources of Apollonius, see d'Alessio 2000, 92-95, who also ascribes on good grounds to Asclepiades the treatise fragmentarily preserved in PMich 1316v. It is unclear whether here τὰ πάντα should be taken as referring only to the episode of Thoas'
2 – was Apollonius really the first to introduce new literary patterns for monologues and dreams? Was he the first to portray the character of Medea as the incarnation of a new kind of femininity and love? And how should we gauge the possibility that centuries later Cleon might have represented a source for the plot of Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*?

3 – what should we make of recent theories underscoring the very existence of an ongoing tradition of mythological epic in Hellenistic times?

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53 See Zanker 1979, 69: "As far as we can tell, Apollonius was the first to treat of the love theme in epic to this extent". See also Paduano 1972, 63-64 (with earlier bibliography). The prominent role of Medea – known to Mimn. fr. 11.1 W. – was maybe an innovation by the Corinthian poet Eumelus, though we know very little on the exact development of the Argonautic saga in its first literary *facies*: see Michelazzo 1975; Matthews 1977; Zanker 1979, 69-70; Deias 2003; more generally on the literary antecedents of Apollonius see Hunter 1989, 12-21; Dräger 2001, 7-30; Scherer 2006, 9-42.

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