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## THE ARGONAUTICA IN POST-ANCIENT EPOCH

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Valeri Asatiani (Tbilisi)

### THE ARGONAUT MYTH IN THE BYZANTINE LITERATURE

The Argonaut myth was well-known in the Byzantine Greek literature, in prose as well as in poetry. The elements of antiquity were still strong in the literature of the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries. The motifs and themes of the Hellenistic period frequently repeated in poems. Byzantine poets continued to treat ancient myths and legends in their epic works (A. Urushadze, *The Ancient Land of Colchis in the Argonaut Myth*, Tbilisi, 1964, 82).

In the epic poem "Dionysiaca", Nonnos of Panopolis (the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> cc.) relates a fantastic legend about Dionysus' journey to India aimed to disseminate the culture of vine. Special attention is paid to Phrixus, who is a prominent figure in the story of Jason and the Argonauts. He arrived in Colchis on a flying golden ram. The poet also mentions Circe: "I heard that the exiled lad, who held the reins of the miraculous ram carrying him through the air to the land of Colchis, is still alive" (X, 99-101) (... εἰς χθόνα Κόλχων); "Circe – sister of Aietes, having magic power" (Κίρκη, σύγγονος Αἰήταο πολύθρονος, XIII, 331).

It is worth mentioning that the poet Marianus, known by his metaphrastic works (the 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> cc.), elaborated and extended the "Argonautica" by Apollonius Rhodius (5 608 iambic trimeter).

Clement of Alexandria (the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> cc.), one of the Church fathers, refers to the Argonaut myth in the "Stromata" ("Miscellanies"):

- "Medea, the daughter of Aietes, was the first to use dyes to change the colour of hair" ("Georgica", I, 24).

- "Theseus, a rival of Heracles, lived one generation prior to the Trojan War... There was a period of 63 years from Dionysius to Heracles, Jason and other heroes of the Argonautic expedition. According to Apollonius' "Argonautica", Asclepius and the Dioscuri also accompanied them."

Methodius of Patara writes in his work "Symposium, or on Virginity" (the 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> cc.) that the zodiac of Aries (the Ram) was exactly the ram that carried Phrixus and Helle, Athamas' daughter, away from the Scythians.

Among other writers who referred to the Argonaut legend were rhetoricians Libanius (314-393) and Themistius (317-388)<sup>1</sup>, the sophist philosopher Eunapius (345-420) and the historian of the Christian Church, Salminius Hermias Sozomenus (400-450).

Procopius of Caesarea regards the Argonauts' expedition as a historical fact and mentions such names as Aietes, Apsyrtus, Jason and Medea. According to Procopius, there was a fortress of Aietes in the ancient land of Colchis, Lazica, near the bank of the river Phasis (Rioni). ... Ταύτην παραρρεῖ τὴν χώραν ποταμός Ρέων ὄνομα...

In the work "On the Reign of Justinian", Agathias Scholasticus (536-582) mentions Jason, the ship "Argo", the city of Apsorunt (derived from the name of Apsyrtus) and talks about the glorious past of the land of Colchis. "The Laz people are a strong and brave tribe, and even dominate over other strong tribes. They are proud of their historical glory and are excessively arrogant, which, probably, is not groundless. Among the tribes subordinated to another state, I can not recall any other tribe thus renowned and splendid owing to the profusion of wealth and the multitude of its subjects, to the abundance and rich harvest as well as to the loveliness of their character and agility" ("Georgica", III).

The kingdom of Aietes is mentioned in the history of Menander Protector (5<sup>th</sup> c.) – "A Truce between the Byzantines and the Persians": "When the Midians occupied the disputable territory of Colchis, intending to make them subjects of theirs, they failed to achieve anything for a long period, even after so many a struggle ...

Thus, if a man does not recall brazen-footed bulls and giants sprung from the ground, as well as many other wonders and unbelievable stories included in the myth about Aietes, he will be certain that the present state is even better" (Agathias, "Georgica", III, 50-51). So, the fragment refers to the well-known episode of the Argonaut myth.

Stephanus of Byzantium (the 6<sup>th</sup> c.) offers several remarkable explanations. Here are the notes included in the "Ethnica":

Aia – the capital of Colchis, built by Aietes, 300 stadia away from the sea; with two rivers, Hippius ( Ἰππῶς) and Cyaneus (Κυάνεος), which make it a peninsula. In my opinion, it is the opposite, "Aietes" must have been derived from it, Aia Aietes in the same way as Asia Asiate. There is also Aia of

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<sup>1</sup> According to Themistius, he was educated in rhetoric in the school of Phasis in Colchis (... not in a quiet and Hellenic environment, but at the edge of Pontus, near Phasis... Oratio, XXVII).

Thessaly, mentioned by Sophocles. About the first he says "sailed to Aia", while about the second he states "There is a certain Aia, the land of the Thessalians". Aia was also a spring in Macedonia, according to Antimachus' "Thebais" ("Georgica", III, 274).

The Amarantes – a Colchian tribe. The Phasis flows from their country (cf. Amiranmta – Amirani Mountain – mentioned in M. Chikovani's work) and that is why the Phasis is referred to as "Amarantio". Cf. the Scholiast: "Amarantos is a town in Pontus." According to Herodianus, they are the hills of Colchis from where the Phasis river flows. "Amarantioi – is a barbarian tribe dwelling above the Colchians, on the land – from this point the springs of the Phasis stream down, or it is a mountain in Colchis, called Amarantion, where the Phasis river has its source" (Apoll. Rh., II, 401; III, 1217; "Georgica", III, 275).

The island of Ares – located in Pontus in the neighborhood of the Colchians, as mentioned by Scymnus (Σκυμνός, the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. B.C.) in the "Asia".

Apsyrtides – the islands in the Adriatic Sea, called so after Apsyrtus, the son of Aietes, killed by his sister Medea on one of the islands. The inhabitants of these islands were called the Apsyrts. In Euxeinus Pontos, there is a place Apsar, earlier called Apsyrt. Artemidorus (1<sup>st</sup> c.) mentions in his "Overview" a town and an island called Apsyrt.

Dioscuria – one of the white islands in Libya. ... There is another Dioscuria in Pontus, Sebastopol, previously called Aia according to Nikanor (Nikanor of Alexandria, 2<sup>nd</sup> c.).

Kytaia – a Colchian town, the birthplace of Medea. There is another one, in Scythia. There is also a town "Kytaion" on Crete.

Phasis – There is a town in the land of the Colchians, on the Phasis river ("Georgica", III, 274-289).

The Chronograph of John Malalas includes the stories about the sorceress Circe, Circe's sister, Calypso, and Odysseus. According to John, Circe and Calypso were the daughters of Atlas and ruled over two islands. Circe was the ruler of Aia and the priestess of Helios. She claimed to be Helios' daughter and treated foreign visitors with food and drinks mixed with mesmerizing drugs. Circe bore Odysseus a son, who afterwards killed his father (FGH, I, Chron. v.p. 117, 17-119, 23, cf. "Odyssey", X, 135).

John Malalas refers to two individuals as the sources for this fragment. They are Sisyphus, to which the tradition ascribes a work called "Troid", and Dictis of Crete. No clear information is available about the latter; however, according to an ancient tradition, he presumably accompanied Cretan King Idomeneus, the son of Deucalion, and at the behest of the king composed in Phoenician "Diaries" describing the war.



The "Chronicles" also describe the battle between Amycus, the King of the Bebrycians and the Argonauts (see Apoll. Rhod., "Argonautica", II, 1-136).

According to Charax of Pergamon, the "History" or "Archeology" by John of Antioch (6<sup>th</sup> c.) offers rationalistic explanation of the myth of the Golden Fleece maintaining that it was a book written on leather and containing information about how to receive gold through chemistry (διά χημείας).

Besides, similarly to John Malalas, it gives an account of the battle between Amycus, the King of the Bebrycians, and the Argonauts. Byzantine writers (George Cedrenus, Nicephorus Callistus and an anonymous author) frequently included this episode of the story in their works. The same episode was related by Euthymius of Athos (955-1028), who had learned about the Argonaut legend from Byzantine sources (The Account of the Miracles of Archangel Michael by the Patriarch Germanus). The Georgian version includes interpolations. Euthymius, as usual, added to it some new passages, biblical and historical information. What captured my attention about Euthymius' interpolations was the story of the Sosten (Susten) temple located in the vicinity of Chalcedon. The story includes an episode from the Argonaut legend – the Argonauts' encounter with Amycus, the King of the Bebrycians, and the erection of the temple (K. Kekelidze, A. Urushadze).

Especially interesting are the comments and entries about Colchis and the Argonauts included in the Suda (the 10<sup>th</sup> c):

Aia – land; Aiaia – islands, Aietes – name, also "An Epic about Aietes", Argonauts – sailors of the Argo; The Fleece – A piece of golden-haired leather which Jason found in Colchis; a book written on leather containing information about how to receive gold through chemistry; (The Iberians and Iberia); Circe – a woman who prepared medicines. We call female villains "Circes"; Colchis – Lazeti (the land of the Laz); Kytaiia – a town. Also Kytiisis; Kytaiion – a certain place, Medea – Colchian, the daughter of Aietes, the greatest sorceress of all women. She made Jason invulnerable so that he could yoke the fire-breathing bulls (to a plough) and still the earth. Having acquiring the Golden-Haired Fleece, he carried away Medea as well. The Greeks used to call natural oil Medea's oil (see Nikandros, the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. B.C., sch. 249, 35). This note is preserved in the work of Nicandros Colophon (the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. B.C.).

"The Medean or a one-day medicine" – a preparation called Colchian or Barbarian, which barbarians also call oil (νάφθαλας); if applied (to one's body) or put on the clothes worn over, or something else is dipped in it and then is exposed to the sun, all will be destroyed and wiped out as if by fire: because of the burning quality of it.

Apparently, Medea discovered the way to prepare it, and that is why it is called Colchian (medicine)... (The remedy) grows by the Himan river (in ancient sources the name is used to refer to the rivers in Scythia: Dnestr, Kuban, Bug), and by the noon it fades away. This may also account for calling it "one-day") because those who drink it cannot survive a full day..."

Joseph Genesisius (the 10<sup>th</sup> c.) in his work "Reigns" (Γενεσιού Βασιλείαι) refers to the Argonaut myth to state that the Armenians borrowed their appellation from Armenus, the inhabitant of Armenion, a town in Thessaly (ἐξ' Ἀρμένιου) who took part in the campaign to Colchis together with Jason ("Georgica", IV, 2, 308).

George Cedrenus (the 11<sup>th</sup> c.) in his "Concise History" tells the story of the Argonauts' expedition and of Heracles' stay in Colchis in the company of the Argonauts.

The work of Eudocia Ἰωνία – "Ionia" – is a historical-mythological dictionary based on different sources.

In Eudocia's work, the Argonaut myth is treated in detail. The following themes are presented as separated articles: Athamas (28); Aietes (37); Alcimede (45); Argos (197); About the Argo (198); Apsyrtus (214); About Phrixus and Helle (342); How many and who the Argonauts were, whom and where they originated from (439); Jason (478 a); Genealogy of Jason (478 B); Circe (537); The Ram (543); Medea (647); Phrixus (954).

The above-mentioned extracts attest that Byzantine authors frequently referred to the episodes of the Argonaut myth, and presented the epic treatment of the events. What captures attention are the characters and place names of the myths commented on in the works of historians and encyclopaedic collections. It is noteworthy that a great deal of information about mythological characters and place names can be found in encyclopedias and the works of historians.

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### **A LA RECHERCHE... D'ARGONAUTIQUE BYZANTINE PERDUE**

Das Thema der Argonautenabenteuer und deren Aufenthalts bei den Kolchern, das Bild Medeas, Iasons Schicksal, obwohl kein Hauptgegenstand irgendeines epischen Poems in Byzanz geworden ist (Johannes Tzetzes' "Antehomerica, HomERICA und Posthomerica" ist eine Ausnahme und ist außer Rechnung, da das Hauptthema des Werkes viel breiter als *pure et dûre* Argonautik ist), hat aber viele Spuren in der byzantinischen Literatur hinterlassen. Der auf der Antike sich orientierte Nonnos von Panopolis vom 5. Jh. erwähnt nicht einmal in den Dionysiaka das Schiff Argo<sup>1</sup>. Der Konstantinopolitanische Patriarch zw. 858 und 886 (mit der Pause) Photios erzählt in seiner Myriobiblion-Bibliothek u.a. über die Kolcher<sup>2</sup>, Argo<sup>3</sup>, die Argonauten und Peleius<sup>4</sup>, Medea<sup>5</sup> und Iason<sup>6</sup>. Noch mit der heidnischen Tradition verbundener Libanios<sup>7</sup> hat eine Ekphrase Medeas und in einem Brief erwähnt er Iason<sup>8</sup> mit. Mehrere byzantinische Lexika sind auch mit diesem Gegenstand gut bekannt.

So behauptet man in Etymologicum Magnum (vom ersten Hälfte des 12. Jh.), das Schiff Argo habe seinen Eponym von der Stadt wo es konstruiert worden war, d.h. Argos, oder von Argos, der das Schiff gemacht hatte<sup>9</sup>. Etymologicum Magnum bezieht sich in diesem Zusammenhang auf den

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<sup>1</sup> Nonni Panopolitani Dionysiaka, 47. 255; 13. 87.

<sup>2</sup> Photii Bibliotheca, III. 31. 37; 2. P. 38. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem, III. 55. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem, VII. P. 33. 43.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, VII. 141. 27 und III. P. 38. 31, 40-41, 62. 39, 63. 41.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem, III. 55. 30; 31; p. 31. 31-36; p. 38. 31. 1; p. 62. 22.

<sup>7</sup> Libanii Opera, VIII. 516. 5-518. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Libanii Epistolae, ed. Foerster, X. 57. 17.

<sup>9</sup> Etymologicum Magnum, P. 388-389; 136. 32-36.

Historiker Hege[sippos], wenn Tzetzes im Lykophonkommentar<sup>10</sup> auf Salaminier Hegesandros.

Der letzte heidnische Geschichtsschreiber in Byzanz Zosimos, dessen "Neugeschichte" vom 5. Jh. datiert ist, erwähnt Peisandros als Verfasser der "Heroischen Theomagien", wo die Beschreibung des Weges der Argonauten vom Pontos durch den Ister in Richtung des Norikergebietes über die Stadt Emonos<sup>11</sup> steht.

In den byzantinischen Beschreibungen der weiteren Reise der Argonauten bemerkt man eine Kontamination der heidnischen und christlichen Elementen. So erzählte Johannes Antiochenus am Anfang des 7. Jh. im Text nach dem Cod. Paris. gr. 1630 wie die Argonauten zu Kyzikos angereist waren und den dortigen König Kyzik umgebracht hatten, aber danach sie errichteten einen Tempel im Namens der Rhea. Darüber erzählt auch Zosimos<sup>12</sup>. Später aber, nach Johannes, ist dieser Tempel als Mariaskirche benannt geworden. Dann passierte der Zug über Bithynien und sie besiegten dort den Barbar Amykos, wonach auch ein Tempel errichtet wurde, welchen später der Kaiser Konstantin I. im Ehren des Erzengels Michael nannte<sup>13</sup>. Darüber spricht auch Johannes Malalas, ergänzend daß es Kaiser Zeno war, der den Rheatempel als Gottesmutter-Kirche umbenannt hat<sup>14</sup>. Die Kyzikos-Geschichte ist später, im 12. Jh. übereinstimmend von Georgios Kedrenus nacherzählt<sup>15</sup>, danach auch von Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos im 14. Jh.<sup>16</sup> im Zusammenhang mit dem Kaiser Konstantin dem Grossen, der die Argonautengedenksäule in Sosthenion, wo die zwei Kirchen dem Erzengel Michael errichtet hätte, gefunden habe<sup>17</sup>.

Johannes Tzetzes wie in Gedichtsform<sup>18</sup>, so auch im prosaischen Kommentar<sup>19</sup> erzählt die Entstehungsgeschichte Jasons und dessen Verhältnis in Bezug auf Pelias nach.

Eine Sonderstellung bei den Byzantinern hat der Fahrtteilnehmerkatalog. Wenn Tzetzes den aus Apollonios Rhodios ausgeschriebenen Katalog<sup>20</sup> wiederholte, Stephan von Byzanz im 6. Jh. den Amyros im Zusammenhang

<sup>10</sup> Ioannis Tzetzae Commentarii ad Lycophronem, 833.

<sup>11</sup> Zosimi ... Historia Ecclesiastica, 286. 14-287. 2, Bonn.

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, 97. 2-14, Bonn.

<sup>13</sup> Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum, vol. IV. 548. F. 15.1-2.

<sup>14</sup> Ioannis Malalae Chronographia, ed. Thurn, 54. 68-56. 24.

<sup>15</sup> Georgii Cedreni... 104. 4-13, Bonn.

<sup>16</sup> VII. 50.

<sup>17</sup> PG 145, 1865, coll. 1328C-1329B.

<sup>18</sup> Ioannis Tzetzae Historiae, ed. P. Leone., Chil. VI. 96: P. 251. 973-984.

<sup>19</sup> Ioannis Tzetzae Commentarii ad Lykoph., 175.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, 175; cf. 874.

mit dem Stadtnamen hervortrat<sup>21</sup>, und bei seinem fast Zeitgenossen Hesychios ist Azoros spezial erwähnt<sup>22</sup>.

Um der Namen der Heniochoi bei Dioskurias zu erklären, machte man die Wagenlenker der Dioskuren zu Argonauten, Amphistratos und Rhekas (?), oder Amphitos und Telchis (?); so bei Eustathios von Thessalonike im Kommentar zu Dionysios Periegetes<sup>23</sup>. Auch im 12. Jh. bei Tzetzes sind viele geographische Bezeichnungen des Kolchischen Landes erwähnt<sup>24</sup>, die im Westen wieder erschienen.

Noch einige Bemerkungen zu den byzantinischen Interpretationen. Nach dem Etymologicum Magnum solle Paissos von einer Landung der Argonauten seinen Namen haben<sup>25</sup>.

Verschiedene Variationen der Geschichte des Hylaskultes findet man wie bei Eustathios' Kommentaren zu Dionysios Periegetes<sup>26</sup>, so im Lexikon "Suda" (10. Jh.)<sup>27</sup>.

Weitere Beschreibungen des Argonautenzuges befinden sich in verschiedenen byzantinischen Texten. Von Amykos (darüber als Königsnamen der Bebriker in Etymologicum Magnum)<sup>28</sup> gelangen die Argonauten alsbald zu Phineus am Bosphoros vor dem Eingang zum Pontos, wohnte nach anderen dagegen am Pontos selbst in Paphlagonien (so bei Stephan von Byzanz<sup>29</sup>), oder in der Gegend von Salmydessos<sup>30</sup>. Phineussage wiedererzählt Eustathius<sup>31</sup>. Dann wieder, nach Tzetzes<sup>32</sup>, die Boreaden Kalais und Zetes griffen die Harpyien an, jagten sie in die Flucht und töteten sie.

Der Historiker vom Ende 8./Anfang 9. Jh. Georgios Syncellos erwähnt zwischen den Argonauten Herakles, die Dioskuriden und Asklepios<sup>33</sup>.

Wenn man die nördliche Richtung der Fahrt im Pontos betrachten kann, ist hier die Stadt Medeia (nach dem Memoirist des 14. Jh. ex-Kaiser Johannes Kantakuzenos<sup>34</sup>), das skytische Kytaiia (nach Stephan von Byzanz<sup>35</sup>), wie auch

<sup>21</sup> Stephanus Byzantinus, *Ethnika*, 88. 10.

<sup>22</sup> Hesychii Alexandrini *Lexicon*, ed. M. Schmidt, 44. 20-21.

<sup>23</sup> Eustathii Thessalonicensis *Commentarii ad Dionysium Periegetem*, 680.

<sup>24</sup> Ioannis Tzetzae *Commentarii ad Lycophr.*, 1312.

<sup>25</sup> *Etymologicum Magnum*, ed. Th. Gaisford, 119. 33-37: P. 338

<sup>26</sup> Eustathii... *ad Dionys. Per.* 805.

<sup>27</sup> *Suidae Lexicon*, ed. A. Adler, T. IV. S. 638. 16-22, n. 90.

<sup>28</sup> *Etymologicum Magnum*, 87, 11-12, l. 240.

<sup>29</sup> Stephanus Byz. *Ethnika*, 562.22-24. Cf. Eustathii Thessalonicensis *Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem*, 362. 8.

<sup>30</sup> Stephanus... 551. 21.

<sup>31</sup> Eustathii... *Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem*, XII, 69.

<sup>32</sup> Ioannis Tzetzae *Historiae*, Chil. I. 212-230: P. 10-11, n. 7.

<sup>33</sup> Georgius Syncellus, *Ecloga Chronographica*, ed. A. A. Mosshammer, 183. 27-28.

<sup>34</sup> Ioannis Cantacuzeni *Historiae*, vol. III. P. 62. 22-23; 63. 5-6, Bonn.

<sup>35</sup> Stephanus Byz., 398. 14-399. 3.

die Gründung Pantikapaions durch einen Sohn des Aietes (bei Stephan<sup>36</sup> und bei Eustathios im Kommentar zu Dionysios Periegetes<sup>37</sup>) erwähnt.

Bei der östlichen Richtung der Fahrt im Pontos, sollte ein Grab den Steuermann Tiphys bergen, den plötzlich der Tod überraschte, während die Helden noch um Idmon trauerten, wie es bei Tzetzes im Lykophronkommentar<sup>38</sup> erwähnt ist.

Nach dem Etymologicum Magnum<sup>39</sup> hatten die Argonauten dem Euarchosflusse seinen Namen gegeben und Sinopes Pflanzenstadt Kytoros galt für eine Gründung des Phrixossohnes Kytoros (wie bei Stephan von Byzanz<sup>40</sup>) oder Kytisoros<sup>41</sup>. Nach Eustathius sei auch<sup>42</sup> Glaukos der Erbauer und Steuermann der Argo gewesen und sei bei einem Kampfe der Argonauten und Thyrrhener (vermutlich bei Lemnos bzw. bei Kyzikos) allein unverwundet geblieben.

Was sich um den Drachenkampf handelt, stammten die Drachenzähne, welche Iason säen mußte, nicht von einem durch Iason getöteten Drachen, sondern von dem Kadmosdrachen: Kadmos nach Tzetzes<sup>43</sup> habe seiner Zeit nur die Hälfte der Zähne verbraucht, die andere Hälfte sei von Ares, Athena oder Phrixos nach Kolchis gebracht und dem Aietes geschenkt, der sie nun Iason übergab.

Der verbreiteten antiken Meinungen nach, hat Iason den Drachen getötet. Johannes Tzetzes aber im Kommentar zu Lykophron behauptete (nach Lykophron selbst, wie auch Apollodor, Ovid u. a.), daß Medea den Drachen mit Zaubermitteln verschläfert hat und also Iason die Gelegenheit verschaffte, die Goldenen Vliess zu entwenden<sup>44</sup>.

Die Byzantiner haben die Beschreibungen bzw. Erwähnungen der Städte und Orte in Kolchis und den benachbarten Ländern als Beweis, daß die Argonauten wirklich in diesen Gebieten geweilt hätten, so die Stadt Aia am Phasis<sup>45</sup>, Kytaia, nach welcher Aietes und Medea das Beiwort Kytaeisch führen (bei Stephan von Byzanz<sup>46</sup>; Tzetzes<sup>47</sup>; bei Prokop von Kaisareia<sup>48</sup>; und

<sup>36</sup> Ibidem, 501.13-502. 3.

<sup>37</sup> Eustathii... Commentarii ad Dionys. Per., 311.

<sup>38</sup> Ioannis Tzetzae. Comm. ad Lycophr., 890.

<sup>39</sup> Etymologicum Magnum, 388. 45-45: P. 1115.

<sup>40</sup> Stephanus Byz., 399. 12-14.

<sup>41</sup> Eustathii... Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem, P. 361. 41.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem, 271. 24.

<sup>43</sup> Ioannis Tzetzae Comment. ad Lycophr., 175.

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem, 175.

<sup>45</sup> Eustathii... Commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam, I. P. 321. 1614. 5-6.

<sup>46</sup> Ethnika. 398.14-399.3.

<sup>47</sup> Ioannis Tzetzae Commentarii ad Lycophr., 174.

<sup>48</sup> DeBello Gothico, // Procopii Caesariensis, Bella, ed. Haury, vol. IV. 14. 49: II. 565. 7-10.

Agathias aus Myrina (Kleinasien), 6. Jh.<sup>49</sup>). Dioskurias, nach Nikanor bei Stephan von Byzanz<sup>50</sup>, sei das alte Aia, für eine Gründung der Dioskuren als Argonauten oder ihrer Wagenlenker Amphistratos und Rhekas oder Amphitos und Telchis, welche auch dem Stamme der Heniocher seinen Namen gegeben haben sollten<sup>51</sup>. Die Achaioi, von denen es sonst hieß, sie seien nach dem troianischen Kriege von Askalon und Ialmenos oder von Achilleus (wie bei Eustathius zu Dionysios Periegetes<sup>52</sup>) an die Pontosküste geführt, sollten nach anderen von den Genossen Iasons stammen; ebenso die Albaner und Iberer und die nach Iasons Begleiter Armenos genannten Armenier (Eustathius im zu Dionysios Periegetes Kommentar<sup>53</sup> und in den Parekbolen zu Ilias<sup>54</sup>, wo doch steht Ormenion).

Bei der Heimatfahrt der Argonauten, sowohl nach dem heidnischen Historiker Zosimos (V. 29), als auch dem kirchlichen Geschichtsschreiber Sozomen<sup>55</sup>, sei die Argo zwar den Isros und die Sau hinaufgefahren, dann aber auf den Schultern der Helden oder auf Walzen zu einem in das Adriatische Meer mündenden Fluß hinübergetragen.

Andere Einzelheiten verstanden die byzantinischen Autoren wieder sprüchlich im Zusammenhang mit der angenommenen Tradition. So ist die Apsyrtosaffäre in der Stadt Apsaros (ehemalige Apsyrtos) nach Prokop<sup>56</sup> stattgefunden, nach Stephan von Byzanz<sup>57</sup> aber bei Tomoi<sup>58</sup>.

Nach der byzantinischen Tradition, die die Argonauten verfolgenden Kolcher selbst kehrten aus Furcht vor Aietes nicht wieder in ihr Vaterland zurück, sondern sind in verschiedenen Orten an der adriatischen Küste angesiedelt, so in Istrien, Illyrien, Epeiros, in Polai (nach Tzetzes<sup>59</sup>), am Dizeros, nach dem Suchen der Medea benannten (ebenda und bei Stephan von Byzanz<sup>60</sup>), wie auch auf den Apsyrtosinseln (Eustathius zu Dionysios Periegetes<sup>61</sup>).

Nicht nur in der früh- und mittebyzantinischen Literatur kann man das argonautische Sujet treffen. Die spätbyzantinischen Schriftsteller wie Theodoros

<sup>49</sup> Agathiae Myrinensis Historia, ed. Keydell, 65. 15-17.

<sup>50</sup> Stephanus Byz., Ethnika, 233. 15-19.

<sup>51</sup> Eustathii... Commentarii ad Dionys., Perieget., 687.

<sup>52</sup> Ibidem, 680, 685.

<sup>53</sup> Ibidem, 694.

<sup>54</sup> Eustathii... Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem, 332. 2: I, P. 269. 9-15.

<sup>55</sup> Sozomeni Historia Ecclesiastica, I. 6.

<sup>56</sup> Procopii Caesariensis... Bellum Gothicum, IV. 2: II. 492. 9-14.

<sup>57</sup> Stephanus Byz., 628. 6-8.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Ioannis Tzetzae Comm. ad Lykophr., 175.

<sup>59</sup> Ibidem, Scholia, 1022.

<sup>60</sup> Stephanus Byz., 230. 10-12.

<sup>61</sup> Eustathii... Comm. Dionys. Per., 488.

Metochites oder Johannes Kantakuzenos im 14. Jh. demonstrieren ihre Kenntniß dieses Themas.

Sogar in der nachbyzantinischen Dichtung gibt es interessante Bearbeitung des Medea-Iason-Stoffes. K. Krumbacher hat nach einer handschriftlichen Kopie des 16. Jh. ein Poem "Synaxarien der Vornehmen Männer und Frauen" veröffentlicht<sup>62</sup>, wo Medea und Iason ihre unbestreitbaren Platz empfangen.

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<sup>62</sup> Krumbacher K., Ein vulgärgriechischer Weiberspiegel, München, 1905, 335-433.



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**THE LEGEND OF THE ARGONAUTS  
IN PROCOPIUS' OF CAESAREA *GOthic* WARS**

In the fourth book of his Gothic Wars, before presenting the relations between the Byzantines and the Persians after 550 A.D., as well as the conflict that opposed the two powers for control over the Lazicum region lying on the eastern coast of the Black Sea, Procopius offers a description of the south and east shores of the Pontus Euxinus and of the Caucasian region, description destined to provide his reader with the basic geographical coordinates that could enable him to follow the account of the historical events in their own setting. The choice of the writer was influenced also by the fact that, although during his age some works by ancient authors on the same topic were still available, they were not corresponding to his high standards. Without naming these authors, Procopius blames them for important errors and inadvertences that he illustrates by examples. He also argues that their works aren't anymore up to date, because of the numerous changes produced in the geography of the region by the implacable lapse of the time. By these statements he stands out from most Greek historians of the Roman and Byzantine periods, who, seemingly convinced by the immutability of geographical facts, weren't hesitating to take over information regarding the furthestmost regions of the globe from the works of authors who had lived many centuries or even one millennium before. Another usual feature of the Greek history writing was the intermixture of historical data and mythical or legendary facts in the geographical and ethnographic descriptions. Programmatically turning away from this practice, Procopius clearly states: "I think that history is far away from the legend (μύθου γὰρ ἱστορίαν παρὰ πολὺ κερῶριῶσαι οἶμαι, 8.1.13.1-2) and ensures his reader that he won't provide him with legendary information or with one concerning facts too

ancient to be well known (οὐ τὰ μυθώδη περὶ αὐτῶν ἀπαγγέλλοντι ἢ ἄλλως ἀρχαῖα, 8.1.12.2-3). And in order to make his message clearer the historian specifies that he won't utter an opinion on the place where Prometheus was supposed to have been put into chains (οὐδὲ ὅπη ποτὲ Πόντου τοῦ Εὐξείνου δεθῆναι τὸν Προμηθεῖα ποιηταὶ λέγουσι, 8.1.12.3-13.1). In his description of the Pontus he will present – we may infer – only well documented geographical, ethnographical and historical information, that aim to represent an important qualitative leap as compared to his predecessors.

Nevertheless in the second chapter of the fourth book, that comprises the description of Pontus, no less than three passages concerning the legend of the Argonauts occur. This one is however perceived by the Byzantine historian, as we shall show in the following lines, as an unchallenged historical reality in contrast to Prometheus myth, the *par excellence* legend of the Caucasus. Like every Greek, Procopius automatically connects the expedition of the Argonauts with this part of the world, considering it as the event that had the longest lasting influence on the Pontic region.

The first trace of the Argonauts' voyage encountered by the traveller who covers the stretch of the south coast of the Black Sea from west towards east is to be found, according to Procopius, in the ancient town of Apsarus (today Gonio in Georgia, 12 km south of Batumi). In the opinion of the Byzantine historian and not only his, the ancient name of the town was Apsyrτος, from the man treacherously killed by Medea and Jason (αὕτη Ἄψυρτος τὸ παλαιὸν ὠνομάζετο, ὁμώνυμος τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ διὰ τὸ πάθος γεγεννημένη. ἐνταῦθα γὰρ φασιν οἱ ἐπιχώριοι ἐξ ἐπιβουλῆς Μηδείας τε καὶ Ἰάσονος τὸν Ἄψυρτον ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀφανισθῆναι, καὶ δι' αὐτὸ τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν τὸ χωρίον λαβεῖν, 8.2.12.1-6), whose tomb was still extant at that time on the east side of the town. (τοῦτου δὲ τοῦ Ἄψυρτου καὶ τάφος ἐς τῆς πόλεως τὰ πρὸς ἀνίσχοντα ἡλίον ἐστίν, 8.2.14.1-3). It has had its times of glory, having been enclosed with strong walls and adorned with a theatre and a hippodrome (αὕτη πόλις ἦν τὸ παλαιὸν πολυάνθρωπος, καὶ τείχους μὲν αὐτὴν περιέβαλε μέγα τι χρῆμα, θεάτρῳ δὲ καὶ ἵπποδρόμῳ ἐκαλλωπίζετο, 8.2.14.3-5), but in Procopius' age it had completely fallen into decay. From the flourishing town only the foundations of the wall now remained (νῦν δὲ δὴ αὐτῶν ἄλλο οὐδὲν ἀπολέλειπται, ὅτι μὴ τῆς κατασκευῆς τὰ ἐδάφη, 8.2.14.7-8).

If, in all the variants of the Argonauts' legend, Apsyrτος was the son of king Aietes and the stepbrother of Medea, the sources contradict each other on his status and role in the moment of his sister's eloping with Jason, who took away the precious Golden Fleece. The first category of sources presents Apsyrτος as a child that his sister murders right in Aietes' palace (Sophocles,

*Kolchides*, frg. 319; Euripides, *Medea*, 167-1334; Callimachus, frg. 411), or drags him along with her on board the ship Argos, where she assassinates him, chops him up and throws the pieces into the waves of the river Phasis (Pherekydes, frg. 73), in the waters of the Black Sea (Apollodorus, I, 9, 24; Zenobius, IV, 92) or on the coast of Scythia Minor (Cicero, *De imperio Cnaei Pompei*, 22; Ovidius, *Tristia*, III, 9, 27 et seq., *Heroides*, VI, 129 et seq., XII, 113 et seq.) in order to force her pursuers to stop for a while to gather the mortal remains of Apsyrtos and to bury them according to the tradition. The second category of sources depicts Apsyrtos as a grown-up man, to whom his father entrusts the pursuit and the bringing back home of Medea, by force. Of course, he did not achieve his purpose, but was murdered by Jason with the help of his cunning sister (Apollonius Rhodius, IV, 305; Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 23; *Argonautica Orphica*, 1022 et seq.).

The scene of the awful assassination is also located by the sources in three extremely different places, far away from each other. These are the town of Tomis (today Constanța in Romania) on the west shore of the Black Sea (Ovidius, *Tristia*, III, 9; Steven of Byzantium, s.v. *Tomeus*; Apollodorus, I, 9, 24, 2), the Apsyrtides islands, located in the Adriatic Sea, on the high seas of the Istrian Peninsula (Plinius, *Naturalis Historia*, III, 151; Strabo, VII, 315), and Apsarus on the eastern coast of the Pontus (Arrian, *Periplus Ponti Euxini* 7; Steven of Byzantium, s.v. Apsyrtides).

All this mythical material may shed light onto the sources, the options and the reasons for selecting the information provided by Procopius about Apsyrtos. First of all, it seems obvious to us that the Byzantine writer does not intend to enter the polemic around the details of Apsyrtos' legend that he considers a reality, whose elucidation he plans with the scientific methods of the historian. For him, the fact that at Apsarus in the Pontic region the tomb of Medea's brother was still visible represents the supreme and irrefutable argument for locating the dreadful crime in that precise place. Since, with regard to the other aspects of the legend there wasn't so tangible evidence, Procopius prefers to mention only those points that were not engendering contradictions between the sources (the fact that Apsyrtos murdering was owed to the perfidiousness of the couple Jason – Medea). This tendency is pushed to extreme when the historian from Caesarea does not mention Apsyrtos as Medea's (step) brother, but refers to him with the most general appellative of "man", that gives rise to a well-inspired pun due to the addition "made to disappear from among the men" through the artfulness of Medea and Jason (ἐξ ἐπιβουλῆς Μηδείας τε καὶ Ἰάσονος τὸν Ἄψυρτον ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀφανισθῆναι, 8.2.12.4-5).

The presence in Arrian's work of the same location for Apsyrtos' tomb forces us to wonder whether the Bythinian historian from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.

represented the source of inspiration for the data provided by Procopius. First of all, let's pay attention to the statements of Arrian who has visited the town of Apsaros, passing into review and paying the salaries of the five garrisons that were settled there: "It is said that the village of Apsaros was once called Apsyrτος, since here had died Apsyrτος because of Medea, and Apsyrτος tomb is shown here. Later, the name was corrupted by the barbarians dwelling in the region" (ὁ δὲ Ἄψαρος τὸ χωρίον λέγουσιν ὅτι Ἄψυρτος ἐκαλεῖτο πάλαι ποτέ· ἐνταῦθα γὰρ τὸν Ἄψυρτον ὑπὸ τῆς Μηδείας ἀποθανεῖν, καὶ τάφος Ἄψύρτου δείκνυται, ἔπειτα διαφθαρῆναι τὸ ὄνομα ὑπὸ τῶν περιόικων βαρβάρων, 6.3.1-5). In fact the small amount of information provided by Arrian is to be found also in Procopius' work. However the Caesarea born writer also mentions a novel element – the exact location of Apsyrτος' tomb on the east side of the town (τούτου δὲ τοῦ Ἄψύρτου καὶ τάφος ἐς τῆς πόλεως τὰ πρὸς ἀνίσχοντα ἥλιόν ἐστιν, 8.2.14.1-3). Moreover, he proves himself interested in the present state of the afore mentioned settlement. Considering these circumstances, we believe that, being acquainted with the text of Arrian's *Periplus Ponti Euxini*, as it is unquestionably proven by the general comparison of the two writings, Procopius aspired in a programmatic way to complete and improve the information afforded by his forerunner, on the basis of his own sources.

The same striving for progress in the scientific research and for the restoration of the truth that permanently drives Procopius is also obvious in the passage in which he raises the point of the exact geographical confinement of the Colchians and of the Trebizondians and, implicitly, of their supposed neighbourhood. In contrast with the much too numerous Byzantine authors, who were content with taking over in a slavish way the geographic or ethnographic information present in the works of their predecessors, the more so if those were considered authorities in the field, the historian from Caesarea subjects the information, as far as possible, to a critical examination. His goal is just to correctly inform his reader, and not to state his own merits by comparison with the previous writers, as Procopius is able to avoid the easy temptation of boastfulness and empty polemics. Illustrative for this line of action is his decision not to cite the writer he is contradicting. For example, in the passage we discuss, he simply avers that "with good reasons would somebody be astonished by those who state that the Colchians are neighbours of the Trebizondians" ("Ὡστε εἰκότως θαυμάσειεν ἄν τις τῶν Κόλχους φημένων Τραπεζουντίοις ὁμόρους εἶναι, 8.2.15.1-2). In spite of Procopius' discretion, the identification of the sources that he tends to distance himself from is not too difficult, since he almost quotes from the same *Periplus Ponti Euxini* of Arrian ("And the Colchians are the neighbours of the Trebizondians, just as Xenophon says,

Τραπεζουντίοις μὲν, καθάπερ καὶ <Ξενοφῶν> λέγει, Κόλχοι ὄμοροι, 11.1.1-2). In this way, we discover on one side why Procopius uses the plural "those" in the afore mentioned statement and, on the other side, which was the source of an error lasting for almost one thousand years in the Greek literature, mainly because of the unchallenged authority that Xenophon was enjoying. In the fourth book of his *Anabasis* (8, 22) the latter one had narrated the arrival of the Greek mercenaries headed by himself at Trebizond: "An inhabited Greek city in the Black Sea, Sinope's colony in the land of the Colchians" (εἰς Τραπεζοῦντα πόλιν Ἑλληνίδα οἰκουμένην ἐν τῷ Εὐξείνῳ Πόντῳ, Σινωπέων ἀποικίαν, ἐν τῇ Κόλχων χώρα, 4.8.22.2-4). Also, the Athenian historian has shown how the Greek soldiers had made a thirty days halt in the nearby villages of the Colchians that they didn't hesitate to loot (ἐνταῦθα ἔμειναν ἡμέρας ἄμφι τὰς τριάκοντα ἐν ταῖς τῶν Κόλχων κώμαις· κἀντεῦθεν ὀρμώμενοι ἐλῆζοντο τὴν Κολχίδα, 4.8.22.4-23.2). The confusion between the local inhabitants of the regions of Pontus and Colchis, respectively, is due firstly to the fact that the *Ten Thousands* have come on their way across a flow called also Phasis on its first sector (μετὰ τοῦτο ἐπορεύθησαν ἐπὶ σταθμοὺς ἀνὰ πέντε παρασάγγας τῆς ἡμέρας παρὰ τὸν Φᾶσιν ποταμόν, 4.6.4.1-5.1). This was not the Phasis river from the legend of the Argonauts (today Rioni in Georgia), which discharges its waters into the Black Sea, but Araxes (Rakhsi in Georgian), a tributary of the Caspian Sea that is nowadays named on Turkish territory by the similar name of *Fasin Su*. Of course, the confusion was facilitated by the poor geographic knowledge of the Greeks about a region close to the limits of their known world and about which more legends than precise data were afloat during the classical period.

Even Procopius paradoxically starts his attempt to re-establish the truth from the legend of the Argonauts which he perceives not only as a historical reality, but also as a reliable source of geographical information. In order to fight off the statements concerning the vicinity of the Trebizondians and Colchians he avers: "in this manner, it would seem that Jason, after snatching away the Golden Fleece, together with Medea, did not flee towards Greece and his native lands, but, on the contrary, towards Phasis and the inland barbarians." (ταύτη μὲν γὰρ καὶ τὸ δέρας ζῦν τῇ Μηδεΐα συλῆσας Ἰάσων οὐκ ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα καὶ τὰ πάτρια ἤθη φυγῶν φαίνοιτο, ἀλλ' ἔμπαλιν ἐπὶ Φᾶσιν τε ποταμόν καὶ τοὺς ἐνδοτάτῳ βαρβάρους, 8.2.15.2-16.1). The reasoning of the historian is not quite clear, seeming even out of context. However we can be certain in asserting that Procopius rebuts from the very beginning the variant of the legend according to which the Argonauts would have returned in Greece by a roundabout way that would have led them along Phasis river down to the Ocean, then through the Red Sea and the Libyan

Desert, to finally reach the Mediterranean (Pindarus, *Pythics*, IV, 26; Antimachos of Colophon, frg. 65). Only one possibility remains – that they came back through the Black Sea – irrespectively of the route followed afterwards. In this context, for the vicinity of the Colchians and Trebizondians to hinder the Argonauts in heading towards their homeland, the Trebizond should have been situated eastward of Colchis, fact that neither Arrian and Xenophon, nor any other author had previously alleged. Consequently, Procopius' argument is not at all sound and doesn't render more trustworthy the geographical description of the Pontus. What remains symptomatic, is however Procopius' tendency to resort to arguments taken over from the expedition of the Argonauts, in order to support a statement about the geography of the region.

Conversely, the historian does not hesitate to amend some elements of the legend in question, based upon the real geographical coordinates of the Pontic region. Thus, talking about the river Phasis, which springs from the Caucasus massif and flows into the Black Sea, he quotes the opinion according to which this one would separate Europe (on its right bank) from Asia (on the left) (τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐν ἀριστερῇ κατιόντος τοῦ ροῦ Ἀσία ἐστὶ, τὰ δὲ ἐν δεξιῇ Εὐρώπη ὠνόμασται, 8.2.28.1-29.1). Moreover, he specifies that all the dwellings of the autochthonous Lazians are situated on the right bank of the river (κατὰ μὲν οὖν τὴν τῆς Εὐρώπης μοῖραν ξύμπαντα Λαζῶν τὰ οἰκία ξυμβαίνει εἶναι, 8.2.29.1-3), while on the left side has once existed the Roman camp Petra, but nowadays not even one village or fortification remains (ἐπὶ θάτερα δὲ οὔτε πόλισμα οὔτε ἄλλο τι ὀχύρωμα οὔτε κώμην τινὰ λόγου ἀξίαν Λαζοὶ ἔχουσι, πλὴν γε δὴ ὅτι Πέτραν Ῥωμαῖοι ἐνταῦθα ἐδεῖμαντο πρότερον, 8.2.29.3-30.1). Influenced by these geographical facts, Procopius categorically contradicts the opinion of the natives who consider that the Golden Fleece would have stood on the right European bank of Phasis, based on a simple reasoning: Medea and Jason wouldn't have managed to escape with the Golden Fleece, if the sanctuary where it was standing hadn't been separated by the Phasis river from Aietes' palace and from the other dwellings of the Colchians (οὐ γὰρ ἂν, οἶμαι, λαθὼν τὸν Αἰήτην Ἰάσων ἐνθένδε ἀπηλλάσσετο ζὺν τῇ Μηδείᾳ τοὶ δέρας ἔχων, εἰ μὴ τὰ τε βασιλεία καὶ τὰ ἄλλα τῶν Κόλχων οἰκία τοῦ χωρίου διείργετο Φάσιδι ποταμῷ, ἵνα δὴ τὸ δέρας ἐκεῖνο κείσθαι ξυνέβαινε, 8.2.31.1-8.2.31.5). Moreover, the Caesarea born writer calls on his behalf the assertions of the poets who have written on the topic (ὃ δὴ καὶ οἱ ποιηταὶ παραδηλοῦσιν οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀναγραφάμενοι, 8.2.31.5-6), seeming to completely forget what he had claimed explicitly just one chapter before, namely that "history is far away from legend" (μῦθος γὰρ ἱστορίαν παρὰ πολὺ κεχωρίσθαι οἶμαι, 8.1.13.1-2) and even what he had stated in the

previous phrase – that poets forge legends (οἱ ποιηταὶ [...] μυθολογοῦσι, 8.2.30.3-4).

We believe that the text Procopius is directly referring to is the epic poem *Argonautica* by Apollonius of Rhodes. Towards the end of the second book, while recounting the arrival of Jason and his companions in the land of Colchis the Hellenistic poet offers exact topographic data concerning the region: "On the left hand they had the precipitous Caucasian mountains and the town Kytai from Aia, on the other side the field of Ares and the / sacred grove of the god, where the tireless snake was guarding the fleece hung by the branches of an oak tree in leaf" (ἔχον δ' ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ χειρῶν / Καύκασον αἰπήεντα Κυταιίδα τε πτόλιν Αἴης, / ἐνθεν δ' αὖ πεδῖον τὸ Ἀρήιον ἱερά τ' ἄλση / τοῖο θεοῦ, τόθι κῶας ὄφις εἴρυτο δοκεύων, / πεπτάμενον λασίοισιν ἐπὶ δρυὸς ἀκρεμόνεσσιν, 2.1266-1270). If we take into account the fact that on the left means for Apollonios upstream of the river, and for Procopius downstream we come to the conclusion that the two topographies coincide. Similarly, although more vague in description, seems to proceed the author of the *Argonautica Orphica*, who states that "in front of the palace and of the fortified river" there was a stronghold with towers, locked up with iron bars and enclosed by seven precincts, inside which the ill-fated grove which was housing the Golden Fleece was lying (Πρόσθε γὰρ Αἰήταο δόμων ποταμοῖο τ' ἔρυμνοῦ, / ἐννέ' ἐπ' ὀργυῶν ἔρκος περιμήκετον ἄντην / φρουρεῖται πύργοισι καὶ εὐξέστοισι μύδροισιν, / ἐπτά περὶ στεφάνοισι κυκλούμενον, 894-897).

Conclusively, Procopius' references to the legend of the Argonauts are important because they prove its perfect survival in the conscience of the cultured Greeks during the sixth Byzantine century. To our author the expedition of Jason and his companions does not seem a legendary event, but a historical reality. To unravel its secrets he resorts to the rigorous methods of the historian, who is continually searching for proofs and arguments. Simultaneously, Procopius does not hesitate to fully make use of his critical, rationalist spirit in order to separate the truth from the legend, although he not always manages to successfully reach his goal. Well acquainted with the similar works of his predecessors (Xenophon, *Anabasis*; Arrian, *Periplus Ponti Euxini*), he permanently aims to surpass them, avoiding at the same time the temptation of entering a superficial polemics with their authors. Moreover, the expedition of the Argonauts and the geographical realities of the Pontic region tend to form an integral unity, since the historian resorts, in a biunivocal manner, to the legend in order to explain the topography of the Black Sea and, respectively, the geographical realities for establishing the correct variant of the legend.

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**THE ARGONAUTS' VOYAGE  
IN THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD OF GEORGIAN LITERATURE  
(THE 18<sup>TH</sup>-19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES)**

Georgian people were historically well acquainted with ancient culture owing to centuries-old political and cultural contacts with Greece. This is clearly reflected in old Georgian literature. Greek mythology and especially the Argonaut myth, whose episodes and mythological characters are mentioned in many old Georgian written sources, invited particular attention. Ephraim Mtsire's (the 11<sup>th</sup> century) translation of the *Hellenic Tales* were very popular in medieval Georgia.<sup>1</sup> It was one of the main sources of Greek mythology in Georgian language. The work influenced the original Georgian writing as well.<sup>2</sup> However, it is noteworthy that Georgian literature of the so-called transitional period offers information about Greek mythology with different amplex and interpretation. The works of the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries mention mythological characters and plots unknown to Georgian literature of the previous period. By that time, quite a number of collected works relating Greek myths were available in Georgia. "In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, closer contacts between Russia and Georgia resulted in the translation from Russian into Georgian of numerous works by ancient authors, many of which included modified redactions of particular plots or motifs from ancient writing."<sup>3</sup> A large number of scholarly works were devoted to the study of these issues,

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see Abuladze I., *Hellenic Tales*, The Bulletin of the Institute of History of Language and Material Culture, Tbilisi, 1941 (in Georgian).

<sup>2</sup> Asatiani V., *Classical and Byzantine Traditions in Georgian Literature*, Tbilisi, 1996, 194 (in Georgian); Kutateladze L., *Lexicographic Works of David and Ioane Bagrationi*, Tbilisi, 1967, 10-13 (in Georgian).

<sup>3</sup> Asatiani V., 1996, 234.



including researches by Korneli Kekelidze, Simon Kaukhchishvili, Iia Abuladze, Akaki Urushadze and others, which are no less relevant nowadays.

The study of ancient literature was considered to be especially important in the transitional period. This may be attributed to increasing interest in ancient world on the part of 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Public awareness of ancient Greek mythology and its popularity was largely contributed by the works of distinguished writers and literary men taking interest in the related issues. This tendency is attested by the materials found in manuscripts. Presently, I will dwell on literary activities of Princes David, Ioane and Teimuraz Bagrationi (popularly known as Davit, Ioane and Teimuraz Batonishvili), whose works reflected the phenomenon of Greek myth in a very interesting way. The princes carried on old Georgian literary traditions, which implied close cultural contacts with the Greek world (ancient as well as Byzantine) throughout many centuries.

David Bagrationi (1767-1819) combined public work with literary, translating and scholarly activities. The *Mythology* ascribed to him has survived through many manuscripts including comments on ancient characters and terms. Admittedly, the source for David Bagrationi's *Mythology* was Chulkov's *Concise Mythological Dictionary*.<sup>4</sup> However, the Georgian text offers elements missing in the Russian source. Studies also revealed that many comments included in the *Mythology* imply references to the *Hellenic Tales*; moreover, the work enables to reconstruct quite a number of illegible fragments from the *Hellenic Tales*.<sup>5</sup>

In the *Mythology*, David Bagrationi comments on Jason's identity and offers the traditional version of the retrieval of Golden Fleece from the Argonaut cycle: "Iason, the son of Iazon, king of Phessaly, whose great feat is that with the help of Medea, the daughter of the Colchian king, he obtained Golden-Fleeced Ram protected by many dragons, and Medea put the dragon to sleep cunningly."<sup>6</sup> Remarkably, the *Hellenic Tales* mentions Jason on one occasion describing him sowing the dragon's teeth. It says nothing about the obtaining of the Golden Fleece, about Medea and the Colchian king, while the *Mythology* offers brief information from the Argonaut cycle. Presumably, the author referred to the Russian translation of the Greek source.

Ancient mythology is widely commented on in *Kalmasoba or Teaching through Games* by Ioane Bagrationi (1768-1830). The work proved to be a

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<sup>4</sup> Чулков М., Краткий мифологический лексикон, Сб., 1767.

<sup>5</sup> Asatiani V., 1996, 247.

<sup>6</sup> Asatiani V., *Antiquity in Old Georgian Literature*, Tbilisi, 1987, 199 (in Georgian).

real encyclopedia<sup>7</sup> of those times, including huge information about various branches of science such as philosophy, psychology, ethics, logics, law, linguistics, poetics, rhetoric, history, medicine, theology and what is the most relevant for the present paper, about mythology. He was thoroughly acquainted with the Russian sources available in that period. They are clearly reflected in his writings. Presumably, Ioane Bagrationi must have referred to Russian translations of works by Greek philosophers and writers when he treated mythological themes. The author used a Roman version to provide detailed explanation of nearly all deities and relates the stories of the heroes known from Greek mythology including Jason. As the Argonaut legend is connected with Colchis, it is natural that Ioane Bagrationi treated it with particular interest and attempted to present it completely to Georgian readers. *Kalmasoba* provides a detailed description of how the Argonauts started their campaign to ancient Colchis. "He gathered all heroes and they went to Colchis to obtain the Golden Fleece. This campaign is called the Campaign of the Argonauts."<sup>8</sup> This is one of the comparatively full versions of the Argonaut myth in Georgian literature of the transitional period. The story starts with the information about Jason's origin and identity. Then the author dwells on the tasks which Aietes set for him, on how he managed to accomplish them with Medea's help, and how he finally obtained the Golden Fleece: "Jason went to the Dragon and when he approached it, he gave the Dragon the sleeping drugs and immediately the Dragon fell dead on the ground. Then he took the Golden-Fleeced Ram as the award for his trial and came to his companions filled with joy and everybody congratulated him."<sup>9</sup> The story told by Ioane Bagrationi accurately and coherently follows Apollonius' *Argonautica*.<sup>10</sup> However, unlike Apollonius, he goes on with the story and tells us about Medea's lot after she left her country together with Jason. Medea married Jason but later on "Jason disliked his wife and wished to marry another woman."<sup>11</sup> The *Kalmasoba* describes how Jason's fiancée was burnt by the clothes sent to her by Medea. The Georgian author follows the Euripidean version and tells the readers how Medea, enraged by her

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<sup>7</sup> See Kekelidze K., *History of Georgian Literature*, vol. I, 1960; Baramidze A., *About the Realistic Stream in the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> c.*, *Georgian Literature, Literary Studies*, vol. 9, Tbilisi, 1955; Jamburia K., *Genre Properties of the Kalmasoba*, Matsne, Series of Language and Literature, 1984, 3 (in Georgian).

<sup>8</sup> Ioane Batonishvili, *Teaching through Games*, prepared for publication by T. Kakhabrishvili and T. Kikvidze, vol. 1, 1990, 334 (in Georgian).

<sup>9</sup> Ioane Batonishvili, 1990, 335.

<sup>10</sup> Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, translated from Greek, introduced and commented on by A. Urushadze, Tbilisi 1948; Urushadze A., *Ancient Colchis in the Argonaut Legend*, Tbilisi, 1964 (in Georgian).

<sup>11</sup> Ioane Batonishvili, 1990, 335.

husband's unfaithfulness, killed her own children.<sup>12</sup> Admittedly, Euripides deliberately changed the myth to present Medea as a truly tragic character.<sup>13</sup> This is proved by the fact that before the tragedy was composed, none of the sources mentions the episode of child-slaughter. Although many writers attempted to deny this fact, they referred to the Euripidean interpretation as a model as they treated the theme of Medea. It is hard to say whether Ioane Bagrationi shared this version or not but it is true that he presented to the Georgian public the character popular in ancient world and associated with great tragedy. It is beyond doubt that Ioane Bagrationi referred to many Greek sources as he treated the Argonaut myth. He even acquainted readers with Euripides' version, which Georgian writers normally tried to avoid. This remarkable fact seems to be unique in Georgian sources. Despite the fact that Jason tried to take revenge on his wife, Medea who was known for her witchcraft "flew away in a chariot harnessed to two dragons."<sup>14</sup> This is how the Argonaut myth ends in *Kalmasoba*. Remarkably, it offers a lot of important information in connection with the Golden Fleece as well as with other Greek and Roman myths. The fact is that the tendency of taking interest in this theme is clearly reflected in Ioane Bagrationi's works. The author offers a definition of mythology: "Mythology is the art or study of traditional stories about gods and religions of the ancient Greeks and Romans."<sup>15</sup> This was very important for the Georgian community of that period. The representatives of the transitional period carried on the diverse tradition that existed in Georgia throughout centuries and enjoyed original interpretation. As time passed, the interest in ancient world was increasing.

Teimuraz Bagrationi, a well-known scholar of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, devoted his work to the treatment of the Argonaut myth. According to Akaki Urushadze, the "History of Iveria" by Teimuraz Bagrationi offers the most comprehensive account of the Argonaut myth.<sup>16</sup> In the opinion of scholars, the author referred to Russian sources. However, one of Teimuraz's manuscripts mentions that the story of "Phrix, Helle and the Golden Fleece" is based on the translated version of an early Greek source: "This story was found and translated into Georgian by Teimuraz, the son of King. It was translated from ancient Greek books and the translation, previously made by

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<sup>12</sup> Euripides, *Medea*, translated by B. Bregvadze, introduced and commented by R. Gordeziani, Tbilisi, 1999, 69-71; See K. Nadareishvili's article in the present volume.

<sup>13</sup> Gordeziani R., *Greek Literature. Hellenic Epos, Lyric, Drama*, I, Tbilisi, 2002, 397-398; Schadewaldt W., *Die griechische Tragödie*, Tübinger Vorlesungen, Band 4, Unter Mitwirkung von M. Schadewaldt, hrsg. I. Schudoma, 1996.

<sup>14</sup> Ioane Batonishvili, 1990, 335.

<sup>15</sup> Asatiani V., 1996, 257.

<sup>16</sup> Urushadze A., 1964.

some Georgian, was revised and improved. I believe that the story of Jason and the Myrmidons was translated into Georgian eight hundred years ago" (H – 3723, 245).<sup>17</sup> Apart from this, scholars admit that Teimuraz treated the first part of the Argonaut myth, namely Jason's trip to Colchis at the behest of his uncle, Medea's help, the retrieval of the Golden Fleece and the campaign of Jason and Heracles against Troy, on the basis of *Historia destructionis Troiae* by Guido de Columna. At this point Teimuraz finished his narrative as his only interest lay in the Argonaut theme.

It is truly challenging to compare Teimuraz's story with those by David and Ioane and trace differences. The plot and narrative structure varies in all the three works.<sup>18</sup> David Bagrationi's *Mythology* is more informative and does not aim at giving a detailed account of the Golden Fleece legend. Although Teimuraz Bagrationi frequently refers to Georgian sources, including the *Mythology*, he does not do this when he relates the Argonaut story. Ioane and Teimuraz Bagrationi offer different versions. Teimuraz Bagrationi avoids the episode of childslaughter and presents the traditional ancient story according to which, after Medea learned about Jason's unfaithfulness, she left her children in Corinth and fled to Athens, while her children were skilled by the Corinthians.<sup>19</sup> Teimuraz refers to the version of the myth existing before Euripides, which was repeatedly treated by authors of the later period. In the *History of Iveria* Teimuraz Bagrationi deliberately accentuates the Argonaut myth and tries to give a detailed account of the legend, which he regards as one of the most significant parts of the history of Iveria. So we may assume that Teimuraz Bagrationi deliberately included the traditional version of the Argonaut myth in his history.

Thus the above-mentioned examples attest that the interest in ancient culture did not diminish in the Georgian literature of the so-called transitional period. The presented material is the later response to this interest.

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<sup>17</sup> Asatiani V., 1996, 273; Akhobadze L., About the Sources of *Phrix and the Golden-Fleeced Ram* by Teimuraz Batonishvili (Prince Teimuraz), III, Tbilisi, 1973.

<sup>18</sup> Jamburia K., Artistic Structure of the *Kalmasoba*, Criticism, 1983, 4 (in Georgian).

<sup>19</sup> Gordeziani R., The Argonauts. The World of Greek Myths, Tbilisi, 1999, 128-130 (in Georgian).

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**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ ΧΑΡΑΓΜΑΤΑ  
ΩΣ ΣΗΜΕΙΑ ΤΩΝ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΩΝ ΟΔΟΠΟΡΩΝ**

Στις βυζαντινές εκκλησίες υπάρχουν πολλά χαράγματα με ευχές, με αποσπάσματα από τα λειτουργικά κείμενα, με ονόματα και με άλλα διαφορετικά σημεία τα οποία άφησαν ενορίτες και προσκυνητές από διάφορους τόπους. Αυτά τα χαράγματα όμως είναι ανώνυμα και σήμερα μόνο πλάγιες ενδείξεις μας δίνουν πληροφορίες για τον τόπο προέλευσης εκείνου του Βυζαντινού που έγραψε κάτι σ' έναν εκκλησιαστικό τοίχο, σε μια τοιχογραφία ή σ' έναν στύλο. Αυτές οι πλάγιες ενδείξεις είναι ονόματα ή παρατσούκλια, τάξεις, σύντομες ονομασίες τοποθεσιών και ορισμένα λάθη σύνθεσης ή ορθογραφίας, καθώς και γλωσσικές παραλλαγές (θα συζητήσουμε την διαφορά μεταξύ τους αργότερα) και παλαιογραφικοί χαρακτήρες. Πιο εύκολα για την ερμηνεία είναι ονόματα, που μας δείχνουν την εθνικότητα του ιδιοκτήτη τους με την εξαίρεση τα πια διαδεδομένα. Παραδείγματος χάριν, στην Κριμαία η Αλλα Ιλίνιτσα Ρομαντσούκ βρήκε μια μικρή εικόνα από στεατίτο στην οποία υπάρχει ένα χάραγμα. Η ερευνήτρια δεν κατέφερε να διαβάσει αυτό το χάραγμα αλλά βασιζοντας σε ορισμένα αρχαιολογικά στοιχεία (κομμάτια στεατίτου και εργαλεία για την παραγωγή των ομοίων εικόνων) κατέληξε στο συμπέρασμα πως αυτή η εικόνα φτιάχτηκε στην Χερσόνησο της Ταυριδας. Μετά από ένα χρόνο η Αλλα Ιλινισνα μου έδειξε αυτό το χάραγμα και μου ζήτησε να το διαβάσω. Το διάβασα με τέτοιο τρόπο: "Άξητον λέγων έχει τῷ Κουμει(ικ) CΞIB"-, δηλαδή "Αυτός που μιλάει πήρε το πολύτιμο από τον Κουμεικ το 1204". Μια τέτοια ερμηνεία δεν είναι αναμφίβολη

αλλά όλοι οι χαρακτήρες με την εξαίρεση τη δεύτερη λέξη διαβάζονται καλά. Όταν είδα για πρώτη φορά την δεύτερη λέξη, σκέφτηκα, πως είναι τρίτη και πρέπει να διαβάσουμε κάτι τέτοιο: "ἄξει τον λόγον", δηλαδή- "πλήρωσε το λογαριασμό". Αλλά αν κοιτάξουμε πιο προσεκτικά, θα δούμε ότι μετά το λάμβδα στη λέξη "λόγον" δεν έχουμε κανένα όμικρον, έχουμε έψιλον και επομένως δεν μπορεί να είναι "ἄξει τον λέγον(τα)", όπου το τελείωμα της λέξης "λέγον(τα)" είναι γραμμένο με μια συντόμευση. Όμως δεν έχουμε ούτε ίχνο συντομεύσης ούτε και θέση γι' αυτή. Γι' αυτό το λόγο την παρούσα στιγμή αποδεχόμαστε την ερμηνεία: "Ἄξιτον λέγων έχει τῷ Κουμει(ικ) ϚΞΙΒ", δηλαδή- "αυτός που μιλάει πήρε το πολύτιμο από τον Κουμεικ το 1204". Με την ερμηνεία αυτή το εν λόγω χάραγμα δημοσιεύθηκε στη περυσινή συλλογή εκθέσεων της συνδιασκέψης εις μνήμην της Αλιίσας Βλαντίμιροβνας Βανκ. Σ' αυτό το χάραγμα έχουμε το όνομα Κουμείκ, το οποίο σύμφωνα με το λεξικό ονομάτων της εποχής των Παλαιολόγων, είναι όνομα ενός ανθρώπου από την Τραπεζούντα και επομένως η ως άνω εικόνα μπορεί να ήταν φτιαγμένη στην Τραπεζούντα ή στην Κριμαία από έναν άνθρωπο ο οποίος (ή οι γονείς του οποίου) ήρθεν από την Τραπεζούντα. Αν η εικόνα αυτή προέρχεται από την Τραπεζούντα, είναι πιθανό να την έχει φέρει στην Κριμαία ένας οδοιπόρος που τη χάρισε ή πούλησε σ'έναν κάτοικο της Χερσονήσου και με τέτοιο τρόπο αυτή η εικόνα βρέθηκε στα ερείπια ενός σπιτιού.

Στο βιβλίο του Ορλάνδου για τα χαράγματα των βυζαντινών χρόνων στο Παρθενώνα δημοσιέτηκε ένα χάραγμα με νομμερο 53 "(θεοτ(ό)κε, βοίθη σι Στεφάνου ἀναγνώ(στου) Ἀγ(ίας) [Σ]ωφίας [δ]ούλου Χ(ριστο)ῦ κ(αι) τ(ῶν) χριστιαν(ῶν) ἀδ(ελφῶν)" στον οποίο πρόκειται για τον αγαγνώστη Αγίας Σοφίας. Αν δεν έχουμε την εξήγηση για ποιά Σοφία πρόκειται μπορεί να είναι μόνο δύο δυνατότητες: Αγία Σοφία της Κωνσταντινούπολης και Αγία Σοφία της Αθήνας αν υπήρχε, αλλά δεν μπόρεσα να βρω καμία πληροφορία για την ύπαρξη της εκκλησίας με τέτοιο όνομα στην Αθήνα. Εφόσον ξέρουμε, ότι μόνο μια πόλη του βυζαντινού κράτους μπόρουσε να ονομαζόταν απλά Πόλη με κεφαλαίον γράμμα και αυτή η πόλη είναι Κωνσταντινούπολη. Είναι λογικό να υποθέσεις ότι μόνο μια εκκλησία της Αγίας Σοφίας μπορεί να είναι απλά Αγία Σοφία- αυτή η ίδια στην Κωνσταντινούπολη. Αν βλέπουμε σε άλλες χαρακτήρες αυτού του

χαράγματος· θα δούμε κάποια ορθογραφικά λάθη και μια φόρμουλα του υψηλού στυλ· «χριστιανών αδελφών». Χρησιμοποίηση τέτοιας φόρμουλας μας δείχνει την πολυμάθεια του συγγραφέα αλλά κάποια λάθη, απεικονίζοντα την προφορά του επιβεβαιώνουν την θεωρία του Μπορίς Ανδρέεβιτς Ουσπένσκι για το σύστημα της εκπαίδευσης στα βυζαντινά χρόνια, ότι περισσότερα σπούδαζαν να διαβάζουν και το γράψιμο δεν ήταν τόσο προχωρημένο. Αν εξετάζουμε αυτά τα λάθη και τα συγκρίνουμε με τα δεδομένα άλλων χαραγμάτων από διάφορους τόπους, θα είναι καταφανές ότι αυτός που γράφει είτε καταγεται από την Αθήνα είτε μιμήθηκε την γραφή την οποία είδε στα τείχη.

Η γραφή του όμικρον και οι άλλες ορθογραφικές αποδοχές του στα χαράγματα των διαφορετικών τοποθεσιών μας δείχνει τέτοιος πίνακας (βλ. πίνακας 1).

Ας εξετάσουμε αυτόν τον πίνακα, στη Κωνσταντινούπολη υπάρχει μόνο ένα λάθος στη γραφή του όμικρον, στην Αθήνα υπάρχουν κάποια λάθη αλλά το ποσοστό της σωστής γραφής είναι πάρα πολύ υψηλό.

Η γραφή της ήτας και οι άλλες ορθογραφικές αποδοχές της (βλ. πίνακας 2).

Όπως δείχνει αυτός ο πίνακας στη Κωνσταντινούπολη δεν υπήρχε αντικατάσταση της ήτα με ιότα, αλλά στη Αθήνα αυτή η αντικατάσταση επεκτάθηκε. Αυτό είναι πρώτο σημείο της ορθογραφικής μίμησης ή της δυνατής καταγωγής από την Αθήνα και πιθανώς από τους Σλάβους.

Η γραφή του έψιλον ιότα και οι άλλες ορθογραφικές αποδοχές του (βλ. πίνακας 3).

Η αντικατάσταση του έψιλον ιότα με ήτα στην κλίση είναι σηνηθής, αλλά στη Αθήνα βρίσκεται συχνότερα και μπορεί να είναι δεύτερο σημείο.

Όπως βλέπουμε η γνώση των τάσεων στα ορθογραφικά λάθη ή στις γλωσσικές παραλλαγές μπορεί να μας βοηθήει να χαρακτηρίσουμε τον άνθρωπο, ο οποίος γράφει κάτι. Ποια διαφορά υπάρχει μεταξύ των ορθογραφικών λαθών και των γλωσσικών παραλλαγών; Δεν είναι τόσο εύκολη ερώτηση, αλλά πρέπει να βρούμε κάποια απάντηση πριν να πάμε παρακάτω. Όταν δούμε ότι η ορθογραφία είναι γενικά λαθεμένη σε σύγκριση με την αρχαία ελληνική πρέπει να

καταλαβουμε αν είναι τέτοια γραφή μια τάση ή όχι. Αν είναι τάση λοιπόν μπορεί να είναι γλωσσική παραλλαγή, όπως στα θεσσαλικά στη θέση του «αι» έγραφαν «ει» (Μπακ, 30) και αυτό δεν ήταν λάθος αλλά μια ιδιότητα της διαλέκτου. Δεν έχουμε αρκετή πληροφορία για τις βυζαντινές διαλέκτους και κάποια λάθη μπορεί να είναι και χαρακτηριστικά της διαλέκτου και απεικονήσεις της γλωσσικής αλλαγής.

Στην εκκλησία της Αγίας Σοφίας στην Κίεβ υπάρχουν πολλά παραδείγματα, τα οποία δεν είναι καθόλου λάθη, αλλά κάτι άλλο. Ας εξετάσουμε δύο απ'αυτά. Πρώτο είναι η λέξη αλελούηα- έψιλον στη θέση της ήτας, ένα λάμβδα αντί των δύο λαμβδών, ήτα αντί του ιότα. Πρώτη αλλαγή του ήτα με έψιλον είναι χαρακτηριστική για μια σειρά των διαλέκτων όπως η Καππαδοκιανή και κάποιες στις Νεσσάν, μια πόλη στη βυζαντινή Συρία, και γι'αυτό ο άνθρωπος που εγράψε αυτό το χάραγμα μπορεί να είναι από την Συρία ή από την Καππαδοκία. Η αποκοπή ενός από τα διπλά σύμφωνα άρχισε και στη ελληνιστική εποχή, και δεν μπορεί να μας δείξει τίποτα για την καταγωγή αυτού του φαινομένου. Για την ερμηνεία της αλλαγής του ιότα με ήτα να δούμε τον πίνακα (βλ. πίνακας 4).

Η κατάσταση μ'αυτη την αλλαγή στην Κίεβ είναι εξαιρετική, μόνο η Καππαδοκία έχει σ'αυτόν τον δείκτη περισσότερο σε είκοσι τοις εκατό. Αυτό το γεγονός εξηγείται έτσι: στη σλαβική γλώσσα τα παρόμοια γράμματα ήταν γράμματα-διπλότυπα, η γραφή τους ρύθμισε με τους ορθογραφικές κανόνες και δεν εξαρτώταν από την προφορά. Οι Σλάβοι μετέφεραν την πραγματικότητα της δικής τους γλώσσας στην ελληνική.

Το δεύτερο παράδειγμα για το οποίο θέλω να πω είναι Γηόργιον· – ήτα στη θέση του έψιλον, ομικρόν αντί του ωμέγα και ήτα στη θέση του ιότα. Δεν θέλω να επαναλαμβάνω για την δεύτερη και την τρίτη αλλαγή, ομοίες με τις εξετασμένες παραπάνω. Ας κοιτάξουμε στην πρώτη, στην χρησιμοποίηση της ήτας αντι του έψιλον· σε κάποιες διαλέκτους της βυζαντινής εποχής (καππαδοκιανή και κάτω ιταλική) αυτη η αλλαγή έγινε χωρίς τόνο. Γιγκακ γράφει το ίδιο για τις βυζαντινές παπύρους. Μαίισερ εκδηλώνει για τους νωρίτερα παπύρους ότι υπάρχει μια τάση- το έψιλον πριν ωμέγα αλλάζει σε ήτα. Αλλά υπάρχει και άλλη ερμηνεία σε ένα χάρτη γραμμένο στον φλοίο της σημύδας έχουμε Γιούργη, σλαβική παραλλαγή του όνοματος



Γεώργιον, η οποία εμφανίστηκε για να διαφύγει την χασμωδία στη ρίζα της λέξης.

Όπως είδατε η γνώση των τάσεων της αναπτύξης της γλώσσας και των διαλέκτων της μπορεί να μας βοηθεί να ερμηνεύει τα χαράγματα και να βρει εξηγήσεις για την καταγωγή του ανθρώπου που τα έγραψε. Τα περισσότερα δημοσιευμένα χαράγματα δεν έχουν ούτε εικόνες ούτε περιγραφή των παλαιωγραφικών χαρακτήρων, γι' αυτό δεν μπορούμε τώρα ούτε να κάνουμε το ίδιο με παλαιογραφικές χαρακτήρες ούτε να καταλάβουμε αν είναι πιθανό.

Τοποθεσία	Κιεβ		Κωνσταντινούπο		Αθήνα		Καππαδοκία				Νουβία	
	ω/ο	ω/ο	ω/ο	ω/ο	ω/ο	ω/ο	ω/ο	ω/ο	ω/ο	ω/ο	ω/ο	ω/ο
Υφάμμο(τα)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Με	1+3- 36%	3+3- 54%	13+1	0+1- 9%	56+19- 95%	2+2-5%	76+15-94%	3+2-5%	1-1%	8	8	
τόνο	5+1- 100%		3+2		24+6- 91%	3-9%	55+4			0+1- 50%	1- 50%	1- 50%
Χωρίς τόνο	22+3		23+5		120+30- 94%	11-6%	121+24- 94%	8-5%	3-1%	6+3	6+3	
	1+10- 91%	0+1- 1%	1+1		15+3- 79%	0+5-21%	17+10- 94%	1-3%	1-3%	4	4	
Κλίση	23- 92%	2-8%	14		117- 98,4%	2-1,6%	155- 95,2%	8- 4,8%		7	7	
	30+8		12+7,95%		86+34- 98,4%	1+1- 1,6%	155+25-97%	6-3%		12+2- 94%	0+1- -6%	

πίνακας 1

Τοποθεσία	Κιεβ	Κωνσταντινούπολη			Αθήνα			Κατπαδοκία					Νουβία	
		η	νή	εή	η	νή	εή	η	νή	εή	ση	νή	εή	η
Μεγάλη Βάση Μεγάλη	23+ 2- 641 %	1+6 179 %	18+4 - 91,6 %	1- 416 %	1- 416 %	14+3- 109%	1- 0,64 %	1- 0,64%	65+ 11- 99%	3- 3,75%	1- 125 %	2+1 5- 773	5- 22,7%	
	Κλίση λήξη όνομα	1- 50%	1- 50%	2+1		15			13+ 2					
Χαρις τόνο	0+4		5+2		89+30- 84,8%	22+9- 20,3%	2- 1,3 %		33- 97,1 %		1,29%	7+4		
	Μετά τόνο	1- 858 %		1		21- 67,8%	9+1- 32,2%		23			1		
Κλίση ή	3- 60%	1- 20%	5		44				31- 96,9 %			4	1,31%	
	Μετά τόνο	1+5 857 %	0+1- 143 %	15+5		50+16- 89,2%	8- 10,8%		26+ 11					

πίνακας 2

Τοποθεσία Υγράμια(τα)		Κιεβ			Κωνσταντινούπολη			Αθήνα			Καπαδοκία			Νοββία	
		αι	ηβ	υβ	αι	ηβ	υβ	αι	ηβ	υβ	αι	ηβ	υβ	αι	υβ
Με τόνο	Βάση		2+1 75%	0+1 25%	5+2 43,75%	2- 12,5%	7- 43,75%	0+2 14,2%	7- 50%	3+1 28,4%	1- 8,1%				
	Κλίση				1			1- 33,3%	1- 33,3%	1- 33,3%					
Χωρίς τόνο	Βάση		3+1 80%	0+1 20%	33+1 41,9%	22- 27,8%	15- 18,5%	1- 6,6%	8- 53,3%	6-40%					
	Κλίση				2				3- 75%	12,5%					
	Βάση		3	3-20%	9,82%	1-9%		1- 9%	6- 37,5%	4- 25%	5- 31,25%	1- 6,25%			
	Κλίση		8- 364	6-40%		16- 27,5%	36- 62%		3- 4,8%	33- 51,6%	22- 35,4%	5- 8%			
	Βάση														
	Κλίση														

πίνακας 3

Τοποθεσία	Κριβ			Κοινοτατιστοί			Αθήνα			Καρταβόκια			Νοβία		
	ι	η/ι	υ/ι	ι	η/ι	ο/ι	ι	η/ι	ο/ι	ι	η/ι	ο/ι	ι	η/ι	ο/ι
Υδάμια(τα)															
Μελέτη ση όνομα	3			4+9 88%	1+1 14%		59+66 93,9%	6-8 0,7%	1-07 %	45+34 59,3%	2+1 3,2%	3-2 3,7%	3+8 91,6%	1-84 %	
Καλέτη ση όνομα				2			5			5-83,8%	1-16,6%				
Χελέτη ση όνομα	0+4 22%	2+4 33%	+8- 44 %	11+14 94%	0+1- 3%	1-3%	127+62 91,7%	6-5- 5,3%	2-0,9%	48+36 58,3%	34+23- 38,7%	1-0,6 %	10+14 83,7%	3-107 %	1-3,3%
Φιόν ση όνομα	1+1- 18%	5+4 82%		1+6- 88%	0+1- 12%	0+1- 3%	15+14- 82,6%	4-17,4 %		28+6- 69,3	12+2- 28,9%	1,2%			
Καλέτη ση όνομα				4				2		1					
Μελέτη ση όνομα	1-25%	1+1- 50%					20+1- 95,5%		1-4,5%	28+2- 54,5%	13- 23,6%	11- 20,3 %	1-1+1 1,8 %		

πίνακας 4

Maia Kakashvili (Tbilisi)

## FORMS OF REFLECTION OF THE ARGONAUT THEME IN THE BYZANTINE ROMANCE NOVEL<sup>1</sup>

The whole Byzantine culture, which assumed the role of the successor to and protector of the intellectual treasure of old times, is marked with vigorous interest in ancient world. The age of "the Revival of Comnenos"<sup>2</sup> devoted special attention to the heritage of ancestors. An essentially new genre – a romance, a story of love and adventure – systematizes the plot, characters and literary images in compliance with ancient Greek literary works and represents the best example of the conservation of ancient culture. For this very reason, some scholars took interest in Byzantine novels as in "the archive of Hellenism".

Ancient world holds a significant place in the works of Byzantine novelists. The Byzantine novel is distinguished by the tradition of quoting many literary works of different genres and by including the reminiscences of ancient authors. Eumathios Makrembolites refers to quite a large number of ancient authors. Theodore Prodromos' *Rodánthe and Dosiklís* is the climax in this regard.<sup>3</sup> Niketas Eugenianos is distinguished by an original and creative treatment of ancient works,<sup>4</sup> while in Constantine Manasses' work ancient reminiscences are remarkably infrequent.

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'romance' is rather conventional in this case. It is common knowledge that it came into use in the West to refer to love stories written in the Romance languages and not in Latin.

<sup>2</sup> The use of the term 'Revival' in connection with the Byzantine literature is rather conventional as interest in ancient world is *among* the whole string of factors characteristic of the Revival, and by no means is *the only one*.

<sup>3</sup> It should be stated in general that Theodore Prodromos' works abound of reminiscences.

<sup>4</sup> Фрейберг Л. А., Попова Т. В., Византийская литература эпохи расцвета IX-XV вв., Москва, 1978, 160.

I will confine myself to showing the forms of the reflection of the Argonaut theme in the Byzantine novel, and in particular in the works by Eumathios Makrembolites<sup>5</sup> and Theodore Prodromos.

These two writers treat the Argonaut legend in different ways. In my opinion, two types of reflection of the Argonaut legend can be distinguished in Eumathios Makrembolites' work. The writer uses a riddle<sup>6</sup> and presents the myth as well as his own interpretation of it.

#### **a) An overview of a particular episode of a myth:**

##### 4) IV, 22.1

Ἡ δέ μοι γενομένη περὶ τὸ στόμα δάκνει μου τὸ χεῖλος καὶ τοὺς ὀδόντες αὐτῆς ὅλους τοῖς ἐμοῖς κατεφύτευσε χεῖλεσι· καὶ μοι περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐβλάστησαν ἔρωτες καὶ γιγάντων παλαμναιότεροι.<sup>7</sup>

"She [Hysimine – M.K.] meanwhile bites my lip, planting all her teeth in it. And Eroses, more bewildering than giants, grow up in my soul."<sup>8</sup>

Here Hysimine is compared to Jason, who planted dragon's teeth in the earth, and the soul of the narrator is compared to the earth, which gives birth to Eros, i.e. love, instead of ruthless giants.

Out of the literary works composed on the Argonaut theme, only Euripides' *Medea* is reflected in Eumathios' *Hysimine and Hysimines*. Similarly to citing the pieces of classical poetry in general, the author makes slight changes to the quotations from Euripides' work, to which he admits himself. He refers to the above mentioned tragedy three times<sup>9</sup>, all the three cases being precise quotations. The author borrows unaltered not only individual lexical formatives, but whole phrases as well.

<sup>5</sup> The role of Makrembolites' novel in the history of development of the genre, the extent of its impact and its role in the processes of Greek and world literature are discussed in my doctoral thesis called *Ancient Reminiscences in Byzantine Prose Fiction (Eumathios Makrembolites)*, 2006 (in Georgian) and in my articles *Repetition as a Literary Device in Hysimine and Hysimines by Eumathios Makrembolites*, *Logos*, The Annual Journal of Hellenic and Roman Studies, 3, Tbilisi, 2005 (in Georgian); *Homeric Reminiscences in Hysimine and Hysimines by Eumathios Makrembolites*, *Byzantine Studies in Georgia*, Tbilisi, 2007 (in Georgian).

<sup>6</sup> A riddle is among symbolic-allegorical devices and is characteristic of the novel. In the times of Eumathios Makrembolites, a literary puzzle was a genre of Byzantine literature.

<sup>7</sup> Eustathius Macrembolites, *De Hysimines et Hysimniae amoribus*, libri XI, edidit Miroslav Marcovich, *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana*, Monachii, Lipsiae, Saur 2001. All the fragments from Eumathios Mekrembolites' work cited in the paper are taken from this edition.

<sup>8</sup> Eumathios Makrembolites, *Hysimine and Hysimines*, translated from Greek into Georgian, introduced and commented on by M. Kakashvili, Tbilisi, 2006, 77.

<sup>9</sup> Eumathios Makrembolites' novel includes reminiscences from Euripides' other tragedies as well. They are: Hecuba (9 cases), Hippolytes (2 cases), Phoenician Women (2 cases).

**b) Precise quotation of particular phrases:**

1) III, 9. 12-13

ἔσθλ' ἀμηχανώταται,  
 κανῶν δὲ πάντων τέκτονες σοφώτατοι.

Eur. Med. 408-409

ἔς μὲν ἔσθλ' ἀμηχανώταται,  
 κακῶν δὲ πάντων τέκτονες σοφώταται.<sup>10</sup>

2) H, 20. 18-19

χρηστοῖσι δούλοις συμφορά τὰ δεσποτῶν  
 κακῶς πίτνοντα.

Eur. Med. 54-55

χρηστοῖσι δούλοις ξυμφορά τὰ δεσποτῶν  
 κακῶς πίτνοντα, καὶ φρενῶν ἀνθάπτεται.

3) O, 23. 3-4

ὄταν <δ'> ἔς εὐνήν ἠδίκημένη κορῆ,  
 οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλη φρῆν μαιφονωτέρα.

Eur. Med. 265-266

ὄταν δ' ες εὐνήν ἠδίκημένη κορῆ,  
 οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλη φρῆν μαιφονωτέρα.

It should be noted that Makrembolites uses ancient reminiscences only as embellishment aimed to stir associations, so that the reader could better comprehend the plot and the spiritual sensations it conveys. The novel does not offer the cases of deeper, creative perception.

Theodore Prodromos' work *Rodánthe and Dosiklís* is different in this regard. The author does not precisely quote the words by Euripides and Apollonius Rhodius, as we have it in Eumathios' novel. Theodore uses only partial citation; therefore, the scrupulous eye of a specialist can detect a whole string of receptions. The phrases are not precisely repeated; Theodore borrows individual lexical formatives and phrases from various authors and uses them as tools for composing his own lines. Naturally, the works mentioned in this paper cannot have been the direct source of influence, but their linguistic impact is obvious in the majority of cases. I should also mention here that out of the works composed after the Argonaut legend,

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<sup>10</sup> Euripides, *Fabulaí*, Recognovit brevique adnotatione critica instruxit Gilbertus Murray, Tomus I, Great Britain 1958. All the fragments from Euripides' *Medea* cited in the paper are taken from this edition.



Makrembolites quotes only Euripides' *Medea*, while Prodromos cites not only the mentioned tragedy, but also Apollonius' *Argonautica*.

**Reflection of individual lexical formatives:**

*Rodánthe and Dosiklís* reflects individual lexical formatives and collocations. There are 14 cases of citing Euripides' *Medea* and 3 cases of citing Apollonius' *Argonautica*.

1) 191 b

ὡς ἄφελόν γε· καὶ τί γάρ μοι ζῆν ἔτι;

Eur. Med. 145

διὰ μου κεφαλᾶς φλόξ οὐρανία  
βαίη· τί δέ μοι ζῆν ἔτι κέρδος;

2) 476 b

ἴσῳσισθε λησται τῶν καλῶν ληστευμάτων  
καὶ συντελεσται τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων·

Eur. Med. 769

οὗτος γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἢ μάλιστ' ἐκάμνομεν  
λιμῆν πέφανται τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων·

3) 372 b

οἷς οἱ τυχόντες ἀρχικῶν κηδευμάτων  
ὑπερφέρουσι τῶν χαμαιριφεστέρων.

Eur. Med. 76

παλαιὰ καινῶν λείπεται κηδευμάτων,  
κοῦκ ἔστ' ἐκείνος τοῖσδε δώμασιν φίλος.

4) 56 b

ἄφες τὸ μακρὸν βρῦγμα, τὸν μέγαν χόλον,  
μὴ συρραγείσης τῆς μάχης ἀντιστάδην  
αἰσχροῦν βρεφῶν γένοιο πικρὸς ἐγκύμων.

Eur. Med. 590

εἰ σοι γάμον κατέϊπον, ἦτις οὐδὲ νῦν  
τολμᾶς μεθεῖναι καρδίας μέγαν χόλον.

5) 52 b

Ὡμοὶ Δοσίκλεις, ταῦτα μὲν πολὺς λόγος  
καὶ ῥητὰ μωρὰ καρδίας πλανωμένης.

Eur. Med. 1139

ἦσθημεν οἷπερ σοῖς ἐκάμνομεν κακοῖς

*δρῶες· δι' ὧτων δ' εὐθύς ἦν πολὺς λόγος  
σὲ καὶ πόσιν σὸν νεῖκος ἐσπεῖσθαι τὸ πρῖν.*

6) 297 b

*τέως γε μὴν ἔπραττε τὰ πρὸς ἰσχύος,  
ἀφ' ὧν ἑαυτὴν γνωριεῖ τῷ φιλτάτῳ·*

**Eur. Med. 538**

*Πρῶτον μὲν Ελλάδαδ' ἀντὶ βαρβάρου χθονὸς  
γαῖαν κατοικεῖς καὶ δίκην ἐπίστασαι  
νόμοις τε χρῆσθαι μὴ πρὸς ἰσχύος χάριν.*

7) 150 a

*θηλυπρεπῆς γὰρ ἡ ῥοὴ τῶν δακρύων.*

**Eur. Med. 928**

*γυνὴ δὲ θῆλυ κἀπὶ δακρύοις ἔφν.*

8) 176

*προβάς δὲ πρὸς τοῦμπροσθεν ἤσυχον πόδα  
ἔσπευδον ἐλθεῖν ἀμφὶ τὴν χρυσοχρόην.*

**Eur. Med. 217**

*τοὺς δ' ἐν θυμαίοις· οἱ δ' ἀφ' ἡσύχου ποδὸς  
δύσκειαν ἐκτήσαντο καὶ ῥαθυμίαν.*

9) 415

*Ναὶ ναί, συναρήξατε, συγκυνηγέται,  
κἀν τῷ παρόντι τῆς κόρης κυνηγίῳ.*

**Eur. Med. 1277**

*ναί, πρὸς θεῶν, ἀρήξατ'· ἐν δέοντι γάρ.  
ὡς ἐγγυὺς ἦδη γ' ἐσμὲν ἀρκύων ξίφους.*

10) 449 a

*μόνος μόνῃ γοῦν ἐντυχῶν τῇ παρθένῳ  
καὶ γῆς ἀνηρκῶς καὶ λαβῶν ὑπ' ἀγκάλῃν.*

**Eur. Med. 513**

*εἰ φεύξομαί γε γαῖαν ἐκβεβλημένη,  
φίλων ἔρημος, σὺν τέκνοις μόνῃ μόνοις.*

11) 228

*ἀλλ' εἰς ἄμυναν τοῦ κακοῦντος ἐτράπου  
καὶ πάντα πάντως συγκεκίνηκας κάλων,*

**Eur. Med. 278**

*έχθροὶ γὰρ ἐξιᾶσι πάντα δὴ κάλων,  
κούκ ἔστιν ἄτης εὐπρόσοιστος ἔκβασις.*

12) 91 b

*καὶ δείγμα τῆς ἔσωθεν εἰς ψυχὴν ζάλης  
τὴν ἐκτὸς εἰς πρόσωπον ἐμφαίνων ὄλην.*

**Eur. Med. 1285**

*Ἰνώ μανεῖσαν ἐκ θεῶν, ὄθ' ἦ Διὸς  
δάμαρ νιν ἐξέπεμψε δωμάτων ἄλη.*

13) 181 b

*μὴ τῶν γυναικῶν τὴν ἐπάρατον τύχην  
καὶ τοὺς ὑπαλγύνοντας ἐν τόκοις πόνους  
ἀνδρὶ στρατάρχη δυστυχή δώσοι χάριν.*

**Eur. Med. 1031**

*ἄλλως ἄρ' ὑμᾶς, ὦ τέκν', ἐξεθρεψάμην,  
ἄλλως δ' ἐμόχθουν καὶ κατεξάνθην πόνους.*

14) 373

*τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἔστιν ἀνδρικῆς εὐτολμίας,  
θανεῖν πρὸ τέκνων καὶ πεσεῖν πρὸ πατρίδος.*

**Eur. Med. 469**

*οὔτοι θράσος τὸδ' ἐστίν οὐδ' εὐτολμία,  
φίλους κακῶς δράσαντ' ἐναντίον βλέπειν.*

### **Reminiscences from Apollonius' *Argonautica***

1) 144

*βακχῶν προπηδᾶ καὶ κρατῆρα λαμβάνει,  
λαρόν δὲ κινῶ τοῖς ξένοις πιεῖν πόμα.*

**Apoll. Rhod. 1. 456**

2) 215

*ἄρτι χνοῶσαν ἀνατέλλων τὴν γέννην  
καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον εὐφυῶς περιστέφω  
πρώτοις ἰούλοις τοῖς ἐπιγναθιδίσις.*

**Apoll. Rhod. 2. 43**

3) 204 b

*τοὺς γὰρ Ἔρως τε Πόθος τε καὶ Αφρογένεια Κυθήρη  
δρήσατο θειοδέτοιο ἀλυκτοπέδησι σιδάρου.*

**Apoll. Rhod. 2. 1249**

## Conclusion

I believe that it is not necessary to go deeper into the novels to understand that Eumathios Makrembolites' work is closer to the most traditional text based on the Argonaut myth and in the majority of cases reflects it directly at the level of plot as well as language, i.e. it shows obvious textual encounters with the source. As concerns Theodore Prodromos, his novel reflects ancient sources at the level of lexical formatives and collocations.

The novels *The Story of Hysimine and Hysimines* and *Rodánthe and Dosiklís* imply receptions of all authors included on the list of the so-called 'recommended'. Therefore, reminiscences from Euripides' and Apollonius' works appeared in the Byzantine novels not because of their authors' particular interest in their literary heritage in the Argonaut myth, but because the 'novelists' used a great number of collected works and textbooks composed as a result of increasing community of readers and the marvelous revival of university life in the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries.

So, the above-mentioned leads to the conclusion that with respect to the reflection of the mythological information, and namely, of the Argonaut myth, this period was distinguished not by the forms of creative reception, but by direct borrowing and citation.

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**COMPOSITIONAL FUNCTION OF THE CIRCE-MYTH  
IN GREEK-ROMAN, MEDIEVAL EUROPEAN  
AND GEORGIAN EPIC TRADITIONS:  
TYPOLOGICAL SIMILARITY OR LITERARY RECEPTION?**

Although Circe is organically linked with the voyage of the Argonauts, she is represented as an incidental character in the *Argonautica* by Apollonius Rhodius. The situation is different in this regard in the *Odyssey* by Homer. Thus, it is beyond doubt that this character must have become so well-known and popular thanks to Homer. Most likely, Homer was aware of and rested on the earliest version of the Argonaut legend one of the constituent parts of which, according to researchers, must have been the Circe-myth. The exclusively archaic character of the Homeric version of the Circe-myth, along with many other factors, is also indicated by the circumstance that, unlike the *Argonautica*, in the *Odyssey* the Aeaean island and respectively the goddess inhabiting it are localized in the East.<sup>1</sup> However, it is known according to Apollonius Rhodius that Circe was brought to the West by her father Helios in his chariot<sup>2</sup>, and hence, her original location logically must have been in the East. Accordingly, an earlier version of the Circe-myth must be reflected in Homer's *Odyssey*, as compared with the *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius.

Taking into account the above-mentioned, the following question arises naturally: with what purpose must Homer have included the Circe-Myth in the story of the return of Odysseus, i.e. why must the image of Circe have been so interesting for him from the *compositional* viewpoint? This question is answered at length in my book *Homer and Rustaveli. Homeric Principles*

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<sup>1</sup> See: *Odyssey*, XII, 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> See: *Argonautica*, III, 309-313.

of *Compositional Organization and the Epic Tradition*, published at the end of 2005. In particular, on the basis of the traditional Homeric viewpoint that the plot of the *Odyssey* is of the folkloric origin, I tried to demonstrate what in the poem is Homeric proper, i.e. where and how the compositional technique of the individual artist is manifested. For this purpose, the composition of the *Odyssey* was discussed in relation to the fairy tale structure established by Vladimir Propp. One of the conclusions drawn as a result of the study in this direction answers the above question. In my view, Circe, as well as her mythological and literary doublets – Calypso, Nausicaa, Aeolus, Cyclops Polyphemus – are, in Propp's terminology, the so called magic helpers, having a positive or negative function, who, respectively, facilitate or hamper the hero, wandering with one or another purpose, in reaching his goal. Thus, I suppose, by means of the Homeric insertion of the Circe episode into the *Odyssey*, the foundation was laid for a *new variant (in this case – with the participation of Circe)* of the traditional epic model, according to which, the hero, wandering over the sea and straying far outside his homeland, whose life is in danger as he finds himself in the half-real world of a strange enchantress, after entering into a love affair with her, finally succeeds in taking the advantage of his relationship with the hostess to attain his goal (in the case of Odysseus – to return to his homeland).

As is known, the situation is analogous in the post-Homeric epic tradition as well, in particular, with Apollonius Rhodius. Virgil offers a slightly different situation in the *Aeneid*, which also pictures Circe and her island. However, the compositional function of Homer's Circe is given to another, though similar character – Dido. As is noted,<sup>3</sup> "Virgil refers to Circe and Dido by one and the same epithets and in that way indicates their interrelation." Of the compositional functions of Homer's Circe, Virgil's Dido has only that of being a sexual partner of the hero. This compositional function, as is known, culminates in the *Satyricon* of Petronius, in which Homer's enchantress and goddess is reinterpreted as a woman of easy virtue from high society, who, in spite of this, still greatly endangers the man, namely, her sexual partner – Encolpius.<sup>4</sup> The compositional function of Homeric Circe-Myth, having become traditional after the *Odyssey*, I believe, may be traced in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as well, in particular, in the story of Circe and Picus.<sup>5</sup> However, unlike the characters of Homer and Apollonius, and, similarly to the Roman epic tradition, here Circe has an unequivocally negative function: having

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<sup>3</sup> For more details see M. Erkomaishvili, *The Circe Myth and Its Interpretation in Classical Literature*, Tbilisi, 2002, 113.

<sup>4</sup> See: *Satyricon*, 126, 1-139, 5.

<sup>5</sup> See: *Metamorphoses*, XIV, 346-414.

turned Picus into a woodpecker after he left home to go hunting, she once and for all separates him from his beloved wife, Canens.

In my view, already the traditional compositional function of Homer's Circe-myth is found in the medieval Byzantine as well as West-European epic traditions. An example of the former may be an episode from the novel of chivalry *Callimachos and Chrysorrhoe* by the Byzantine Prince, Andronicos Comnenos Ducas Palaeologos (line 1270...), in which a sorceress kills the protagonist Callimachos using witchcraft and separates him from his sweetheart, Chrysorrhoe. But the sorceress, like Homeric Circe, has both negative and positive traits: the initial negative *function* of her character finally changes to a positive one. A case of realization of the above-mentioned compositional function in the West-European epic tradition can be traced in an episode from the unfinished novel *Lancelot or, The Knight of the Cart* by Chretien de Troyes (lines 938-1292): Lancelot, engaged in the quest of the Queen Guinevere, spends the second night of his travel in the palace surrounded by a water trench belonging to an unknown woman, probably a sorceress, where the hostess fruitlessly tries to seduce him, but finally does him no harm. However, it should be noted that, unlike the Classical tradition, in the above works Circe's name is not found any more, and the similarity of the sorceress to the traditional image of Homeric Circe is by far more general. Thus, this similarity apparently must not go beyond the limits of typology, the illustration of which requires a special study and is outside the main purpose of my presentation.

Along with the above-mentioned, my attention was also claimed by the circumstance that an episode of an encounter of the hero, engaged in the quest – Avtandili, wandering over the sea, and a woman associated with magic, Patmani, living in a littoral city is also found in the novel of chivalry *The Man in the Panther's Skin* of the Georgian epic poet Shota Rustaveli (the juncture of the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> cc.) This episode, from the structural and compositional viewpoint, is one of the most important parts of the entire poem. Although the heroine, according to Rustaveli, is called Patmani, not Circe, I think, unlike the examples of the medieval European epic tradition cited above, in the given case it is possible to speak not only about the typological similarity (Odysseus – Circe, on the one hand, and Avtandili – Patmani, on the other), but about the conscious, pre-Renaissance, the so-called creative literary reception as well. The main objective of my presentation is to illustrate exactly this thesis.

The above conclusion is drawn taking into account the circumstance that between Homer's story of Odysseus and Circe, on the one hand, and Rustaveli's episode about Avtandili and Patmani, on the other, structural-compositional, i.e. systemic similarity, that of the so-called general character,

as well as particular cases of lexical-phraseological and situational coincidence can be found. I focus attention on the above-mentioned because in the case of the existence of only the former, the similarity under consideration might have been explained within the limits of typology, and not necessarily that of reception, whereas in the case of the existence of only the latter – by the factor of accidental coincidence. The simultaneous existence of both types of similarity, in my opinion, can be explained exclusively by the fact of literary reception.

The circumstance that Circe is an enchantress and *goddess*, and Patmani – only *a mortal woman* of easy virtue from high society, I think, cannot be regarded as an obstacle to substantiating the possible similarity between them. The point is that the image of Circe as a result of different interpretations of various authors of the Classical and Byzantine periods underwent considerable transformation. In particular, it was entirely demythologized and desacralized. The fact is that, as was noted above, with Petronius Circe is neither a goddess nor an enchantress nor a priestess any longer, but *a woman of easy virtue from high society*. And finally, in philosophical treatises of Late Antiquity her image is interpreted as an allegory of passion, lack of restraint and other human vices. This tendency of demythologization and desacralization appears already in the *Argonautica* by Apollonius Rhodius, where Circe is only a priestess, and no longer a goddess.<sup>6</sup>

When comparing the episodes of Patmani and Circe, from the thematic-structural viewpoint, above all the striking similarity of these two female characters should be noted. Here I imply the so-called ambivalence i.e. duality, typical of the mythological as well as literary image of Circe, which means that this character has both negative and positive traits. In Homer's *Odyssey* Circe is exactly like this. Already from the *Argonautica* by Apollonius Rhodius onward she is interpreted one-sidedly – only positively (with Apollonius Rhodius) or only negatively (with Virgil, Ovid, Petronius, philosophers and commentators of the Late Antiquity). Thus, unlike Circe, interpreted in fact partially by Apollonius Rhodius and other Classical authors, literary characters created by Homer and Rustaveli (Circe and Patmani, respectively) undergo a transformation: the initial negative function of these characters finally changes to a positive one.

In my view, the literary images of Homer's Circe and Rustaveli's Patmani show obvious similarity according to another, even more significant thematic-structural feature as well: both characters are associated with the world of sorcery, i.e. magic. According to the *Odyssey*, Circe, as is known, is an enchantress herself and can turn men into pigs. In the case of Patmani, it is

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<sup>6</sup> See: M. Erkomaishvili, op. cit., 152.



evident that this female character too is linked with witchcraft (this is the only case of *real* magic found in the poem, hence, the fact of its existence in Rustaveli's literary world, due to its extraordinariness, requires a special explanation). Although Patmani herself apparently is not initiated into the knowledge of magic, she has slaves "full of sorcery"<sup>7</sup> and makes use of their skill.<sup>8</sup>

One more thematic-structural similarity between the image-characters of Homer's Circe and Rustaveli's Patmani is that both women ruin the men with whom they had a love affair. However, the similarity is not limited to the thematic-structural coincidence. In my view, the functional-compositional analogy is also evident. Circe does not do Odysseus any harm, on the contrary, she even helps him. Patmani, in her turn, remains Avtandili's faithful helper even after he reveals his identity. So, as we see, one more compositional similarity is found: if in the *Odyssey* Circe helps Odysseus to find his way home, in *The Man in the Panther's Skin* the architectonic peculiarity of development of the story-line gives Patmani the compositional function of assisting Avtandili in finding Nestani (hence, helping his friend Tarieli and *returning to Arabia*).

Although the European and American scholars participating in the conference may have information concerning *The Man in the Panther's Skin* by Rustaveli (in particular, from the book *Inspiration and Poetry* by Sir Cecil Morris Bowra, London, 1955), I have chosen to remind the reader the narrative of Rustaveli's poem. There are two protagonists in *The Man in the Panther's Skin*: Tarieli, Commander-in-Chief of India, who is in love with his king's daughter, Nestan-Darejani, and Avtandili, Commander-in-Chief of Arabia, enamoured of the king's daughter, Tinatini. As a result of the tragic events in the Kingdom of India, Nestan-Darejani is kidnapped by the Kajis, evil sorcerers. Tarieli searches for his beloved for a long time, but to no effect, due to which he becomes depressed and settles in a cave, far away from people. When hunting the King of Arabia, Rostevani, and his Commander-in-Chief, Avtandili catch a glimpse of him at a distance, and in vain try to get acquainted with him. The strange knight disappears. On the orders of the King of Arabia, his slaves during a year are searching for the stranger, but cannot find him, after which the King loses all interest in him. But the heiress to the throne, Tinatini, calls Avtandili in secret and orders him, as her lover, *mijnuri*, to find the strange knight. After looking for him for almost three years, Avtandili discovers the stranger's cave in a desert place, manages to get acquainted with him and hears from him the story of the

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<sup>7</sup> See: *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, 1234, 1-2; cf.: *Odyssey*, X, 571, 573.

<sup>8</sup> See: *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, 1265, 1.

abduction of Nestan-Darejani. Avtandili makes friends with Tarieli and promises that he will try to find Nestan-Darejani's location. However, first he returns to Arabia, meets Tinatini secretly, tells her Tarieli's story and, with her consent, leaves the kingdom once again, this time without the permission of King Rostevani. Afterwards, Avtandili returns again to Tarieli, whose only desire is to meet his own death. Upon Avtandili's request, Tarieli promises his friend to wait for him during a year in the cave. In the meantime Avtandili succeeds in discovering Nestan-Darejani's location, in which, he is assisted most of all by the wife of the chief of merchants of the Kingdom of the Seas, *Patmani*, who is a woman of easy virtue from high society. Avtandili returns in time to Tarieli, tells him good tidings that his beloved Nestan-Darejani is a captive of the Kajis, in the unassailable castle. After this, Tarieli, with the aid of Avtandili and one more friend, King Pridoni, takes the castle of Kajeti by assault, liberates Nestan-Darejani and marries her after his arrival in the Kingdom of the Seas. At the end of the poem Avtandili returns together with his friends to Arabia and marries Tinatini.

In order to illustrate the systemic similarity, i.e. that of the general character between Homer's story about Odysseus and Circe, on the one hand, and Rustaveli's episode about Avtandili and Patmani on the other, I would like to focus attention on the fact that the episodes under consideration in the *Odyssey*<sup>9</sup> (as well as in *The Man in the Panther's Skin*<sup>10</sup>) are created by means of the realization of one and the same structural-compositional model. In particular, this model consists of four component parts: the first one is the arrival of the hero (Odysseus / Avtandili) in a foreign land (Aeaeian island / capital of the Kingdom of the Seas, Gulansharo) and his familiarization with that place; in the second part the hero meets an unknown hostess (Circe / Patmani) and enters into a love affair with her against his own will; in the third part the hero asks the hostess to assist his friends who are in trouble, and his request is satisfied immediately; in the final, fourth part the hero takes leave of the hostess and receives advice and guidance from her before his departure. As regards particular cases of lexical-phraseological and situational coincidence of scenes, to illustrate them I would like to emphasize the following circumstances.

1. One of Patmani's sorcerer slaves during the process of fulfilling the task entrusted to him by his mistress uses a magic means called "Moly" (as it is called in the Circe episode from the *Odyssey* as well).<sup>11</sup> So, from the

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<sup>9</sup> See: *Odyssey*, X, 135-574.

<sup>10</sup> See: *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, 1057, 1-1321, 4.

<sup>11</sup> This word recorded with Homer as *Molū* (see: *Odyssey*, X, 305), according to the phonetic laws of the Greek language of the Byzantine period, in Rustaveli's time was already pronounced as *moli* or *Moly* (see: *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, 1271, 3).

thematic-structural viewpoint, the similarity is not manifested only in the "coincidence" of the designations of the magic means, but on the functional-compositional level as well: in both cases "Moly" is such a magic means which is used against sorcerers (Circe and the Kajis), and with a kind purpose, in particular, to assist the travelling hero (Odysseus / Avtandili). Along with this, it should also be noted that Rustaveli refers to "Moly" as "a certain Moly", i.e. some kind of Moly. Generally, it is not typical of the author of *The Man in the Panther's Skin* to describe anything else so vaguely,<sup>12</sup> and the only fact of the deviation from this general rule must indicate that Rustaveli is not familiar with the properties of Moly and with the way how it worked as a magic means. This in its turn can be explained by the fact that neither did Homer describes the way Moly worked and presents only the outward appearance of this plant.<sup>13</sup> In my view, the above-mentioned unequivocally points to the fact that "Moly" must have found its way into the artistic world of *The Man in the Panther's Skin* exactly by means of literary reception. I shall touch upon other similarities more briefly, taking into account the time-limit.

2. Patmani's littoral city, like the Aeaeon island of Circe, lies to the east.<sup>14</sup> According to one passage of the poem, this city is situated at the junctures of different sea routes, and moreover, as is clear from the name of the country ("Kingdom of the Seas"), at the crossroads of different seas.<sup>15</sup> In another passage of *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, this place is definitely referred to as "the very midst<sup>16</sup> of the sea".<sup>17</sup> As is known, Homer refers to the island of Nymph Calypso, a mythological-literary doublet of Circe, at the beginning of the *Odyssey*, when Odysseus is there, as "the middle of the sea".<sup>18</sup>

3. As is known, the Greeks stayed with Circe during a year, after which Odysseus asked his hostess to let him and his friends continue their journey homewards. According to Homer, this happened "when exactly one year had passed, seasons had made their circle, / months had flown and many long days had passed".<sup>19</sup> Avtandili stayed with Patmani for a much shorter period than a year. However, Rustaveli starts counting time from the beginning of one of the stages of the hero's wanderings of many years, and thus, Avtandili (like Odysseus) can start his parting words by noting that one year has

<sup>12</sup> E.g. see: *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, 458, 3-459, 4.

<sup>13</sup> See: *Odyssey*, X, 304.

<sup>14</sup> See: *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, 944, 3 and *Odyssey*, XII, 1-4.

<sup>15</sup> See: *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, 1061, 1, 3.

<sup>16</sup> In Georgian: "Wipi", i.e. "navel".

<sup>17</sup> See: *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, 579, 1.

<sup>18</sup> See: *Odyssey*, I, 50: "ὅθι τι ἄμφαλός ἐστι θαλάσσης."

<sup>19</sup> See: *Odyssey*, X, 469-470.

elapsed almost completely, due to which, he has to say farewell to his hostess and continue his journey. Literally, Avtandili says: "I go, I have no leisure to tarry longer, last year's time is come."<sup>20</sup> So, I think, one more lexical-phraseological coincidence is found: at the beginning of the parting scenes of Odysseus and Circe as well as Avtandili and Patmani the expiration of a one-year period of time is compared with the recurrence of seasons and the cyclicity of nature, in general.

Against the background of the above-listed general-systemic and lexical-phraseological i.e. particular coincidences, I think, it is unjustifiable to ascribe to chance numerous cases of situational similarity of scenes, of which, taking into account the time-limit, I shall draw your attention only to the following ones.

1. According to Homer, Odysseus has to go to bed with Circe. Hermes demands this from him. Otherwise the hero will not be able to help his companions, transformed into pigs, as he will not compel Circe to turn them back into humans in any other way.<sup>21</sup> Like Odysseus, Avtandili fulfils Patmani's wish to enter into a love affair with her against his own will and in order to help his friend, Tarieli.<sup>22</sup>

2. When Odysseus learns from Eurylochus that his companions, sent to reconnoiter, are in real danger, he without hesitation arms himself and immediately takes a decision to rescue them. He only asks Eurylochus to show him the way to Circe's house. However, when Eurylochus refuses to do so, he goes to Circe alone.<sup>23</sup> When in return for telling the story of her former lover, Chashnagiri, Patmani demands from Avtandili to kill him, the hero realizes at once that if he learns this story, he may help Tarieli, so he arises fast and taking an iron cudgel, decides immediately to satisfy Patmani's demand.<sup>24</sup> He asks Patmani to give him a man as a guide to show him the road. The guide shows Avtandili Chashnagiri's house from a distance and leaves him hastily.<sup>25</sup> Taking into account the situational similarity analyzed above, I think that it should not be accidental either that exactly in this passage Rustaveli addresses the reader and insists twice within one line that there is none other [knight] like Avtandili.<sup>26</sup>

3. Both in the *Odyssey* and in *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, the hero (Odysseus / Avtandili) eventually manages to subjugate the hostess (Circe /

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<sup>20</sup> See: *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, 1307, 3.

<sup>21</sup> See: *Odyssey*, X, 296-298.

<sup>22</sup> See: *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, 1087, 3-4; 1088, 3-4; 1089, 4.

<sup>23</sup> See: *Odyssey*, X, 261-263.

<sup>24</sup> See: *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, 1105, 1-2.

<sup>25</sup> See: *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, 1106, 1-2.

<sup>26</sup> See: *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, 1105, 4.

Patmani) to his will by threatening her, namely, he is holding a weapon (Odysseus is holding a sword, Avtandili – a blood-stained knife).<sup>27</sup>

4. After Odysseus goes to bed with Circe, four housemaids of the goddess wash and dress him. Then Circe bids him eat, after which the hero returns to his ship.<sup>28</sup> After the night spent with Patmani, Avtandili too goes forth to bathe. Patmani gives him many garments, and invites him to a meal, like Circe invites Odysseus. After this the knight goes home.<sup>29</sup>

5. Finally, one more plot-compositional parallel. In the *Odyssey* as well as in *The Man in the Panther's Skin* the motif of leave-taking is doubled. Naturally, this serves different compositional purposes. Odysseus and his companions, returning from the Hades, visit once again Circe's island and continue their voyage to their native Ithaca only after this.<sup>30</sup> In *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, the heroes, being on their way home after destroying the castle of Kajeti, meet Patmani once again.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, Homer's enchantress Circe, gradually "degraded and diminished" to the image of a woman of easy virtue within the classical epic tradition, transformed into Patmani in the artistic world of *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, by means of Rustaveli's poetic perception again acquires her original compositional function, which she had had at the initial stage of the epic tradition, in particular, in the *Odyssey*: that of assisting the wandering hero visiting her. According to Homer, this hero is Odysseus, and according to Rustaveli – Avtandili. Rustaveli, on the one hand, takes into account the medieval European epic tradition and does not mention Circe's name. On the other hand, it is obvious that Circe is familiar to the author of *The Man in the Panther's Skin* directly from the Classical epic tradition: in particular, both from its relatively late stage (literature of the Roman period and Late Antiquity, within which Homer's enchantress and goddess retained, in fact, only her name – Circe), and from the earliest stage as well, i.e. Homer's *Odyssey*, which enabled Rustaveli, by means of the creative reception of the initial, Homeric compositional function of the Circe-myth, to create an entirely new, Renaissance-type literary character – Patmani.

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<sup>27</sup> See: *Odyssey*, X, 321-323 and *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, 1114, 4-1115, 1-2.

<sup>28</sup> See: *Odyssey*, X, 345-407.

<sup>29</sup> See: *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, 1251, 1.

<sup>30</sup> See: *Odyssey*, XII, 1-144.

<sup>31</sup> See: *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, 1422-1441.

Beate Kobusch (Essen)

**IASON – HELD ODER ANTIHELD?  
ZUR APOLLONIOS - UND VALERIUS - REZEPTION  
IN G. B. PIOS ARGONAUTICA-SUPPLEMENT (BOLOGNA 1519)**

Die Argo war schon zu Homers Zeiten πᾶσι μέλουσα (Od. 12, 70). In der Antike erfuhr der Argonautenmythos durch Pindar, Euripides, Apollonios von Rhodos, Ovid und Valerius Flaccus eine mannigfache literarische Bearbeitung, durch die der Stoff bis heute bekannt ist und immer wieder zum Thema der Weltliteratur wird.<sup>1</sup> Da den griechischen und lateinischen Originaltexten im Mittelalter jedoch kaum ein Nachleben beschieden war,<sup>2</sup> verdanken sie ihr dauerhaftes Fortleben der vielfältigen Rezeption durch die Renaissance-Humanisten, die sich der Wiederbelebung der Antike verschrieben hatten.

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<sup>1</sup> Vgl. z.B. F. Grillparzers Dramentrilogie *Das Goldene Vlies* aus dem Jahr 1821 oder R. Graves' *The Golden Vlies* aus dem Jahr 1944, zu einem Überblick vgl. Frenzel E., (<sup>9</sup>1998), *Stoffe der Weltliteratur*, 511f. Inzwischen ist für das Jahr 2008 auch ein Computerspiel angekündigt, das Iasons Abenteuer zum Thema macht: *Rise of the Argonauts*, vgl. [www.codemasters.de](http://www.codemasters.de).

<sup>2</sup> Zwar lebte der Argonautenmythos auch im Mittelalter fort, da die Verbreitung des Christentums nicht eine Verdrängung des antiken Mythos, sondern vielmehr eine Instrumentalisierung im Sinne christlicher Allegorisierung und Moralisierung zur Folge hatte. Bekannt war er jedoch kaum aus antiken Originaltexten, sondern aus Mythenzusammenstellungen und Kompendien wie den *Fabulae* des Hygin oder der *De excidio Troiae historia* des Dares Phrygius, die die ursprünglichen Quellenzusammenhänge weitgehend ignorierten. Vgl. de Vries J., *Forschungsgeschichte der Mythologie*, Freiburg/München 1961, 59ff.; Buck A., *Die Rezeption der Antike in den romanischen Literaturen der Renaissance*, Berlin 1976, 193ff.; Seznec J., *Das Fortleben der antiken Götter. Mythologische Tradition im Humanismus und in der Kunst der Renaissance*, München 1990, 163-249. Zur mittelalterlichen Argonautenrezeption allgemein vgl. Kepetzis E., *Medea in der bildenden Kunst vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit*, Frankfurt/Main 1997; Morse R., *The Medieval Medea*, Cambridge 1996; Harter N.F.R., *A Literary History of the Legend of the Argonautic Expedition through the Middle Ages*, Diss., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 1954; Domínguez F. A., *The Medieval Argonautica: Sources, Transmission and Interpretation*, Diss., Ann Arbor 1974.

Ein solches Rezeptionsdokument der antiken Argonautensage möchte ich im Folgenden vorstellen: Das *Argonautica-Supplement* des Giovanni Battista Pio.<sup>3</sup> Dazu werde ich zunächst einige Worte über Pio selbst und seine Beschäftigung mit dem Argonautenmythos sagen. Im zweiten Teil möchte ich anhand eines inhaltlichen Aspektes einen Eindruck von Pios Supplement vermitteln. Und zwar soll es um die Iason-Darstellung bei Pio gehen, also um die Frage, welche charakterlichen Eigenschaften der Renaissance-Humanist Pio seiner zentralen Heldenfigur zuschreibt. Betrachtet werden muss Pios Iasongestalt vor dem Hintergrund seiner antiken Vorbilder: An erster Stelle ist hier die hellenistische Iasonfigur der *Argonautika* des Apollonios von Rhodos zu nennen, die wiederum nur auf der Folie des homerischen Heldentypus zu verstehen ist. Eine ebenso wichtige Vorlage für Pios Iason stellt die Iasongestalt des Valerius Flaccus dar, der im 1.Jh. n. Chr. eine lateinische Fassung der Argonautengeschichte verfasste, die das griechische Vorbild gewissermaßen romanisiert. Als dritte Bezugsgröße soll die für die lateinische Literatur wohl wichtigste und einflussreichste Heldengestalt, die Figur des Aeneas in der *Aeneis* Vergils, in den Blick genommen werden, da sie sowohl Valerius Flaccus als auch später Pio als Folie für die eigene Heldendarstellung dient.

1. Ein wichtiges Zentrum der Argonautenrenaissance in Italien war das Bologna des frühen 16. Jahrhunderts. Hier entstand beispielsweise um 1500 ein Gemälde von Lorenzo Costa, das die Argo auf der Rückfahrt von Kolchis nach Griechenland zeigt. Nahezu gleichzeitig fand die Rezeption des Argonautenmythos auch im literarisch-wissenschaftlichen Bereich ihren Niederschlag. Davon legt eindrucksvoll das Werk des Bologneser Humanisten Giovanni Battista Pio Zeugnis ab. Pio wurde ca. 1475/6 in Bologna geboren und starb 1542/3 in Rom – die Lebensdaten lassen sich nicht bis ins Letzte rekonstruieren. Sein Leben, das als typisch für einen Humanisten der italienischen Renaissance gelten kann, widmete Pio ausschließlich der Wissenschaft. Er erhielt schon mit ca. 19 Jahren einen Lehrstuhl für Rhetorik und Poetik in Bologna und lehrte von da an ununterbrochen an den Universitäten in Bologna, Mantua, Mailand, Lucca und Rom. Charakteristisch für Pios Leben und Movens seiner Laufbahn war sein Stilideal, der Apuleianismus, d.h. die Vorliebe für die nichtklassischen lateinischen Autoren. Pios wissenschaftlicher Tätigkeitsbereich umfasste sämtliche wesentlichen Gebiete der Renaissance-Philologie. So edierte er zahlreiche Werke zum Teil bis dahin kaum bekannter antiker Autoren wie

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<sup>3</sup> Der Text des Supplements ist ediert, übersetzt und ausführlich kommentiert: Kobusch B., *Das Argonautica-Supplement* des Giovanni Battista Pio, Einleitung, Edition, Übersetzung, Kommentar, Trier 2004.

Sidonius oder Fulgentius, schrieb philologische Kommentare mit textkritischen Bemerkungen, Wort- und Sacherklärungen z.B. zu Plautus oder Lucrez und verfasste darüberhinaus auch eigene literarische Texte.<sup>4</sup>

1519 erschien in Bologna seine Valerius-Flaccus Ausgabe. Mit der kommentierten Edition des "vollständigen" Valerius-Textes leistet Pio zunächst einen wesentlichen Beitrag zur wissenschaftlichen Beschäftigung mit Valerius Flaccus: Die Ausgabe entspringt dem Wissen um die im Laufe der Zeit zunehmende Textverderbnis und ist mit durchaus modernen Ansprüchen und Methoden um die Herstellung eines möglichst originären Textes bemüht, indem sie auf der Kollation mehrerer Valerius-Handschriften und Drucke basiert.<sup>5</sup> Mit ausführlichen kommentierenden Anmerkungen bemüht sich Pio darum, den Text dem Leser inhaltlich verständlich zu machen und ihn mit seiner griechischen Vorlage in Beziehung zu setzen.<sup>6</sup>

Zugleich erfahren die *Argonautica* durch Pio in einem Supplement auch eine produktive Rezeption. Pio empfand den fehlenden Schluss der lateinischen *Argonautica* als Desiderat, dem er zum allgemeinen Gebrauch im Rahmen der epischen Tradition Abhilfe schaffen wollte.<sup>7</sup> Deshalb erzählt er

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<sup>4</sup> Vgl. ausführlich zu Leben und Werk des Giovanni Battista Pio Kobusch B., Das *Argonautica-Supplement* des Giovanni Battista Pio, Einleitung, Übersetzung, Kommentar, Trier 2004, 19-117. Zu Einzelaspekten seines Lebens und Werkes vgl.: Del Nero V., Note sulla vita di Giovan Battista Pio, RIN 21, 1982, 247-263; dens.: La questione dell'anima nel commento di G. B. Pio, De rerum natura' di Lucrezio, AIFU 5, 1983, 29-60; dens.: Filosofia e teologia nel commento di Giovanni Battista Pio a Lucrezio, Interpres 6, 1985-6, 156-199; dens.: La sessualità nel commento di Giovan Battista Pio a Lucrezio, RIN 26 (1986), 277-295; dens.: Giovan Battista Pio tra grammatica e filosofia, in: Avellini L., (Hrsg.): Sapere e'è potere, vol. I, Bologna 1990; Dionisotti C., Giovan Battista Pio e Mario Equicola, in: Ders.: Gli umanisti e il volgare fra Quattro e Cinquecento, Firenze 1968, 78-130; Maranini A., Dispute tra vivi e morti: Plauto fra Bocchi, Pio e Pilade, GIF 53, 2001, 315-330; Opelt I., Studi su Giovanni Battista Pio, in: L. Rotondi Secchi Tarugi (Hrsg.): Educazione e la formazione intellettuale nell'età dell'umanesimo: Atti del II convegno internazionale, 1990, Mailand 1992, 187-192; dies.: Giovanni Battista Pio an die Regierung von Lucca: Widmung von Ciceros Briefen an Atticus, in: Finger H., (Hrsg.): Bücherschätze der rheinischen Kulturgeschichte, Düsseldorf 2001, 255-266; Pizzani U., La psicologia lucreziana nell'interpretazione di G.B. Pio, RPL 6, 1983, 291-302; Tagliente M. C., G.B. Pio e il testo di Lucrezio, RPL 6, 1983, 337-345.

<sup>5</sup> In der Widmungsepiistel schreibt Pio: *In quo tot mendae, liturae, calvitia, defectus verum sensum interverterant, ut Flaccus in Flacco [...] quaereretur nec inveniretur*. Sodann kündigt er den Vergleich unterschiedlicher Handschriften an, C. Valerii Flacci commentarii Pio Bononiensis auctore, Bononiae 1519. Ausführlich zu Pios Edition und den von ihm benutzten Handschriften vgl. Kobusch B., Das *Argonautica-Supplement* des Giovanni Battista Pio, 144-157.

<sup>6</sup> Der Kommentar enthält textkritische Anmerkungen, Wort- und Sacherläuterungen, Vergleiche mit der Fassung des Apollonios sowie Übersetzungen des griechischen Textes ins Lateinische, vgl. Kobusch B., Das *Argonautica-Supplement* des Giovanni Battista Pio, 157ff.

<sup>7</sup> Pios Überschrift zu seinem Supplement lautet folgendermaßen: *Octavi libri Argonauticon reliquum ex Apollonio Rhodio interprete Pio Bononiensi cum duobus aliis libris subsequentiibus ex eodem Rhodio, unde habetur perfecta historia Argonautica*. C. Valerii Flacci commentarii Pio Bononiensis auctore. Bononiae 1519, 163v.



den bekanntlich mitten im 8. Buch (nach Vers 467) abbrechenden Text des Valerius Flaccus in zweieinhalb Büchern weiter. Pios Text setzt also ein mit der Auseinandersetzung zwischen Medea und Jason über die Bedrohung durch Medeas Bruder Apsyrtos, schildert dann den Mord an Apsyrtos und die weiteren Abenteuer der Rückreise wie die Entsöhnung durch Kirke, die Passage durch Skylla und Charybdis, den Aufenthalt bei den Phäaken, die Irrfahrt in die libysche Syrte oder die Bedrohung durch den Riesen Talos und schließlich die glückliche Heimkehr. Pio vervollständigt den Text des Valerius auf diese Weise mit 1423 Versen auf 10 Bücher.<sup>8</sup>

Dabei versteht Pio sich in erster Linie als *interpres ex Apollonio*, also als Übersetzer des Apollonios.<sup>9</sup> Dementsprechend orientiert er sich grundsätzlich sehr eng an dem 4. Buch der *Argonautika* des Apollonios von Rhodos. Dabei ignoriert er die Tatsache, dass Valerius die Rückfahrt, soweit das aus dem

<sup>8</sup> Pio reflektiert an keiner Stelle über die tatsächliche oder von Valerius geplante Buchzahl, die auch in der modernen Forschung nicht eindeutig beantwortet werden kann: Nachdem lange die Hypothese von der an der Aeneis orientierten Zwölfzahl der *Argonautica*-Bücher vorherrschte, wies zuerst Ribbeck O., Geschichte der römischen Dichtung III, Stuttgart 1892, 167, 187, nachdrücklich auf die Fragwürdigkeit dieser These hin und vertrat die Meinung von 10 *Argonautica*-Büchern. Nach den einschlägigen Untersuchungen von Schetter W., Die Buchzahl der *Argonautica* des Valerius Flaccus, *Philologus* 103, 1959, 297-308 und Adamietz J., Zur Komposition der *Argonautica* des Valerius Flaccus, München 1967, 108-113, geht die *communis opinio* heute von 8 Valerius-Büchern als Ergebnis einer Dopplung der 4 Apollonios-Bücher und einer Imitation der asymmetrischen Bucheinteilung Vergils aus.

Bei Pio ergibt sich die Anzahl von 10 Büchern zum einen konsequent aus der inhaltlichen Orientierung an den *Argonautika* des Apollonios, die einerseits für 8 Bücher mit der ungefähren Verszahl des Valerius zu viel, für 12 jedoch zu wenig Stoff bieten. Zum anderen kann man die Bucheinteilung Pios in gewisser Weise als Nachahmung der kompositionellen Gestaltung des Valerius im Hinblick auf ihr Verhältnis zur Bucheinteilung des Apollonios betrachten: Da dem 3. Buch des Apollonios bei Valerius die Bücher 5, 6 und 7 entsprechen, ist es konsequent, wenn mit dem 4. Buch des Apollonios weitere 3 Bücher in den lateinischen *Argonautica* kongruieren. Vgl. ausführlich hierzu Kobusch B., *Das Argonautica-Supplement* des Giovanni Battista Pio, 616-620.

<sup>9</sup> Vgl. Anm. 7. Der Begriff des *interpres* gewinnt im Humanismus noch stärker als schon in der Antike ein vielschichtiges Bedeutungsspektrum von dem 'Übersetzer', der einen Text wortwörtlich in eine andere Sprache überträgt, bis hin zum 'Erklärer' oder 'Kommentator', der einen Text im modernen Sinne interpretiert, und schließt damit die Prinzipien der *imitatio* und *aemulatio* mit ein. Zu dem gesamten Themenkomplex vgl. Reiff A., Interpretatio, imitatio, aemulatio. Begriff und Vorstellung literarischer Abhängigkeit bei den Römern, Diss., Köln 1959; Fuhrmann M., Interpretatio, Notizen zur Wortgeschichte, in: Liebs D., (Hrsg.): *Symptica F. Wieacker*, Göttingen 1970, 80-110; Russel D. A., De imitatione, in: West D., Woodman T., (Hrsg.): *Creative Imitation and Latin Literature*, Cambridge 1979, 1-16. Zintzen C., Das Zusammenwirken von Rezeption und Originalität am Beispiel römischer Autoren, in: Lange H., Zintzen C., (Hrsg.): *Zum Problem der Rezeption in den Geisteswissenschaften. Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur*, Mainz 1986, 15-36.

Indem Pio sich in seiner Rolle als Fortsetzer des Valerius als *interpres* des Apollonios bezeichnet, spielt er mit der Vielschichtigkeit des Begriffs. Zugleich macht er so indirekt sein Verständnis des Verhältnisses der griechischen zu den lateinischen *Argonautica* deutlich, das er offensichtlich als enges Abhängigkeitsverhältnis sieht.

überlieferten Teil des 8. Buches hervorgeht, wesentlich knapper darstellt oder darstellen wollte als seine griechische Vorlage. Pio fasst die beiden Episoden bei Apollonios, in denen die Auslieferung Medeas an die Kolcher einmal durch den Apsyrtos-Mord und das zweite Mal durch die Hochzeit vermieden wird, zu einer zusammen.<sup>10</sup> Indem Pio die Stelle, an der der Valerius-Text abbricht, mit der ersten Auslieferungspassage parallel setzt und ab da in enger Orientierung an Apollonios weitererzählt, nimmt er einige logische Brüche zum Text des Valerius in Kauf: So ignoriert er z.B. die bei Valerius schon vollzogene Hochzeit (VF 8, 216-58) und lässt Iason und Medea 'erneut' heiraten (Pio 10, 159-189). Ein anderes Beispiel für Pios Fixierung auf die griechische Vorlage ist die Schilderung vom Tod des Kanthos in der libyschen Syrte (Pio 10, 503-520), der bei Valerius schon in Kolchis im Krieg gegen Perses fällt (VF 6, 317ff.).

Trotzdem stellt Pios Supplement aber keineswegs eine reine Apollonios-Übersetzung dar, sondern bemüht sich auch um eine sinnvolle Weiterführung des Valerius-Textes. Deutlich wird dieses Bestreben zum Beispiel in der konsequenten Verwirklichung der von Valerius in Anlehnung an Vergil explizierten *fatum*-Konzeption, nach der die Weltordnung durch Iupiters Weltenplan unverrückbar festgelegt ist.<sup>11</sup> Immer wieder spielt Pio auf diesen Leitgedanken der grundsätzlichen Determination aller menschlichen Geschehnisse an. So hält er z.B. das katastrophale Ende der Ehe zwischen Iason und Medea durch Vorausdeutungen stets präsent (Pio 8, 574-577; 9, 343-349; 10, 182-185) oder führt den Grundgedanken des Valerius konsequent weiter,

<sup>10</sup> Vgl. Adamietz J., Zur Komposition der Argonautica des Valerius Flaccus, München 1967, 111; Schenk P., Studien zur poetischen Kunst des Valerius Flaccus, München 1999, 66f.

<sup>11</sup> Bis heute besteht in der Forschung weder Konsens über die Konsequenz der Umsetzung der 'tragenden' Idee des Weltenplans noch in der Bestimmung des übergreifenden Sinngehalts, vgl. dazu besonders Wetzel S., Die Gestalt der Medea bei Valerius Flaccus, Diss., Kiel 1957, 111ff.; Schönberger O., Zum Weltbild der drei Epiker nach Lucan, Helikon 5, 1965, 123-145; Adamietz J., Zur Komposition der Argonautica des Valerius Flaccus, München 1976, 24, 120; Burck E., Die Argonautica des Valerius Flaccus, in: Ders., (Hrsg.): Das römische Epos, Darmstadt 1979, 232-236; Schubert W., Jupiter in den Epen der Flavierzeit, Frankfurt/Main 1984, 38f.; Davis M. A., Ratis audax: Valerius Flaccus' 'Bold Ship', Ramus 18, 1989, 46-73; Wacht M., Jupiters Weltenplan im Epos des Valerius Flaccus, Stuttgart 1991; Franchet D'Espèrey S., L'univers des Argonautiques est-il absurde? In: Eigler U., Lefèvre E., (Hrsg.): Ratis omnia vincet. Neue Untersuchungen zu den Argonautica des Valerius Flaccus, München 1998, 213-232; Ehlers W. W., Einhundert Jahre Prinzipat. Über den Sinn der Argonautica des Valerius Flaccus, In: Holthausen J., (Hrsg.): Psyche, Seele, Anima: K. Alt zum 7. Mai 1998, Stuttgart 1998, 145-156; Lefèvre E., Der ordo rerum in Valerius Flaccus' Argonautica, in: Eigler U., Lefèvre E., (Hrsg.): Ratis omnia vincet. Neue Untersuchungen zu den Argonautica des Valerius Flaccus, München 1998, 223-232; Eigler U., Valerius Flaccus: Auf der Suche nach dem verlorenen Stil? In: Ders., Lefèvre E., (Hrsg.): Ratis omnia vincet. Neue Untersuchungen zu den Argonautica des Valerius Flaccus, München 1998, 33-49; Manuwald G., Die Cyzicus-Episode und ihre Funktion in den Argonautica des Valerius Flaccus, Göttingen 1999, 130-176; Dräger P., Die Argonautika des Apollonios Rhodios, Das zweite Zorn-Epos der griechischen Literatur. München/Leipzig 2001, 570ff.

den Argonautenzug als ersten einer Folge von Frauenrauben, die jeweils zur Translation der globalen Herrschaft führen, in einen weltpolitischen Gesamtzusammenhang einzuordnen (Pio 9, 20f.; 9, 91-97; 10, 81-85).

Darüber hinaus setzt Pio in seiner Version der Rückfahrt der Argonauten nach Griechenland aber auch eigene Akzente, die weder auf eine Apollonios- noch auf eine Valerius-Nachahmung zurückzuführen sind. Auf diese Weise entsteht ein reizvolles Konglomerat aus Apollonios-Übersetzung und Valerius-Fortsetzung, das aber durchaus auch Reflexe auf zeitgenössisches Gedankengut aufweist. Dieses typisch humanistische Nebeneinander von Rezeption und Produktion, von *interpretatio*, *imitatio* und *aemulatio* spiegelt sich in besonderem Maße in Pios Iasondarstellung wider:

2. Die Iasongestalt des Apollonios stellt eine Kontrastfigur zu homerischen Helden dar, da sie weder über besondere körperliche Stärke noch über herausragenden Mut oder Tapferkeit verfügt. Vielmehr wird Iason bei Apollonios zu einem Helden, der zwar durch Schönheit und Sexappeal besticht, als Anführer eines so gewagten Unternehmens wie der Fahrt nach Kolchis durch seine Schwäche und Unsicherheit aber wenig geeignet erscheint. Apollonios stellt Iason also als Antihelden dar, dessen charakteristische Eigenschaft in seiner *εμῆκαν...α* besteht.<sup>12</sup>

Im Gegensatz dazu entspricht Iason bei Valerius wieder dem Prototypen eines homerischen Heros. Er wird wieder zu einem unangefochtenen Haupthelden mit Führungsqualitäten, der sich durch typisch römische Qualitäten wie *virtus* und *gloria* auszeichnet. Trotzdem bleibt er – beispielsweise im Umgang mit Medea, deren Liebe er hemmungslos für seine eigenen Interessen ausnutzt – ein Held mit moralischen Defiziten, so dass er keineswegs als ungebrochen positive Heldenfigur erscheint.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Die Forschungsmeinungen zum Heldentum Iasons bei Apollonios divergieren beträchtlich in der Definition bzw. Negierung seines Heroismus. Zu einem Überblick über die unterschiedlichen Interpretationstendenzen vgl. Klein Th. M., Apollonius' Jason, Hero and Scoundrel, QUCC 42, 1983, 115-126; Hunter R. L., Short on Heroics. Jason in the Argonautica, CQ 37, 1988, 436-453; Thiel K., Aietes der Krieger – Jason der Sieger. Zum Heldenbild im hellenistischen Epos, Stuttgart 1996, 2-5; Pietsch Ch., Die Argonautika des Apollonios von Rhodos: Untersuchungen zum Problem der einheitlichen Konzeption des Inhalts, Stuttgart 1999, 99-104 und den Forschungsbericht von Gleij, R. F., Outlines of Apollonian Scholarship 1955-1999, in: Papanghelis Th.D., Rengakos A., (Hrsg.): A Companion to Apollonius Rhodius, Leiden/Boston/Köln 2001, 6-13.

<sup>13</sup> Auch der Iason des Valerius erfährt in der Forschung keineswegs eine einheitliche Beurteilung; vor allem die Frage nach dem Verhältnis zwischen *gloria* und *religio* wird kontrovers diskutiert und dementsprechend Iasons moralische Integrität unterschiedlich bewertet. Vgl. u. a. Adamietz J., Jason und Hercules in den Epen des Apollonios Rhodios und Valerius Flaccus, A&A 16, 1970, 29-38; Adamietz J., Zur Komposition der Argonautica des Valerius Flaccus, München 1976, 6ff.; Hash R. W., The Jason Theme in Greek and Roman Literature. Diss., Vanderbilt 1970, 133ff.; Lühje E., Gehalt und Aufbau der Argonautica des Valerius Flaccus, Diss., Kiel 1971, *passim*; Burck E., Jasons Kämpfe in Kolchis bei Apollonios Rhodios und C. Valerius

Pio ist nun zunächst in Übereinstimmung mit Valerius um eine Re-Heroisierung seiner Iasongestalt bemüht. Ohne den Rahmen der durch den Mythos nach der Fassung des Apollonios vorgegebenen Fakten zu sprengen, sucht Pio seinen Iason als herausragenden Haupthelden zu präsentieren, der als aktiv und mutig handelnder *dux* seiner Führungsposition gerecht wird und die Argonautenfahrt zur Mehrung seines Ruhms zu einem erfolgreichen Ende führen will. Wie Valerius nähert auch Pio damit seinen Iason wieder dem Ideal eines homerischen Helden an. Deutlich wird dies schon im Proömium zum 9. Buch, in dem Iason eine exponierte Stellung zugewiesen wird:

Pio 9, 1-4: *Nunc mihi, Calliope, primae ratis ausa canenti  
erroresque ducis varios iterumque remensum  
aequor et Adriaco lustratas marmore terras  
adspira!*

Während Apollonios in seinen Proömien zum 3. und zum 4. Buch Medea in den Vordergrund rückt, kündigt Pios Erzähler die *errores ducis* als thematischen Schwerpunkt des folgenden Buches an und stellt Iasons Erlebnisse so ins Zentrum des Interesses.

Deutlicher noch wird Pios Bemühen um eine Re-Heroisierung Iasons z.B. anhand eines Gleichnisses, das bei Apollonios dazu dient, Iason von der homerischen Heldenkonzeption zu distanzieren: Nachdem die Argonauten in der libyschen Syrte gestrandet sind, ruft Iason seine Gefärten zu einer Versammlung zusammen. Apollonios vergleicht Iasons Ruf nach den Argonauten mit dem Brüllen eines Löwen nach seiner Gefährtin, das Rinder und Hirten in Furcht erstarren lässt, während auf die Argonauten die Stimme ihres Freundes jedoch keineswegs furchterregend wirkt (AR 4, 1337ff.). Indem Apollonios explizit das Moment der Inkongruenz durch ein negatives *tertium comparationis* betont, erscheint Iason gerade nicht wie homerische Helden 'als ein Löwe'.<sup>14</sup>

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Flaccus, In: Dauer und Überleben des antiken Geistes, Festschrift für Diller H., Athen 1975, 11-43; dens.: Die Argonautica des Valerius Flaccus, In: Ders. (Hrsg.): Das römische Epos, Darmstadt 1979, 238ff.; Hull K. W. D., The Hero-Concept in Valerius Flaccus' Argonautica, In: Deroux C., (Hrsg.): Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History I, Bruxelles 1979, 379-409; Cecchin S. A., Giasone alla conquista del vello d'oro. Personaggi e intreccio nelle Argonautiche di Valerio Flacco, Orpheus 5, 1984, 271-318; Ferenczi A., Sine Honore Labores. Zum Virtusbegriff bei Valerius Flaccus, Philologus 139, 1995, 147-156; Hershkowitz D., Valerius Flaccus' Argonautica: Abbreviated Voyages in Silver Latin Epic, Oxford 1999, 35-128; Ehlers W. W., Einhundert Jahre Prinzipat. Über den Sinn der Argonautica des Valerius Flaccus, In: Holthausen J., (Hrsg.): Psyche, Seele, Anima: K. Alt zum 7. Mai 1998, Stuttgart 1998, 152.

<sup>14</sup> Vgl. Effe B., Tradition und Innovation. Zur Funktion der Gleichnisse des Apollonios Rhodios, Hermes 124, 1996, 295f.; dens.: The Similes of Apollonius Rhodius. Intertextuality and Epic Innovation, in: Papanghelis Th. D., Rengakos A., (Hrsg.): A Companion to Apollonius Rhodius, Leiden/Boston/Köln 2001, 152; Goldhill S., The Poet's Voice. Essays on Poetics and Greek

Pio setzt in seiner Version des Gleichnisses mit der traditionellen Gleichnisstruktur auch den traditionellen Heldentypus wieder in sein Recht:

Pio 10, 365-372: *Dixit et assurgens socios dux convocat omnes  
fauce siti exusta atque arenti pulvere siccus.  
Ut leo per nemus amissam si forte leaenam  
vestigans rugit, fluvii vallesque profundae  
voce gravi montesque tremunt praeduraque saxa,  
agrestes horrent tauri durique bubulci:  
Sic ducis horribili strepuit vox magna fragore  
et rigido commista sono est cogentis amicos.*

Statt wie Apollonios das Gleichnis durch die Negierung der Vergleichbarkeit in gewisser Weise wieder aufzuheben bzw. zu einem Antigleichnis werden zu lassen, betont Pio ausdrücklich die Kongruenz zwischen den furchterregenden Stimmen Iasons und des Löwen. Diese ‘Re-Homerisierung’ des Gleichnisses dient der Heroisierung Iasons, der auf diese Weise von einem Gefährten (AR 4, 1343) wieder zu einem *dux* (Pio 10, 371) wird, dessen Autorität nicht in Zweifel steht.

Entscheidend über Valerius hinaus geht Pio allerdings in dem Bestreben, seinem Iason auch moralische Qualitäten zuzuschreiben. In Anlehnung an Vergils Aeneasfigur stilisiert er ihn zu einem *pius Iason*, der sich sowohl in seinem Verhalten den Göttern als auch den Menschen gegenüber von seinem ‘römischen’ Vorbild unterscheidet. Vor allem scheint Pios Iason ehrliche Liebe für Medea zu empfinden, so dass er dementsprechend liebevoll und einfühlsam mit ihr umgeht. Z. B. intensiviert Pio die teilnahmevolle und zärtliche Fürsorge, mit der Iason sich bei Kirke um Medea kümmert, im Vergleich zu Apollonios (AR 4, 749-752) sehr deutlich.

Pio 9, 276-280: *Sic ait. Illa gravi iamdudum oppressa dolore  
desiccat levi rorantia lumina peplo,  
donec Iolchiacus deflentem sustulit heros  
et – iuvenem comitatus Amor – suadere salutem  
incipiunt blandoque levant sermone gementem.*

Pio lässt Iason Medea im physischen und psychischen Sinn aufrichten, sie mit schmeichelnden Worten trösten und ihren Blick wieder auf die Zukunft richten. Besonders durch die eigenständige Einführung des personifizierten

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Literature, Cambridge 1991, 307ff.; Gummert P. H., Die Erzählstruktur in den Argonautika des Apollonios von Rhodos, Frankfurt/Main 1992, 115f.; Hunter R. L., The Argonautica of Apollonios, Literary Studies, Cambridge 1993, 133; Reitz C., Zur Gleichnisteknik des Apollonios von Rhodos, Frankfurt/Main 1996, 141.

*Amor* charakterisiert Pio Iason eindeutig als Liebenden und spricht ihn damit von dem Vorwurf frei, Medea nur ausgenutzt zu haben.

Am sinnfälligsten wird Pios Bemühen um eine moralische Aufwertung Iasons bei der Beschreibung des Apsyrtos-Mordes, den er zu einer im Rahmen der *pietas* vertretbaren Tat umwertet:

Pio 8, 548-563

*Tantum effatus: "Abitne heros per stagna profundi  
Cimmerii, soror, Aesonides? Relegitne priora  
litora vel portus alios subiturus et urbes?",  
fallax, ut iuvenes Graios pubemque Pelasgam  
excipiat ferro atque inimico remige claudat,  
cum subito Aesonides densis subit actus ab umbris  
attollitque manu nudatum fervidus ense.*

...

*Qualis cervice iuvenus  
saucius a Libyco reboans immane leone  
se rotat et gyris redeuntibus implicat orbes,  
talis ab Haemonio percussus Ponticus ense  
Absyrtus, licet attonitus et corde gelato  
saxeus, arma tamen iuvenilibus apta lacertis  
corripit et saevo fert comminus ora tyranno.*

Zunächst einmal ist bemerkenswert, dass bei Pio anders als bei Apollonios Medea allein zur Initiatorin des Verbrechens wird. Vor allem erzielt Pio aber eine moralische Entlastung Iasons durch die grundlegende Änderung der Charakteristik des Apsyrtos: Pio präsentiert Apsyrtos nicht wie Apollonios als unschuldigen, naiven jungen Mann, der einem Kind vergleichbar ist, das sich, ohne die Gefahr zu kennen, in einen reißenden Fluss wagt (AR 4, 460f.),<sup>15</sup> sondern zeigt ihn als hinterhältigen Schurken, der seinerseits keineswegs auf eine friedliche Lösung des Konflikts bedacht ist und ebenfalls einen heimtückischen Anschlag auf Iason plant. Dadurch kann der folgende Mord, auch wenn er in seiner Ausführung ein feiges Verbrechen ist, doch in gewisser Weise als Folge eines Kampfes zweier gleichwertiger Gegner angesehen werden.

<sup>15</sup> Zur Interpretation dieses Gleichnisses vgl. Drogemöller H. P., Die Gleichnisse im hellenistischen Epos, Diss., Hamburg 1956, 164; Fränkel H., Noten zu den Argonautika des Apollonios, München 1968, 497; Stanzel K. H., Jason und Medea: Beobachtungen zu den Gleichnissen bei Apollonios Rhodios, Philologus 143, 1999, 262f; Gummert P. H., Die Erzählstruktur in den Argonautika des Apollonios von Rhodos, Frankfurt/Main 1992, 112 Anm. 44; Natzel S. A., Klša gunaikîn: Frauen in den Argonautika des Apollonios Rhodios, Trier 1992, 105; Gleis R., Natzel-Gleis S., Apollonios von Rhodos: Das Argonautenepos, herausgegeben, übersetzt und erläutert. Bd. 2., Darmstadt 1996, 194 Anm. 49; Reitz C., Zur Gleichnisteknik des Apollonios von Rhodos, Frankfurt/Main 1996, 116ff.

Des Weiteren sucht Pio seinen Iason zu entlasten, indem er ihn mit Aeneas bei der Tötung des Turnus parallelisiert: Wie Aeneas (Aen. 12, 951) wird Iason als *fervidus* beschrieben, als er auf seinen Gegner zustürmt. Außerdem ist bezeichnend, dass der eigentliche Akt der Ermordung des Apsyrtos nicht als solcher berichtet wird: In Vers 8, 554 erhebt Iason nur die Hand zum Schlag und in Vers 8, 558 ist Apsyrtos bereits getroffen. So wird Iason nur indirekt als Mörder dargestellt.

Noch evidenter wird Pios Absicht zur moralischen Entlastung Iasons auch hier im Rahmen eines Gleichnisses: Apollonios qualifiziert Iason (AR 4, 468) als barbarischen Verbrecher vom Schläge eines Amykos, indem er ihn mit einem brutalen Schlächter, der einen Stier niedermetzelt, vergleicht.<sup>16</sup> Pio hingegen parallelisiert Iason stattdessen in 8, 557ff. mit einem Löwen und charakterisiert ihn so als einen Kämpfer homerischer Prägung, der mutig gegen seinen Widersacher antritt. Wie Apollonios setzt Pio Apsyrtos mit einem Stier gleich, der allerdings nicht als hilfloses Opfer erscheint, sondern auch nach dem Angriff durchaus noch aktionsfähig und weiterhin gefährlich ist. Die Beschreibung seines ziellosen Hin-und-Herlaufens verweist wiederum auf Turnus, der sich nach dem Verlust seines Schwertes im Kampf mit Aeneas ganz ähnlich verhält (Aen. 12, 743). Apsyrtos' innere Haltung dagegen wird, ebenfalls in Entsprechung zu der Reaktion des Turnus auf den Anblick des Aeneas (Aen. 12, 447), als feige und schreckhaft qualifiziert. Insgesamt wird Iasons Verhalten so zum einen als Akt der Notwehr in der Auseinandersetzung mit einem ebenbürtigen Gegner entschuldigt, zum anderen erscheint seine unerschrockene Tapferkeit im Vergleich zu der Feigheit seines Gegners umso herausragender.

Darüber hinaus gewinnt Iasons *pietas* bei Pio jedoch eine ethische Dimension, die die moralische Integrität eines Aeneas übersteigt: Er wird gleichsam zu einem modernen 'humanistischen' Helden, dessen Verhalten an dem Ideal der Menschlichkeit ausgerichtet ist und von Grundsätzen der Humanität bestimmt wird. Während sein griechisches Vorbild (AR 4, 489ff.) ironischerweise zum Kampf gegen die Kolcher nach dem Apsyrtosmord zu spät kommt und so als feiger Meuchelmörder offensichtlich ein offenes

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<sup>16</sup> Vgl. Livrea E., *Apollonii Rhodii Argonauticon liber quartus*. Introduzione, testo critico, traduzione e commento, Firenze 1973, 153, 149f; Beye C. R., *Epic and Romance in the Argonautica of Apollonius: Literary Structures*, Carbondale 1982, 150; Porter J. R., *Tiptoeing through the Corpses: Euripides' Electra, Apollonius and the Bouphonia*, GRBS 31, 1990, 266ff.; Stanzel K. H., *Jason und Medea: Beobachtungen zu den Gleichnissen bei Apollonios Rhodios*, *Philologus* 143, 1999, 262f.; Byrne C. S., *The Killing of Apsyrtos in Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica*, *Phoenix* 50, 1996, 13.

Gefecht scheidet,<sup>17</sup> gibt Pio Iason im Gegensatz dazu Gelegenheit zu einer eigenen Aristie:

Pio 9, 28-30, 36f.: *Emicat Aesonides inimica corymba revellens  
rostraque perfringens Argois aemula rostris  
nec minus et laterum tabulas perrumpit inertes.*

...

*Subsistit Iason  
contentus vicisse feros sine sanguine Colchos.*

Dennoch unterscheidet sich Iasons Kampfeinsatz von dem eines homerischen Helden, weil er seinen Angriff statt gegen die Gegner selbst, lediglich gegen deren Schiffe richtet. Bemerkenswert ist aber vor allem seine Genugtuung darüber, einen Sieg ohne Blutvergießen erzielt zu haben.

Mit dieser Iasonfigur, die auf die Schonung von Menschenleben und das Vermeiden von Blutvergießen bedacht ist, konstituiert Pio eine ganz neue Art des Heldentums, das sich vom altepischen Heldenideal durch seine moralischen Werte und humanen Qualitäten unterscheidet, dennoch aber im Vergleich zu dem von Apollonios vorgestellten hellenistischen Heroismus an traditionellen Heldentugenden wie Mut und Tapferkeit festhält. Pio scheint also hier seinen Helden einerseits von dem Iason des Apollonios durch seinen Heldenmut und andererseits von dem des Valerius durch seine moralische Lauterkeit differenzieren zu wollen.

Diese Gestaltung der Iasonfigur entspricht dem positiven Iasonbild der Renaissance, das von allen negativen Implikationen befreit ist. Iasons Popularität in der Renaissance ist so groß, dass er sogar zum Ordenspatron des 1430 von Philipp dem Guten gegründeten Ordens 'Vom Goldenen Vlies' werden kann.<sup>18</sup> Dementsprechend präsentiert Pio seinen Iason als Vertreter eines modernen, humanistischen Heldentypus, der dem Ideal der Menschlichkeit verpflichtet und Reflex des Humanitätsgedankens der Renaissance ist. Denn das auf Wiederbelebung der Antike ausgerichtete Bildungsideal der Renaissance-Humanisten war keineswegs Selbstzweck,

<sup>17</sup> Gleit R., Natzel-Gleit S., Apollonios von Rhodos: Das Argonautenepos, herausgegeben, übersetzt und erläutert, Bd. 2. Darmstadt 1996, 194f. Anm. 54.

<sup>18</sup> In der Folge entstand eine Vielzahl von literarischen Bearbeitungen, die der Heroisierung Iasons dienen und seine Heldentaten propagandistisch verbreiteten und für den Orden aufbereiteten, z.B. Raoul Lefèvres *Histoire de Jason* oder Guillaume Fillastres *L'histoire de la toison d'or*. Zum Orden 'Vom Goldenen Vlies' und den in diesen Zusammenhang gehörenden literarischen Bearbeitungen des Argonautenstoffs vgl. De Terlinden, Ch.: *Der Orden vom Goldenen Vlies*, Wien/München 1970; Domínguez F. A., *The Medieval Argonautica: Sources, Transmission and Interpretation*, Diss., Ann Arbor 1974; und die Beiträge in Ch. van den Bergen-Pantens (Hrsg.): *L'ordre de la toison d'or, de Philippe le Bon à Philippe le Beau (1430-1505): Idéal ou reflet d'une société?* Turnhout 1996.



sondern stand im Dienst einer neuen Sensibilisierung für die ethische Natur des Menschen. Insofern ist die humanistische Wertschätzung der Antike mit einem christlichen Humanitätsideal verbunden und erstrebt die Formung eines humanen Menschen, der sich der Verantwortung seinen Mitmenschen gegenüber bewusst ist.

Pios Iasondarstellung ist demnach nicht nur an dem Ziel der Heroisierung nach Valerianisch-Vergilischem Verständnis ausgerichtet, sondern wird auch von der Tendenz zur Humanisierung im Sinne einer Orientierung an ethischen bzw. christlichen Grundwerten bestimmt.

So streng sich Pio also auch an seiner griechischen Vorlage orientiert und diese teilweise wörtlich in die lateinische Sprache zu übertragen sucht, bleibt sein Supplement keineswegs reine Apollonios-Übersetzung, sondern ist gleichzeitig Valerius-Fortsetzung mit Renaissance-Kolorit.

Gvantsa Koplatadze (Tbilisi)

### **CHRISTIAN TROPOLOGY OF THE ARGONAUT MYTH**

The unbiased study of the culture created on the basis of the history of Christian religion and Christian outlook more and more exposes the erroneous nature of the viewpoint that Christianity irreconcilably opposed ancient world as soon as it established itself. Of course, this does not mean that the instances of hostility did not occur at all; however, they should not be identified with the general stand of Christ's Church regarding pagan civilization and culture. Distinguished thinkers and Church Fathers duly and timely appreciated the merits and significance of the best works of ancient culture on the way of spiritual development of the humankind and did not spare efforts for the creative reception of the works.

For example, in the opinion of Clemens of Alexandria, one of the great fathers of the Alexandrian school, development of spiritual culture was accomplished under the guidance of the Divine Logos and therefore, he believed that every science and art had the heavenly origin.<sup>1</sup>

A particularly significant role in the creative reception of ancient culture was played anyway by the Cappadocian school. The understanding of the Christian religion as hostile to the past and in general, to the world around was unacceptable for great Cappadocian fathers. It even may be admitted that they determined the attitude of Byzantine Christian thinkers to ancient culture, finding themselves the rightful successors to its best traditions and advancements. The Cappadocian fathers not only used those achievements in their own works, but also advised others to start education with the study of pagan culture. For example, according to Basil the Great, young people were first to train their eyes by reading the best works of ancient authors, as owing

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<sup>1</sup> Лосев А., Философия, Мифология, Культура, М., 1991.

to the 'natural faith' (Saint Paul), which means conscience, they offered many spiritually beneficial and unforgettable examples of high morality.

Basil the Great also specifies what should be learned from pagan culture and what should not. Young people can learn a lot when poets describe the images and deeds of noble characters. They should love them, follow their example and compete with them. But if an author pictures an immoral behavior with sympathy and attempts to make it more presentable, young people should block their ears in the way Odysseus did it so that he could not hear the sweet but disastrous tunes of the Sirens.<sup>2</sup> So, Basil the Great himself offers a specific and memorable example of what can be taken and learned from ancient literature or mythic characters.

Gregory the Theologian so often referred to ancient mythological plots and characters in his homilies in order to embellish and render artistically his ideas that his works, distinguished by laconic style and requiring explanations, were primarily attached with mythological comments, which survived to our times under the name of Nonnos of Panopolis.<sup>3</sup>

Of course, such attitude of Christianity towards mythology was altogether unacceptable in the sphere of religious consciousness, and the synthesis of Christianity and Hellenism was likewise out of the way.<sup>4</sup>

Before dwelling on the Christian tropology of the Argonaut myth, it is necessary to first present which particular method and position of its reading I use and support. This method and position was developed by A. Losev, the greatest scholar of our times.<sup>5</sup>

According to this method, the interpretation of the myth should be based on the material offered by the mythic consciousness and not on the personal outlook of a researcher. Although this statement sounds indisputable, the actual fact is that the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century scholars tried to study the scholarly reality on the basis of subjectivism, almost neglecting the actuality and objectiveness of its categories and sometimes even taking pride in the arguments such as 'we offer the study of a particular subject, but actually we are not concerned about whether they truly exist or not', which is altogether opposite to the mythic consciousness.

This problem exists in our contemporary academic world as well and compels us to face the following dilemma: 1. We talk not about the mythic consciousness itself, but about either our own, or other scholar's attitude,

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<sup>2</sup> Basil the Great, *Address to Young Men on the Right Use of Greek Literature*, PG. vol. XXXI, 564-590.

<sup>3</sup> Georgian translation of pseudo-Nonnos mythological comments was published by A. Gamkrelidze and O. Otkhmezuri, Tbilisi, 1989 (in Georgian).

<sup>4</sup> Fleury E., *Hellénisme et christianisme*, Paris, 1930.

<sup>5</sup> Лосев А., *Философия, Мифология, Культура*, М., 1991.

which can be either positive or negative (the myth is wonderful, divine, sacred; the myth is a childish invention, it is unreal and frail in philosophical terms) and 2. we should not be willing to express either our or other's attitude, or even to try to develop scholarly consciousness, but to explain the mythic consciousness itself. If we share the second position, we will not find it difficult to agree with the opinion that myth, naturally, 'for mythic consciousness, which is altogether specific, is the highest, the maximally intensive, and extremely tense reality. It is not an invention, but the most genuine truth; it is an altogether indispensable category of thought and life, standing apart from any kind of chance and arbitrariness.'... 'There is nothing accidental, redundant, arbitrary, invented or fantastic' in the myth. It is not an invention, but has the most firm and definite structure and is logical i.e. primarily dialectical and indispensable category of consciousness and being in general.'<sup>6</sup>

A. Losev provides a convincing argument in favor of the opinion that myth is neither an ideal being, nor a primitive-academic and philosophical string of ideas, nor a scheme, an allegory or a piece of poetry, but in contrast to them is lively perceptible and creatable, material reality, containing its own, non-academic pure mythic truth, genuineness, and distinguished for its own principal norms and structure. It may also incorporate in itself schematic, allegorical and live-symbolic layers. It is a personal being, or more precisely, the image and form of a personal being.

Myth should by no means be regarded as a scheme. If it was a scheme, the supersensible and the ideal in it would turn into an abstract idea, while the sensible as meaning would remain inessential and would add nothing to the abstract idea. Myth always relates not about mechanisms, but about organisms and even more than that, about personalities; its characters are not abstract ideas, but live beings, in which the important thing is exactly the specific, the sensible, the particular, the actual and the figurative.

As concerns the allegory of myth, almost every popular mythological theory puts an accent on the allegorical character of myth, discerning therein personified natural elements or deified historical personalities. In those theories, mythic characters are interpreted in a special, allegorical sense; they point to some other reality, apparently more important and conceptualized, but are not actual themselves. But if we follow the above-mentioned viewpoint, according to which mythic reality is neither metaphorical, nor allegorical or allusive, but is an actual, completely self-existing one, we will come to the inevitable conclusion that it should be perceived as it is, naively

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<sup>6</sup> Лосев., 1991, 24.

and word by word.<sup>7</sup> Allegory will not facilitate its understanding, as it always implies misbalance between the signifier and the signified; the image is always more than idea, being always embellished and illuminated, while the idea is abstract and unexpressed. As concerns myth, we find a full balance between 'idea' and 'image', 'inner' and 'outer', the ideal and the actual. There is nothing in the image that is missing in the idea. Therefore, the expression can be symbolic, which implies the above-mentioned balance between image and idea. 'Idea' is by no means superior to 'image', and neither is 'image' 'particular' in any way, but is perceived as an abstract concept. 'Image' on its part refers to expressed 'idea' and not merely to 'idea'. It is impossible to discern in the symbol 'idea' without 'image' or 'image' without 'idea'. The symbol is an independent reality. Although it implies two planes of being, they are offered through absolute integrity.<sup>8</sup> This, of course, does not mean that 'idea' and 'symbol' do not at all differ in myth – otherwise, symbol would lack expression. Besides, as the very fact of 'the inner' is identified with the fact of 'the outer' in symbol, 'idea' and 'matter' are united not simply by conceptual, but also by material sameness. For example, the beasts of a fable, whose actions are conscious and who sometimes even utter philosophical ideas, are allegorical, as nobody believes in the actuality of their actions and speeches; however, the author presents one of the horses of Achilles, which suddenly speaks up and prophesies the approaching death of his master, as real, to be interpreted straightforwardly and accepted with naive directness. Hence, here we have a symbol and not an allegory. So, myth is neither a scheme, nor an allegory, but first of all a symbol, which may incorporate in itself schematic, allegorical and complicated symbolical layers.

Naturally, all diverse methods of myth interpretation accepted in the scholarly community were applied in connection with the Argonaut myth as well. One of such interpretations attributes the act of child-slaughter committed by Medea to the cult of Hecate, the representative of the receding matriarchal culture and to the frequent practice of offering young boys as a bloody sacrifice in the last phase of the matriarchate, in this particular case performed by Medea, the priestess of Hecate. In another opinion, the myth is allegorical and Medea's killing of children implies the state of a new life.

Some scholars go even farther and not only regard Medea as the priestess of Hecate, but even identify her with this Thracian goddess of moon and consider that owing to her special state, she was authorized to have at her disposal the Golden Fleece, which embodied masculine aggressiveness.

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<sup>7</sup> Лосев., 1991, 47.

<sup>8</sup> Лосев., 1991, 48.

Medea is to be interpreted as the destructive force against the masculine element, as the power which, from the matriarchal point of view, rejects the masculine force. Such interpretation of the myth presents the integrated image of Medea and Hecate as the protector and at the same time demolisher of the masculine.

According to Kerenyi, Jason and Medea, as the representatives of masculine and feminine aggressive cultures, are incompatible as there is nothing that would unite them, which the author of the theory calls 'the hermetic principle'.<sup>9</sup>

It is clear that such and other similar methods of interpreting the Argonaut myth are based on subjectivism; the scholars seem to forget that in terms of mythic consciousness, the mythic reality is an actual and self-existing reality and not a metaphorical or allegorical one, and therefore, myth should be understood as it is, naively and word by word, and its characters should be perceived as actual beings. In these circumstances, Medea and Jason cease to appear as the representatives of feminine and masculine aggression respectively; in fact, the former is the woman skilled in sorcery, whose unkindly intentions are helped by evil spirits, while the latter is a person, who cannot be called a hero despite his heroic feats as he accomplished them with woman's help, and not with his own bravery and intelligence.

The Argonaut myth, as well as its literary versions, captures attention not by the sublime qualities of its characters, but by the psychological truth which underlies them. Their unity is achieved by a firm inner logic characteristic of truly high art and indispensable for the creation of coherent characters – one of the requirements for poets, posed as early as by Aristotle.<sup>10</sup> This logic on its part implies a deep insight into and analysis of the characters' qualities, which motivate their actions.

The characters of Medea and Jason develop in such a surprisingly logical way that this consistency is never violated, and neither of their words or actions bring disharmony into the unity of their characters. In this respect, I dare not agree with the distinguished scholar Grigol Tsereteli, who maintained that Apollonius Rhodius failed to logically develop Medea's image, presenting her in Book 3 as a tender virgin in love struggling against herself, and in Book 4 as a cold, matter-of-fact and implacable witch.<sup>11</sup> In my opinion, the psychological authenticity of Medea's character is determined by her actions after she betrayed her father and homeland. For example, there is

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<sup>9</sup> Kerenyi K., *Das hermetische Prinzip in Mythologie*, Zürich, 1943.

<sup>10</sup> Aristoteles, *Poetik*, Leipzig, 1972, 54.

<sup>11</sup> Аполлоний Родосский, *Аргонавтика*, перевод, введение и примечания Г. Церетели, Тб., 1964, 14.

nothing unexpected in the fact that she doomed her brother to a brutal death, which repeats in all the versions of the myth. I do not agree with the opinion that Medea did this for the sake of 'the great cosmic love'<sup>12</sup>, as love is an integral emotion and treachery and murder, especially of a close person, is altogether alien to those endowed with this gift, and what is more, on the part of those who love, this feeling implies self-sacrifice and not the sacrifice of others.

The emotion, gripping the heart of the king's daughter after she met the strange guest, not only failed to turn into the fire of love, which would be at the same time a light-giving source, but went out, and Medea was possessed by darkness and bleakness. She was doomed to such an agonizing state by herself, when she decided to win Jason's favour and love at the expense of betraying her father and homeland. The virgin, skilled in magic, ruined with her evil deeds the remnants of her tender and beautiful feeling, if there was such, and eventually became a callous witch, provoking fright, or intimidation at best.

Considering the above-mentioned, the fact that after fleeing Colchis, Medea has nothing in common with Jason except crimes is the very evidence of the logical and coherent development of the character. She is not able to love, and is well aware that neither can Jason love the woman, who, although for his sake, has committed so much evil. Therefore, it is quite natural that Medea requires his protection not because of love, but because of the debt which Jason owes her, and shows surprising practicality like those skilled in bargains.

Skilfulness in magic implies help from evil forces and not only kills the gift for love in a person, but makes him/her implacable and ruthless. After the merciless murder of her own brother, the killing of Peleas, Jason's uncle, Creon, the king of Corinth and his daughter because of vengeance is perceived as Medea's normal behaviour, and therefore does not have very strong impact on the reader. But this is not all. The principle of logical development of her character requires of her an unparalleled, the most appalling crime. According to various versions of the myth, Medea either kills her children herself, or they die from the hands of the Corinthians, or because their mother wanted them to join the ranks of the immortals. Euripides had her murder her own children intentionally, to revenge upon Jason. According to R. Gordeziani, this innovation of the playwright proved indeed successful, as following the 5<sup>th</sup> century, Euripides' *Medea* was almost

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<sup>12</sup> Бауер В., Дюмотц И., Головин С., Энциклопедия символов, М., 1998, 155.

the only source referred to as the model for the development of Medea's theme in ancient culture.<sup>13</sup>

Although the first performance of Euripides' *Medea* in 431 failed to appeal to the spectators, horrified with the brutal murder, as soon as the first and the most painful impression was past, the spectators, as well as the readers, easily accepted the psychological authenticity of the character pictured by the tragedian as the evil, which ruins itself, is unable to spare anyone. As neither Jason is distinguished by high morality, his union with Medea is quite logical. It is likewise logical that vainglorious Jason, who did not have enough power to carry out his ambitions, as he failed to recover the throne of Iolcus and decided to become a king in Corinth, once again with a lady's help, through marrying Creusa, abandoned the woman whom he owed the retrieval of the Golden Fleece to his homeland. They more or less deserve each other, which is clearly attested by the dialogue, in which the spouses rebuke each other remembering the service they gave each other.

The above-mentioned reveals that in the characters of the Argonaut myth the idea and the image are assimilated in actual terms, at the level of matter. Neither the idea is somewhat more than the image, nor is the image something particular. According to Losev, such a balance is characteristic only of symbol. That is why Medea became the symbol of betrayal and ruthlessness, and Jason the symbol of an average little man, whose actions are motivated only by ambitions and profiteering, but as he does not have enough power himself, he tries to attain the goal through gaining ladies' favour. This may account for the fact that the characters of the Argonaut myth were less popular in the Byzantine period. Since they could not have served as spiritually beneficial examples to be followed by the Christians, Church Fathers preferred to be reticent about them. Even Gregory the Theologian, who is distinguished among the Holy Fathers for multiple references to mythological materials, does not mention the characters of the Argonaut myth. Their names appear more often in historical writings, whose authors give an account of Colchian events, and each case of such a reference conveys a negative message.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Euripides, *Medea*, translated into Georgian by B. Bregvadze, introduced and commented on by R. Gordeziani, Tbilisi, 1996, 11 (in Georgian).

<sup>14</sup> Georgica, The Notes of Byzantine Writers about Georgia, edited by S. Kaukhchishvili, vol. I, VIII, Tbilisi (in Georgian).



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## MEDEA IN ITALIAN LITERATURE

*Nota omnibus Medea* (Petrarch)

The myth of the Argonauts and Medea was well known in Greek and Latin culture, for it embodied feelings and behaviours, which are typical of human nature. No wonder, therefore, that it spread through Italian literature soon from its beginning. In the Italian schools, during the Middle Ages, Latin language was currently taught and spoken, and the most important works of Latin literature were fundamental for a sound education. Among these works, there were Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which contain the longest narration of Medea's tragedy, full of psychological details. And we cannot forget that the myth of the Argonauts was considered an example of human boldness and ingenuity, for it describes the first human's tentative of navigation. So it is not without reason that Petrarch uttered the words we have put in the beginning (*De remediis utriusque fortunae*, I 52, 8), though he blamed Medea's passions and deeds.

### 1. The Argonauts' myth

The great, heroic enterprise of the Argonauts, which was celebrated in classical times, provoked a warm admiration in the greatest Italian poet, Dante Alighieri. In his *Comedia* (*Paradiso*, II 16-18) he evokes "those glorious men who sailed to Colchis", and Jason's labour of ploughing, when he had to subdue the furious bulls.

But another great poet and scholar, Francesco Petrarca, interpreted the myth in a new way, that is critically: in his opinion, the Argonauts weren't a band of heroes, a group of bold young men who reached the boundaries of the world in search for the Golden Fleece, but a crew of pirates, such as there were so many in the Mediterranean Sea during the Middle Ages, in his own

times (*De remediis utriusque fortunae* (I 117, 8)): in spite of Ennius' words (*scaen.*, 250-251, which Petrarch quotes indirectly, through Cic., *Tusc.*, I 20, 45), they were not illustrious men, but *vere predones*, drawn by the *fama divitiarum*. Indeed, the famous Golden Fleece possesses no noble signification, does not allegorize the desire of glory, and of confronting the most difficult enterprises, but simply indicates that vulgar people are in search of wealth. According to Petrarch, the Argonauts simply looked for luxurious clothes, that is the Golden Fleece. Also in *Epist.*, *Familiares*, XIX 3, 5 Petrarch, meditating on some Ennius' lines (which he knew, as usual, thanks to a quotation in Cicero), describes the Argonauts, who "parva spe magno et procelloso mari Colchon *barbaricam* petiere, ubi regnabat *incognitus* rex Oethes". The 'feeble hope' is the greed of wealth, certainly not the desire of knowing the king Oetes and his country.

## 2. Jason

According to Jason's characteristics he found in the classics, Dante strictly condemned him as a seducer, describing his punishment in one of the lowest 'circles' of his *Inferno*, the first of the so called 'Malebolge' (XVIII, 86 ss.).

Quelli è Iason, che per cuore e per senno / li Colchi del monton privati fene. / Ello passò per l'isola di Lenno [...] Ivi con segni e con parole ornate / Isifile ingannò, la giovinetta / che prima avea tutte l'altre ingannate. / Lasciolla quivi, gravida, soletta; / tal colpa a tal martiro lui condanna; / e anche di Medea si fa vendetta. / Con lui sen va chi da tal parte inganna ...

Jason surely was endowed with boldness and intelligence, but had deceived and abandoned first Hypsipyle and then Medea (the two heroines are often introduced together by poets who described Jason's forfeits). This description is most probably drawn from Statius *Thebais* (books 5 and 6), a poem which enjoyed a great popularity in the Middle Ages and which Dante uses extensively.

## 3. Medea

### 3, 1. Medea in literature

According to Dihle<sup>1</sup>, European literatures characterized Medea in three ways; either she is a loving woman, ready even to kill her husband and her sons to take vengeance for having been abandoned; or she is a demonic per-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. Dihle, *Euripides' Medea und ihre Schwestern in europäischen Drama, Antike und Abendland* 22, 1976, 175-184.

son, endowed with superhuman (that is, infernal) powers; or, lastly, she is a barbarian woman, whose customs don't fit the civilized Greece. The first categorization has its origins in Euripides' tragedy and spread from the Renaissance theatre to the Italian 'Opera'; demonic Medea is inspired by Seneca's – but also by Ovid's – characterization; the third type is much more recent, and spread particularly in modern European literatures: in hard polemic against racism and colonialism, aims at giving Medea a higher estimation.

Generally speaking, Italian literature was much more interested in describing Medea as a loving and passionate woman, whose vicissitudes excited warm feelings.

Petrarch, on the contrary, reminds Medea's drama and her wrath, in the *Triumphus Cupidinis* (I, 128-132); but he wrote this work in his old age: therefore, he does not justify Medea: true, she loved Jason and hoped to have deserved his love, but she was guilty of murdering her father and her brother.

The poet who was more interested in Medea was Giovanni Boccaccio. Many of his works, just as his *Decameron*, are romantic and erotic, and he is moved in many, different, ways, considering the fortunes of the heroine. Medea was exceedingly beautiful, he says in *Comedia delle ninfe fiorentine* 12; she appears in the crowd of loving women, whose catalogue is given in *Filocolo*, IV 83, and in *Rime* parte II 38,75 (because of her love to Jason, she abandoned her father); she is a poisoner and a sorcerer (*Teseida*, I 102; *Commedia delle ninfe fiorentine*, 34). As usual in Mediaeval treatises on love, sometimes Boccaccio cites Medea as an example of the changes love produces in humans: disputing with the queen (a character of his novel, *Il Filocolo*), Caleone says that Medea was forced by love to abandon herself, her honour and her country, and to follow Jason. This means that, thanks to love, humans utterly immolate themselves; but the queen replies that love usually produces dangerous effects, just as those mentioned above (*Filocolo*, IV 45). The terrible consequences of love and the madness it causes, are a commonplace in Mediaeval literature, and Boccaccio mentions them several times (for instance in *Commedia delle ninfe fiorentine*, 29, *Amorosa Visione*, IX 25 ss., containing a catalogue of famous women<sup>2</sup>).

In the *Amorosa Visione* the whole chapter XXI is interesting. Boccaccio represents not only Hypsipyle and Medea, but also Creusa: both are angry with the young bride (they are "con Creusa sospette"); Jason is on the scene,

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<sup>2</sup> "In abito crucciato con costei [*scl.*, with Hypsipyle] seguia Medea crudele e dispietata; con voce ancor pareva dicere: "Omei, / se io più savia alquanto fossi stata / né si avessi tosto preso amore, / forse ancor non sarei suta ingannata"". Here, again, Medea is mentioned together with Hypsipyle.

but doesn't utter a word. In a tone, which recalls Ovid's *Heroides*, first Hypsipyle reproaches him for his treachery: he loved her, but he abandoned her while she was pregnant with the twins Thoans and Eunaeus. She hoped to see Jason coming back soon, but she heard that he had fallen in love with a woman in Colchis and had changed his feelings<sup>3</sup>. So now, Jason does not mind her and takes delight of Hypsipyle's foe. Her sufferings are terrible, but she begs in vain Jason not to leave her. Medea too is moved by wrath: she reproaches Jason for neglecting her love; indeed, she had loved him more passionately than any other woman did. Furthermore, she helped him to escape the dangers in Colchis and to catch the Golden Fleece; and, what's most infamous to her, she killed her young brother Absyrtos, so that she could fly with him. Thanks to her magic arts, she rejuvenated Aeson, Jason's old father, killed Jason's uncle Pelias, so that he eventually could reign in Thessaly. He is well aware that Medea will do everything in order to please him – yet, longing for another woman, he forgot even his sons. As a conclusion, Medea begs Jason to come back to her, who is his wife, but he takes care neither of Hypsipyle nor of Medea and gladly embraces Creusa (XXII, 1-3).

Elsewhere Boccaccio, considering Medea's cruelty, somehow justifies Jason's behaviour. In *Filocolo*, III 18 Florio is longing of his loved Bianciflore; he is compared to Hypsipyle, abandoned by Jason, who fell in love for another young girl – but he had to do so, because he was in danger, and he could not have saved himself if Medea hadn't helped him. Soon after these events, Jason abandoned Medea, but, again, *pour cause*, due to her cruelty<sup>4</sup>: he had met Creusa, who was so kind and loving.

As a whole, Giovanni Boccaccio, the poet of love and the storyteller of the *Decameron*, was the writer most interested in Medea's vicissitude, in her adventures, or faults, and eventually found some reasons for justifying her. In the same way, the Renaissance poet Matteo Maria Boiardo shows his sympathy for her, though he knows, as every poet or narrator did<sup>5</sup>, that she was a sorcerer, skilful in magic arts; she could tie and untie the lovers by the filters she prepared with unknown grasses; yet she couldn't untie herself from the chains of Love (*Amores*, I 48, 5-8).

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<sup>3</sup> "ch'avevi nuova amica presa in Colcòs e mutato proposto" (vv. 41-42).

<sup>4</sup> This is a topic; in the same work, there is a catalogue of cruel women (Clitemnestra, Helen, Procne and other): there Medea too is present: cf. III, 35.

<sup>5</sup> For example, Matteo Bandello. It is worth mentioning also a miscellaneous 'novel' by Francesco Colonna (XVth century), the *Hypnerotomachia Polifili* (p. 178, 275, 390 ed. G. Pozzi, Padua 1980): the author labels Medea with the usual characterization as sorcerer, and lover.

### 3, 2. Medea on the stage

Thanks to the rediscovery of classical theatre, a new literary genre rose in Italy and spread through Europe during the Renaissance. Greek and Latin tragedies were 'rewritten' in Italian: it was not, however, a simple translation, but an interpretation and a modification of Euripides' or Seneca's plots. In the Renaissance Medea is not a real, living woman of the past, as the Middle Ages had considered her, but a mythical character – that is, not 'historical'; as such, she is an unvarying, uniform character, always identified by her magical arts and provided with extreme cruelty. While the Senecan tragedy was considered the model *par excellence* of Medea's vicissitude, Horace became the theoriser of her savage and uncivilized behaviour.

3, 2, 1. Among these Italian tragedies, we can mention the *Medea* by Ludovico Dolce, a polygraph, who wrote eight dramas (*Medea* was published in 1557). As we said, in the XVIth century, translation was often a remaking: therefore, the source of Dolce's *Medea* is Euripides' drama. In fact, the Italian poet was an admirer of Euripides, as every cultivated man was in XVIth century. At the same time, he inserted in the plot some details from Seneca. Tragedy was highly estimated as a dramatic genre of classical origin, even though it was considered as a relic of heathenism. However, interest for Greek tragedy wasn't common in Renaissance Italy, and particularly in the years 1540 - 1560, when the Catholic Reformation didn't approve plots ending in catastrophe and desperation. Furthermore, the literary tastes of cultivated people preferred a 'happy end'.

Sometimes sentences or exhortations to Christian faith were artfully inserted into the tragedies, into the choruses and at the end, so that the author could distinguish himself from the ancient poets of pagan dramas. It was recommended introduce on the stage a feminine character, who might be not a heroine, but a victim, or a young girl whose destiny could arouse pathos (*e.g.* Antigone), or an old woman, whose vicissitude arose piety (*e.g.* Hecuba). Nevertheless, feminine characters were allowed acting cruelly, infringing laws, being liable for the evil they had done. Such was Medea, the sorcerer inspired by hell, merciless and unable of repentance, thanks to the long tradition we hinted at.

4. And, as it was normal for the Italian scholars in the Cinquecento, such a frightful character, modelled from Euripides' and Seneca's tragedy, interested authors of rhetorical and poetical treatises<sup>6</sup>. In their works nothing remained

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<sup>6</sup> Also a great poet, Torquato Tasso was interested in this theoretic problems; he observes that Thyestes', Medea's and Oedipus' story (Tasso is considering the most famous Senecan trage-

of the sprightliness of the ancient and mediaeval Medea; the heroine is analysed only from the point of view of the dramatic technique and the exigency of how to construct a character fitting to rational rules: who is depicted by tradition as cruel, in no way can appear tender toward her sons. Could, therefore, Medea feel pity to his children? Was Jason a heroic character, or not? He didn't possess any actual virtue; a hero might be, on the contrary, Charles the Great ...

Yet, such a schematism didn't choke Medea's life, her love, and her wrath, which were stronger than erudition, and continued to the subject of dramas (also musical ones) in the following centuries, until our ages.

Of course, it is not possible to single out the whole story of Medea in Italian literature; we limit ourselves to mention some significant examples, drawn from the production of nineteenth and twentieth centuries: classicizing tragedies continued to be written<sup>7</sup>. But much more interesting are the modern distortions or adaptations of the myth. The popular *feuilleton* writer Francesco Mastriani was the author of a long novel *Medea di Porta Medina* (a popular quarter in Naples), published in 1915; Alberto Savinio wrote a short story in

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dies) attracted many ancient poets, who, thanks to their elaboration, renewed it in many ways ("variamente tessendolo, di commune, proprio, e di vecchio, nuovo il facevano": *Discorsi dell'arte poetica*, p. 5; *Discorso del poema eroico*, libro secondo, p. 86 - Cf. T. Tasso, *Discorsi dell'arte poetica e del poema eroico* a cura di L. Poma, Bari 1964.). Tasso distinguishes between the simple argument (the 'materia nuda') and the subsequent elaboration of it, which determines the success of the poet's work. Indeed, if a poet wants to rise compassion, he will be more successful treating Oedipus' misfortune, who killed his father unintentionally, than representing Medea, who, though aware of the crime she would commit, torn her sons into pieces: "questa appena sarà atta a intiepidire gli animi, ancora che l'artificio, nell'una e nell'altra (favola) usato, sia non solo simile, ma eguale". It is also very important to consider the nobility of the enterprises, such as those of the Argonauts, which were the subject of Orpheus', Homer's and Apollonius' poems. However, epic poem can have its origin from an erotic subject, as from the myth of Jason and Medea, which was treated by the Greek Apollonius and the Latin Valerius Maximus (*Del poema eroico*, libro secondo, p. 108. In this quotation I suppose a mistake by Tasso, obviously he meant Valerius Flaccus). Reputation of piety and religiousness requires a 'perfect knight', as were Charles the Great and King Arthur, not Theseus and Jason (*ibid.*, p. 98; cf. *Trattati di poetica e di retorica del Cinquecento*, a cura di B. Weinberg, vol. I-IV, Bari 1970-1974). Such and other similar considerations (rather pedantic, we admit) can be found in Bernardino Daniello's treatise *Della poetica* (a. 1536 - vol. I, p. 252), who, according to Horace's *Ars poetica*, affirms that cruel, terrible and shameful actions, such as those of Medea and of Procne, cannot have their place on the scene. On the contrary, Bartolomeo Ricci (*de imitatione liber primus* - del 1541, p. 444) thinks that such behaviours are allowed, as it is shown by Seneca's *Hercules*, "et naturam suam et fortasse etiam sua tempora secutus". Who is interested in this problem pertaining the history of Italian culture and literature can read also Gian Giorgio Trissino, *La poetica*, quinta divisione, p. 24 (anno 1549); Giason Denore, *Discorso* etc. (anno 1586 - III, p. 387); Nicolò Rossi, *Discorsi intorno alla commedia* (1589 - IV, 74. 75. 94. 96).

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. the tragedies by G. B. Nicolini (1803) or C. della Valle (1810).

1917-18, in which he identified himself with Jason. We should mention also a tragedy by Corrado Alvaro, *La lunga notte di Medea* (1949). Finally, a brief section in Cesare Pavese's masterpiece *Dialoghi con Leucò*, written just after World War II, and inspired by Greek mythical characters, reproduces a dialogue between two Argonauts about human life and ultimate destiny<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Cfr. P. Fornaro, *Medea italiana*, in *Atti delle giornate di studio su Medea, Torino 23-24 ottobre 1995*, ed. by R. Uglione, Torino 1997, 117-163. M. G. Ciani (ed.), Euripide, Seneca, Grillparzer, Alvaro, *Medea*, Venezia 1999; A. Zumbo, *La Lunga notte di Medea di Corrado Alvaro*, in *La riscrittura e il teatro dall'antico al moderno e dai testi alla scena*, a cura di P. Radici Colace e A. Zumbo, Messina 2004, 135-147; G. Ieranò, *Tre Medee del Novecento: Alvaro, Pasolini, Wolf*, in B. Gentili - F. Perusino (eds.), *Medea nella letteratura e nell'arte*, Venezia 2000, 193-216.

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### MEDEA IN ITALIAN CULTURE: MUSIC, ICONOGRAPHY, AND CINEMA\*

In his paper Claudio Moreschini tried to show how widespread a fortune the myth of Medea and the Argonauts had in Italian literature from the earliest testimonies to the sixteenth century. Following the same lines, in turn, I will discuss other examples of such a fortune in Italian music (namely, opera) and art, which sometimes are in close connection to literary models. For the sake of brevity, I will take into account only Italian works and therefore I will not discuss other important testimonies from European art and music.<sup>1</sup>

It is perhaps obvious saying that Greek myths were particularly suit for the stage and for theatrical purposes, even though, in European culture at the beginning of the modern era, these purposes were radically different and diverging from the ones that originated the tragic performances in the fifth-century Greece, or the so-called 'rhetorical' tragedy in Rome. More specifically, musical opera since its beginnings in the sixteenth century was attracted by intrigues, complex plots, exaggerate passions, and extreme emotions – a

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\* It was for me a pleasure and an honour to take part in this conference together with scholars from all over the world. My topic is an attempt at divulging some aspects of Italian culture; though, to a greater extent, investigating the offspring of an ancient myth is a confirmation of a well known statement by the late Platonist Secundus Salustius, mentor of the Emperor Julian, according to whom myths are "events that never happened but are forever".

<sup>1</sup> A brief but rich and interesting survey is offered by G. Tedeschi, *Medea e gli Argonauti nei poeti greci*, in *Scrivere, leggere, interpretare. Studi di antichità in onore di S. Daris*, ed. by F. Crevatin, G. Tedeschi, Trieste 2005 (available online at <http://www.sslmit.univ.trieste.it/crevatin/Documenti/daris/Tedeschi.pdf>), with further bibliographic references, among which it is worth quoting E. Hall, F. Macintosh, O. Taplin (eds.), *Medea in Performance 1500-2000*, Oxford 2000; B. Gentili, F. Perusino (eds.), *Medea nella letteratura e nell'arte*, Venezia 2000. See also J. J. Clauss, S. I. Johnston, *Medea: Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy, and Art*, Princeton 1996.



mixture of ingredients, which could easily find fertile soil in classical mythology and in its vicissitudes. This was also a useful way to divulge or trivialize classical antiquity. On the contrary, I agree only partially with the Italian scholar Dario del Corno, when he states that tales and heroes (or heroines) from a remote past were favoured, because they could offer a sort of evasion or refuge in a mythical time.<sup>2</sup>

As expected, the saga of Medea and the Argonauts did not escape the notice of librettists and composers. As to my knowledge, there are almost twenty Italian operas and a few cantatas inspired by this story. This is a significant number, albeit this subject, however, seems less fashionable in comparison with other mythical tales or stories (Dido and Aeneas, for example).

I will take into account only the four major ones, limiting myself to a brief mention of the others: as it usually happens for many operas of the eighteenth century, in some cases, their music is now lost, or still unpublished, and we can only record the date of their performance. Such is the case of the various *Medea* composed by Giovanni Francesco Brusa (Venice 1726), Davide Perez (Palermo 1744), Gaetano Martinelli (*La vendetta di Medea*, Venice 1792), Gaetano Andreozzi (*Giasone e Medea*, Naples 1793), Francesco Piticchio (*La vendetta di Medea*, Naples 1798), and Antonio Sacchini (composed between 1784 and 1786, but unperformed). In addition, there are some vocal chamber works, which drew inspiration from the same legend: I will mention *Gli Argonauti in viaggio*, by Antonio Draghi (1682), *Peleo, Giasone, Pallade*, a cantata by Pasquale Cafaro (1766), and the more significant serenade *Giasone*, written by the famous Neapolitan composer Niccolò Porpora (1742). The related story of Jason and Hypsipyle, the young princess whom Jason meets during his voyage to Colchis, seduces and abandons, inspired many composers as well, who availed themselves of a libretto by the celebrated and prolific Caesarian poet in Vienna, Pietro Metastasio (1732). It is worth recording Johann Adolph Hasse, Niccolò Porpora, Pasquale Galuppi, Giuseppe Scarlatti, Johann Christian Bach, Giuseppe Sarti, Pasquale Anfossi and the famous Christoph Willibald Gluck.<sup>3</sup>

But let's turn now to some major works. The first example of an opera inspired by the Argonauts is *Giasone*, composed by the Venetian Francesco Cavalli and first performed in 1649. Together with *Egisto* and *Didone* it con-

<sup>2</sup> D. Del Corno, *Medea in musica: una figura nel mondo classico nel melodramma*, in *Atti delle giornate di studio su Medea, Torino 23-24 ottobre 1995*, ed. by R. Uglione, Torino 1997, 107-115.

<sup>3</sup> I derive these references (and the following ones about visual art) from J. Davidson Reid, *The Oxford Guide to Classical Mythology in the Arts, 1300-1990*, New York 1993, s.v. *Medea; Jason and the Argonauts*.

stitutes a sort of ‘mythological’ trilogy. It is counted among the masterpieces of its author, despite the inconsistencies and the faults of the libretto, written by Giacinto Andrea Cicognini. The major reproach, as we said, is the grotesque libretto, which appears somewhat farfetched in its mixing of farcical and serious elements – but it must be noticed that this was a common praxis of the period (just to remember a famous case, in *The Tempest* by Shakespeare the two buffoons insert their sketches between the main, solemn, plot). As usual in the operatic praxis, the composer, however, seems unaffected by the inconsistencies of the poor libretto, and, for example, gratifies with a fine aria the ugly and stammering servant Demos as well. Notwithstanding the plot, often absurd and farfetched, the libretto shows many elements of originality and novelty: for example, the scene is staged in Colchos and in the Iberian countryside, whereas the more usual place is Corinth according to the ancient models by Euripides or Seneca. There is no chronological consistency, for the scene displays simultaneously characters such as Hypsipyle, Medea, Jason, Heracles, and also Aegeus. The backbone of the myth is only a pretext to display a complex intrigue: Jason and Medea are planning their marriage, after the slaying of the bulls and the conquest of the Golden Fleece; but the sudden coming of Hypsipyle and her pretensions to marry the reluctant Jason provoke Medea’s suspicions and jealousy. She plans to let her rival be killed during the night, but falls a victim to her own intrigue: the servant entrusted to kill Hypsipyle mistakes a woman for the other and drowns Medea into the sea.

However, the most significant feature of this work consists in its astonishing happy end, which is a deliberate subversion of the classical model, in accordance with the joyful atmosphere we already underlined. Indeed, after a long series of misunderstandings, Jason marries Hypsipyle, whereas Medea eventually escapes to death, thanks to her old lover Aegeus, king of Athens, and marries him. In a broader perspective, this final section pays its homage to the unwritten rules of certain melodrama, which, to some extents, tended to avoid tragic endings. But, much more, in some respects all this is very fit to Cavalli’s temperament and musical style, which, according to all modern interpreters, is characterized by a cheerful attitude and fondness for joy, therefore being the actual representative of a Venetian musical fashion – it is perhaps worth remembering that his *Didone* displays a happy final as well. This opera, therefore, contains some ironical or auto-ironical patterns and can be regarded as a fresco of human feebleness. Music is also pervaded, so to say, by sensuality: it emerges particularly in love duets (and in this respect, it can be considered very close to Monteverdi’s *Incoronazione di Poppea*). At the same time, the composer emphasizes, as to be expected, the ‘dark side’ of

Medea, namely her sorcery and her close links to chthonian deities: this is well expressed in the famous aria and chorus from act I, *Le mura si squarcino* ("Let it be a rift in the walls"), where she performs an evocation of infernal gods. This passage offers a good example of Cavalli's colourful and lively instrumentation.<sup>4</sup>

Cavalli, therefore, represents an exception among the composers inspired by Medea and Jason: it was the tragic epilogue, according to the unanimous classical tradition, that most attracted composers and artists. The most important opera about Medea, and indeed one of the masterpieces of lyric music, "the highest peak of dramatic music" in Brahms' words, is undoubtedly the "tragédie lyrique" *Médée* composed by the Florentine Luigi Cherubini and first performed in Paris in 1797. The libretto was written by François Hoffmann and, as usual, omits the antecedents of the story that is the part placed in Colchis; conversely, it develops the events which took place afterwards, in Corinth. This opera was immediately considered if not the actual masterpiece, one of Cherubini's most important works; it was largely admired in France and, most of all, in Germany. In Italy it enjoyed a revival during the fifties of the last century, thanks to the powerful and spectacular interpretation of the Greek legendary soprano Maria Callas in the main role.<sup>5</sup>

Cherubini is in many respects a proto-romantic composer, his operas being a sort of transition between classicism and romanticism. His texture shows echoes from different composers, even though they are blended in an original ensemble. As far as *Médée* is concerned, this is particularly clear in the instrumental sections (the *ouverture* is a good example), whereas in the solo parts a sort of monumental pathos is continuously irradiated from the music. Despite the literary weakness and inconsistencies of the libretto, it is all the same possible to outline a spiritual evolution of Medea, who is a passionate woman in despair for having lost her lover. She seeks for revenge after having humiliated herself. Indeed, in Corinth she is an exile, and she is hated as a stranger and alien figure. Comprehensibly, she is the main character. In comparison with her, the other figures result more faded (even though King Creon has a sort of heroic greatness in resisting her menaces). Some critics have labelled *Médée* as a 'monodrama'. Cherubini obtains this contrast

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<sup>4</sup> F. Bussi, *L'opera veneziana dalla morte di Monteverdi alla fine del Seicento*, in *Storia dell'opera*, diretta da A. Basso, Torino 1977, vol. 1, 121-182 (in part. 131-142). This opera was recorded by Harmonia Mundi in 1989 (conductor R. Jacobs).

<sup>5</sup> Her first interpretation of Medea during the season of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino in 1953 (with Vittorio Gui as conductor) was particularly meaningful and decreed the international success of Callas as a star. Among her many recordings of this opera, we can mention the one conducted by Tullio Serafin (Emi Classics, 1998).

by employing two different kind of music, and therefore there is a sort of disproportion between the excited and colourful harmony characterizing Medea and the plain melodic line of the other figures. However, it is all the same worth mentioning the only coloratura aria sung by the Corinthian rival of Medea, Glauce, and the melodic, more intimate, aria sung by Medea's servant, Neris.<sup>6</sup>

After Cherubini, two minor composers in the first half of the nineteenth century were attracted by the story; I mean Giovanni Simone Mayr and Giovanni Pacini. The first one performed in 1813 an extremely classicizing *Medea in Corinto*, which is his acknowledged masterpiece. Tough born in Germany, Mayr lived for a long time in Italy and tried to blend the two styles together, adding sometimes a touch of French vague. Mayr, who had been completely forgotten till recent times, was, however, one of the most successful and acclaimed composers of his times: the well known rivalry against Rossini testifies his importance. *Medea*, first performed in Naples with the famous Isabella Colbran and Manuel Garcia in the main roles, was a triumph. Part of the merits should be credited to the librettist, the famous Felice Romani (who, incidentally, some decades later wrote for Vincenzo Bellini a pendant of *Medea's* story, namely *Norma*, deriving the partly similar plot from Chateaubriand's *Les Martyrs*)<sup>7</sup>. The libretto is powerful and concise, as, for example, the dialogues show. Medea is a tormented figure, both a sorceress and a barbarian princess, and the contrast between the two different civilizations and culture is exemplified in the other female figure, the mild-temperate Creusa, as well as in the male hero Jason, who feels himself entangled by Medea's dangerous charming. The Athenian king Aegeus represents an element of novelty in the otherwise standard plot, for he loves Creusa too and was formerly promised to her. Furthermore, he and Medea conjure together in order to prevent the marriage between Jason and Creusa. After murdering Creusa and the children, Medea flies away, together with Aegeus, whereas Jason attempts at committing suicide, his deed being prevented only by the Corinthians. Among the most interesting sections of the opera we can count

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<sup>6</sup> G. Confalonieri, *Cherubini*, Torino 1978, 295 ff.

<sup>7</sup> C. Questa, *I Romani sulla scena operistica*, in *L'aquila a due teste. Immagini di Roma e dei Romani*, Urbino 1988; L. Belloni, *Reminiscenze da 'Medea' nel libretto di 'Norma': sulla memoria euripidea di Felice Romani*, in *Memoria di testi teatrali antichi*, ed. by O. Vox, Lecce 2006, 33-65.

the arias sung by Medea – they, once again, are meant to emphasize the obscure power of the woman.<sup>8</sup>

Giovanni Pacini was, likewise, a prolific composer. Among his titles, we can remember other two plots inspired by classical subjects, *L'ultimo giorno di Pompei* (1825), and *Saffo* (1840), both counted among his masterpieces. Pacini's *Medea*, was first performed in Palermo in 1843, and after ten years, in a revised form, in Naples. This opera is rather interesting, for, according to the fullest Romantic atmosphere of the forties, it displays a sensitive use of instrumentation and orchestra. Of course the dark and ominous side of the events is emphasized as well. This is particularly clear in sections like the ill-fated weddings between Jason and Creusa (who does not appear on stage), or the rites performed by Greek priests to avert Medea's magic arts and incantations. But the main element of novelty is the sympathetic attitude towards her disgraces – a result which Pacini achieves by accentuating her solitude and her despair. His heroine is a deceived woman, exile in a stranger land, threatened by losing both her children and her lover. The music is, in certain respects, inconsistent, for Medea alternates passionate moods and outbursts of wrath and calm and peaceful, somewhat, melancholic melodies. However, the main elements of the story are slightly changed in order to create a coherent framework: for example, Medea disguises herself as a servant to persuade Creon to have mercy of her and her children, and at the same time advising him of how terrible can be Medea's demonic fury. The tragic final demonstrates this twofold and unresolved nature, since, after killing her children, Medea commits suicide. Unlike from Cherubini, however, her suicide does not prelude to revenge against Jason in the otherworld, but is a vain acknowledgement of despair and feebleness.<sup>9</sup>

To conclude the section about music, it can be worth recording here also Prospero Selli's and Salvatore Cammarano's *Medea* (1839 and 1851 respectively), whose libretto was readapted from Romani's text; and two modern operas, both entitled *Medea*, written by the Roman composer Vincenzo Tommasini (performed in Trieste in 1906), and by the polyvalent artist Pietro Canonica (Roma 1953), who himself wrote the libretto, and cared for the per-

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<sup>8</sup> For further details see J. Commons, *Medea in Corinto* (foreword to the discographic edition, Opera Rara, 1994); P. Russo, "*Medea in Corinto*" di Felice Romani. *Storia, fonti e tradizioni*, Firenze 2004.

<sup>9</sup> A. Weatherson, *Il Maestro delle Cabalette* (foreword to the discographic version by Agorà Musica, 1998). For other bibliographic references, see the webpages dedicated to Pacini's life and works: <http://www.italianopera.org/pacini/pacini.html>; <http://www.geocities.com/Vien-na/8917/Pacini.html>

formance details (scenes, costumes) as well<sup>10</sup>. These compositions would be worth of a rediscovery like the one that favoured Mayr and Pacini in recent times.

As far as iconography is concerned, there are not many Italian artists inspired by Medea or the Argonauts. This seems a more fashionable subject in other European countries and regions (for example, in France). Some paintings, however, are worth mentioning. For the sake of brevity, I will offer here just some hints. Medea performing her magical arts to rejuvenate the Athenian king Aeson inspired two Tuscan artists between sixteenth and seventeenth century – namely Girolamo Macchietti (whose painting is now in the *Studiolo* of Francesco I in Florence) and the baroque artist Anton Maria Vassallo (whose canvas, painted about 1637-48, is now in the Uffizi Museum). In the Mannerist age, it is worth mentioning also a drawing of the Venetian painter Andrea Schiavone (1563), now in Princeton, representing Medea flying on her chariot. Strangely enough, as to my knowledge, there are no iconographic representations in Italian art of Medea slaying her children.

The legend of the Argonauts, in turn, inspired various painters. I will mention here a famous picture by the famous Ferrarese artist Lorenzo Costa (1464-1535, now in Padua); a pictorial cycle by Ercole Grandi da Ferrara (also a mannerist);<sup>11</sup> a relief by Francesco Primaticcio in Fontainebleau Castle (1541-45); a fresco by Giuseppe Passeri (1678) in Palazzo Barberini (Rome); a quite interesting fresco by Baldassarre Peruzzi (1510) in Villa Farnesina (Rome), which represents Argo as a star (the so-called *catasterismos*); a bas-relief by Filarete (1433-45) on the bronze portal in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, in which the tale of Jason and Medea has an allegorical meaning together with the other relieves inspired by Ovid. At the end of the nineteenth century the Argonauts were painted by the Istrian artist Cesare Felice Giorgio dell'Acqua on a fresco in Miramare Castle in Trieste (1868).<sup>12</sup> Finally, also the very last period of contemporary art records an aluminium sculpture by Anglo-Italian sculptor and painter Eduardo Paolozzi (1924-2005).

In my opinion, however, the most important painting inspired by the Argonauts is Giorgio de Chirico's *La partenza degli Argonauti* (*Departure of the Argonauts*), which is not, however, the only painting De Chirico produced on the subject. The most famous paintings on this subject were painted by De Chirico in 1909 and 1920 respectively. It is significant that the first one, more

<sup>10</sup> Cfr. [http://www.museocanonica.it/museo/figura\\_di\\_pietro\\_canonica/canonica\\_musicista](http://www.museocanonica.it/museo/figura_di_pietro_canonica/canonica_musicista)

<sup>11</sup> Cf. R. Longhi, *Officina ferrarese*, Roma 1934.

<sup>12</sup> These paintings can be viewed at <http://www.castello-miramare.it/cesaredellacqua/home.htm>

academic, represents just the harbour of Volos (that is the ancient Iolchos, Jason's homeland), where De Chirico himself was born in 1888. The second one is more meaningful and original. De Chirico painted it just after the years he spent in Paris, becoming acquainted with the Surrealist movement. It is already possible noticing in that canvas the distinctive features of his 'meta-physical' style, which gave him universal renown. The subject is particularly important because De Chirico was fascinated by the theme of the voyage and dealt with it at great length. Classical myths exerted on him a particular attraction because he spent part of his youth in Greece (where his father worked as a train engineer in Thessaly). De Chirico resumed this topic in a sort of autobiographic writing (*Hebdomeros*, published in French in 1929) too.<sup>13</sup> It is perhaps worth remembering that his younger brother, the composer, writer and painter Alberto Savinio (a pseudonym) is the author of a brief piece about the Argonauts, dedicated to another Italian writer, namely Giovanni Papini.<sup>14</sup> Savinio, though labelled as "the most important writer between world war I and II" (by Leonardo Sciascia), is still a less known author and his works has not received until recent times the attention it deserves. Perhaps this is due to the difficulty and peculiarity of his style, sometimes ironic, sometimes mannerist, often grotesque, extravagant and eccentric. Savinio's literary production, like his brother's pictorial one, is deeply influenced by classical antiquity and displays a sort of nostalgic feelings for ancient Greece and its literature, which is filtered through the lens of a modern sensibility. In particular, this work narrates an autobiographical journey through Italy.<sup>15</sup>

Before concluding, I would like to hint at the cinematographic fortune of Medea's story. I will not take into account the famous masterpiece by Pier Paolo Pasolini with Maria Callas in the main role (also because specific communications are going to deal with it),<sup>16</sup> but minor works only. Besides

<sup>13</sup> *Hebdomeros. Le peintre et son génie chez l'écrivain*, Paris 1929. This work has been considered as De Chirico's masterpiece, as a writer. He published also an Italian version of it in 1942 and 1971 (see the modern reprints Milan, 1999 and 2003). For further information about De Chirico, his life and works see the website managed by the Fondazione Giorgio and Isa de Chirico, <http://www.fondazionedechirico.it>.

<sup>14</sup> *La partenza dell'Argonauta in Hermaphrodito* (A. Savinio, *Hermaphrodito e altri romanzi*, a cura di A. Tinterri, Milano 1995, 107 ff.).

<sup>15</sup> See S. Zampieri, *Il punto su Savinio*, in *Bollettino '900*. Electronic Newsletter of '900 Italian Literature, 1-2 (2002) (available at <http://www3.unibo.it/boll900/numeri/2002-i/Zampieri1.html>).

<sup>16</sup> See, however, M. Fusillo, *La Grecia secondo Pasolini. Mito e cinema*, Roma 2007; B. Zimmermann, *Fremde Antike? P. P. Pasolinis Medea*, in *Bewegte Antike. Antike Themen im modernen Film*, ed. by U. Eigler, Stuttgart – Weimar 2002, 53-66; B. Hessen, *Pasolinis Medea – aus der Perspektive eines Klassischen Philologen*, in *Pontes II. Antike im Film*, ed. by M. Ko-

some 'peplum-movies' from the fifties and the sixties (a trivial genre, which now has been rediscovered after the success of the epic *Gladiator* – indeed, more distinguished),<sup>17</sup> it is important mentioning two movies drawn from the *feuilleton* novel by Francesco Mastriani, *La Medea di Porta Medina* (published posthumously in 1915). This colourful and pathetically exaggerated novel is placed in a popular quarter of Naples at the end of the eighteenth century and actualizes the story of the betrayed woman who kills her baby because her lover is going to marry another woman. The plot is inspired in the title and in its main lines by the Greek myth and the main female character, Coletta, is daring and fierce like her classical antecedent. At the same time, there are some significant differences, introduced by the author in accordance with the different ambiance and a sort of fondness for folkloric details: the 'modern' Medea is not a princess, but an orphan who is raped and then married by an old man; after her divorce, she falls in love with a moneylender, Cipriano Barca. They have a baby, but Coletta is jealous of the love Cipriano has for the little girl, because she feels neglected. Furthermore, Cipriano meditates marrying another woman, submissive and, so to say, less dangerous. This provokes Coletta's outbreak: her wrath knows no limits; she catches the two in the church where they are just celebrating the wedding, strangles the baby and stabs the rival, who will die in sufferings. Coletta is finally sentenced to death. As we can see from this brief summary, the novel emphasized passion and intrigue, according to the literary genre of serial stories, of which Mastriani was acknowledged as the Italian master.<sup>18</sup> Two films were drawn from it, one (silent) in 1919, by the Neapolitan director Elvira Notari, one of the first women engaged in cinematographic direction. The subject seems very fit to her professional activity, which was largely inspired by Neapolitan popular life and stories placed in the underworld, full of violence, passionate love, coups de theatre, hardships and privations of poverty, and so on. The other remake is more recent (1981): it was directed for television by Piero Schivazappa and was interpreted by a popular Neapolitan actress, Giuliana de Sio. Finally, it should be mentioned a documentary by P. Benvenuti,

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renjak, K. Töchterle, Innsbruck, etc. 2002, 95-106; R. Linder, *Der Heros und die Zauberin. Gender in Verfilmungen griechischer Mythen*, *ibid.*, 44-57.

<sup>17</sup> *I giganti della Tessaglia (Gli Argonauti)*, written and directed by Riccardo Freda (1961); the Argonauts appear also in the farfetched *Ercole e la regina di Lidia* (1959), directed by Pietro Francisci.

<sup>18</sup> Among his works, in fact, we can mention novels like *La cieca di Sorrento*, or *I misteri di Napoli*: they follow the genre of the contemporary French *feuilleton* literature (e.g. Eugène Sue), and at the same time show some concerns towards the socialist movement. For his *Medea*, see P. Fornaro, *Medea italiana*, in *Atti delle giornate di studio su Medea, Torino 23-24 ottobre 1995*, ed. by R. Uglione, Torino 1997, 117-163. Mastriani's novel has been reprinted in 1988 (with a foreword by R. Reim, Rome).



*Medea, un Maggio di Pietro Frediani*, inspired by a popular opera written by the Pisan vernacular poet Pietro Frediani (1775-1852). This kind of representations, usually performed during the month of May ("maggio"), was meant both to educate and to entertain villains and humble people in the countryside with theatrical declamations and music. This tradition seems very close to the one of the *Commedia dell'Arte*. Frediani's *Medea* is inspired by the classical antecedents, though, in certain respects, simplified and modernized.<sup>19</sup> His woman is a despaired figure, obsessed by jealousy, who in the end commits suicide.

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<sup>19</sup> The text was reprinted in *I Maggi*, with a foreword by E. Montale, Pisa 1954.



La spedizione degli Argonauti (L. Costa)



La partenza degli Argonauti (G. De Chirico)



La partenza degli Argonauti (G. De Chirico)

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## THE IMAGE OF MEDEA IN THE WORK OF A FOURTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH AUTHOR

The present paper deals with a work of John Gower, a well known writer of the later Middle Ages.

In the history of English literature the fourteenth century is regarded as the age of Geoffrey Chaucer. His works became the starting point for the further development of English literature. But, among other authors of the same period, the most distinguished was John Gower. Chaucer wrote only in English language and laid the foundation for the English literary language, while Gower used Latin and French as well. However, his best work 'Confessio Amantis' (1390) was written in English. The Cambridge History of English Literature highly appreciates the language of this work: 'That Gower, through the purity of his English style and the easy fluency of his expression, exercised a distinct influence upon the development of the language cannot be questioned.'<sup>1</sup>

The poem 'Confessio Amantis' includes more than a hundred stories. Some of them are rather long, others describe short episodes. This work of Gower was well known to the readers of the following centuries. It was used as a source of plots for the playwrights of the Renaissance, even for Shakespeare. Gower's narrative style is praised in the Cambridge History of English Literature, but at the same time it is pointed out that his work cannot be compared with the stories of Chaucer: 'We have in 'Confessio Amantis' more than a hundred stories told in a pleasing and simple style by one who clearly had a gift for story-telling, though without the large humanity which

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<sup>1</sup> Sampson G., The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature, Cambridge University Press, 1970, 64.

makes the stories of Chaucer unique in the literature of his time.<sup>2</sup> Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales' opened the way to the further development of literature, while Gower's works wholly reflected the preceding traditions. In the opinion of M. Alekseev, Gower's creative work presents interest just by 'the summing up of the extensive and diverse poetic heritage of the Middle Ages.'<sup>3</sup>

Gower is known to have been one of the most erudite persons of his age. For his poem 'Confessio Amantis' he used a great number of different sources, highlighting in them didactical, moral aspects, typical of his manner of writing. He borrowed plots from the Bible, from ancient sources, collections of medieval stories, courtly romances, chronicles. Fairly often he referred to the works of Ovid, well known in the Middle Ages. Gower's story, with Medea as the central character, was composed according to Ovid.

Throughout ages the myth of the Argonauts attracted the attention of writers and received different interpretations. But, as L. Mallinger points out, 'the image of Medea never suffered such modifications as in the Middle Ages.'<sup>4</sup> The courtly romances accentuated her extraordinary beauty and her infinite love for Jason, while the writers of the later Middle Ages were more concerned with her power as a sorceress. It is in the latter aspect that Medea is shown by John Gower. The material is borrowed from the 'Metamorphoses' of Ovid, who relates how Medea returned youth to Jason's father with the help of magic medicines. This story is described in the seventh book of Ovid's poem. The author gives a brief account of Colchian stories and the seizure of the Golden Fleece; but the main action takes place in Greece after the return of the Argonauts. Medea makes Jason's father younger and ruins his uncle, who usurped his brother's throne and deceived Jason as well.

Gower's story is written according to Ovid's 'Metamorphoses'. However, the comparison of the English text with that of Ovid shows that Gower did not simply translate this episode of the Latin poem, but in many ways altered it. To begin with, the English version says nothing about Jason's uncle. Consequently, the composition of the story is entirely connected with one central problem. It is generally known that Gower is distinguished by his good, logical manner of narrating.

The changes made by Gower are seen in many episodes of the story. To begin with, Gower says nothing about Colchis and starts the narrative with the happy return of the Argonauts to Greece:

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>3</sup> Алексеев М. П., Литература средневековой Англии и Шотландии, Москва, 1984, 189.

<sup>4</sup> Mallinger L., *Medée*, Paris, 1898, 195.

Jason to Grece with his preie  
 Goth thurgh the see the rihte weie.<sup>5</sup>

The history of Jason's father is also told differently. According to Ovid, when the Argonauts returned home Jason's father – Aeson – was so weak that he could not take part in the joyous celebration:

Haemoniae matres pro gnatis dona receptis  
 Grandaeuque ferunt patres, congestaque flamma  
 Tura liquefaciunt, inductaque cornibus aurum  
 Victima vota litat. Sed abest gratantibus Aeson,  
 Iam propior leto fessusque senilibus annis.<sup>6</sup>

In Gower's version, at that time Aeson is in good health and celebrates his son's victory more than anyone else:

Eson, whan that he wiste of this,  
 How that his sone comen is,  
 And hath achieved that he soughte,  
 And hom with him Medea broughte,  
 In al the wyde world was non  
 So glad a man as he was on.<sup>7</sup>

Jason's father feels likewise well enough in the following years when his grandchildren are born:

And olde Eson gret joie made  
 To sen th'encress of his lignage;  
 For he was of so gret an age.<sup>8</sup>

Only later the old man becomes weaker, and Jason asks Medea to use her magic power and make his father young again.

This episode is another point of difference between the Latin and English texts. In Ovid's work, Jason wishes to make his father's life longer at the expense of shrinking his own life:

Cum sic Aesonides: 'o cui debere salutem  
 Confiteor, coniunx, quamquam mihi cuncta dedisti,  
 Excessitque fidem meritorum summa tuorum:

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<sup>5</sup> Gower John, *Medea as Queen of Air and Darkness*, *The Age of Chaucer*, vol. I, Penguin Books, 1976, 429.

<sup>6</sup> P. Ovidius Naso, *Metamorphoses*, Lipsiae, 1886, 131.

<sup>7</sup> Gower, 1976, 429.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 429.

Si tamen hoc possunt, – quid enim non carmina possunt? –  
Deme meis annis, et demptos adde parenti.<sup>9</sup>

In Gower's poem, Jason says nothing about himself and only asks Medea to make his father younger:

Jason, which sih his fader old,  
Upon Mede made him bold,  
Of art magique, which she couthe,  
And preith hire that his fader youthe  
She wolde make ayeinward newe.<sup>10</sup>

The central part of the work is devoted to the description of Medea's magic art, which the author finds miraculous:

Bot what she dede in that matiere  
It is a wonder thing to hier.<sup>11</sup>

In many places Gower modifies the text of Ovid's poem: some episodes are omitted, others are extended. In the same way as in the 'Metamorphoses', Medea leaves home at midnight pronouncing some magic words and flies in a chariot driven by dragons. Gower gives a more detailed account than Ovid concerning the places where Medea goes to find herbs and other materials that she needs. Very eloquent and impressive is Gower's description of how Medea prepares her mysterious solution and afterwards walks with magic yells around the old man who has already fallen asleep. The poet himself admires Medea's superhuman faculties and calls her a goddess:

For with the craftes that she can  
She was, as who seith, a goddesse.<sup>12</sup>

It should be noted that in the title of the work Medea is called 'Queen of Air and Darkness'.

The story has a happy end: Medea fulfilled her husband's request, and her father-in-law became young and strong. The wonderful transformation is compared with the month of May, when nature revives after cold rains.

The narrative is quite logical and clear; its short poetic lines are easy to read. According to critics, these are characteristic features of Gower's

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<sup>9</sup> Ovidius, 1886, 131.

<sup>10</sup> Gower, 1976, 430.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 430.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 434.

narrative style. As A. Fowler writes in his 'History of English Literature', 'Gower was our first major poet of formal elegance in narrative'.<sup>13</sup>

In the fourteenth century the theme of magic, sorcery certainly attracted the reader's attention. That is why Gower tried to describe the magic art of his heroine as fully as possible. In J. Speirs' opinion, Medea's image presented by Gower 'is typically medieval by character'.<sup>14</sup>

John Gower was a great erudite and his works clearly show the aesthetic interests of his age. The fact that Gower wrote a story about the myth of the Argonauts, proved that the image of Medea was well known in fourteenth-century English literature.

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<sup>13</sup> Fowler A., *A History of English Literature*, Harvard University Press, 1987, 12.

<sup>14</sup> Speirs J., *A Survey of Medieval Verse, The Age of Chaucer*, vol. I, Penguin Books, 1976, 52.

Tamar Tarkhishvili (Tbilisi)

## THE ARGONAUTICA AND ANCIENT MYTHOLOGY IN MEDIEVAL GEORGIA

The development of medieval Georgian Christian literature and translating activities, apart from their main purpose, contributed to general education of Georgian readers as well. Among various issues was also the information from Greek mythology. The format of a conference paper does not allow referring to the numerous sources of medieval Georgia that reflected the awareness of Georgian authors of Greek mythology and antiquity in general. I will dwell only on several facts. I have selected two significant sources for consideration: "Hellenic Tales" and George Hamartolus' "Chronographer".

"Hellenic Tales" represents comments on the works of Gregory of Nazianzus. Such explanation was necessary to comprehend the works as the medieval reader was not familiar with Greek mythology and these questions were also unknown to him. The Georgian version of Nonnos' "Hellenic Tales" was made by Ephraem the Lesser. Nonnos provided comments for the fragments where Gregory of Nazianzus mentioned names from Greek mythology.

Translation of Nonnos' explanations represented one of the most important sources for becoming familiar with ancient mythology in Georgia of that period. Nonnos did not aim at spreading and promoting the names of pagan deities but intended to clarify the essence of the characters and items mentioned in the work of Gregory the Theologian. This work, written from the Christian perspective, to a certain extent threw light on pagan religion. Ephraem the Lesser had perfect knowledge of Greek mythology and philosophy, and required the same of clergy so that they could oppose anti-orthodox opinion more effectively and knowingly. He applied this knowledge for the purpose of strengthening the Christian doctrine and church. As



concerns the full Georgian version of the "Hellenic Tales", it was published by Il. Abuladze.

"Hellenic Tales" includes the following fragment: "The eighteenth story is about ... the sown and sprouted heroes. In Beotia they say that either Cadmus or Jason or some other hero took the Dragon's teeth and sowed them into the ground, from where sprouted armed people, visible above the ground up to their waists, who in such a posture fought each other as well as others."<sup>1</sup>

"Hellenic Tales" offers the traditional version of the story of mythological characters – Jason and Cadmus (Book III). According to Apollonius Rhodius (Book III), Aeetes sets a difficult task for Jason. In order to obtain the Golden Fleece, he must yoke two fire-breathing and brazen-footed bulls to a plough and at a short notice still the ground that requires four-day labor. Then he must sow dragon's teeth in the ploughed soil and beat the armed heroes that will spring out.<sup>2</sup>

As the significant episodes of the Argonauts' adventures are connected with Georgia, and namely with Colchis, the legend, or at least this very episode, could have aroused particular public interest; however, no such tendency can be observed in Georgian literature. The Argonaut episodes and characters are mentioned along with other fragments of Greek mythology only with respect to the context that required clarification for readers. It is noteworthy that in this period of the Middle Ages (the 11<sup>th</sup> century), the contents and ideology of literature were predetermined by the Christian religion and all remaining questions, including those related to paganism, served this purpose. Therefore, as it might have been expected, Ephraem the Lesser made no comments on this episode.

Ephraem the Lesser's translation of the "Hellenic Tales" could have been among important sources about the Greek mythology for literate Georgians of the medieval period. This is evidenced in the works of poets of this period.

One fragment of Shavteli's poem attests that the author was acquainted with the Georgian translation of the "Hellenic Tales". In particular, I mean the usage of Mount Etna as a literary image:

"The abyss of wisdom, the language-rhetorician,<sup>3</sup>  
You are similar to Mount Etna" (7-8).

In the "Hellenic Tales" we read:

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<sup>1</sup> I. Abuladze, *Hellenic Tales*, *The Bulletin of the History of Language and Material Culture*, X, Tbilisi, 1941.

<sup>2</sup> Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, Greek texts with a parallel Georgian version edited, introduced, commented and supplemented with an index by A. Urushadze, Tbilisi, 1970, 197-98.

<sup>3</sup> "Droeba" (a periodical), 13, Tiflis, 1873.

"The fire [of Etneos] is said to be emerging from the forge of Hephaestus on Mount Etna and then it submerges into the field streaming like water" [Fairy Tales, 3. 1].

"... The emergence of the fire of Etneos", "in Sikila there is (a town) called Katana, and above it is a mountain called Etna, on which there is unceasing fire emerging on its own, which is called the Etna fire" (3. 46).

The author of "The History and Laudation of Royalty" ("Istoriani and Azmani Sharavandectani") had good knowledge of Greek-Roman mythology. Apparently, he referred to the "Hellenic Tales" as well as George Hamartolus "Chronograph" to portray Tamar and George III. He used the epithets and names which Nonnos had provided with appropriate notes and comments. When telling us the story of King Tamar, he mentions famous couples from various works: "Similar to Pelope fighting for Hippodamia, daughter of Oenomaus, Pluto fighting for Persephone, Ramin fighting for Vis."<sup>4</sup> He compares George III as a hunter to Artemis (367). When talking about David Soslan he notes, "He, the keen shooter, threw a dagger at Mosimakhos."<sup>5</sup> In K. Kekelidze's opinion, the name of Mosimakhos must have been adopted in the chronicle from George Hamartolus' "Chronograph".<sup>6</sup> The author of "The History and Laudation of Royalty" thinks that David Soslan was an excellent archer, as if trained by Centaurus.<sup>7</sup>

Describes King David Aghmashenebeli as a matchless archer, the historian of the king also notes that Achilles was trained in archery by Centaurus: "Who has seen anyone so victorious in hunting [as David] ... Achilles of the Hellenes is said to have been trained by Centaurus in archery ..., none of them were able to become his equal."<sup>8</sup> It seems that the historian had a profound knowledge of the "Hellenic Tales" and was even guided by it.

"When Achilles was born by Thetis, he was entrusted to Chiron. Chiron was half man and half horse. He took him and seated him on a horse back to front. And thus he tested him and trained him in archery, fed him on milk and bread" [Fairy Tale, 2.4].

Similarly to the historian of David Aghmashenebeli, the author of "The History and Laudation of Royalty" is aware of the image and function of Centaurus in Greek mythology. However, none of them mentions Jason, who was also raised by Centaurus. It is hard to say whether they were not familiar

<sup>4</sup> Kartlis Tskovreba (Georgian Chronicle), the text is identified according to all relevant manuscripts by S. Kauhchishvili, Tbilisi, 1959, 36.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>7</sup> K. Kekelidze, The History of Georgian Literature, vol. II, Tbilisi, 1958, 270.

<sup>8</sup> Kartlis Tskhovreba (Georgian Chronicle), edited by Z. Chichinadze, 369.

with the Argonaut legend or gave preference to Achilles as they sought comparison for the image of the King.

As observed by Pavle Ingorokva, the elements of the "Hellenic Tales" can be traced in the following popular episode of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin":

"Hearing the knight's singing, beats came to listen to him; the sweetness of his voice even prompted stones to come out of water."<sup>9</sup>

An analogical phrase can be found in the "Hellenic Tales", which points to the musical gift of Orpheus:

"Orpheus, who was skilled in the art of music, used to sing so sweetly that even the inanimate were attracted and followed him" (1.17).

According to mythology, as certified by Apollonius Rhodius (and the "Orphic Argonautica"), Orpheus was among the Argonauts even though his connection with the Argonautica and Colchis is not mentioned either in the "Hellenic Tales" or in George Hamartolus' "Chronograph". Only his divine voice and gifts are discussed.

George Hamartolus mentions Thracian Orpheus in the "Chronograph". "Prometheus and Thracian Orpheus were the wisest among the Hellenes."<sup>10</sup>

What accounts for George Hamartolus' mentioning of the Greek pantheon is certainly not his liking for them. He needs to use mythological names in his work to show the readers how false and harmful idolatry is. He basically dwells on Zeus' pederasty and perversity. Aphrodite is connected with adultery and Rhea with insatiability. "The Chronograph" includes traditional descriptions of other gods and goddesses; Poseidon is the patron of sailors, Asclepius – the god of healing, Apollo – of music, Athena – the goddess of wisdom and weaving, Artemis – of hunting, Demeter – the goddess of grain and fertility. Aphrodite is the goddess of love; Athena – of knowledge; Hephaestus is the founder of forging while Hermes is connected with theft.

According to V. Asatiani, George Hamartolus mentions only theft with respect to Hermes and is reticent about the fact that he personified the omnipotent force of nature, was the god of cattle-breeding, taught people to light a fire on an altar, etc.<sup>11</sup> This unambiguously points to the purpose of picturing Greek gods in George Hamartolus' "Chronographer".

The paper accentuates only several medieval sources attesting to the awareness of medieval Georgian scholars of Greek mythology and pantheon. As concerns the Argonaut story, and more precisely, the above-mentioned

<sup>9</sup> P. Ingorokva, *The Literary Heritage of the Rustaveli Age*, Tbilisi, 1928, 4, 51.

<sup>10</sup> S. Kaukhchishvili, *The Chronograph of Monk George*, Tiflis, 1920, 68.

<sup>11</sup> V. Asatiani, *Ancient and Byzantine Traditions in Old Georgian Writing*, Tbilisi, 1996, 199.

episode, it is touched upon only in the "Hellenic Tales". So we cannot be certain that medieval Georgian readers were acquainted with this epic plot, or at least with the episode taking place in Colchis. The "Hellenic Tales" could have raised certain interest in pagan epics; however, if we bear in mind that these works were mainly read by the clergy and all questions were treated from the perspective of Christian ideology, this interest may not have been reflected in literary works.

## THE ARGONAUTICA AND CONTEMPORARY WORLD

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Medea Abulashvili (Tbilisi)

### THE PHENOMENON OF RITUAL IN PIER PAOLO PASOLINI'S *MEDEA* AND LARS VON TRIER'S *MEDEA*

Ritual is a very mystical, old, diverse and mysterious phenomenon. We can hardly imagine any historical period, individual or public life, the space of time, of being or country which ritual has not penetrated in some form or other. And it is absolutely impossible to perceive, conceptualize and interpret the age of mythology without comprehending ritual. It is relevant to the scope of any field of the humanities. Ritual dissolves local and chronological boundaries between the spaces.

My immediate goal to consider ritual phenomenon in the films with the same name *Medea* directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini and Lars von Trier is motivated by several factors:

It is impossible to imagine Medea, the niece of sorceress Circe, and the priestess of Hecate, without ritual;

Contemporary studies tend to look for the cases of ritual not only in various tales and legends, but first of all in myths, religions and literary works. And Medea is a mythological, literary and religious character at the same time.

Cinematic presentation of ritual seems particularly interesting as cinema originated from theatre. And according to widely admitted theories, the latter is rooted in rituals long lost and subjected to modification and evolution along with the changes in consciousness and the development of human artistic vision.

The more remote is the period in chronological terms, the more difficult it is to perceive the magic and moral implications, the meaning, the form, the functional logic, ethnic connotation, world outlook, and specific properties of

the corresponding ritual. And in these circumstances, one may yield to the temptation to perceive ancient rituals through the interpretation, imagination and horizon of great masters of the cinematic art.

Lars von Trier's *Medea* starts with an impressive scene: Medea, lying on the ground, is washed over several times by the sea-water. At first, the viewer has the impression that the scene renders the despair of an ill-fated and exhausted woman, but Medea's movements, expression and the words that follow compel to perceive the scene as an intentional behavior of a sorceress. Soon afterwards appears the daughter of Creon, the King of Corinth. Maids are washing the would-be-bride, i.e. the ritual of pre-bridal washing is being performed. After this, the viewer will interpret the preceding scene with Medea as water-based abluion, which the sorceress performs prior to an important decision or action. The emotion is intensified by the perception that the abluion of the bride is performed by hosts of maids, while the abandoned woman is assisted by nature itself. The director most skillfully makes a soft allusion that Medea is washed off by the waves produced by a passing ship – and, the vessel belongs to Aegeus, whom Medea is to heal from childlessness.

The tragism conveyed through the juxtaposition of these scenes is echoed in the words of Pasolini's *Medea*: 'Chastity is also a curse. Gods love and at the same time hate.' Pasolini also presents the scene of abluion twice: the first scene features purification by the fire, while the second one – by water. The first scene of abluion is set in Colchis: 'Put dresses on me. I must pray in the temple', Medea orders. The servants quickly array the daughter of Aeetes, set the fire, and the sorceress walks through it before entering the temple. The second scene of abluion presents the children, doomed to be slaughtered, as there are being washed and dressed in white.

None of the above-mentioned abluion rituals are described in Euripides' *Medea*, which in fact is the primary source for both films. However, owing to the marvelous mythopoetic design of both directors, all the four scenes fully correspond to the forms of mysteries connected with ancient Greek traditions and described in literature. I will recall several examples: 'Thee I will hallow in the ocean waves',<sup>1</sup> says Iphigenia. On another occasion, Orestes reminds Iphigenia of the following: 'For Aulis did thy mother bathe thy limbs?'<sup>2</sup>

Greek literature illustrates the purifying power of fire as well: the episode when Odysseus cleans his home with fire and sulphur is certainly

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<sup>1</sup> *Iphigenia in Tauris*, translated by R. Potter, The Plays of Euripides, Everyman's Library, vol. I, 1906, 1932, 362.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 356.

unforgettable.<sup>3</sup> And putting on white normally follows the ritual of purification and indicates its completion.<sup>4</sup>

Lars von Trier skillfully uses the third option of purification as well – roaming – when an ousted person leaves their sins on the way and is cleaned. This scene effectively accentuates the wavelike motion of colors, which shows how gradually the earth and the air take the burden of Medea's sins. Contrary to this, I will recall the scene from Pasolini's *Medea*, where the earth is covered all over with cracks, and the woman, who has betrayed her father and fatherland, shrieks in despair: 'I touch the earth with my feet, but do not feel it, I watch the sun with my eyes, but do not recognize it!'

To produce a sharp sensation of tragism, Euripides has the daughter of Creon killed in the bridal attire: 'Their charm and heavenly gleam will entice her to put on the gown and the circlet of the fashioned gold. But the bridal bed she lies in will be with the dead.'<sup>5</sup>

The mythical connection of wedding and death is fulfilled through putting on the bridal gift sent by Medea: 'Already the crown is on her head and the royal bride is perishing in the robe ...'<sup>6</sup> In their cinematic versions, both Pier Paolo Pasolini and Lars von Trier increase the number of characters taking part in the scene and present a real ritual of dressing up a bride. Pasolini goes even farther: he presents the scene when, upon Medea's arrival in Corinth, the locals put on her Corinthian clothes instead of her Colchian garment in the same mysterious way as they will later dress up Creon's daughter.

Pasolini's *Medea* includes another highly impressive ritual: the scene is set in Colchis, where a human sacrifice is performed. The Colchians dismember a lad of distinguished appearance, adorned with the wreath of ears. The offering ritual is attended by the royal family as well. The participants of the ritual dip their hands in the blood of the sacrificed lad and then put the blood on the trees and leaves. The event is undoubtedly related to fertility. The Colchians softly tap each other with the twigs of the trees covered with leaves. The ceremony grows into dancing and games and closely resembles the ceremonies at Dionysian festivals or Georgian folk fertility celebrations. Medea, the daughter of the King, recites the main phrase, the phrase of the supreme order: 'You gave life to the seed and the sun rised from the seed.'

This is the first scene of Pasolini's *Medea*. Now let us recall the last one: Medea does not allow her unfaithful husband to perform the ritual of burying

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<sup>3</sup> Homer, *Odyssey*, translated from Greek into Georgian by P. Beradze, Tbilisi, 1979, 490-495.

<sup>4</sup> Ratiiani N., *The Reflection of Ritual in Ancient Greek Literature*, Tbilisi, 2001, 123.

<sup>5</sup> Euripides, *Medea*, The Loeb Classical Library, 1994, 2001, Stasimon IV, Antistrophe 1, 373.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 1994, 2001, 381.

and mourning their slaughtered children, sacrificed for the revenge. The same is described in Euripides' tragedy: Medea categorically turned down Jason's request: 'Allow me to bury these dead children and to mourn them.'<sup>7</sup> 'But with all the strength I have, I make my lament and adjure the gods, calling the heavenly powers to witness that you killed my sons and now forbid me to touch them or bury their bodies',<sup>8</sup> utters Jason.

The first and the final scenes of Pasolini's film make up a circle: they both picture human sacrifice. In the first case, the offering is made for the sake of fertility, while the sacrifice in the final scene brings about childlessness. The fulfillment of the mystery is the final touch of the tragedy. If in the beginning Medea is the guarantee for the accomplishment of the ritual, for the observance of moral rite and custom, in the end she becomes the prohibitor of ritual. Medea's performance of ritual in the beginning of the film suggests regular progress of life, while its prohibition indicates the greatest tragedy. In this way, Pier Paolo Pasolini and Lars von Trier attempt to intensify the sensation of tragism and dramatism, and make it perceptible for contemporary viewers through reviving the remotest past.

Owing to the performance of rituals, dictated by social morality and traditions, the world has been following a more or less regular path of life from ancient times till nowadays.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 409.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 413.



Fragiski Abatzopoulou (Thessaloniki)

## ΤΑ ΑΡΓΟΝΑΥΤΙΚΑ ΤΩΝ ΕΛΛΗΝΩΝ ΥΠΕΡΡΕΑΛΙΣΤΩΝ

Η αναβίωση του αρχαίου μύθου στην ποίηση του 20ού αιώνα είναι ένα από τα πιο σύνθετα και δύσκολα προβλήματα που απασχόλησαν τη σύγχρονη λογοτεχνική ιστορία και κριτική. Οι δυσκολίες οφείλονται στο ότι οι μοντέρνοι ανέλαβαν να δώσουν σε ατομικό επίπεδο ένα νέο νόημα και μια προσωπική ερμηνεία σε μύθους παλιούς, ανατρέποντας τις παραδοσιακές χρήσεις του μύθου ως μέρους μιας κοινά αποδεκτής αφήγησης, η οποία αναβίωνε συμβολικά – και συχνά διακοσμητικά – το αρχαίο παρελθόν, όπως συνέβη στην ποίηση των παρνασσικών και των συμβολιστών, με κύριο παράδειγμα στην Ελλάδα τον Κωστή Παλαμά.

Είναι κοινά αποδεκτό ότι η χρήση των μύθων στη διαμόρφωση μιας προσωπικής μυθολογίας υπήρξε ένα από τα κύρια χαρακτηριστικά στο έργο των κορυφαίων ποιητών του 20ού αιώνα, όπως ο T. S. Eliot, που εισήγαγε την περίφημη θεωρία της «μυθικής μεθόδου». Λιγότερο διερευνημένη είναι η χρήση των αρχαίων μύθων στην ποίηση των πρωτοποριακών καλλιτεχνικών κινημάτων των αρχών του 20ού αιώνα, όπως ο φουτουρισμός και ο υπερρεαλισμός, η οποία, κατά τη γνώμη μου παρουσιάζει εντελώς ξεχωριστό ενδιαφέρον. Ειδικά ο μύθος των Αργοναυτών αποτελεί μοναδικό παράδειγμα για να εξετάσουμε γενικότερα την αντιμετώπιση των αρχαίων μύθων από τους καλλιτέχνες εκείνους οι οποίοι δεν περιορίστηκαν απλά στην ανανέωση των εκφραστικών τους μέσων, αλλά, σε αντίθεση με άλλους μοντέρνους, επιδόθηκαν σε πειραματισμούς και υιοθέτησαν εντελώς πρωτότυπες και ρηξικέλευθες τεχνικές.

Ειδικά για τους υπερρεαλιστές, και τους άμεσους προδρόμους τους, ο αργοναυτικός μύθος έγινε, όπως θα προσπαθήσω να δείξω, σύμβολο της δικής τους καλλιτεχνικής προσπάθειας και, ακόμη περισσότερο, της ίδιας της περιπέτειας της τέχνης σε μια εποχή μεγάλων επαναστατικών αλλαγών.

Θα ξεκινήσω με ορισμένες παρατηρήσεις σχετικά με τα ιστορικά και πολιτισμικά συμφραζόμενα. Τα καλλιτεχνικά πρωτοποριακά κινήματα γεννήθηκαν στις αρχές του 20ού αιώνα στην Ευρώπη, ως αντίδραση στις μεγάλες κοινωνικές αλλαγές και στη θεαματική πρόοδο της επιστήμης και της τεχνολογίας. Την ίδια εποχή παρατηρούμε μια μεγάλη άνθηση του ενδιαφέροντος για τη μυθική σκέψη σε δυο νέους επιστημονικούς κλάδους, την εθνολογία και την ψυχανάλυση.

Για τους εθνολόγους, τον Άγγλο James Frazer και τους Γάλλους Marcel Mauss και Lucien Lévy-Bruhl οι μύθοι των πρωτόγονων έγιναν ένα πεδίο έρευνας με μεγάλες προεκτάσεις και συνέπειες στην αντίληψη για τον άνθρωπο και τον πολιτισμό του. Αντίστοιχα για τον Freud οι αρχαίοι μύθοι, και ειδικότερα αυτός του Οιδίποδα, έγιναν κλειδί για την εξερεύνηση του ασυνειδήτου, ενώ ο μαθητής του Carl Young ασχολήθηκε με την ανάδειξη των συμβολικών σημασιών τους και ανέπτυξε μια θεωρία για τους αρχετυπικούς μύθους.

Τον αργοναυτικό μύθο, κατ' εξοχήν αρχετυπικό, είχε ήδη χρησιμοποιήσει μεταφορικά ο Νίτσε στην *Χαρούμενη επιστήμη* για να εκφράσει τον αγώνα του σύγχρονου ανθρώπου: «Και τώρα, μετά από τόσο δρόμο που διανύσαμε, εμείς, οι Αργοναύτες του ιδεώδους, πιο τολμηροί ίσως από ότι θα απαιτούσε η σύνεση, συχνά θαλασσοπνιγμένοι και καταποντισμένοι, αλλά με υγεία καλύτερη από αυτήν που θα μας επέτρεπαν, επικίνδυνα εύρωστοι – με μια υγεία πάντα καινούργια – μας φαίνεται ότι έχουμε μπροστά μας, ως ανταμοιβή, μian άγνωστη χώρα, που κανείς ακόμη δεν έχει δει τα σύνορα της...»

Η ανακάλυψη αυτής της άγνωστης χώρας θα γινόταν ο στόχος των καλλιτεχνικών πρωτοποριακών κινήματων, και ο αργοναυτικός μύθος θα εξέφραζε ιδεωδώς το εγχείρημά τους.

Μέσα σ' αυτό ακριβώς το πνεύμα βρίσκουμε αναφορές στον αργοναυτικό μύθο ήδη στις αρχές τις δεκαετίας του 1910 στον Γάλλο ποιητή Guillaume Apollinaire, πρόδρομο και φίλο των υπερρεαλιστών. «Αργοναύτες» ονομαζόταν το περιοδικό του Camille Lemercier d'Erin στο οποίο ο Apollinaire δημοσίευσε ποιήματα το 1910. Ο ίδιος, την επόμενη χρονιά, εξέδωσε το περίφημο ποίημά του «Bestiaire»<sup>1</sup> ή «Cortège d' Orphée». Είναι γνωστό ότι ο Apollinaire θεωρούσε ότι το όνομά του – γιος του Απόλλωνα – τον συνέδεε συμβολικά με τον Ορφέα. Στο ποίημα αυτό, τα ζώα που ακολουθούν μαγεμένα τον Ορφέα, πλαισιώνουν μια τελετή μύησης μυστικιστικού χαρακτήρα.

Πρωταρχική σημασία απέκτησε ο αργοναυτικός μύθος για τον Ιταλό ζωγράφο Giorgio de Chirico, φίλο και προστατευόμενο του Apollinaire, όπως

<sup>1</sup> Εικονογραφημένο βιβλίο μύθων με θέμα τα ζώα.

και για τον αδελφό του, μουσικό και συγγραφέα Alberto Savinio. Ο De Chirico είχε γεννηθεί στο Βόλο, στον Παγασητικό κόλπο, στα μέρη από όπου απέπλευσε η Αργώ. Μετά από σπουδές στο Μόναχο, όπου είχε δεχθεί την επίδραση του Nietzsche και του Schopenhauer, έζησε στο Παρίσι, όπου θα αναδεικνυόταν σε κυρίαρχη μορφή της μονέρνας τέχνης. Το 1918 ο αδελφός του Alberto Savinio, είχε δώσει στο ημερολόγιό του από τις εμπειρίες του πολέμου τον τίτλο «Η αναχώρηση του Αργοναύτη». Το 1921 ο De Chirico ζωγράφισε τον διάσημο πίνακά του «Η αναχώρηση των Αργοναυτών», που ανήκει στη «μεταφυσική» περίοδο της τέχνης του: στο αριστερό μέρος του πίνακα απεικονίζονται δυο άνδρες γυμνοί, ο ένας ανεμίζει λάβαρο, ο άλλος έναν μανδύα ή πανί, ενώ δεξιά κάθεται ένας άνδρας με χλαμύδα, σαν αρχαίος φιλόσοφος: στο βάθος φαίνεται η θάλασσα και ένα καράβι. Εδώ η προοπτική της αναχώρησης μοιάζει να συμβολίζει την ευοίωνη προοπτική μιας σωτήριας πνευματικής δραστηριότητας.

Τον αργοναυτικό μύθο τον ξαναβρίσκουμε το 1919 σε ένα από τα πρώιμα ποιήματα του σημαντικού Γάλλου υπερρεαλιστή ποιητή Robert Desnos, «Le fard des Argonautes» (Το βάρος των Αργοναυτών), που ακούγεται στα γαλλικά και σαν «Φάρος των Αργοναυτών». Το ποίημα, γραμμένο σε παραδοσιακή μορφή, σε αλεξανδρινούς ομοιοκατάληκτους στίχους, εκφράζει πλήρως τη σημασία που θα αποκτούσε ο μύθος για τους πρωτοπόρους καλλιτέχνες. Στο τέλος του ποιήματος, πέρα από τους μυθικούς ήρωες, ο μύθος διευρύνεται σε οικουμενικό όσο και άμεσα προφητικό επίπεδο με την αναφορά σε έναν γερο-Ισραηλίτη, που θα οδηγούσε το έθνος του σε μαύρες θλιβερές θάλασσες – ο Desnos ήταν εβραίος.

Αυτό ακριβώς το πνεύμα της τολμηρής και επικίνδυνης αναζήτησης θα εξέφραζε ο αργοναυτικός μύθος για το υπερρεαλιστικό κίνημα που συγκροτήθηκε στη Γαλλία από μια ομάδα ποιητών και ζωγράφων γύρω από τον Αντρέ Μπρετόν το 1924.

Το ενδιαφέρον των υπερρεαλιστών για τη μυθική σκέψη, κάτω από τον διπλό αστερισμό της εθνολογίας και της ψυχανάλυσης, διαπιστώνεται άμεσα από τα σχετικά δημοσιεύματα στα τρία σημαντικότερα περιοδικά του κινήματος: *La révolution surréaliste*, *Le surréalisme au service de la révolution*, *Minotaure*. Ακόμη πιο συστηματικό ενδιαφέρον δείχνουν ορισμένοι συγγραφείς που αποσχίσθηκαν από το κίνημα, και ειδικότερα ο André Bataille, εκδότης του περιοδικού *Documents* (1929), και (*Acéphale*) 1936, ο οποίος, στο περίφημο *College de sociologie* που ίδρυσε το 1936, μαζί με τους Michel Leiris και Roger Caillois, επεχείρησε με τους συνεργάτες του μια νέα ερμηνεία των μύθων, με τη συμμετοχή διανοούμενων από

διαφορετικές κατευθύνσεις, όπως οι Julien Benda, Drieu la Rochelle και Walter Benjamin.<sup>2</sup>

Ο Breton και οι φίλοι του είχαν διδαχθεί πολλά από τον Apollinaire και τον De Chirico, τους οποίους θεωρούσαν δασκάλους τους. Γι' αυτούς ο αργοναυτικός μύθος εξέφραζε το ίδιο το πνεύμα της τολμηρής και επικίνδυνης αναζήτησης, αλλά και κάτι περισσότερο, το ταξίδι προς τη μύηση, δηλαδή τη διαδικασία μιας αναγέννησης, που δίνει άλλη συμβολική σημασία στο πέρασμα μέσα από τις Συμπληγάδες. Όπως παρατηρεί ο Alain Moreau: «Μπορεί κανείς να υποθέσει ότι ο Απολλώνιος θεωρεί όλο το ταξίδι των Αργοναυτών στην κοιλιά της Αργώς σαν την ιστορία μιας κήσης. Η τελική αποβίβαση στον Παγασητικό είναι η γέννα και η αναγέννηση των ηρώων. Το καράβι Αργώ γεννά τους Αργοναύτες όπως το άλογο της Τροίας του Αχαιούς πολεμιστές».<sup>3</sup>

Η ίδια η θεωρία και η πρακτική των υπερρεαλιστών, βασισμένη στη θεωρία του φροϋδικού ασυνείδητου, προϋπέθετε μια μυητική διαδικασία: ζωγράφοι και ποιητές καλούνταν να εισχωρήσουν στο βάθος του εαυτού και να αποκαλύψουν τη βαθύτερη, αθέατη πλευρά του, αυτήν που απέκρυπτε και αποσιωπούσε η πολιτική του ορθολογισμού, την οποία συνέδεαν με την κυριαρχία της αστικής ιδεολογίας.

Μέσα στην επαναστατική προοπτική τους, που αποσκοπούσε ακριβώς στην ανατροπή αυτής της ιδεολογίας, οι υπερρεαλιστές υιοθέτησαν ρηξικέλευθες τεχνικές τόσο στη ζωγραφική όσο και στην ποίηση: η τεχνική του «κολλάζ», η «αυτόματη γραφή» και η χρήση των ελεύθερων συνειρμών ήταν γι' αυτούς δρόμοι που οδηγούσαν στη διερεύνηση του ασυνείδητου. Ο στόχος τους, που ξεπερνούσε τα στενά πλαίσια της τέχνης, απέβλεπε στην επαναστατικοποίηση της σκέψης και στην απελευθέρωση του ανθρώπου από τις αστικές συμβατικότητες και την καταπίεση της επιθυμίας. Γι' αυτό ακριβώς οι κειμενικές πρακτικές των υπερρεαλιστών ευνοούσαν οτιδήποτε μπορούσε να λειτουργήσει ανατρεπτικά και να υπονομεύσει τις αισθητικές συνήθειες: τολμηρές μεταφορές, λογοπαίγνια, παρωδία, γκροτέσκο, μαύρο χιούμορ.<sup>4</sup> Με τον τρόπο αυτό διάβασαν και χρησιμοποίησαν και τους αρχαίους μύθους, επιχειρώντας ουσαστικά την επανερμηνεία και την επαναγραφή τους σε ένα διαφορετικό πλαίσιο κοσμοαντίληψης, στους αντίποδες του δυτικού ορθολογισμού.

<sup>2</sup> Βλ. Ν. Λοϊζιδη, *Ο μύθος του Μινώταυρου στην πρωτοπορία του μεσοπολέμου*, Νεφέλη, Αθήνα, 1988.

<sup>3</sup> A. Moreau, *Le mythe de Jason et Médée: le va-nu-pied de la sorcière*, Les Belles Lettres, collection "Vérité des mythes", Παρίσι, 2006, 118.

<sup>4</sup> Βλ. σχετικά στο *Surréalisme et pratiques textuelles*, (επιμ. E. Rubio) Phénix Editions, Παρίσι, 2002.

Η εξέταση του αργοναυτικού μύθου στο έργο των δυο κορυφαίων Ελλήνων υπερρεαλιστών, του Ανδρέα Εμπειρικού και του Νίκου Εγγονόπουλου, μας δίνει ένα χαρακτηριστικό παράδειγμα αιρετικής ανάγνωσης και επαναγραφής ενός αρχαίου μύθου. Το ελληνικό παράδειγμα αποκτά προσθετο ενδιαφέρον για την τολμηρότητά του, εάν λάβουμε υπόψη το ιστορικό πλαίσιο στην Ελλάδα της δεκαετίας του '30 – όταν πρωτοεμφανίζονται οι δυο ποιητές –, κάτω από τις συνθήκες της μεταξικής δικτατορίας, η αναφορά σε οτιδήποτε είχε σχέση με την ελληνική αρχαιότητα αποτελούσε πράξη φορτισμένη ιδεολογικά και αποκτούσε πρόσθετη σημασία, καθώς οι μύθοι αποτελούσαν κομμάτι της εθνικής κληρονομιάς, ενώ το αίτημα για μια τέχνη εθνική, δεμένη με την παράδοση, δεν ίσχυε μόνο για τη συντηρητική αλλά και την προοδευτική παράταξη, την οποία εκπροσωπούσαν ποιητές όπως ο Γιώργος Σεφέρης και ο Οδυσσεύς Ελύτης.

Είναι αξιοσημείωτο ότι ειδικά ο αργοναυτικός μύθος στην ποίηση του Εμπειρικού και του Εγγονόπουλου μοιάζει να είναι η απάντηση στον κλασικίζοντα μοντερνισμό του Σεφέρη. Η προσέγγισή τους μοιάζει με τη δική του αποκλειστικά και μόνο σε ένα σημείο, αυτό της ταύτισης της περιπέτειας του σύγχρονου ανθρώπου με το ταξίδι της Αργώς – μια ιδέα ήδη παρούσα στο μυθιστόρημα *Αργώ* του Γιώργου Θεοτοκά, ενός από τους επιφανέστερους εκπροσώπους της γενιάς του '30. Κατά τα άλλα οι δυο υπερρεαλιστές προτείνουν τη δική τους διαφορετική και έντονα προσωπική ανάγνωση και επαναγραφή του μύθου.

Ένα πρώτο χαρακτηριστικό είναι ότι και οι δυο εμπνέονται όχι από την περιπέτεια του Ιάσωνα και της Μήδειας, αλλά από τα μέλη του πληρώματος, τους ημίθεους και ήρωες που έτρεξαν να συνδράμουν τον Ιάσωνα στον επικίνδυνο άθλο του. Ανάμεσα στους άλλους «ποντοπόρους» δείχνουν προτίμηση στον Ορφέα, τον Ηρακλή, τον Κάστορα και Πολυδεύκη.

Ο πρώτος που «ξαναγράφει» τον αργοναυτικό μύθο είναι ο Νίκος Εγγονόπουλος, ο οποίος μοιάζει να γνωρίζει καλά τα *Αργοναυτικά* του Απολλώνιου, αλλά και τα ορφικά *Αργοναυτικά*. Αυτό δείχνει όχι μόνο το ποιητικό αλλά και το ζωγραφικό έργο του. Οι συνεχείς αναφορές του στον Ορφέα, καθαρά αυτοαναφορικού χαρακτήρα, και οι απεικονίσεις του Ορφέα σε μεγάλο αριθμό πινάκων, μας υποβάλλουν τη σκέψη ότι ο Εγγονόπουλος ενδιαφερόταν για τη μυστικιστική-ορφική πλευρά του μύθου, και τον «διάβαζε» ως μνητική διαδικασία, όπως είχε κάνει παλαιότερα ο Άγγελος Σικελιανός στο περίφημο ποίημά του «Το τραγούδι των Αργοναυτών», από την μεγάλη ποιητική του σύνθεση *Πάσχα των Ελλήνων* (1918). Εκεί ο μύθος προσλάμβανε καθαρά μνητικό χαρακτήρα και αποτελούσε χαρακτηριστικό δείγμα του σικελιανικού συγκρητισμού, στον οποίο ο Ορφέας, όπως και ο Χριστός, έπαιζαν πρωτεύοντα ρόλο.

Αυτήν ακριβώς την μυητική διάσταση έχουν και οι αναφορές του Εγγονόπουλου στο ταξίδι της Αργώς. Οι περισσότερες και πιο ενδιαφέρουσες βρίσκονται στα ποιήματα «Το καράβι του δάσου» από την πρώτη συλλογή του *Μην ομιλείτε εις τον οδηγόν* (1938), «Σεβάχ ο θαλασσινός», και «Ακριβώς όπως...» από την δεύτερη συλλογή του *Τα κλειδοκύμβαλα της σιωπής* (1939), και στο ποίημα «Η ερωτική πλεκτάνη» από τη συλλογή *Η επιστροφή των πουλιών* (1946).

Στο «καράβι του δάσου» βρίσκουμε μια υπόμνηση της Αργώς, караβιού «από οξία/με κουπιά από έλατο» στα Αργοναυτικά του Ορφέα. Στο ποίημα «Σεβάχ ο θαλασσινός», πάλι ένα καράβι λειτουργεί ως συμβολισμός της ποίησης:

«κι ενώ μαίνεται γύρω μου η καταγίδα / και σκεπάζει / το κατάστρωμα / του έρμου/καραβιού μου / η αγριεμένη θαλασσα / με τα πόδια / γυμνά / σκαρφαλώνω / στο ιο ψηλό κατάρτι/και κρατώ σφιχτά / μεσα στα χέρια / ένα ποτήρι / από μπλέ γυαλί.»

Ο ποντοπόρος ποιητής μέσα στο καράβι παλεύει με την καταγίδα. Το μπλε ποτήρι ανακαλεί μυητική τελετουργία.

Στο ποίημα «Η ερωτική πλεκτάνη» οι επαναστατημένοι ποιητές, που χαρακτηρίζονται βρυκόλακες (vampires), ετοιμάζουν καινούργιο καράβι:

σίμως' εδώ κοντά στο παραθύρι  
και παραμέρισε τους σκοτεινούς τους βαρείς μπερντέδες  
κύττα  
οι βρυκόλακες εφτάζαν  
στο ακρογυάλι  
εκεί στο ξύλινο σπιτάκι όπου κατόκει  
ένας αρχαίος θεός  
ιχθυοτρόφος  
κι αφού χυθήκανε μέσα στους κρύφιους αρσανάδες  
σκαριά καινούργια εσκαφιστήκανε να στήσουν  
για ναν τα ρίζουνε στη θάλασσα  
να φύγουν.

Είναι χαρακτηριστική η αναφορά στον ιχθυοτρόφο θεό, τον Ορφέα.

Στην ποίηση του Εγγονόπουλου το μυθολογικό στοιχείο, με μορφή ονομάτων ή συμβόλων, συχνά είναι έμμεσο, και χρησιμοποιείται ως δείκτης σημασιολογικού προσανατολισμού του ποιήματος: ονόματα μυθικών μορφών από τα αργοναυτικά όπως του Ορφέα, του Ιάσωνα, της Μήδειας, της Ευριδίκης, της Ιππολύτης, φέρνουν στο κείμενο τις σημασίες τους και γίνονται κλειδιά νοηματοδότησης για τον αναγνώστη.

Το καράβι για τον Εγγονόπουλο εμφανίζεται με τα χαρακτηριστικά της καλλιτεχνικής μύησης: «για ν' αρματώσουνε καράβι, ν' ανοιχτούν, να

φύγουνε», γράφει στην αρχή της σημαντικότερης ποιητικής του σύνθεσης *Μπολιβάρ* (1944). Το καράβι είναι το μέσο που οδηγεί στην πραγμάτωση του ανθρώπου και ειδικότερα του καλλιτέχνη, και το ταξίδι είναι πάντα η περιπέτεια που συγκεντρώνει τα χαρακτηριστικά μιας επανάστασης σε όλους τους τομείς, προσωπικό, ερωτικό, κοινωνικό, καλλιτεχνικό. Είναι χαρακτηριστικό ότι στα ποιήματα αυτά ο ποιητής διαλέγεται όχι μόνο με τον Απολλώνιο αλλά και με τον Σικελιανό. Μια ακόμη επαναγραφή του μύθου βρίσκουμε στο ποίημά του «Στους φίλους των πόλεων», από την τελευταία συλλογή του *Στην κοιλάδα με τους ροδώνες* (1978), όπου μιλά για την καταδίωξη των ποντοπόρων, με τους οποίους ταυτίζει τους επαναστάτες καλλιτέχνες.

Στη ζωγραφική του Εγγονόπουλου, εκτός από τους πολυάριθμους πίνακες με το θέμα του Ορφέα, ο Εγγονόπουλος έχει ζωγραφίσει έναν πίνακα με θέμα την Αργώ, ενώ το 1970 φιλοτέχνησε τον πίνακα «Ιάσων και Μήδεια». Σ' αυτόν παριστάνεται η Μήδεια να κρατά μια λάμπα. Το γυάλινο μέρος της βρίσκεται στη θέση του κεφαλιού της ηρωίδας και μπορούμε να υποθέσουμε ότι συμβολίζει τη γνώση και το φως αλλά και τις μαγικές γνώσεις της Μήδειας που ισοδυναμούν με την τέχνη του ποιητή.

Ένα ακόμη πρόσωπο του αργοναυτικού μύθου, την αμαζόνα Ιππολύτη, βρίσκουμε στο ποίημα Όσιρις. Εδώ «άγριοι κι αιμοβόροι Αλβανοί» (ίσως από την Αφμπανία ή Αλβανία του Καυκάσου) σκοτώνουν τον «κυνοκέφαλο» εραστή της Ιππολύτης. Η Ιππολύτη ίσως να είναι απλά ένα ερωτικό πρόσωπο, ίσως όμως η αναφορά στο συγκεκριμένο μυθικό πρόσωπο επιτυγχάνει να ανακαλέσει στον αναγνώστη την ατέρμονη βία, στο μύθο όσο και στη ζωή, που τονίζεται και από τη μορφή του Αιγυπτιακού Όσιρι, θεού της ζωής και του θανάτου.

Στον Ανδρέα Εμπειρικό ο αργοναυτικός μύθος έδωσε τον τίτλο σε ένα από τα τολμηρότερα κείμενά του, το πεζογράφημά του *Αργώ ή πλους αεροστάτου*, που έγραψε τον Σεπτέμβριο του 1944 και δημοσίευσε για πρώτη φορά σε συνέχειες στο περιοδικό *Πάλι* το 1964-65, παραλείποντας ορισμένες τολμηρές ερωτικές σκηνές, ενώ η ολοκληρωμένη μορφή του κειμένου, χωρίς παραλείψεις, δημοσιεύτηκε το 1980, πολλά χρόνια μετά τον θάνατο του ποιητή. Πρόκειται για ένα κείμενο στο οποίο εμπλέκεται η προσωπική μυθολογία του ποιητή με την άκρατη επιθυμία για τη σεξουαλική απελευθέρωση.<sup>5</sup> Ο πρωταγωνιστής του αφηγήματος καθηγητής Πέντρο Ραμίρεθ ονειρεύεται ότι βρίσκεται στο καράβι Αργώ, που ετοιμάζεται να αποπλεύσει, λίγο πριν την πτήση ενός αεροστάτου που φέρει το ίδιο όνομα.

<sup>5</sup> Βλ. Δ. Αναγνωστοπούλου, *Η ποιητική του έρωτα στο έργο του Ανδρέα Εμπειρικού*, Ύψιλον/βιβλία, Αθήνα, 1990· βλ. επίσης G. Saunier, *Ανδρέας Εμπειρικός, Μυθολογία και ποιητική*, Δοκίμια, Αγρα, Αθήνα, 2001.

Όμως ο Ραμίρεθ, παράλληλα με τα επιστημονικά του ενδιαφέροντα, που τον στρεφουν προς την πτήση του αερόστατου, τρέφει και αιμομικτικά αισθήματα για την κόρη του, που έχει ερωτευθεί έναν μιγάδα. Ο επιστήμων και ορθολογιστής Ραμίρεθ είναι δέσμιος των ενστίκτων και των παθών του, και εύκολα περνά το κατώφλι του απόλυτου ανορθολογισμού.

Ο Ραμίρεθ, ο οποίος ονειρεύεται τον εαυτό του ως Αργοναύτη, αλλά και ως θεό Πάνα, βασικά εκπροσωπεί την διπλή κατάσταση συνείδησης και ασυνείδητου που βιώνουν συνεχώς οι άνθρωποι, μέσα στο πέλαγος της ανεξέλεγκτης ερωτικής επιθυμίας. Ωστόσο οι Αργοναύτες, σύμφωνα με τα λόγια του Εμπειρικού, είναι οι «νοσταλγοί και πλαστουργοί του μέλλοντός των», είναι εκείνοι που κατορθώνουν να πραγματώσουν τη γιγαντιαία δημιουργική προσπάθεια της γνώσης του εαυτού. Ο δυστυχής Ραμίρεθ αποτυγχάνει στον αγώνα της αυτογνωσίας και αφήνει να τον κυριεύσει το πάθος – σκοτώνει την κόρη του και τον εραστή της – όμως η Αργώ, το αερόστατο, ξεκινά θριαμβικά το ταξίδι της. Στο κείμενο αυτό μπορούμε να αναγνωρίσουμε μια επαναγραφή του μύθου ως αγώνα για λύτρωση μέσω της τέχνης, στο πλαίσιο ενός φροϋδικού, ερωτικού Μεσσιανισμού.

Ελπίζω πως αυτή η περιδιάβαση στα αργοναυτικά των υπερρεαλιστών έδειξε κάτι που έχει σχέση κυρίως με την αγωνία των καλλιτεχνών των πρώτων δεκαετιών του 20ού αιώνα – και τον πολυμέτωπο αγώνα τους με την παράδοση ενός πολιτισμού σε κρίση. Όμως το γεγονός ότι οι πιο ακραιφνείς ανάμεσά τους διάλεξαν να ταξιδέψουν με την Αργώ, και να ξαναγράψουν το μύθο της, μας δείχνει κάτι για την ίδια την ουσία αυτού του μύθου που αποδείχθηκε ο πιο πολυδιάστατος και ο πιο διαχρονικός μετά από το ταξίδι του Οδυσσέα, και ίσως πιο επίκαιρος: τα μαγικά φίλτρα μιας «βάρβαρης» τέχνης παραμένουν ίσως τα μόνα μέσα θεραπείας ενός πολιτισμού που συνεχώς ανακυκλώνει τα μοτίβα της ιερής ή βέβηλης περιέργειας, της κατάκτησης, της προδοσίας και της τιμωρίας.



Svetlana Berikashvili (Tbilisi)

**THE AUDIO-AESTHETIC EFFECT OF READING  
THE TEXT OF THE ARGONAUTICA**

Greek texts were universally recited in accordance with two traditional ways of pronunciation: similar to Modern Greek and to Erasmus' scheme. Modern linguistics offers different opinions on the tradition to follow. Such discussion started in the XVI century and the most important was the work of Erasmus "Dialogus de Recta Latini Graecique Sermonis Pronunciatione" (Dialogue on Pronunciation of Latin and Greek Words) published in 1528, where the author proved suitability of reading in accordance with the pronunciation established in the Classical Period. Approximate restoration and reconstruction of ancient pronunciation were carried out in accordance with the pattern of phonological system. Moreover, scholars take into account data of ancient writers, grammarians and scholastics as well as etymology of words and hyphenation pattern for Ancient Greek.

Since then the issue about which tradition is more reasonable for reading of ancient Greek texts has been hotly debated.<sup>1</sup> The majority of classical scholars favors reading ancient Greek texts in accordance with Erasmus' scheme, while the greater part of Modern Greek scholars maintains for opinion that the reading of ancient Greek texts in accordance with Erasmus' scheme is not science-based taking into account the fact that pronunciation strongly varied in different geographical areas as well as at different periods of language development; therefore, it must have been impossible to use similar rules for all texts.<sup>2</sup> Taking into account their opinion, the reading of

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<sup>1</sup> For additional information and bibliography see Gordeziani R., Darchia I., Shamanidi S., Ancient and Modern Greek Grammar (Comparative Grammar), Logos, Tbilisi 2001, 23.

<sup>2</sup> For details see Μπαμπινιώτης Γ., Ερασμική και Νεοελληνική προφορά, Ιστορική γραμματική της Αρχαίας Ελληνικής Γλώσσας, Εκδόσεις Γ. Γκέλυπες, Αθήνα 1985, 38-39.

ancient texts using Modern Greek pronunciation will help people who know Ancient Greek, to study Modern Greek Language.<sup>3</sup> In my opinion the reading of ancient Greek texts in accordance with Erasmus' scheme will help people who study Modern Greek Language, to understand phonetic system of Ancient Greek and consequently, to study orthographic issues of Modern Greek Language.

Since the moment when comparative historical linguistics of the XIX century admitted the superiority of pronunciation in accordance with Erasmus' scheme, scholars started hot debates on how to read ancient Greek texts – "εξ επαυνοθέσεως" (reconstructed), according to Erasmus' scheme or "εξ εξελίξεως" (developed), according to Modern Greek Pronunciation.

There is no doubt that the phonetic system of the Ancient Greek language differed from Modern Greek. The majority of scholars, including Greek scholars, acknowledge that Erasmus' scheme is more precise for reproducing phonological system of Ancient Greek language. However, it remains unclear whether the use of reconstructed pronunciation for reading all text, is to be approved. Thus, according to G. Babiniotis, on the one hand reading digrams given in texts from the VII/VI centuries B.C. up to the II century as diphthongs diverts attention from different pronunciation of true and non-true diphthongs<sup>4</sup> and on the other hand, we do not consider their monophthong phonation in different districts. For both cases, using i.e. "correct" ("ορθή") or "Erasmus'" pronunciation we deny scientific truth.<sup>5</sup> Naturally, different periods of language development and different geographical areas were characterized with different pronunciation as well as dialect differences of Ancient Greek language. Thus, it was impossible to take into account all possible dialect differences. Generally, we use Attic dialect to study the phonetic system of Ancient Greek language, and consequently, using Attic dialect, we compare Erasmus' pronunciation with Modern Greek.

Our research issue does not consider which pronunciation is more correct from the scientific point of view, but we want to expose, which one has an audio-aesthetic effect on audience. Thus, we can determine which pronunciation will be more efficient for the study of ancient Greek texts.

For this purpose we carried out phonetic experiment using phonetic software "Sound Forge". We recorded a short fragment of the first song of the "Argonautica" by Apollonius Rhodius recited in accordance with Erasmus'

<sup>3</sup> Χαρωλαμπάκης Χ., Η Ερασμική προφορά, Ιστορία της Ελληνικής γλώσσας, Επιστημονική επιμέλεια: Κοπιδάκης Μ. Ζ., Ελληνικό Λογοτεχνικό και Ιστορικό Αρχείο, Αθήνα 1999, 124-125.

<sup>4</sup> For true and non-true diphthongs of Ancient Greek Language see Соболевский С. И., Древнерусский язык, издательство литературы на иностранных языках, Москва 1948, 8.

<sup>5</sup> Μπαμπινιώτης Γ., op. cit., 38-39.

scheme as well as with the principles of Modern Greek. Afterwards, the third and the fourth year students of the Modern Greek Studies department at the Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, listened to the texts and were later asked to present a written opinion on the pronunciation they appreciated or disliked as they listened to ancient Greek texts. Before presenting, we will proceed to statistical results of the experiment, which will help to determine reading efficiency in accordance with Erasmus' scheme during the study of ancient Greek texts, we would like to introduce graphical results of phonetic records as well as phonetic differences between readings in accordance with Modern and Erasmus' Schemes.

Ancient Greek language had short and long vowels. Short vowels are –  $\alpha$ ,  $\epsilon$ ,  $\iota$ ,  $o$ ,  $u$ . Long vowels are –  $\alpha$ ,  $\eta$ ,  $\iota$ ,  $\omega$ ,  $u$ . Modern Greek Language has only short vowels. The loss of long vowels started in the Ancient Period and finished in the VIII-X centuries A.D. There is an opinion that the loss of short-long vowels was caused by the changes in the stress-accent system. Namely the length of vowels lost its function when the musical stress was replaced by an expiratory stress. This process must have accelerated by the 100 years A.D. and finished in the middle of the third century.<sup>6</sup> Thus, it was impossible to reveal differences between long and short vowels during the recording.

Ancient Greek language had a very large system of diphthongs, replaced by, digraph system in Modern Greek. The conditioning factor of different phonetic records was different pronunciation of diphthongs and sounds:  $\eta$  –  $e$  (Ancient Greek),  $i$  (Modern Greek),  $v$  –  $iu$  (Ancient Greek),  $i$  (Modern Greek) etc.

Consonants were altered as well. Changes can be observed in pronunciation of the following sounds:  $\beta$ ,  $\gamma$ ,  $\delta$ ,  $\zeta$ ,  $\theta$  (Modern Greek Language) and  $b$ ,  $g$ ,  $d$ ,  $zd$  ( $dz$ ),  $th$  (Ancient Greek language).

Aspiration and stress-accent are very important for diagrams. Naturally, it was impossible to distinguish acute (*accentus acutus*), circumflex (*accentus circumflexus*) and grave (*accentus gravis*) accents, but the metres of texts were of great importance as well. Taking into account that we have analyzed the text of the "Argonautica", naturally, the difference between Modern and Erasmus' pronunciation depended on dactylic hexameters. Apollonius Rhodius tried to keep to the language and style of ancient epos in the "Argonautica". The poem was written in Ionic dialect with Aeolic elements of Ancient Greek language. Here and there the poet tried to use modern forms, so, his language varied between Ancient and Modern forms.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Allen W. S., *Vox Graeca*, The Pronunciation of Classical Greek, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1974, 88-89.

<sup>7</sup> Urushadze A., Introduction, Apollonius Rhodius, "The Argonautica", Metsniereba, Tbilisi 1970, 22.

We have processed a fragment of the "Argonautica" (Apollonius Rhodius, "The Argonautica", with an English translation by R. C. Seaton, Harvard University Press, MCMLXVII, Book I, 3, 1-17) using phonetic software Praat.<sup>8</sup> The software developers are Professors Paul Boersma and David Weenink, Institute of Phonetic Sciences, University of Amsterdam. The program provides phonetic analysis of records, composition of diagrams and curves. Program Praat – is a tool for comparative analysis, synthesis and manipulation of speech. Using the program we can analyse the following data: pitch of sound, intensity, shimmer, interval between sounds, duration of sound, spectral analysis (spectrograms, spectral slices etc.) etc.<sup>9</sup> Generally, the program is used for experimental phonetics. So, we can meter and calculate articulation.<sup>10</sup>

*See diagram N1-2*

The diagrams show 17 lines of the first volume of the "Argonautica". Horizontal line shows record time; its duration is 95.790000 seconds. Vertical line shows frequency, which is calculated in HZ. Spectrogram is given under the record diagram. The starting point of spectrogram is 0 HZ, its peak is equal to 5000 HZ. Dark lines given on spectrogram show that the pronunciation of sound produces large amount of power, while less dark lines indicate less power. Blue lines or points show pitches of sound. Pitches of sound increase as a result of jitter increase and decrease – as a result of jitter decrease. Pitches of sound change in accordance with type of phrase, emotional load or sound timbre.<sup>11</sup> Especially important is who the voice belongs – to a female or a male. For a male voice the minimum pitch equals 75 HZ, the maximum – 300 HZ; for a female voice – 100 – 600 HZ. On the diagrams, yellow lines show intensity, red lines – sound formants (generally, vowels), and blue lines – sound impulses.

What kind of differences was revealed between the two diagrams? Naturally, vowels pronunciation is especially relevant. It is impossible to see difference between short and long vowels. Very important are stress-accent, aspiration and diphthongs. After pronunciation of vowels we shall determine their formants, which are acoustic representatives of vowels and depend on sound frequency. Using formants we determine sound timbre, which provides melodic pattern of sounds. Melodic pattern has an impact on human brain.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.praat.org>.

<sup>9</sup> For additional information about Praat see Lobzhanidze I., Modern Methods of Experimental Phonetics for Fragments of Udi Language, Tbilisi 2006, 19-20.

<sup>10</sup> For experimental phonetics see Akhvediani G., Introduction to General Phonetics, Ganatleba, Tbilisi 1996, 19-21.

<sup>11</sup> Матусевич М. И., Введение в общую фонетику, Учпедгиз, Москва 1959, 19.

To have a more accurate idea, we have to consider spectrogram of a word. Let us take a word, where the pronunciation of vowels (taking into account that we don't distinguish short and long vowels) does not differ in Ancient and Modern Greek, but gives different spectrograms. E.g. a word – ἀρχόμενος.

*See diagrams N 3-4*

For us the most important is the number of formants and their numerical signs. Apparently, the first diagram recited in accordance with Erasmus' scheme has less formants than the second recited in accordance with Modern Greek principles. Though, the quantity of vowels is similar. Vowel has a different number of formants, but generally its number does not exceed four formants per frame. For some languages the initial two formants (vowel height (F1) and vowel place (F2) are enough to determine a vowel. So, Greek Language needs determination of the initial two formants. Apart from this, we have some cases, when the formants of i and e or, u and o coincide with each other. In such cases, the decisive importance belongs to intensity of formants. Intensity of the second formant is higher for o and e than for u and i sounds.<sup>12</sup>

Formants of a word read in accordance with Erasmus' scheme can be observed at the beginning of a word – "a" vowel and at the end – "o" vowel, while, a word read in accordance with Modern Greek has a great number of formants. Formant number for "a" vowel given on the first diagram is the following.<sup>13</sup>

F1 = 1169.875977, F2 = 2739.800049

Whereas, the formant number on the second diagram is the following:

F1 = 1215.073120, F2 = 2223.470703

We have similar conditions for the other sounds, e.g. "o" vowel:

F1 = 314.390472, F2 = 1472.985352

On the second diagram

F1 = 365.693726, F2 = 1493.943726

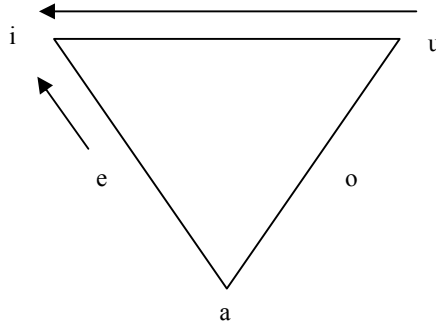
What can we conclude from the above-mentioned? The first formants are higher in HZ for the text read in accordance with Erasmus' scheme than for text read in accordance with Modern Greek pronunciation. It means that Erasmus' pronunciation is characterized with low-HZ frequencies. The second formants depend on vowel place: in the first case we have "a" front

<sup>12</sup> Кибрик А. Е., К вопросу о методе определения дифференциальных признаков при спектральном анализе (На материале гласных новогреческого языка), Вопросы языкознания, 5, Наука, Москва 1962, 83-84.

<sup>13</sup> We have considered only initial two formants taking into account that the initial two formants are sufficient for vowel system of Greek Language.

vowel and "o" back vowel. Differences in HZ of formants depend on epic metre or dactylic hexameter of the "Argonautica".

Differences are caused by different pronunciation in Ancient and Modern Greek Languages: η – e (Ancient Greek), i (Modern Greek),<sup>14</sup> υ – iu (Ancient Greek), i (Modern Greek) etc. We come across these sounds in text, e.g. ἐφημοσύνη. Differences mentioned above can be observed in the diagrams. We will not consider each word separately, but it is important to highlight that Greek Language, as a result of development, tends to simplification, while Greek phonetic – tend to become more melodic. So, changes in pronunciation of η sound – from "e" to "i" show that the middle vowel became high vowel,<sup>15</sup> and changes in pronunciation of υ sound – from "iu" to "i" show that the high hard sound became soft. We can present the above-mentioned using vowel triangle approved all over the World, which is known as V-shaped scalene triangle.<sup>16</sup>



So, the vowel system of Greek Language is transformed to high, closed and soft sounds. Modern Greek becomes more melodious as compared to Ancient Greek language.

Ancient Greek language was characterized with a large diphthong system. Diphthongs are widely presented in different languages worldwide, but their phonological value is different. Each language represents diphthongs

<sup>14</sup> For details about "η" vowel in Ancient Greek see Μπαμπινιώτης Γ., *Ιστορική γραμματική της Αρχαίας Ελληνικής Γλώσσας*, Εκδόσεις Γ. Γκέλυμπεσης, Αθήνα 1985, 34.

<sup>15</sup> The fact can be confirmed by a formant number for "η" sound given on spectrogram of a word "ἐφημοσύνη", which is the following: F1 = 450.951924 HZ according to Erasmus' scheme and F1 = 409.298004 HZ according to Modern Greek pronunciation. F1 for high sounds is always less than for middle or open vowels.

<sup>16</sup> Трубецкой Н. С., *Основы фонологии*, Издательство иностранной литературы, Москва 1960, 123.

differently,<sup>17</sup> sometimes they are considered as difficult vowel phoneme or a liaison of two vowel phonemes. Ancient Greek had two types of diphthongs: diphthongs with two pronounced vowels and diphthongs with one pronounced vowel.<sup>18</sup> Modern Greek transformed diphthongs to monophthongs. So, their pronunciation was changed as well.

Let us consider a word *μνήσομαι* with "αι" diphthong, which was pronounced as "ai" in Ancient Greek and "e" in Modern Greek Language.

*See diagrams, N 5-6*

The most interesting are diphthongs given at the absolute end of the word, which are differently represented on both diagrams. Let us consider formants of the diphthong. Formant number for "αι" diphtong given on the first diagram is the following:

$$F1 = 321.566437, F2 = 2341.126709 \text{ HZ}$$

On the second diagram:

$$F1 = 536.485657, F2 = 1696.898315 \text{ HZ}$$

So, we see that both parts of the diphthong were pronounced at lower frequencies in Ancient Greek than in Modern Greek. As concerns the second formant – middle vowel was replaced by front vowel in Modern Greek. So, the formant value was more in Ancient Greek than in Modern Greek. We shall pay attention to the tendency of sound replacement in diphthongs by high and soft vowels.

ai	—————▶	e
ei	—————▶	i
oi	—————▶	i
ui	—————▶	i
ēi	—————▶	i
ou	—————▶	u

We should take into account that the changes took place as a result of iotization (ιωτακισμός), which supposed more close pronunciation of vowels and diphthongs or their replacement by closed front high "i" sound. This process must have started in the Hellenistic period, and finished in the Byzantine period – the IX-X centuries.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Матусевич М. И., *op. cit.*, 19.

<sup>18</sup> For details about diphthongs see Gordeziani R., Darchia I., Shamanidi S., *op. cit.*, 19-20.

<sup>19</sup> Μπαμπινιώτης Γ., *op. cit.*, 35.

Differences between the above diagrams included in pronunciation of consonants as well:

β – b – v,  
 γ – g – ġ,  
 δ – d – đ,  
 θ – t – ð,  
 ζ – dz – z<sup>20</sup>

Likewise, in intensity of sound waves, impulses and sound heights. We will not dwell on each sound separately, but will consider the data necessary for our research. Naturally, intensity of sound waves is represented with different numbers for different sounds, but the most important is the fact that the number is higher for the text read in accordance with Erasmus' scheme, than for the text read in accordance with Modern Greek pronunciation. The intensity is calculated in dB-s. So, the following illustrates the comparison between Ancient and Modern Greek is the following:

<u>Ancient</u>	<u>Modern</u>
53.221355 dB	52.677667 dB
53.277973 dB	52.699902 dB
53.128075 dB	52.630135 dB

Also, the quantity of sound impulses is more in Ancient than in Modern Greek. So, e.g. within a line of the text read in accordance with Ancient Greek the number of impulses is as follows: 521 impulses with average duration of 6.03356 seconds; and within a line according to Modern Greek: 462 impulses with average duration of 4.92377 seconds. As concerns sound height, maximal levels calculated in HZ-s vary within 499-500 HZ, and minimal level for Ancient Greek equals to 66.69 HZ and for Modern Greek – 150.38 HZ.

As a result of psychological surveys, it was determined that sounds pronounced with low frequencies, defined rhythm and jitter implemented with special power and intensity have very high emotional impact on human brains. Very often in spite of pleasant phonation the text read with melodic phonation has no emotional impact on the listener. As a result of neurological survey it was determined that sound pronounced with low frequency as well as musical sound activates cells of the right cerebral hemisphere of human brains. So, it has very high emotional impact on the listener.

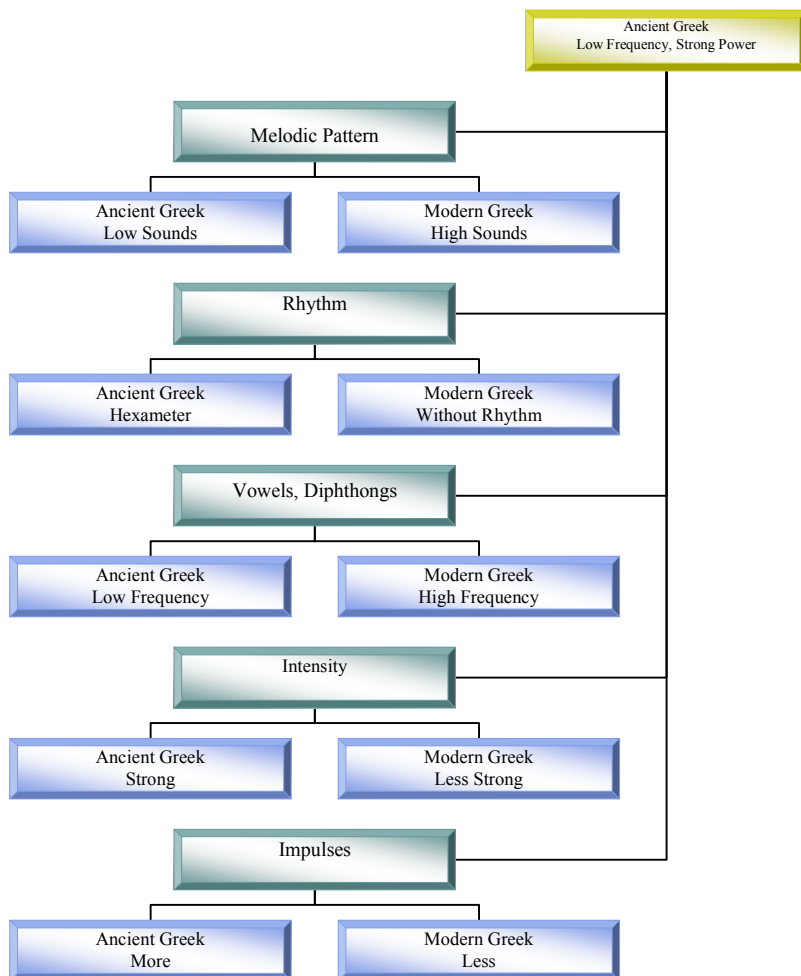
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<sup>20</sup> For changes of consonants see Μπαμπινιώτης Γ., Συνοπτική ιστορία της ελληνικής γλώσσας, Αθήνα 2002, 125-129.



Psychoacoustics has revealed that a human being perceives sounds using the following parameters: height, timbre, duration, frequency variation and localization.<sup>21</sup>

If we compare the two ways of reciting of the "Argonautica" we'll receive the following scheme:



<sup>21</sup> Смирнов А., Элементы психоакустики, <http://www.thereim.ru/lectures/psycho-acoustics.htm>

Thus, Ancient Greek is characterized with sounds of low frequency and high intensity. Nowadays, a lot of destructive weapons were developed as a result of physical impact on human brains caused by sounds. Naturally, we mean the impact of very low frequency sounds that are inaudible to humans, but the most significant is that sounds of very low frequency and high intensity were used for the development of such weapons.<sup>22</sup> Ancient Greek texts read in accordance with Erasmus' scheme do not cause destructive impact on humans, but great emotional effect on cells of human brains concluding in subconscious sense of catharsis.

As about students' opinion about reading in accordance with Erasmus' and Modern pronunciation, the majority voted for Erasmus' pronunciation. Out of 16 students taking part in the experiment 14 voted for Erasmus' pronunciation, 1 – for Modern pronunciation and 1 abstained from voting. Although, the majority could not answer the question – why have they chosen Erasmus' pronunciation? 9 students answered that they found it original, 1 student answered that the principle was more usual, and 4 students could not answer. It prompts us think that the phonetic structure of the text has subconscious effect on the listener.

It is impossible to look through all aspects within the framework of a paper. But we tried to consider a short fragment of the "Argonautica" from the phonetic-acoustic point of view and to determine on audio-aesthetic effect of two traditions of reading.

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<sup>22</sup> Altmann J., Acoustic Weapons – A Prospective Assessment, *Science and Global Security*, Princeton University 2002, vol. 9, 165-234.

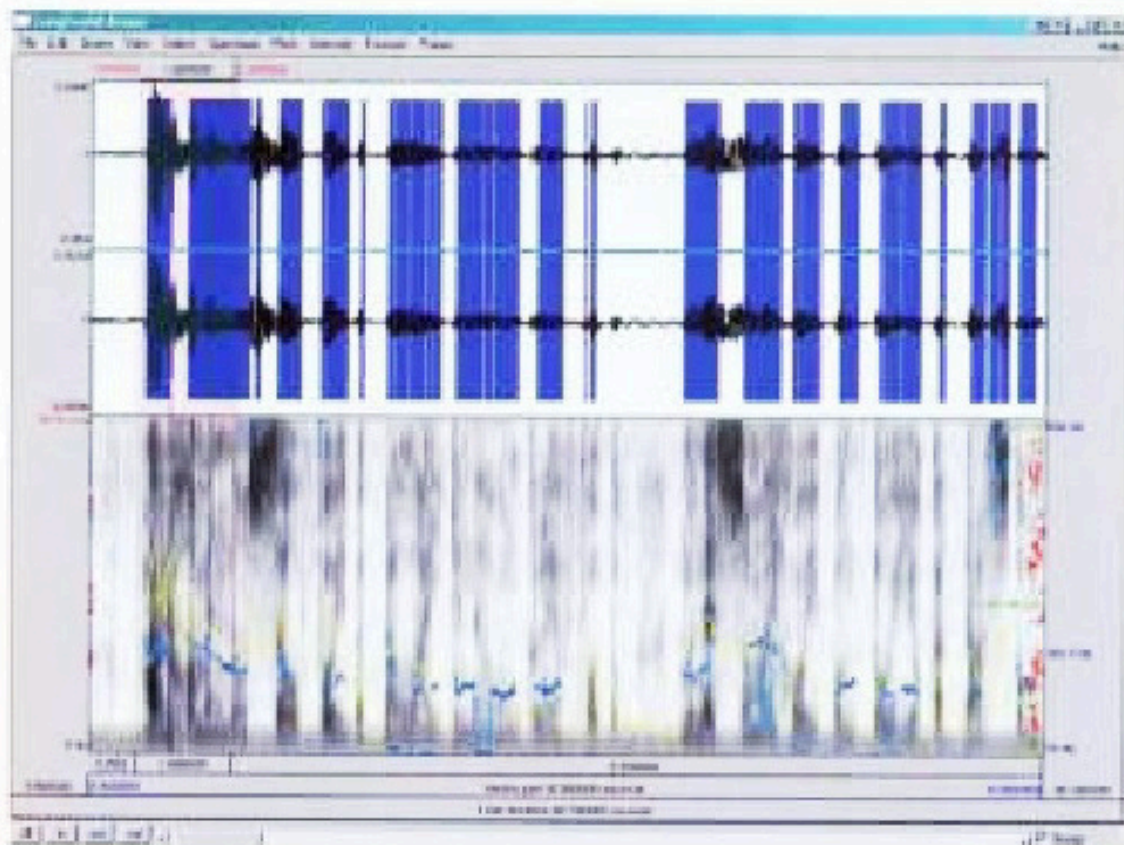


Diagram № 1. Recorded fragment of the *Argonautica* in accordance with Erasmus' reading.

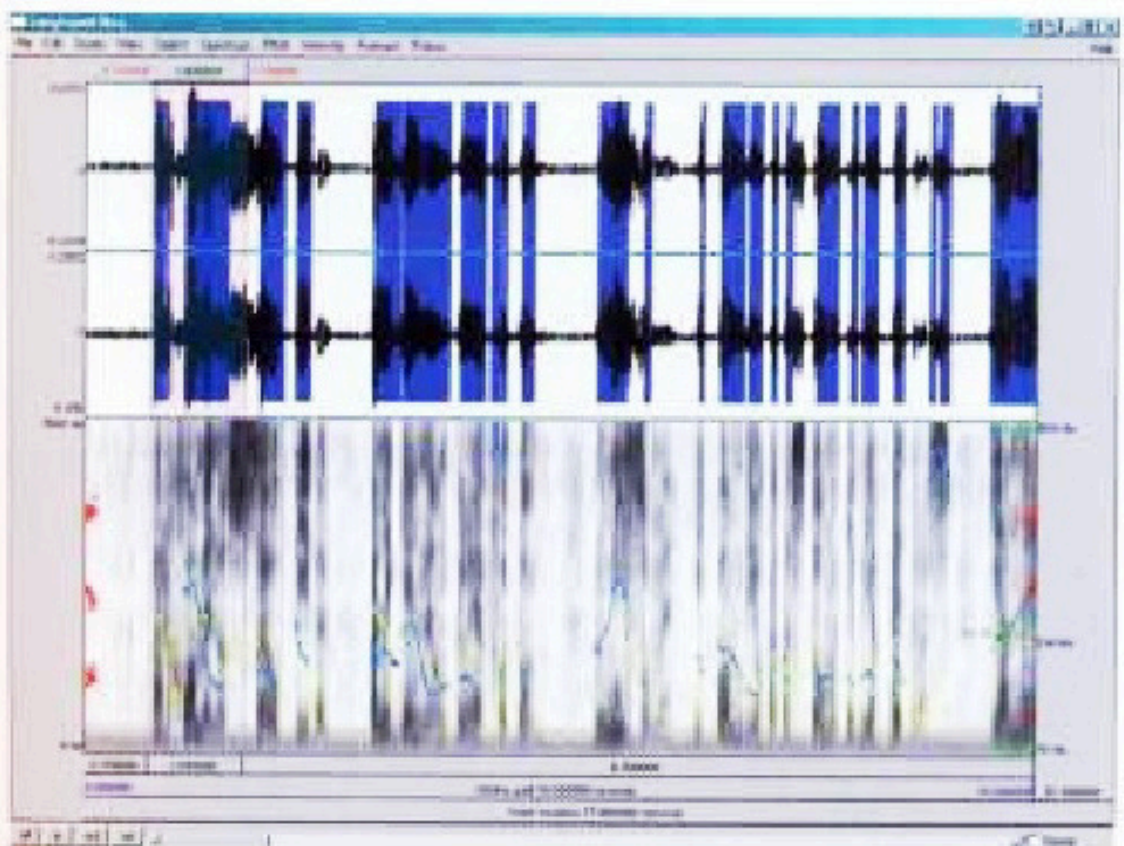


Diagram № 2. Recorded fragment of the *Argonautica* in accordance with Modern Greek reading.



Figure 10.10: Video with blue bar on the right side of the frame.



Figure 10.11: Video with blue bar on the left side of the frame.



Figure 10.12: Video with blue bar on the right side of the frame.



Figure 10.13: Video with blue bar on the left side of the frame.

Gia Bughadze (Tbilisi)

### **THE ARGONAUTS AND MEDEA IN MODERN GEORGIAN FINE ARTS**

The Argonauts and Medea is a comprehensive and diverse theme, but at the same it proves very interesting even to a practicing painter and an amateur theorist.

I believe the function, the duty and even the mission of national culture and a nation in general is to realize what its culture has sacrificed to fill in the universal cultural landscape; what, which tunes and sounds, with motifs and impulses it has contributed to the universal cultural space. Admittedly, epochal cultures have specific properties relevant to the fulfillment of the universal purpose – telos (perhaps, it is not appropriate now to argue over the conception that the humankind has a high and specific purpose in the world). For example, by its attitude, world view, texts and images, the Indo-Asian culture, regarded as the origin of our civilization, is the culture of overcoming ‘Maya’, the world molded by spiritual boundaries.

Ancient Iranian-Chaldean culture is the culture of overcoming the conflict, the clash between Ahura Mazda and Angramana, which has contributed artistic masterpieces to world literature, architecture and fine art.

The next cultural stage is certainly the Egyptian-Babylonian culture, which represents the epoch of detecting and revealing wisdom in the world. It is followed by the culture which seeks for the beautiful in the world, and the wisdom in the human mind. This culture is called Greek-Roman and is distinguished by the perception and establishment of fair proportions, beauty in general, harmony and logic. If the Indian world regards the created material world as illusory, which consequently should be overcome, for ancient Persia,

this profane world is the actual area for the conflict between the good and the evil. It means that at the post-illusory stage, the material world acquired the properties of the conflict between the opposite forces. The following Egyptian-Babylonian period objectified, materialized wisdom. The humankind – or in Hegelian terms, the spirit of the age, the universal telos, exposed humans to the hidden wisdom and regularities, logic of the world, while later all was crowned with the revelation of the zeitgeist of earthly beauty in Greek and Roman period. I believe that it was in this very period that the great culture of carnal beauty developed. This very age, this very culture accepted Christ in the body, i.e. the supreme principle of the universe was embodied, which marked a new starting point for the fulfillment of cultural and epochal telos. Humankind will go through the reverse process – from the renaissance-reflective culture to the reflective process of perceiving wisdom. We have just entered this age. In fact, the Renaissance was the reflection of Greek and Roman beauties and ideals, while at present we are in the age of reflecting Egyptian-Chaldean period. Although this may seem disputable, it is beyond doubt that the Greek world largely contributed exactly to the establishment of the concept of beauty and played an important role for the humankind through the development of beautiful images. These very images convey multiple implications and messages about the deepest and most complex secrets of the universe. The source of such implications for Georgians is the central images of the Hellenic-Greek imaginary and mythological genius, the Golden Fleece and the Voyage of the Argonauts. I believe that an individual and a nation are appreciated by what they have contributed to the humankind and what they have intentionally sacrificed to the fulfillment of the universal telos. The viability of a nation is determined by the extent to which it is capable of devotion and self-preservation. The image of the Golden Fleece and the act of offering committed by Medea is in fact such a large-scale self-sacrifice for the development of European and Western culture. This is the offering which fertilized European civilization, and which is expressed through the image of Medea. Medea is the ideal symbol for selfless readiness to sacrifice and to fall as a victim. She can be regarded as the sun rising from the depth, lavishly giving away her own power, rays, warmth, without sparing herself and thus justifying her existence.

Medea is the sun of the depth and represents the mystical aspect of the sun, reflected in the female element of the universe. The sun is identified with a female element in Georgian mythological beliefs. Medea too is the sun, the bearer of the profound female astral element of the sun. Therefore, in the Argonaut myth, Georgians, Georgian painters and artists in general are primarily concerned with the theme of Medea. And interpretations offered by Georgian painters have always reflected the point of sacrifice justified in

epochal terms. Medea's offering and at the same time, her active and intentional self-sacrifice is the sign and image of this. In my opinion, the exact symbol of our contemporary Georgian reality is the great monument by M. Berdzenishvili, erected in Bichvinta, Abkhazia, the separatist region of Georgia. It is a prophetic work of art. The great figure of Medea against the background of the sea is the most splendid plastic image of tragedy and great pain. This interpretation of Medea's image follows the traditional thematic principle implying the greatest sacrifice of offering one's own children. The tragism is conveyed through the plastic meta-language, the composition is solid and at the same time it is highly dynamic inwardly, even violent. It even seems to me that through this work, the sculptor foresaw the tragedy of the two most valuable regions of Georgia, Abkhazia and Tskhinvali. I would not certainly like to speak in political terms about the idea which the artist has rendered so dynamically in the language of sculpture. Anyway, it should be admitted that great art suggests multiple interpretations and prophetic concepts. Merab Berdzenishvili's Medea seems to imply the tragedies of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali as well.

An absolutely different message is reflected in Medea's monument recently erected in Batumi. It does not convey the energy of the Medea in Bichvinta; it lacks the ample plastic impulse, the energy. However, the Batumi monument also suggests sacrifice, or rather the concept of offering oneself. This is the creation which renders the idea of intentional sacrifice, or rather offering the most precious. Although it conveys this meaning barely and directly, and despite its plastic imperfections, I believe that such an idea and attempt of its interpretation has serious grounds, and primarily refers to the contribution of ancient Colchis to the development of common Western culture and thought. The mission and importance of Georgia was, in fact, expressed through the sacrifice of the Golden Fleece. In this way, our country played its extremely significant role in the development of European, Western culture. If we consider the issues in teleological terms, this gift, which Georgia had preserved and taken care of with great toil, and which subsequently Medea presented to Europe, the Golden Fleece can be regarded as one of the principle forces stimulating European thought and consciousness. And all this was accomplished through Georgia.

Georgian fine arts offer multiple interpretations of Medea's theme: Elguja Berdzenishvili's sculpture *The Sea* is distinguished by Hecatean magic and carnal attractiveness. In my interpretation, Medea is playing with fate with the cords of magic, and the monument conveys the idea of coming in touch with ancestors' experience.

I would like to make a special accent on a very unusual monument by Elguja Amashukeli, erected in Poti and dedicated to the memory of young

people killed in the World War II, the soldiers who died in the sea during the war activities, who were devoured by the waves. Even an idle look at the moment makes us feel that something different is hidden beyond its structure. Many various ideas come to mind as the sculpture itself drives us in many ways. It embodies the killed and missing youth in general. It is a fatalist work, in which hopelessly gigantic waves threaten a young body. In my opinion, the monument implies the image of Absyrtus. It is absolutely opposite to the concept of making an offering to Europe as it conveys the message of inner immobility, stiffness, numbing; and inner stiffness equals to death. So, the waves behind the lad have petrified in a strange and portentous way.

I believe that the multiple interpretations of the Argonaut myth and Medea's image produced by Georgian art reflect a desire to participate in the development of common universal cultural space and in building common European cultural structure through evoking the events of the past. It is a desire to consider and perceive the role and place of Georgian culture in the context of world culture. The theme itself is inexhaustible and suggests many diverse interpretations.

I believe that along with the tragic and sharpest resound, the theme of intentional sacrifice, of giving away one's own essence, implies also the idea of love, which is not amply emphasized in Georgian painting. As mentioned above, the theme of Medea suggests two basic interpretations: 1. The intentional sacrifice related to the accomplishment of the mission of Georgia (Colchis) in world culture; 2. The idea of magic, sorcery, which, along with healing, is related to prophecy. Both motives imply the idea of incorporating national culture and national consciousness into common universal context, i.e. at the level of imagination, Colchis-Georgia contributed to the source of European and Western consciousness, the Greek mythic and artistic perception, which is directly reflected in Georgian fine art.

It should be mentioned that our painters' interest in ancient themes is connected with the names of two great Georgian painters Lado Gudiashvili and Sergo Kobuladze. As our art has experienced neither classicism nor symbolism in the pure sense of the terms, ancient theme enjoyed free interpretation and acquired stylistic-quotational coloring in the works of these two artists as well as the painters of the following generations. Classical-academic reception of ancient themes was reflected in Sergo Kobuladze's works, which on their part follow the line of Polycletes and Leonardo. On the other hand, there is Lado Gudiashvili, who chiefly followed the Hellenistic and mannerist art with the symbolic accents of neo-algorism.

If we refer to Nietzsche's oppositions, we may say that S. Kobuladze follows the Apollonian idea, and L. Gudiashvili – Dionysian. This may certainly be so if we look through the interpretations of these impulses and



mythic images in the works of the following period. The Dionysian element marks the paintings of Zurab Nizharadze and the numerous plastic works on the same theme by Giorgi Shkhvatsabaia. Here also belong the works by the 'Three' and allegorical compositions of Temo Gotsadze. These painters in fact prepared the ground for new interpretations of ancient theme in the 1980s, and the climax of such interpretations, the Dionysian climax I would say, were the creations by Irakli Parjiani. I hope you will not consider me boastful if I say that at present the intentional rendering of the Apollonian element in easel and monumental i.e. wall painting is carried on by your humble servant, Gia Bughadze as my works simultaneously imply artistic research and analytical study. As concerns sculpture, the Apollonian, analytical impulse is conveyed by the works of Gia Japaridze.

The issue on the interpretation of the Argonaut theme and the Greek world in general in terms of fine arts is very complex. The comprehensive description of it at different levels of perception is in fact a topic for a separate scholarly research. However, it is also obvious that other nations may have not produced so many interpretations as the idea of sacrifice has not been so relevant in any other culture. This may be attributed to the fact that their genetic past lacks Medea's most valuable image, filled with love and the idea of sacrifice. Sacrifice is Medea's duty to the humanity. She sacrificed, and at the same time remained for ever in the consciousness of the following generations, which at the verbal level can be expressed in the following way: 'here is, Europe, my gift and offering to you, so that you could become stronger and make us stronger as well. The time will come when you, powerful and enriched, will respond with the same goodness, so that we could survive together and rescue our children and the future.'

Ann Chikovani (Tbilisi)

**GRIGOL ROBAKIDZE'S NOVEL, *MEGI - A GEORGIAN MAIDEN*,  
AND THE INTERPRETATION OF MEDEA'S IMAGE  
IN MODERN GREEK LITERATURE**

The present paper aims to investigate the literary image of Megi, a heroine of *Megi – a Georgian Maiden*. The novel was written by Grigol Robakidze, a famous Georgian writer of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in German language. It was first published in 1932 in Tübingen.<sup>1</sup> The author revived the myth about Medea. The fate and the character of the young Mengrelian<sup>2</sup> girl are easily associated with the fate and character of the famous Colchian sorceress and healer – Medea. It is interesting, that the initial title Robakidze gave to the novel was *Medea's Braids*.

I shall discuss in the present paper Grigol Robakidze's interpretation of Medea's image, and shall draw parallels with Medea's image and the interpretation of the Argonaut's journey as offered by Modern Greek writers.

Medea's image, interpreted in many different ways, has been popular among writers for thousands of years. Medea, *who contained within herself mutually contradictory traits, was an ideal vehicle through whom authors and artists could explore what modern scholarship has called the problem of "self" and "other"*. Not only her checkered career allows authors and artists

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<sup>1</sup> In 1934, the Italian version of *Megi – a Georgian Maiden* with the title *Le Trecce di Medea* (*Medea's Braids*) was published in Milan. The book was introduced by the author's *Autobiography* (for detailed information see G. Sharadze, Book I, 115). Unfortunately, the novel has never been published in Georgian language. During the preparation of the present paper I referred to the Russian translation of the novel, which was published as a book in 2003 with the title: *Меги Грузинская девушка*. The translation is done by S. Okropiridze.

<sup>2</sup> Mengrelia, or Samegrelo – region of Georgia, on the territory of ancient Colchis.

to explore the opposing concepts of self and other, as she veers between desirable and undesirable behavior, between Greek and foreigner; it also allows them to raise the disturbing possibility. . . that the "normal" carry within themselves the potential for abnormal behavior. . .<sup>3</sup>

Ancient Greek sources accentuate the *otherness* of the Colchians: as soon as the Argonauts reach the bank of the Phasis river, they discover, that in this country the dead are wrapped in animal skins and hung on the trees – this fact immediately make Greeks feel the *otherness* of the Colchian people. The different aspects of Medea – that of the *other* and the *Barbarian* – are observed in detail in Mariana McDonald's essay *Medea as Politician and Diva*.<sup>4</sup> However, the issue we would like to discuss is that the interpretation of Medea's Image in Georgia and generally the position of Georgian writers, readers or audience is radically different from that in Greece or in the other parts of the world. For Georgians Medea is the *Self*, his/her famous past and consequently the boundary between the *Other* and the *Self* does not exist. More ever – in Greece or in other countries one can never meet anyone called *Medea* – nobody will give the name of children-murderer to his/her daughter, people are afraid of this name even nowadays. On the contrary, in Georgia *Medea* is an acceptable and even desirable name, wrapped with mystery and charm. Here the girls are often named Medea because parents want their daughters to inherit the wisdom, power, courage, knowledge of Medicine and many other merits. In Georgia nobody will ever tell you, that this is a name of children-murderer, this characteristic of Medea is either denied or neglected under different reasons.

It is interesting to investigate Grigol Robakidze's view about this character, who is beloved by Georgians and treated by them as their *Self*.

From the very first pages of the novel *Megi – a Georgian Maiden* the reader is convinced that Megi, with her beauty, internal power and majestic charm is the descendant of Medea. This is emphasized by the author throughout the whole novel. In order to learn how the literary character of Megi does coincide with the stereotypic image of Medea, let's see the differences and the similarities between the Medea from Ancient traditions and sources and Megi from Grigol Robakidze's novel:

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<sup>3</sup> S. I. Johnston, Introduction, in the book: *Medea, Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy and Art*, Princeton University Press, 1997, 7-8.

<sup>4</sup> M. McDonald, *Medea as Politician and Diva: Riding the Dragon into the Future*, in the book: J. J. Clauss and S. I. Johnston (Ed.), *Medea, Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy and Art*, Princeton University Press, 1997, 297-324.

**Differences:**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Medea is <i>Other</i></li> <li>2. Medea is <i>helper-maiden</i>, with the use of magic she helped Jason to obtain the Golden Fleece</li> <li>3. Medea followed Jason to Greece</li> <li>4. Medea killed her brother, Apsyrtos</li> <li>5. Medea killed Glauce</li> <li>6. Medea is clever</li> <li>7. Medea is Hecate's priestess</li> </ol>	<p>Megi is <i>Self</i>, she is not <i>Other</i>  Megi is not <i>helper-maiden</i> (but contrary to Jason, Astamur did not need Megi's help and those factors are interrelated)</p> <p>Megi didn't follow Astamur to Aphkazia</p> <p>Megi is the only child and this factor is also missing in the story  Megi didn't kill Astamur's supposed fiancée, Khatuna Didia  Megi's cleverness is not emphasized  Megi is not a priestess</p>
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**Similarities:**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Medea is a princess, king's daughter</li> <li>2. Medea is a healer</li> <li>3. Medea brought up her children and then killed them</li> <li>4. After Medea's death, her cult was established</li> <li>5. Medea's aunt was the sorceress Circe</li> </ol>	<p>Megi is a princess, daughter of the noble family</p> <p>Megi herself does not heal people, but her portrait was miracle-working and was healing hundreds of ill, mainly those with mental diseases</p> <p>[Megi did not bring up her only son,] Megi killed or by accident strangled her son with her braids</p> <p>After Megi's disappearance, her portrait was healing the ill and we can speak about the portrait's cult, to which people used to bring different offerings</p> <p>Megi's grandmother / her mother's nurse Meneki is the hypostasis of Medea or maybe of Circe. She is a sorceress, healer, and exorcist. She knows mysteries of magic herbs as well as ancient myths and legends. She is Megi's close relative and teacher. Meneki was able to rejuvenate, she used different herbs in order to look younger than</p>
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6. Medea is manlike	she really was Megi also is manlike (author sometimes compares her to Amazon). Megi is good at horse-riding, she goes hunting with a hawk etc. – these characterize her as manlike, but according to the novel, these qualities of her are considered normal and usual for her region – Samegrelo, or Colchis
7. Medea is considered to have functions of Goddess	Gr. Robakidze compares Megi to the Goddess Diana; Megi's portrait is called "St. Mary". This somehow is an endeavor to attribute divinity to Megi
8. Medea is hot-tempered and violent, fierce	Megi is also violent; in a surge of wrath she wrung the hawk's neck, which Astamur had presented her with. Megi's wrath is compared to the Amazon's axe
9. Medea is terrifying, frightful	Sometimes Megi is also frightful
10. Medea is bewitching, enchanting	Megi is also bewitching, enchanting, the author frequently mentions the bewitching power of Megi's eyes
11. Medea is proud	Megi is extremely proud
12. Medea is a witch	The crowd accuses Megi of being a witch Indirectly, Megi is also Sun's daughter;
13. Medea is the Granddaughter of Helios, the Sun	The symbolic function of Sun is attached to Megi's rich red (pomegranate) Braids. This is emphasized throughout the novel by the author

From the comparison we can see, that Grigol Robakidze's Megi 'falls short' of some properties of ancient Greek Medea. Nevertheless, the similarity of Medea and Megi is clear and we can say that Megi is Medea's hypostasis. The resemblance or the identity of Megi with Medea will become more evident if we add that the enchanting and bewitching power of the Samegrelo or Colchis land and a parallel retelling of Jason's and Medea's story by Megi's grandmother Meneki – are leitmotifs running throughout the whole novel. The main difference between the story of Megi and that of

Medea maybe considered the following: in the Argonaut myth Medea is an *Other*, Barbarian from a land on the far edge of the world, who despite all her positive qualities, her power, her wisdom and the help she provided, remains the *Other*. On the contrary, in Grigol Robakidze's novel, Megi is not *Other*; she is in her own country. Although, at the end of the novel Megi is marginalized from her society, because after her son's death she is not able/does not want to return to her home and starts roaming around the country. Megi wanders from one place into another. Her beauty bred passion and burst of effusion everywhere, but her spirit stayed virgin, emphasizes the author. In the last episode of the novel, Megi is proclaimed witch by the crowd, because of her similarity with her own portrait, which by that time was considered to be holy and was healing thousands of diseases. So she goes on her lonely way searching for her *Self* and for her place under the sun. In the very last chapter of the novel, the author turns Megi toward the reader and makes us feel and believe that she is not the *Other*, she is the *Self* to a greater extent than one could imagine, that *she is the present and the future of ourselves, that will exist forever, like the shafts of sunlight in her fiery red braids*.<sup>5</sup>

As we already mentioned, Grigol Robakidze wrote the novel *Megi - a Georgian Maiden* in German language. Consequently, the novel is primarily targeted at German or European reader. From this point of view, it might have been difficult for the Georgian writer to present Megi in the way acceptable for the European reader. The German reader had to accept Megi, the *Other* as a *Self*. This task was really difficult to be achieved, but taking into consideration the reviews and references, with which the novel was praised<sup>6</sup>, we can say, that the author succeeded in overcoming the difficulties in establishing the heroine's image. Megi is an example of *Self's* representation, with all its positive and negative sides.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century European literature, music and art found especially relevant the theme, the image and the role of Medea as a *stranger, other*, whose seemingly barbarian's deeds make people reassess their deepest values.

In modern progressive world it is unacceptable to discriminate on the basis of nationality, race, sex or religion, it is unacceptable to discriminate between *civilized* and *less civilized* cultures. The *Other*, the *different* one enters the everyday life and makes us believe that they are like us, that they are not different from our *Self*.

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<sup>5</sup> Григол Робакидзе, *Меги Грузинская девушка*, Тбилиси 2003, 136-137.

<sup>6</sup> See G. Sharadze, *ibid*.

For the European literature and culture Medea as an exploited barbarian sometimes is considered to be a symbol of freedom fighter. Some researchers claim that she can be accepted as a revolutionary symbol. It is interesting that in Africa, Haiti and Ireland performances of *Medea* are staged as an affirmation of liberty.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the fact that the majority of literary works dedicated to the Argonauts' story and to Medea's theme follow the Euripidean interpretation of the myth, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century new literary works are created where an author, whether openly or not, tries to rehabilitate the Colchian heroine of myths. From European literature we can mention Christa Wolf's novel *Medea*. We do not intend to dwell on the work here, but would like to mention that the author suggests modern account of Medea's story. Christa Wolf's *Medea* flatly denies that she committed any of those crimes which have been attributed to Medea throughout centuries. Christa Wolf describes how the sins made by others (Aeetes – King of Colchis, or the Corinthians) through intrigues were ascribed to Medea – the wise and special *other* – who along with other Colchians is viewed as alien and consequently, an ideal scapegoat for anything that might go wrong.<sup>8</sup>

As concerns Modern Greek literature, it is interesting to draw parallels with the novel *Argo* by Giorgos Theotokas' (1905-1966). The author's view on Argonaut's journey is not ordinary. It is introduced in the novel through a young boy's impressions and ideas. Father explains to his son a lesson in mythology. The theme of the lesson is the Argonauts' story. The son can not understand many things – and especially, why it was right that Jason took away the treasure [the Golden Fleece] from the Barbarians, as far as this treasure didn't belong to Greeks and the Barbarians had no wish to give it away. Or why Medea helped Jason – a stranger – to rob her own country of the treasure. It is incomprehensible why it was wrong when Medea made the daughters of Pelias kill him, as far as according to the lesson, Pelias was a wrong and evil man?<sup>9</sup> By offering impressions and ideas of a child, the author emphasizes the other side of the question, formerly ignored by the Greeks.

Destruction of Patriarchal stereotypes is attempted by the famous Greek writer – Lily Zographou (1922-1998) in her book: *From Medea to Cindarella*. The author notes in the foreword that she is not a feminist, and on the contrary she is passionate anti-feminist.<sup>10</sup> Lily Zographou asserts that the

<sup>7</sup> For detailed information about the issue, see: M. McDonald, *ibid.*, 301-304.

<sup>8</sup> Christa Wolf, *Medea, A Modern Retelling*, Translated from German by J. Gullin, Virago Press London 1998 (Introduction by Margaret Atwood).

<sup>9</sup> Γεώργιου Θεοτοκά, *ΑΡΓΩ*, Βιβλιοπωλείον της "Εστίας" Ι. Δ. Κολλάρου & ΣΙΑΣ Α. Ε, τ. 2, 172.

<sup>10</sup> Λ. Ζωγράφου, Από τη Μήδεια στη Σταχτοπούτα, Η Ιστορία του φαλλού, εκδόσεις Αλεξάνδρεια 1998, 10.

image and the reputation of Medea had been unfairly sullied by history, that only the transition from matriarchy to patriarchy was the reason that Medea, a typical heroine of matriarchal society, was disgraced and the label of infant murderer was attached to her. Although Lily Zographou's book makes no mention of the word *Self* or *Other*, the whole book, written in an essay style, is dedicated to the rehabilitation of woman, as *other*, and of Medea, whom patriarchy placed in the marginal position.

Modern Greek Literature offers another new interpretation of Medea's image: this is the comedy *Medea* by Greek satirist and playwright, Bost – Chrysanthos Mendis Bostantzoglou. This comedy is a parody on Euripides. The *Medea* of Bost is one of the most comic plays in the contemporary Greek theatrical repertoire. Bost turns the Euripidean tragic protagonist into a tragicomic character and at the same time through the Aristophanic metaphors and invalid interpretations criticizes and castigates contemporary Greek reality. Evaluating his comedy *Medea*, Bost himself mentions: *This is a play, which criticizes critics, troubles judges and liberates the audience.*<sup>11</sup> This is one more example of showing parallels and differences between the *Self* and the *Other*.

All I have mentioned above prove that the theme of Medea is eternal and that it will remain in the conscience of mankind, to make us feel or to make us remember the opposition between the own *Self* and the *Other*. In the contemporary world the issue is considered to be of global importance. It once again attests to the vitality of mythos, and to the fact that problems stated in myths re-acquire relevance from time to time and revive in new works of literature, music, and art. Grigol Robakidze's *Megi – a Georgian Maiden* is the graphic evidence to this, as well as Medea's rehabilitated image in several works of the 20th century literature.

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<sup>11</sup> Newspaper: Καθημερινή, 10. 09. 2007.



Mary Childs (Seattle)

**A THOROUGHLY GEORGIAN MEDEA?:  
CLASSICAL MOTIFS IN OTAR CHILADZE'S  
*A MAN WENT DOWN THE ROAD***

Otar Chiladze's first novel, *A Man Went down the Road*, was published in Georgian, in 1973.<sup>1</sup> The novel is based, loosely, on the story of the *Argonautica*, the tale of Jason's pursuit of the Golden Fleece. The opening lines of the novel state that it is a story about the time when the first Greek set foot on the territory of Vani, the capital of ancient Colchis, and humbly asked for asylum. The story follows the fate of Colchis after the inhabitants of Vani fatefully accept the asylum seeker, Phrixus.

One of the earliest reviewers of the novel in the Soviet Press, A. Bestiavashvili, noted that while the novel is based on the story of the *Argonautica*, it is also full of Georgian folk elements. She predicted that it would become an object of controversy, which it did: subsequent Soviet critics became embroiled in questions such as: does it represent reality, is it mythology, or is it an attempt to create an anti-mythology, deconstructing the old myths, recreating new ones to replace them – an exercise in "myfotvorchestvo"? They wondered why the classical figures of Jason and Medea disappear at the end of Part I, at p. 140 of a 600 page novel; and why the author would make the figure, Farnaоз, by novel's end the main character, such an anti-hero – after all, Greek heroes never partake of his cowardly, dreamy character, or as one Soviet critic deemed it, his "moral deficiency, and social-political inferiority". ["*navstvennaia nedostatochnost'*, *sots'ial'no-politicheskaiia nepol-*

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<sup>1</sup> Chiladze Otar, *კზახე ერთი კაცო მიდითდა*, მერანი, თბილისი, 1973.

ნოს'ენოსთ'ია"<sup>2</sup> I would like to take up the two threads suggested by Bestiavashvili that later Soviet critics did not take into full consideration:

1) That the text is above all a Georgian novel, written in Georgian at a time when other writers from the Caucasus had elected to write in Russian.<sup>3</sup> Otar Chiladze, however, chose to write in Georgian, and to have his work translated into Russian. The contrast between the two versions offers insight into his novel, and helps identify and provide a sense of the Georgian national character that Chiladze manages to create and preserve in his work.

Rather than being Classical in the Homeric sense, or in the tradition of Athenian

Tragedy, the text is rooted in Apollonius' *Argonautica*. As such, it resembles an extended Hellenistic poem, and presents in ways a reverse *Argonautica*. Farnaoz, the novel's hero, unlike Jason who travels from Greece to Colchis and back again, travels from Colchis to Crete and then returns home. The Hellenistic period of Greek literature flourished when the center of the Greek world had shifted from Athens, to Alexandria, Egypt, under the reign of the Ptolomies. It was an active and creative period in "classical" Greek literature. The authors whose works have been preserved, such as Apollonius of Rhodes, Theocritus, and Callimachus, were highly self-conscious artists, mixing genres, making allusions, altering canonical mythologies for aesthetic and creative purposes, focusing on the aesthetics of the text. It was also a period of humanizing the archaic, Homeric super heroes. In Apollonius' *Argonautica*, for example, Heracles is left behind at the beginning of the epic, and Jason emerges as a new hero: a weakling compared to Heracles, treacherous, and dependent on Medea for his ultimate success in obtaining the Golden Fleece.<sup>4</sup> In Theocritus' cycle of bucolic poetry, you see the traditionally mighty Heracles desert his men to search for his lost lover, Hylas; or, Polyphemus, in Homer the picture of a lawless, man-eating Cyclops, transformed into a pathetic, lovelorn shepherd who finds his drug of choice, his medicine and solace, in singing poetry that is highly stylized and heavily laced with philosophy.<sup>5</sup> The political implications of this kind of poetry are not difficult to see: in the welter of allusions to its own classical texts, in the imbedding of philo-

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<sup>2</sup> See Greenberg I., "И жёрнов ещё не учился помолу", *Literaturnoe obozrenie*, 1980, 2, 43-45 and Nuikin A., "Взлёты и просчёты", *Literaturnoe obozrenie*, 1980, 2, 45-51, for some of the controversy surrounding Chiladze's novel.

<sup>3</sup> In particular, I have in mind Bulat Okudzhava, who wrote about Georgia, but primarily in Russian.

<sup>4</sup> References to The *Argonautica* are based on: Apollonius of Rhodes, *The Voyage of Argo*, trans. Rieu E.V., Penguin Books, 1975.

<sup>5</sup> References to Theocritus' work are based on: *Theocritus*, trans. Gow, Andrew Sydenham Farrar, Cambridge University Press, 1973, 1950.

sophical buzz-words, as well as in its place as court poetry, it offered subdued, yet lively political commentary when more open criticism was not encouraged. It provided a fine vehicle for allegorical reading of characters who at the same time were very real and down to earth. I would like to suggest that Chiladze, in this novel, is quite conscious of this Hellenistic tradition, borrows from it, and plays with it on many levels.

In examining Chiladze's novel, I would like to start at the very beginning, in this case, with the preface. As I first began to read the text in Georgian, I noticed that the prefaces of the Russian and the Georgian texts vary to a remarkable degree. While a preface may be a small thing, it can, in some cases be as important as the epigraph to a poem or a longer piece of literature. Thus, I would like to point to a few lines, and comment that the Russian has to me, a quintessentially Soviet tone to it, hailing the good and hearty, emphasizing the striving towards progress, etc.<sup>6</sup> It highlights the Classical Mythology, and overblown emotions of its characters – "full-blooded heroes, full of deep feelings, powerful emotions, lofty thoughts, vile intentions." But, it gives very little idea of what the novel is really about.

When I read the Georgian preface, I was caught by a preoccupation with the word, "xalxi", "ხალხი". This term gets translated as "narod," "the people," in Russian, but rather than having the familiar ring from the vocabulary of international communism, as in "druzhba narodov", it here has a very different tonality. Although the novel is ostensibly about the "xalxi", "ხალხი" of ancient Colchis, the very repetition begs the question of what the term really means, in its own context, in Georgia; and indeed, the novel will do just that: explore what "xalxi" means, in all of its manifestations, ancient and modern.

The Russian preface also mentions little about the "dream and faith in the bright future". Rather, the Georgian preface tells us the novel is the story of the pain, "ტკივილი", or the happiness, "სიხარული" of the dream, "ოცნება" and faith "რწმენა", specifically, of the people of Colchis: the novel is in large part the story of the faith in a specifically Georgian character, and the pain of the destruction of the lands of Colchis at the hands, or feet, of invading peoples.

The Georgian preface also has precious little to do with ancient mythologies. Rather than playing off stereotypes of the threatening king and his daughter, Medea, it promises that we will see the traditional canon anew – "ახლებურად": before our eyes we will see the "source and the roots" of the

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<sup>6</sup> Please see my translation of both the Russian and the Georgian prefaces, which follow this article.

ancient, canonical myths. The text at once offers myths from a Georgian perspective, and claims, perhaps tongue in cheek, a veracity and primacy of these legends as they have sprung up on Georgian soil.

The preface also offers a more realistic picture of what is actually in the novel. There are three parts to it: Aeetes, Ukeiro, Farnaoz, a king, a warrior, and a bricklayer, and these are three faces of one people. We are told outright, that the main hero – not just a character, but hero (გმირი), and both terms, "personage" and "gmiri" are used, is the people, again, the "ხალხი". We get barely a whiff of the exaggerated emotions in the Russian version, and again, no mention of Jason or Medea. Finally, the Georgian has a lovely, complex sentence that boils down the real essence of the novel: if you can keep your humanity on the long road of life that is full of trouble, then your existence will be united with an eternal phenomenon – the people; again we see the term "ხალხი", and connecting with that people and maintaining your humanity is the real meaning of the novel. Chiladze both explores what it takes to maintain your humanity, and somehow equates the idea of Georgia with a cradle and/or a haven for humanity – which is not surprising from the country that beckons with its warmth and citrus plants, was a place of refuge for Pasternak and Mandelstam in the early years of the Soviet period, and others since that time.

Moving onward, the title deserves comment, as does Chiladze's style. The Georgian title is "gzaze erti katsi midioda" which literally translates as "On the Road, (or Path) One Man was Walking". A key word here is "erti", or "one". While the title in Russian, "Shol po doroge chelovek," makes an attempt to replicate the beginning of a fairy tale, as in "once upon a time a man was walking down the road", the Georgian has a specifically Georgian reference: it is part of a children's counting game, which anyone who grew up on the streets of Tbilisi, or Kutaisi, or Poti, would recognize: one man was walking down the street, how many? Two men were walking... Three...<sup>7</sup>

The extended meaning of the title also comes full circle at the end of the novel. We are given two instances of Farnaoz walking down the same road in Vani, at the beginning of his life, and at the end: we can presume, since he is the hero of the novel, that he has kept his humanity through his life of sorrow. This structure also gives the entire work a very neat, classical ring composition, a particular trait of the ancient Lyric poets, and which Chiladze uses more than once in the novel.

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<sup>7</sup> Information about this child's rhyme has come to me from Dr. Aida Abuashvili-Lominadze, my mentor in Georgian language and culture, in Seattle, Washington.

Thus, the title itself is marked by multi-valence: it can be translated into a rather neutral title in Russian or English, but for a Georgian reader it smacks of hometown, of childhood, of identity as a Georgian; it gives the philosophical meaning to the text; and it wraps the entire novel into a neat aesthetic bundle. It also gives a first clue to the overall polyphony of the text. As one Soviet critic has noted, a trademark of Chiladze's style is the use of montage: he will present a lyrical passage, next to a philosophical one, next to a humdrum domestic scene, with little connecting them, and yet they flow together almost seamlessly; and he will often weave many tones together in a single sentence.<sup>8</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the novel is based, loosely, on the story of the *Argonautica*, the story of Jason's pursuit of the Golden Fleece. But, as in a fractured fairy tale, the allusions to the main, canonical Greek Mythological characters are oblique, roles and characters are often inverted and redrawn. For example, in Apollonius' *Argonautica*, Jason loses one sandal in the mud, and when he appears before king Pelius with a single sandal, the king remembers an ancient prophecy that his ruin will follow upon the arrival of a man with one sandal, and so sets Jason the impossible task of retrieving the Golden Fleece. Chiladze has altered the story, and foregrounds Phrixus as the stranger who arrives in Vani with one sandal. There has been no specific prophecy, but, being the first Greek to wash ashore, he does eventually bring ruin to the ancient Colchidians.

Other, key figures are similarly not drawn to their canonical character, but become humanized. Aeetes, known for his ferocity, from Hesiod, to Euripides, and Apollonius, is more kind-hearted in Chiladze's novel as he welcomes in Phrixus, the young asylum seeker, and insists he be treated as one of his own children. He is further merciful when Jason lands on his territory unbidden. He should, as a wise leader, kill Jason and his crew outright, and thinks about doing this, but because of the law of hospitality, a deeply ingrained Georgian trait, and that Jason has brought back his four grandsons, spares them instead, and as a result, loses both his daughter and his kingdom. We get, for the first time that I'm aware of, a very warm and lively picture of Medea's sister, Karisa, who marries the Greek Phrixus. We see her outdoing her brothers in knavery (კეცქი), but having no interest in learning the traditional healing techniques from her aunt. We hear her laughter, and see how she bears the trials and tribulations of her inter-ethnic marriage: Phrixus suffers a severe case of nostalgia for his native land, usurps their sons' loyalty, and the four boys abandon their mother land – *დედა მიწა* – for Greece. We

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<sup>8</sup> See Bestavashvili, *passim*.

actually know much more about her than we do about Medea. And, rather than focusing on Medea's passion and treachery, Chiladze introduces her as an auxiliary character, an innocent, young girl gathering herbs in the meadows.<sup>9</sup> She is the protégé of her older aunt, skilled in the ways of folk medicine. We see her as a young adolescent, who in a dream anticipates Jason's arrival and her own falling in love. She indeed boils up some magic herbs to help Jason retrieve the Golden Fleece, but again differs from, say, Apollonius' Medea in that she runs out of the necessary herbs, not that she had planned the treachery. And, as the first part of the novel ends, Medea sails off with Jason, and we hear nothing about her for the rest of the novel. And Aectes, rather than cursing his daughter and chasing after her, as he does in Apollonius, is further humanized, laments her fate, and wonders what she will do without her father to protect and help her. Apollonius' picture of Medea trembling before her enraged father, or Euripides' picture of Medea driven by jealousy to kill her children, are totally absent.

Other characters are drawn, however, and they become new mythological figures for the Georgian novel. One central, early figure is Bakha, the wine merchant. He is Bacchus, but with a Georgian twist. He is the owner of the tavern, forty steps down, who refuses to mix water with his wine, and prefers watching his customers and hearing their conversations to making an enormous profit. The description of his cellar is wonderful: the voices that mix under the vaulted roof form a polyphonic choir that rises and falls. In the wine that flows we see yet another folk element incorporated into the text: the wine is described flowing from a cask, or *kasri*, to a *koki*, from a *koki* to a *doki*, from a *doki* to a *jami*, from a *jami* to a stomach "stomaki" and then it pours its strength into arteries of the country. "გადადიოდა ღვინო კასრიდან კოკაში, კოკიდან დოქში, დოქიდან ჯამში, ჯამიდან კი სტომაკში..." This has the rhythm of a child's rhyme, similar to "The House that Jack Built", but Georgian: Who ate the grapes? A goat. Who ate the goat? A wolf. Who ate the wolf? A gun. Who ate the gun? Rust. Who ate the rust? The dirt, and so on. Chiladze's text includes the string of terms for specifically Georgian vessels for wine.<sup>10</sup> The passage in question ends with a picture of Bakha sitting on his favorite stool, with his chin resting on his hands, which are rest-

<sup>9</sup> Chiladze Otar, *Bednieri T'anjuli*, Logos Press 2003, 232-234. Chiladze comments that his goal in writing his version of Medea's story was not to repeat the Greek version that we know from Euripides, but to present Medea as a young, innocent girl just awakening to the treacheries of adult life.

<sup>10</sup> See the Georgian reader: დედა ენა, თბილისი, 1912. This has been presented to me as a basic reader with well-known folk songs, stories, lore, including terms for traditional Georgian house wares.

ing on the top of his walking stick. His hands are crossed like roof tiles – the word recalls the term used for the roofs of Vani earlier in the novel; the walking stick is made from the "შინდო", dogwood, and with his arms he forms the shape of a traditional Georgian home, which was built around a central post (დედა ბოძი) – originally a live tree, and later a column or pillar: he is the keeper of the Georgian soul, life-blood and hearth. His hands are chapped and worn from the wind and the sun – he is likened to a pagan god in his temple – he is so obviously Bacchus, but so different from the Greek god, who more often than not is portrayed as a youthful, sensual figure, associated with wild maenads practicing their man-destroying rituals in the mountain tops.

The picture of the tavern as a kind of cave is also suggestive for its philosophical overtones: the stairs are the place where the darkness, dampness, and noise meet the blinding sunshine, which calls to mind an image of philosophical enlightenment – divine and human mingling on the stairs, and Bakha takes particular pride in this daily mixing of dampness, darkness, and blinding light.

Another of these characters is Bedia, both the elder of the local fishermen, and the "lord of the sea". He is described like Poseidon, standing with his triton on the bow of his fishing boat, but with excruciatingly real sweat and salt on his sun and wind burnt face, which not incidentally, are like Bakha's hands. His name actually means destiny, fate, (ბედი) and as he is the one to bear the responsibility for rescuing the first Greek, the young Phrixus; and recognizing a crumpled olive leaf the boy carries in his palm as a plea for asylum, he also, ironically, shares the responsibility for the destruction of his town: if he hadn't saved the boy, who was then welcomed in by Aetes, who knows what might have or not have happened.

Bacchus and Bedia are only two of several characters who get transformed into icons of Georgian culture, and which remain to be explored in far greater detail.<sup>11</sup> I would like at this point, and perhaps rather cursorily, to address some of the novel's contemporary political and social ramifications.

On a general level, we get a fair critique of tyrannical behavior: in the latter part of the novel we see Minos, the imperious king of Crete, and his henchmen, Kusa, the executioner, and Okadjado, the new king of Vani, who is cruel and not particularly bright. These figures caricature tyrants/evil political toadies, and as others have noted, Chiladze is merciless in portraying their dehumanized and dehumanizing behavior.<sup>12</sup> This criticism of tyrannical beha-

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<sup>11</sup> My dissertation, in progress, will explore more of these characters in greater depth than is possible here.

<sup>12</sup> See Greenberg and Nuikin, *Literaturnoe obozrenie*, 1980, 2, 43-45, 45-51.

viator is also a point that, not incidentally, is repeatedly praised by most of the Soviet critics – they recognized common ground, if you will.

The entire issue of the colonizing Greeks invites an interesting parallel to the various peoples who have expanded their territorial claims into Georgia – Romans, Persians, Turks, Russians, and others.<sup>13</sup> When Phrixus, the Greek boy, who is specifically called the first foreigner, is picked up by Bedia out at sea, and accepted into Colchis, we see the first instance of trouble: from this moment the sea makes up its mind to leave the city, which comes then to be situated in a swamp, as if the city had committed some grave sin. We see hints of treachery from the Greeks: We learn that Phrixus has been sent by the Greeks, and that the crumpled olive leaf he bears in his clenched hand had been planted with wicked cunning by the king. Posing as a prince, Phrixus is actually the son of poor pumpkin seed vendors who sell their children for hard cash. Thus, sent by Minos, he is the first in a string of colonizers and foreign controlled rulers. The significance this has for Georgia's history is perhaps too transparent to mention – the visitors who promise much but then bring sorrow and trouble in their wake.

Bakha's underground tavern is again significant. Chiladze offers his readers a marvelously self-deprecating, self-knowing simile: when the townsfolk are all gathered to talk about the rescued boy and ram, the country itself is likened to a frightened hare, afraid to emerge from its underground safety, trembling, as if sensing that the arrival of foreigners signals the loss of their city.

In the final and third section of the novel, there is an interesting echo of men in exile: Farnaaz is an unwanted character at home, so he is sent to Crete to ply his work as a master mason. One scene in particular is strikingly reminiscent of various accounts of prisoners working as forced laborers in the camps: Farnaaz is one of a thousand men, sweating to build Minos' new palace. Putting his heart into his work so the rhythm of the physical labor takes away more troubling thoughts, he is a brooding Tolstoyan figure, given to contemplating philosophical questions. He is a man in exile, and a stranger in his own land. The Russian term that is used for him, over and again, is, as you might imagine: "lishnyi", "superfluous": although Georgian, he is tied to other heroes of the Caucasus, and is likewise a hero in his own time.

To conclude: In the third section Farnaaz emerges as the main hero, a new hero, if you will, the Jason of a reverse *Argonautica*. This returns the text to the other Hellenistic poets: Farnaaz, in many ways defeated by life, becomes

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<sup>13</sup> For an excellent history of Georgia in English, see Suny R. G., *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, Indiana University Press in Association with Hoover Institute Press, Stanford University, Stanford, California, 1988.



a shepherd/philosopher, as he abandons a decrepit Vani to live in a goat's cave, drinking milk straight from the source. He desperately desires to return to the earlier, bucolic life in Vani, to the true love of his childhood – the goat whose milk he drinks had once belonged to his love's mother, and the cave was where he and his love had first run away to – and here he is bathetic, almost to the point of being ludicrous, and at the same time totally true to previous ideals and emotions.

The ending of the novel is rather bleak. The children of Vani, including Farnaoz's own beloved son, try to fly, and his son dies in the effort. The novel draws to a close with Farnaoz about to be hung for not raising his child well, but then switches gears unexpectedly, and in the finale Farnaoz, holding an invalid Ikarus, an ancient symbol of the desire for freedom, in his arms, has a vision of the return of the garden of Dariachangi, the garden of paradise that had been one of the defining features of Vani, but which had disappeared after the Greeks arrived, at the first sign of familial violence, when a father first struck his son. Rather than being a useless dreamer who suffers from "moral deficiency", Farnaoz is a dreamer with a purpose: to restore a vision of Colchis, that is closer to the true essence of its people, or what Chiladze would like to present as the true essence of its people, to restore the vision of Georgia as a haven that beckons and succors.

### **Preface to the Russian edition, 1985.**

*My translation:*

In the novel *A Man Went down the Road*, by the well-known Georgian writer, laureate of the Shota Rustaveli Prize, Otar Chiladze resurrects the events of three-thousand years ago, concerning the history of the Colchidian kingdom, when the first Greek stepped on this land that has had blood poured down upon it. All of the characters – from the threatening tsar of the Colchidians, to his daughter Medea, from the stranger Phrixus, to the Greek Jason, who had sailed to the shores of Colchis after the Golden Fleece, – are living, full-blooded heroes, full of deep feelings, powerful passions, lofty thoughts, or vile intentions Otar Chiladze's work is a work about the dream and faith in the bright future of a people, about its striving towards peace and happiness, about the right of man to fulfillment: only honest, creative work can justify a man's existence on the earth.

Otar Chiladze's work is widely popular, both in our country, and abroad.

### **Preface to the Georgian edition, 1973.**

*My translation:*

In Otar Chiladze's novel, *A Man went down the Road*, the story is told about ancient Colchis, and its people, about the pain or happiness of its people, and most importantly, the dream and hope of the people. With this, we have the experience of reading the myths anew: before our eyes the poetic cover of the myths falls away, we see beyond the traditionally canonical views and imaginings, we see the source, the foundation, the root of the myths.

The novel is made up of three parts: "Aeetes", "Ukeiro", and "Farnaos". At first glance, these parts seem as if they are independent books, but between them truly exists a visible, organic connection.

The main hero of the novel is the people, imagined, as a symbol of life. The three main characters are a king, a warrior, and a craftsman – they are three faces of the people seen from different angles.

If, on the road of life, that is full of danger, you can keep your humanity to the end, then your existence will be united with an eternal phenomenon, the people. This is the fundamental idea of the novel.

James J. Clauss (Seattle)

**WHEN NATURE BECOMES NATURAL:  
SPIRITUAL CATASTROPHE IN PASOLINI'S *MEDEA***

Jonathan Rosenbaum, film critic for the *Chicago Reader*, in his review of Pasolini's *Medea* stated: "Pier Paolo Pasolini's disappointing 1970 version of the Greek tragedy – shot in Syria, Turkey, and Italy – offers soprano Maria Callas in her only film role, playing the lead part but not singing it. Pasolini's Marxist, Catholic, and pagan impulses infuse the film with some life, but it's a step backward after *Oedipus Rex* (1967). It's worth seeing nevertheless."

I remember the first time I saw Pasolini's *Medea*. I hated it. I hated it because of its poor production (the subtitles are often impossible to read), the gory sacrificial scene in Colchis, and what appeared to me at the time as its fundamental weirdness, such as the unrealistic combination of disturbing folk music, an Argo cast as a raft more suited to Huckleberry Finn than to one of the most famous heroic expeditions in Greek mythology, the confusing doublets, not to mention its esoteric dialogue. Despite my initial loathing of the film, I continued to show it in my "Myth in Film" class out of perversity and primarily for its shock value. After numerous viewings, however, I began to realize why I hated it initially: First, I did not understand critical points and so I blamed my inability to penetrate the film on the director; secondly, it pushed buttons below the surface of my consciousness, making me unwittingly uncomfortable, much as Pasolini's *Edipo Re* succeeded in doing. So it was the viewer, and not the director, who was the problem here! *Medea* is not a feel good film. But once the various points Pasolini explores in the movie emerge from his aggressively impressionistic and in-your-face cinematic narrative, you can at least feel good that you were able to come to terms with one of the most remarkable takes on the Medea story of all times.

I would like to begin with the role of the Centaur, Chiron, a liminal figure situated somewhere between animal and human, savage and civilized, and in Pasolini's version, between myth and science, religion and atheism. Chiron guides Jason on a journey even before he meets his uncle Pelias and agrees to go in search of the Golden Fleece, an educational journey that brilliantly recapitulates Greek intellectual history.

When we first see Jason, he is a baby, listening to an afternoon bedtime story told by his bearded and seemingly equine guardian. Chiron's story, an introduction to the Argonautic myth, mentions Ino's plot, the golden fleeced ram, the family of the god of the winds to which Jason belongs; in short, "una storia complicata." Jason's introduction to his family and the world is expressed in folkloric and mythic terms, with talking rams, jealous step-mothers, wicked uncles, and usurped thrones. In this case, however, Chiron's grim fairytale has specific application to Jason.

As Jason grows older, the centaur adds a new dimension to his tutorial: "Tutto è santo, Tutto è santo, Tutto è santo!" "Everything is holy. There is nothing natural in nature. When nature seems natural, everything is finished ... Everywhere you look gods are hidden. But the gods that love at the same time hate." At this point in Jason's education, the mythic explanation of life has evolved more fully into a supernatural view of reality, wherein the uncertainties present in nature are viewed as the work of protecting and malevolent gods. With regard to the human response to this religious interpretation of the world, Chiron goes on to say, "For ancient man, the myths and rituals are concrete experiences which include him even in his bodily and daily existence. For him, reality is a unity so perfect that the emotion he experiences before the silence of a summer sky is equivalent to the most intimate personal experience of a modern man." Myth and ritual, then, are an essential part of human existence for the ancient man who cherishes a view that nature is not natural but rather infused with the presence of the divine.

As the lesson continues, the older Jason is informed that he will go on a journey far from his home, where, paradoxically, life is more realistic because the people there are more mythic. At this point, we must ask ourselves: if the Colchians are more realistic because they are mythic, what are the Greeks? And what is Jason? Less realistic because less mythic? For Pasolini, the answer is, paradoxically, yes.

For Chiron, the definitive lesson comes from the observation of agriculture and how seeds lose their form below the earth in order to be reborn: "La resurrezione, mio caro." But, he goes on to say, this definitive lesson no longer obtains for Jason. "That which you see in the grains, that which you understand from the rebirth of the seeds lacks significance for you,

like an old memory that no longer concerns you. In fact, there is no God." At this point Chiron is no longer a centaur, but a beardless man. And the audience seeing this film for the first time wonders at this point: what is real? Is Chiron a centaur or a man? This question is precisely the point, as becomes clearer later in the film.

Jason's education took him from myth to religion and ultimately to what we might loosely describe as science: the understanding that after all nature is natural, that nothing is holy, that man is the measure of all things, and, for Jason, that he is the measure of all things pertaining to his success. As F. M. Cornford stated in his slender but insightful book *Before and After Socrates*, the birth of science in Greece arises from the assumption that "the whole universe is natural and potentially within the reach of knowledge as ordinary and rational as our knowledge that fire burns and water drowns ... The conception of Nature is extended to incorporate what had been the domain of the supernatural. The supernatural, as fashioned by mythology, simply disappears; all that really exists is natural." This is precisely the point that Chiron makes when he says "When nature seems natural, everything is finished." And it is the devastating realization of this lesson, particularly in the mind of Medea, that Pasolini explores in the rest of the film.

The transition from Greece to Colchis in the film is sudden, even jarring, but also stunningly germane. As soon as Chiron tells Jason that the rebirth of the seeds has no meaning for him, we encounter Medea in Colchis, who, at the beginning of a rather disturbing fertility rite, prays "Grant life to the seeds and be reborn with the seeds." The contrast between Greece and Colchis, East and West, Myth and Nature, religion and atheism, male and female could not be more striking. The interaction between these oppositions, as we already know from the myth, will prove to be destructive. But in the terms established by the film, they can also be annihilating.

Pasolini's representation of the great Argonautic expedition is, in a word, underwhelming. The Argo is a rickety raft, the crew reduced to a handful, and the mission depicted more as a piratical raid than a heroic quest. There is no sleepless dragon, only an animal relic propped on a cross set within an ancient Christian chapel. Medea, without ever seeing the Greek hero face to face (although she has a vision of him) and with the aid of her brother Apsyrtus, gives the fleece to Jason, kills her brother, and accompanies Jason home. Pasolini foregoes the representation of Medea falling in love, so elegantly depicted by Apollonius. Budding love is not the point of this version.

When Medea arrives in Greece, she provides us with a first glimpse of her spiritual catastrophe when she expresses her feeling of complete alienation from the new world she has come to. "Speak to me Earth, let me hear your voice. I don't remember your voice. Speak to me Sun. I can't hear you. I touch

the earth and I don't recognize it; I look for the sun, but I don't recognize it." The complete – or almost complete – divorce between Medea and her mythic, supernatural, and religious core occurs when she is stripped of her dark, priestly vestments and dressed by the daughters of Pelias in the lighter secular clothes associated with Greece. A nice touch, particularly as the donning of Medea's clothing will in time have such disastrous results. That Pelias' daughters should take the initiative in making this transformation is particularly ironic, given that among the ancient stories, it was Medea who tricked them into killing their own father. If you watch Jason's reactions during this portion of the film, Medea's critical condition is not totally lost on him, though he lacks the ability to understand its full ramifications, particularly as it applies to himself. But this will become painfully clear in the years ahead.

Pasolini veers sharply from the ancient myth by having Jason cede his throne to Pelias and by not having Medea orchestrate his foul murder. Jason states "To tell you the truth, this goat skin has no meaning outside of its country." Pelias had said that the fleece was the sign of the eternity of power and order. But this can only be the case for those who would grant it that significance; that is, those who inhabit a world of myth and religion, which Jason had abandoned long ago.

At this point, the film leaves the Argonautic tale as Jason dismisses the Argonauts. He and Medea leave Iolcus and the two head to Corinth, staged partly at the base of the ancient acropolis at Aleppo, reminiscent of Acrocorinth, and partly at the famous Renaissance cathedral in Pisa, a fascinating study of contrasting architecture and time. The director now turns to Euripides' *Medea*. Before the play begins, however, Jason encounters Chiron once again, or rather the Chirons: one an unspeaking centaur as we first saw him, and the other a beardless man as we last saw him.

In his vision, the beardless Chiron identifies the two of them as "the holy one you knew as a baby, the unholy one you knew as an adult." But he goes on to state: "We are still both a part of your understanding." In response to Jason's request for clarification, Chiron states: "He does not speak because his logic is different from ours. I speak for him. It is under his influence that you, beyond your calculations and interpretation, really love Medea. ... Moreover, you pity her and understand her spiritual catastrophe, the disorientation of an ancient woman in a world that does not understand what she believes in. The poor woman was converted to destruction and she never got over it. Why have I told you this? Nothing can stop the old centaur from inspiring sentiments and nothing can stop me, the new centaur, from expressing them."

Once we come to see, and for Pasolini seeing here is literal, this dichotomy in Jason – that there resides in him the dim memory of a

mythic/religious and sentimental understanding of the world which has been replaced by a logical non-mythic conception of life – we can understand much better the duplication of the scenes wherein Glauce and Creon die.

The first scene represents Medea's mythic understanding of what should happen; her power and the dark priestly clothing she wore in Colchis are momentarily restored. She gives Jason poisoned garments to present to Glauce, who, after putting them on, bursts into flames which consume her father Creon as well. The second scene provides the "natural" explanation for Glauce's and Creon's deaths: Glauce felt intense pangs of guilt and remorse for stealing Medea's husband, as a result of which she commits suicide by throwing herself over a cliff, and Creon, overwhelmed at the death of his only child, does the same. Should we ask which explanation is the correct one, our knowledge of ancient myths will tell us the first; our need for a natural explanation will opt for the second. Yet, whether we privilege our mythic or our scientific modes of thinking, we are left with the same awful results. From this vantage point, we might ask, does it really matter? What I find brilliant in the choice to portray two death scenes is that Pasolini has not only represented visually the two modes of thinking that lie at the heart of the film, but he also prompts the audience in their confusion at seeing two contradictory versions of the same scene to wonder: what is real?

Jason's conversion from a mythic to a natural understanding of human existence might appear to be merely a preface to Medea's tragic conversion, his two centaurs prefiguring the two death scenes. There is more to it, however, much more. In addition to offering a succinct account of Greek intellectual history, Pasolini leads us into a part of Jason's soul previously unexplored by writers of any age. Buried inside the pragmatist, the man of nature, there still lurks the old centaur who has a vague sense of what was happening to Medea because he himself had long ago experienced spiritual catastrophe. Though suppressed and silent, its continued presence generates residual understanding, pity, and even love, albeit expressed, in the film as in Euripides' play, superficially. Regardless of the continued presence of the sentimental part, however, the pragmatist, the man of nature, wants control over understanding, pity, and even love, a situation that has long been his normal state.

Medea, on the other hand, is fully committed to, and emotionally invested in, her alienation and spiritual catastrophe. Although she made one last futile attempt to resurrect her mythic view of life as seen in her mental projection of Glauce's death – a way of thinking we first saw in the human sacrifice celebrated to bring forward new crops that was later perverted into the sacrifice of her brother to secure a husband and ultimately children – she ultimately relinquishes any hope of return to her past by way of a horrifying

act of self-destruction as a way of taking vengeance on that husband. Medea could never succeed in going back, just as Jason could not, even if he wanted. We are left, then, with the sad, but necessary, conclusion that the loss of myth and the loss of connection with the supernatural is final and any attempt to recapture it is, as Medea states at the very end of the film, "useless", concluding that "Nothing is possible any more". Medea's spiritual catastrophe happens, as Pasolini demonstrates through his profoundly creative interpretation of the Medea myth, when nature becomes natural. As the critic Jonathan Rosenbaum noted, this film is worth seeing.



Irine Darchia (Tbilisi)

### SOME ARTISTIC PECULIARITIES OF BOST'S *MEDEA*

Euripides' *Medea* left an indelible mark on human thinking and had greatest impact on world literature and art. *Medea* remains an inexhaustible source of inspiration for many artists, and as a true literary masterpiece, offers many possibilities of interpretation. In my article I will dwell on *Medea* by Bost, a contemporary Greek writer. Being popular and appreciated in modern Greek literary and dramatic circles, he is less known to the European reader and almost unknown to the Georgian public.

First, I would like to say a few words about the author himself. Christos (Mentis) Bostandzoglou – known under the pen-name Bost – was born in Constantinople in 1918. In 1939, he moved together with his family to Athens, where he died in 1995. He studied some 6 months in the High School of Art. Bost is known as an illustrator of books and journals, as a political cartoonist, an artist and a stage designer, as well as an author of up to 10 plays, whose paintings were exhibited 16 times. When talking about Bost, I cannot help mentioning his shop "ΛΑΪΚΑΙ ΕΙΚΟΝΑΙ" – "Folk Images", which sold various utensils embellished by his original paintings. He is said to have painted over 27 000 objects and either sold them or given away as a gift. By the way, I learned about Bost's *Medea* quite by chance, when I was visiting one Greek family where I saw an ash-tray painted by him and a few oil paintings, and inquired about their author.

Bost's *Medea* invites comprehensive studies in many different aspects: its reference to ancient Greek tradition and to the modern interpretations of the Argonaut myth, including those by Greek authors; the place of the play in the modern Greek literature; its artistic – genre, dramatic and conceptual – peculiarities, Bost's *Medea* on the Greek stage and its prospects at the international level. In my article I will dwell on some artistic peculiarities of Bost's play.

First of all, I should mention that Bost's *Medea* is not only a modern interpretation of Euripides' *Medea*; it is also a comedy. The characters of the play essentially differ from those of Euripides' tragedy; namely, apart from Medea, Jason, the nurse, the messenger, the Choripheus and Chorus, here are a nun and a monk, a fisherman, Oedipus, Antigone and Euripides. The latter is the character of Aristophanes' comedies, which in their turn were evidently the source for Bost.

The plot of Bost's play is essentially different from Euripides' tragedy. It repeats the gist (a Barbarian, Colchian woman finds herself in the Hellenic civilized society and in the end, enraged, kills her own children). However, this very popular story is developed in a way that is totally different from the ancient tradition.

The well-known love-story of Medea and Jason, supplemented with several other story-lines, runs throughout the whole work. The author presents a nun Polixenes (Polly) and her former love, Yannis, who, disappointed with his unanswered love, is suspected of sexual lust for young boys, including Medea's sons. Medea offered shelter to the nun Polly and afterwards regretted this as Polixenes is loved either by her husband Jason, or her sons. Meanwhile, blind Oedipus appears in the company of his daughter Antigone. He complains about unemployment, attempts to secure the position of a cashier in a bank, and in disappointment decides to earn his bread as a street musician. Euripides asks Medea for help – he is writing a play and wants to consult the Colchian woman on the ways of enriching the plot in order to earn the approval of a special drama committee.

The most essential aspect which sets Bost's *Medea* apart from the ancient tragedy is the motivation for the children's murder.

"Λέγω να σφάζω τα παιδιά, να φύγουν απ' τη μέση  
να κάνω ένα έγκλημα ώστε να τον πονέσει."

"So, I will kill my children,  
commit a crime to offend Jason."

In the conclusive sonnet of the play, Medea and Jason sing a duet, commenting on the motivation of child-slaughter: as they didn't do well at school, taking interest in nothing but a bed, and love affair with the nun and the monk, their mother punished them by killing them.

"Οι πιο κακοί οι μαθηταί ήταν αυτοί στην τάξη  
γι' αυτό κ' η μάνα τους καλά έκανε να τα σφάζει.  
Δεν έπαιρναν τα γράμματα πηγαίνοντας σχολείο  
και το μυαλό τους είχανε στις μοναχής το αιδούο."

"They were the worst students in the class,  
Therefore, their mother was right to kill them.  
They went to school but did not study,  
The nun's pudenda drove them mad."

In his works, including *Medea*, Bost jumbles up various epochs, historical events and characters of different periods, which brings into Bostandzoglou's plays the elements of the Theatre of the Absurd.

Even without reading the work, a mere account of the plot suffices to realize that a tragedy transformed into a comedy is modified not only with regard to its genre, story-line and style, but in conceptual terms as well. The well-known mythological plot is demoralized, the problem is essentially transformed and is entirely set in a political and social context, acquiring a comic, or rather satirical and grotesque colouring.

The play prompts the question: Why did Bost decide exactly on Euripides' *Medea*? What accounts for the relevance of the challenges conveyed by this ancient tragedy?

Euripides *Medea* fully grasps the complex psychological processes taking place in the spiritual world of a character; it offers masterly composed emotional monologues, dialogues – examples of rhetorical art, the so-called verbal Agons with Sophistic implications, extensive parts of the messenger, intrigues. *Medea* is the drama of marital relationships and morally corrupted society, the society which justifies depravity. This is the tragedy of betraying one's parents and homeland, of being fugitive and lonely in a strange land, of disappointment and lost love, the tragedy of socially and emotionally unprotected woman.<sup>1</sup>

Bost's *Medea* features the motif of marital relations, disappointment, lost love and unfaithfulness, but in a lesser degree. We may say that the social dimension takes over private life and the world of emotions.

Bost's play also uses the theme of loneliness and fugitive being in a strange land, but the modern Greek writer shifts the focus. What the play highlights is rather the attitude of one part of Greek society than the adversities of an emigrant's life. The ancient Greek antinomy: the Hellene – the Barbarian is relevant in modern Greece as well.

And most importantly, Bost's *Medea* portrays the drama of a morally corrupted society in satirical terms, the society where immorality is justified: the decay of spiritual values, the depravity of monks, provinciality as well as xenophobia of the Greek society, belief in one's own cultural superiority and Utopian nationalistic ideas; the pragmatism of marital relations and

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<sup>1</sup> Darchia I., *Colour Phenomenon in Greek Tragedy*, Logos, Tbilisi 2006 (Monograph in Georgian with summaries in English and Greek), 163.

anticipation of material profit instead of genuine feelings; luxurious life and the building of the future with bank loans and credits; pseudo-promotion of gender equality and social pseudo-guarantees, when a doctor expects an envelope with an additional fee from a patient; looking for the dominance of one particular nation, and belief that those who speak their language will be privileged; bringing up the youth spoiled and idle, the cult of diploma, lack and depreciation of genuine education and knowledge; superficiality and the pursuit of appearances, unemployment at large, promotion through telephone calls and connections; the veil of vigorous democratic ideas over monarchist or imperial or in general terms, outdated intentions, the sudden transformation of "kings" into Democrats; hosts of victims to leisure or festive steering wheel; the search for the way out from spiritual crises and social deadlocks through the consultations with psychologists and psychiatrists.

By the way, Bostandzoglou was frequently persecuted and oppressed. Being a left-winger, he nevertheless tried to remain unbiased, as illustrated in his *Medea*. Bost is derisive at right-wingers as well as pseudo-democratic left-wingers.

I cannot agree with Greek critics who maintain that "Bost's original way of writing, *Medea*'s tragicomic image, Aristophanes' metaphors and confusion discloses the evil of his contemporary Greek society",<sup>2</sup> as the Greece of Bost's *Medea* very closely resembles modern Georgia.

Bostandzoglou's *Medea* is regarded as one of the most funny plays of Greek dramatic repertoire, as "when the performance is over, spectators head for their homes with laughter"; while the playwright himself wanted "to have them laugh rather than guffaw". Bost's irony is difficult to discern, his satire is naive as an infant, his humour is tender and purposeful. That is why he is regarded as a complicated comedigraph.

Admittedly, laugh can be caused by different impulses – invective, or derision, a mimic scene, grotesque look, profanity and so on. Bost's *Medea* includes all of these devices. Bost mocks at everything and everybody – every layer and circle of society. He criticizes but at the same time loves and believes in his country.

The playwright does not describe the appearance and dresses of the characters. However, he designs the stage set and costumes which convey his conceptions regarding *Medea* and Jason, Oedipus and Antigone, the nun and the monk. *Medea* and Antigone are dressed in indiscreet gowns decorated with pseudo-ancient ornaments, Jason is cled in a military uniform with

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<sup>2</sup> Κωνσταντινίδης Θ., Ο Μποστ και η *Μήδεια* του, Πρόλογος στην 100<sup>η</sup> παράσταση στο Θέατρο "Στοά", 15-4-94, Ανάτυπο από το Περιοδικό ΕΜΒΟΛΙΜΟΝ, τ. 23-24, 1994-1995, Άσπρα Σπίτια Βοιωτίας, 6.

modern epaulets up the waist and a short toga with ancient ornaments down the waist, Oedipus wears black John Lennon glasses and resembles a blind or roving pop or rock musician, so widespread nowadays. The appearance of the nurse, with a laurel diadem on her head, is inspired by the pathetic images of the Roman period. The nun's dress discloses high-heeled shoes and prostitute's net-like socks, and her headwear resembles a helmet of the Soviet military.

The object of laughter are the costumes and images of the characters as well as their words, particular scenes and episodes, and the whole plot. One should not be surprised at Bost's rude jokes, obscene words and expressions. According to Aristotle, the core of comedy is the phallic vocabulary. The modern Greek playwright is obscene like Aristophanes and offends "the tender ear of elitist society".

"Κι αν πεταχθείτε στο σχολειό και μόνη σας θα δήτε  
 με πόσην άνεσιν κ' οι δυό λένε ΑΓΑΜΟΙ ΘΥΤΑΙ...  
 Οι μαθηταί εις το σχολειό οφείλουν να πηγαίνουν  
 κι' όσοι πηδούν και τους πηδούν, είδατε τι παθαίνουν.  
 Φροντίστε όσο είν' καιρός τώρα να μελετάτε  
 κι' έχετε όλο τον καιρό ύστερα να πηδάτε."

Remarkably, after the publication of *My Mother's Profession* in the 1960s, Bost was severely criticized for "crossing the limits of decency and politeness". I will specially dwell on the linguistic aspect of the play. Similarly to Bost's other works, *Medea* is written with the 15-syllabic meter, and is rhymed with homonyms, which is possible in Modern Greek. In Greek language, the words with similar pronunciation are spelled differently and refer to different things. This very peculiarity of Bost's *Medea* was among the principle factors that would cause confusion and laughter. For example, the Cretan and the critic are pronounced analogically, but are spelled differently, which causes a great deal of confusion. Bost achieves a surprising laughter effect through the wordplay:

"Σαν νέος άνθρωπος κι εγώ κι αθώο θηλυκό  
 στην Κρήτη έμπλεξα λοιπόν με κάποιον Κρητικό  
 αλλά για τύχη μου κακή, αυτός ο Κρητικός  
 εκτός που ήταν Κρητικός ήταν και Κριτικός."

"As a young and innocent lady  
 in Crete I came across a Cretan,  
 but to my regret,  
 that Cretan was also a critic."

Although Bost's play abounds of such examples, I will confine myself only to the following fragment:

"Ὅπως γνωρίζεις, Μήδεια, δεν αγαπώ τα μύδια  
 άλλωστε πριν, ετσίμπησα στιφάδο με κρεμμύδια  
 κι αν φάγω τώρα μύδια, αγαπητή μου Μήδεια  
 θα με πειράξουν φοβερά τα επί πλέον μύδια."

"As you may know Medea, I dislike mussels,  
 Besides, I have just had some beef with garlic,  
 And, my dear Medea, if I eat mussels now,  
 They will make me feel bad."

Among the literary peculiarities of Bostandzoglou is believed to be an orthographically, morphologically and syntactically inaccurate writing. According to the stage director, Thanasis Papageorgiou, "one of the most literate writers found a shelter in orthographic errors, which he used to describe the illiteracy reigning around".<sup>3</sup> *Medea* too abounds of such cases. I will cite only one fragment including wordplay and spelling mistakes.

"τυφλός δεν είναι απ' την Τυφλίδα  
 μ' απ' το χωριό μας τον Κωλονό."

"The blind is not from Tbilisi,  
 He is from our Colonus."

Bost's *Medea* implies irony, used already by Euripides. The great tragedian could render ironical everything: the manner of depicting characters, plot development, the world of gods, and *deus ex machina*, political events and rituals reflected in the work, and what is the most important, his dialogues.

The words of one of the conversers are ambiguous. The other character understands them literary, which makes him/her feel safe and anticipate benevolence of the person he/she is talking with. However, the audience grasps the implications of those words and anticipates a disaster (let us recall the dialogues between Medea and Jason, Lycus and Amphitruon, Pentheus and Dionysus, Hecabe and Polymestor and so on, the dialogues full of ambiguity and tragic irony). Euripides' characters pronounce the words that do not mean anything negative at first sight, but convey an implicit message of the pondering sorrow.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See also: Βοσταντζόγλου Κ., *Ολίγα λόγια διά τον κύριον Βοσταντζόγλου, τον καλλιτέχνη και τον άνθρωπον*, in: Μποστ, *Μήδεια*, Θεατρική Εταιρία "Στοά", Εικοστή Τρίτη Θεατρική Περίοδος, 1993-1994, 12-14.

<sup>4</sup> Darchia I., *op. cit.*, 268.

One of the passages from Bost's *Medea* – in particular, the dialogue between Medea and Yannis – has the same implications. The monk admits that the sole target of his passion were the schoolboys. He says that he has recently started a love affair with two boys who work in a post-office, and whom he attempts to seduce with money and sweets. Medea uncompromisingly censures the parents of those boys, who failed to look after their children and declares that in their place, she would kill both children. This very dialogue implicitly alludes to the tragedy which is bound to happen: after Medea finds out about her two son's affair with the monk, she slaughters them. So, Bost renders this "tragic" finale of the comedy with the help of Euripidean tragic irony.

By the way, Bostandzoglou's play has one more trait of a tragedy: the functions of Chorus and Messenger. Chorus appears in the play at a time, either telling in advance about the further events or appreciating what has already happened. So, it is charged with the function of rendering public opinion, like the Chorus of the tragedy. I should accentuate that following the principle of ancient tragedy, Bost's *Medea* does not kill her children right on the stage; it is the messenger who gives a detailed account of the murder.

As far as I know, Bost's *Medea* is among the rarest cases, if not the only one, of the comic interpretation of the Argonaut myth, where Medea dooms her sons to death not because of Jason's unfaithfulness, but because of their misbehaviour. So, Bost's play can be regarded as Aristophanean interpretation of Euripides' *Medea*. And it is not accidental that Bost is referred to as modern Aristophanes, a Modern Greek writer carrying on the tradition of ancient comedy.<sup>5</sup>

*Medea's* transformation into a comedy should not be much surprising. Although Aristotle called it the most tragic tragedy (*Poetica*, 1453, a29), tragedy as a genre implies a subtle comic potential. Let us recall that new Attic comedy borrowed from Euripides the devices of making a guess, cunningness and craftiness. The ending of the *Iphigenia among the Taurians* is not quite typical of tragedies, and besides, the play proceeds without sacrifices. The play abounds of tragic as well as comic elements, which assigns it to the mean between the tragedy and the comedy.<sup>6</sup>

Tragic and comic elements also converge in Euripides' *Helen*. This even prompts scholars not to regard it as a tragedy. *Helen* is appreciated as a tragic-comedy equaling a farce for the abundance of tragic irony. *Helen* is the drama where the author's imagination competes with the traditional myth, and this "fabulous and fanciful game" is regarded as the origin of Menander's comedy

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<sup>5</sup> Κωνσταντινίδης Θ., op. cit., 11.

<sup>6</sup> Darchia I., op. cit., 209.

and ancient novel, as a melodramatic work. By the way, even *Ion* is appreciated as a tragicomedy by some scholars.<sup>7</sup>

Greek critics regard Bost in different ways. On the one hand, he is praised and respected, and recognized as the legend of Greek drama, and on the other hand, he is criticized. Regrettably, I could not find out how he is regarded by European scholars and therefore, I cannot be aware of how Bost is appreciated in the West.

As far as I know, Bost's *Medea* is frequently staged in Greece by professional as well as amateur artists. For the first time, it was staged by Thanasis Papageorgiou in the "Stoa" in 1993. Papers wrote on that occasion: "The most hilarious play of demonic Bost was staged by Papageorgiou, the most satanic among the satanic". *Medea* was staged this year as well, by Stamatis Fassoulis.

And finally, it is interesting what attitude this play will encounter in Georgia, how it will be accepted by the Georgian reader, whether it will establish itself on the Georgian stage or not, and how Georgian literary and drama critics will appreciate it. These questions will be answered in the future, when Bost's *Medea* will resound in Georgian.

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<sup>7</sup> Darchia I., op. cit., 225.



Tedo Dundua (Tbilisi)

## **GOLDEN FLEECE IS BACK – RUSSIAN FICTION**

After adoption of Christianity, Eastern Slavonia, with Kiev as the capital, joined the Byzantine Commonwealth. That clearly meant enlargement of the Eastern European unity towards Eastern section of Humid Continental Europe, into the direction of the river Volga. Russians were the loyal subjects of the Commonwealth, looking calmly at the decline of Constantinople's hegemony, and the Bulgar and Georgian kings seizing the titles of "Tsar" and "Autocrat".

Becoming stronger, Russia vividly protested Ottoman reintegration of what was formerly labelled Byzantium, and Muslim overlordship over the Orthodox World by taking the title of "Tsar" for Grand Prince Ivan in 1547. New centre of East Europe has been shaped, and then long-term war started for hegemony, Russia being victorious.

The 18<sup>th</sup> c. was marked by revolutionary improvement of the Russian technologies due to strengthening of state industrial segment. Still with its serfdom, Russia became a full-scale European partner.

Basic changes took place also in historiography. Thorough study of Graeco-Roman and Byzantine literature had yet another reason – political one. Seeing itself as the East European super-power, thus Russia claimed Byzantine political heritage. For Russians Georgia had to be within the East European Union, and also this country has been acknowledged as a successor state of Colchis and Iberia. If this country back to Orthodox alliance, that could only be compared to the symbolic return of the Golden Fleece – honour, glory and rich is coming back.

One must bear on mind this narrative while observing the numismatic piece below.

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. Kartalino-Kakhetian Kingdom (Eastern Georgia) became a part of the Russian Empire. Administration and courts

were paid in assignations and chervonetzi – Dutch ducates, called Lobanchiks. Army needed even more money to buy local supplies. And the local population neglected assignations even firmly seeing how the taxes were collected in old silver money. Scarcity of silver lowered the rate of Russian gold coin, which was quite high in other places. Scarcity of silver and copper coins seems due to the problems of their transportation – indeed, St. Petersburg and Ekaterinburg were far away. Merchants had good profit thanks to low exchange rate of gold, and the prices rushed high. Cheap Iranian goods flooded Georgian market taking back coins, thus making crisis more severe.

The situation was to be changed. Preparations were made for the reorganization of old Tbilisi mint, now under the Russian control. On September 15 of 1804 there was the mint inaugurated in the former royal bath celebrated by issue of the commemorative medal.<sup>1</sup>

Quite a rare one, it comes to a description as follows:

Ar. 8. 23 gr.

Obv. Russian double-headed eagle (former coat of arms of Palaeologi) soaring towards Iberia and Colchis, bearing in its claws the Golden Fleece, with the Russian legend – "it restores what was stolen".

Rev. Russian legend – "Tbilisi mint opened on September 15 1804".<sup>2</sup>

There could also be a gold piece. Sometimes the legend slightly differs. Tbilisi mint operated until 1834. No mythology was used any more.



<sup>1</sup> T. Dundua, G. Dundua, N. Javakhishvili, A. Eristavi, *Money in Georgia*, II edition, Tbilisi, 2003, 98.

<sup>2</sup> D. Kapanadze, *Georgian Numismatics*, M., 1955, N198, 134 (in Russian); D. Kapanadze, *Georgian Numismatics*, Tbilisi, 1969, N244, 163 (in Georgian with Russian and English summaries); E. Pakhomov, *Coins of Georgia*, Tbilisi, 1970, 271 (in Russian).

Euripidis Garantoudis (Athens)

**ΣΤΑΘΜΟΙ ΤΟΥ ΤΑΞΙΔΙΟΥ ΤΗΣ ΜΥΘΙΚΗΣ ΑΡΓΩΣ  
ΣΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΠΟΙΗΣΗ ΤΟΥ 20<sup>ου</sup> ΑΙΩΝΑ**

Όσοι ασχολούνται με τη μελέτη της νεότερης ελληνικής λογοτεχνίας γνωρίζουν ότι, σε όλη τη διάρκεια της εξέλιξής της, οι σημαντικότεροι ποιητές, από τον Σολωμό και τον Κάλβο μέχρι τον Παλαμά, και από τον Σικελιανό και τον Καβάφη έως τον Σεφέρη και τον Ελύτη, αξιοποίησαν υλικό της αρχαιοελληνικής, ιδίως της γραμματειακής παράδοσης, κατά τέτοιο τρόπο ώστε το υλικό αυτό να αφομοιωθεί στο έργο τους και να καταστεί οργανικό στοιχείο της ιδιοσυστασίας του. Η σχέση της νεότερης ελληνικής ποίησης με την ελληνική αρχαιότητα και ιδίως με την αρχαιοελληνική γραμματεία έγινε αντικείμενο ευρείας αναφοράς από τη λογοτεχνική και τη φιλολογική κριτική ήδη από τα μέσα του 19ου αιώνα, ενώ συστηματοποιήθηκε στη διάρκεια του 20ού αιώνα, σε συνάρτηση με την ανάπτυξη και πρόοδο της νεοελληνικής φιλολογίας.<sup>1</sup>

Στόχος αυτής της μελέτης είναι η δειγματοληπτική εξέταση μερικών ελληνικών ποιημάτων, γραμμένων και δημοσιευμένων στη διάρκεια του 20ού αιώνα, που επεξεργάζονται στοιχεία του μύθου της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας. Με δεδομένη τη συνθετότητα και το εύρος του μύθου επέλεξα, ειδικότερα, να περιορίσω τα παραδείγματά μου σε ποιήματα που έχουν ως θέμα το μυθικό καράβι της Αργώς και το πλήρωμά του, τους Αργοναύτες. Αποκλειστηκαν, λοιπόν, τα ποιήματα με θέμα τη Μήδεια, ένα άλλο βασικό σημείο αναφοράς του αρχαιοελληνικού μύθου, που έχει πολλαπλές προεκτάσεις. Η συγκριτική εξέταση των αναφερόμενων στην Αργώ και τους

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<sup>1</sup> Ενδεικτική βιβλιογραφία γύρω από το ζήτημα καταγράφεται στο τέλος του λήμματος "Αρχαία ελληνική γραμματεία" (υπογράφεται από τις Φλόρα Μανακίδου και Εβίνα Σιστάκου), στο *Λεξικό νεοελληνικής λογοτεχνίας. Πρόσωπα – έργα – ρεύματα – όροι*, Αθήνα, Εκδόσεις Πατάκι 2007, 183-191.

Αργοναύτες ποιημάτων αναδεικνύει αφενός την ποικίλη προσαρμογή του μύθου της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας στα εκφραστικά και τεχνοτροπικά αιτήματα διαφορετικών συγγραφέων, αφετέρου την αντανάκλαση στα ποιήματα των ιστορικοκοινωνικών όρων της κάθε χρονικής στιγμής στην οποία τα κείμενα γράφτηκαν και δημοσιεύτηκαν.

Μια πρώτη γενική παρατήρηση είναι ότι τα περισσότερα από τα αναφερόμενα στον μύθο της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας ελληνικά ποιήματα του 20ού αιώνα μπορούν να χαρακτηριστούν αρχαιόθεμα όχι όμως και αρχαιογνωστικά, με την έννοια ότι πρόκειται για ποιήματα τα οποία δεν (φαίνεται να) έχουν ως πηγή απευθείας κάποιο αρχαίο κείμενο ή κάποιες νεότερες μεταφράσεις ή λογοτεχνικές επεξεργασίες αρχαίων πηγών του μύθου. Συνεπώς στη μεγάλη πλειονότητά τους τα εξεταζόμενα ποιήματα βασίζονται σε μια διαδεδομένη γνώση του αρχαίου μύθου της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας και των συμβολικών ερμηνειών του, γνώση η οποία αποτελεί μέρος μιας γενικής μορφωτικής παρακαταθήκης, μέρος εκείνης της εξοικείωσης με τον αρχαίο μύθο, την οποία έχει, θα μπορούσαμε να πούμε, ο μέσος αναγνώστης.

Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη αυτή την παρατήρηση, ότι τα ποιήματα προϋποθέτουν τη βασική γνώση του πασίγνωστου μύθου της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας από τον μέσο αναγνώστη, μπορούμε να κατανοήσουμε καλύτερα γιατί τα παλαιότερα από αυτά, όσα εντάσσονται στην παραδοσιακή ελληνική ποίηση, αποτελούν ουσιαστικά αναπαραγωγές ή έστω προεκτάσεις του κεντρικού συμβολικού νοήματος της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας. Το πρώτο και χρονικά παλαιότερο παράδειγμα μιας τέτοιας θεώρησης του αρχαίου μύθου είναι το ποίημα του Στέφανου Μαρτζώκη (1855-1913), «Ο νέος Ιάσων» (1901):

Με χίλιων κόσμων το φως, τη δύναμη,  
 πελώριος γίγας ο νέος Ιάσωνας,  
 τ' ουρανού τώρα σχίζει τα πλάτη  
 το χρυσό του το δέρμα ν' αρπάζει.  
 Αίθεροναύτης, τρέχει τ' απέραντο  
 μ' όλη τη λάμψη του νου στο μέτωπο,  
 να κηρύξει μιαν άσβεστη πάλη  
 σε χιλιάδες απόκρυφους κόσμους.  
 Δρόμους ανοίγει σ' εμάς αγνώριστους  
 όπου θ' αφήσει τ' άσβεστ' αγνάρια του,  
 και θα ιδούμε να σέρνει μπροστά μας  
 μύριους ήλιους χλομούς, νικημένους.  
 Τα ουράνι' ανοίγει να τρέξουν οι άνθρωποι  
 μια νέα θεότη να προσκυνήσουνε,

από κόσμο σε κόσμο να τρέξουν  
 την ελιά της αγάπης να φέρουν.  
 Κι όταν θα στήσει γλυκός, ατρόμητος  
 στο κάθε αστέρι σημαία κατάλευκη,  
 αχ! να ζούσα να τρέξω σιμά του  
 εκεί πάνω τα μάτια να κλείσω.<sup>2</sup>

Σε αυτό το οραματικό ή, ακριβέστερα, ουτοπικό ποίημα ο νέος Ιάσωνας, ακολουθώντας τα χνάρια του αρχαίου ήρωα σε ένα ατελεύτητο ταξίδι, μετατρέπεται σε «πελώριο γίγαντα», έναν μοναχικό, δίχως άλλους συντρόφους, «αιθεροναύτη», έναν ορμητικό αλλά και ειρηνικό κατακτητή του άπειρου διαστήματος, που θα φέρει και θα διαδώσει το μήνυμα μιας απροσδιόριστης θρησκείας και της αγάπης σε όλα τα άγνωστα αστέρια του σύμπαντος.

Το ποίημα «Ο νέος Ιάσων» είναι ένα από τα 14 ποιήματα της ενότητας «Στίχοι βάρβαροι», των γνωστότερων ποιημάτων στο σύνολο του έργου του Μαρτζώκη. Οι πρώτες δημοσιεύσεις των ποιημάτων αυτής της ενότητας σε περιοδικά διασπέρνονται στη διάρκεια της δεκαετίας του 1890 (δύο ποιήματα το 1891, ένα το 1894, έξι το 1898 και τέσσερα το 1899), ενώ η ενότητα «Στίχοι βάρβαροι» έλαβε την οριστική της μορφή (τα 14 ποιήματα) στον τόμο των *Ποιημάτων* του Μαρτζώκη το 1901. Με τους «Στίχους βάρβαρους» ο Μαρτζώκης αναζήτησε μια ποιητική οδό ικανή να ανανεώσει την εξαντλημένη ρομαντική παρακαταθήκη θεμάτων και εκφραστικών τρόπων, η οποία διέκρινε την παλαιότερη ποίησή του. Η οδός αυτή ήταν ο νεοκλασικισμός, διαμορφωμένος σύμφωνα με τα υποδείγματα της παλαιότερης και σύγχρονης ιταλικής ποίησης (Foscolo, Carducci, D'Annunzio).<sup>3</sup>

Οι «Στίχοι βάρβαροι» αποτελούν έναν από τους πιο σημαντικούς σταθμούς της αναβίωσης των αρχαίων μέτρων στη νέα ελληνική λογοτεχνία. Η βασική πηγή του μετρικών σχημάτων τους ήταν οι σχεδόν σύγχρονές τους *Odi barbare* (Βάρβαρες ωδές) (δημοσιεύτηκαν στο διάστημα 1877-1893) του πολύ γνωστού στην εποχή του Ιταλού ποιητή Josuè Carducci (1835-1907).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Σ. Μαρτζώκης, *Στίχοι βάρβαροι και άλλα ποιήματα*, Εισαγωγή-επιμέλεια Ε. Γαραντούδης, Αθήνα, Ωκεανίδα 2000, 121. Πρώτη δημοσίευση του ποιήματος, με τον τίτλο "Στίχοι βάρβαροι. Ο νέος Ιάσων", στο περιοδικό *Αττική Τρις*, χρ. 1, τχ. 10-11, 1 Ιουλίου 1898, 73. Πρώτη δημοσίευση σε βιβλίο του Μαρτζώκη: *Ποιήματα*, Εκ του τυπογραφείου Π. Δ. Σακελλαρίου, Έκδοσις Γ. Γ. Μαρασλή, Εν Αθήναις 1901, 80-81 (φωτοαναστατική επανέκδοση: Ζαν Μορεάς (Ι. Παπαδιαμαντόπουλος) – Στέφ. Μαρτζώκης – Α. Παπαδοπούλου, Πρόλογος Γ.[ιάννη] Κ.[ουχτσόγλου], Αθήνα, Εταιρεία Ελληνικών Εκδόσεων, Άπαντα των Νεοελλήνων Κλασικών χ.χ.).

<sup>3</sup> Γενικότερα για την ενότητα "Στίχοι βάρβαροι", βλ. την εισαγωγή μου στο βιβλίο Σ. Μαρτζώκης, *Στίχοι βάρβαροι και άλλα ποιήματα*, ό.π., 43-50.

<sup>4</sup> Για το θέμα, βλ. τη μελέτη μου, "Μαρτζώκης και Carducci. Συμβολή στην ιστορία της ελληνικής βάρβαρης ποίησης", *Περίτλους*, τχ. 28-29, Ιανουάριος-Ιούνιος 1991, 33-55.

Συγκεκριμένα, η στροφική μορφή του ποιήματος «Ο νέος Ιάσων», που είναι παραλλαγμένη μορφή αλκαϊκής στροφής των *Odi barbare* του Carducci,<sup>5</sup> συντίθεται από δύο διπλούς ιαμβικούς πεντασύλλαβους (ο πρώτος παροξύτονος, ο δεύτερος προπαροξύτονος [εξασύλλαβος, σύμφωνα με την ελληνική μετρική ορολογία]) και δύο παροξύτονους αναπαιστικούς δεκασύλλαβους.

Εξεταζόμενο από θεματική σκοπιά το ποίημα «Ο νέος Ιάσων» εντάσσεται σε εκείνη την ομάδα ποιημάτων των «Στίχων βάρβαρων», που θεματοποιούν τη νοσταλγική ανάκληση του αρχαιοελληνικού πολιτισμού (στην ίδια ομάδα ανήκουν, επίσης, άλλα τρία ποιήματα, «Το μέλλον», «Ο Προμηθεύς» και «Η αναδυομένη»),<sup>6</sup> συνδυάζοντάς την όμως με ένα μελλοντολογικό όραμα. Ο κλασικιστικός ιδανισμός εκφράζεται με την περιγραφή μιας εξωραϊσμένης ελληνικής αρχαιότητας, μακριά από συγκεκριμένο τόπο και χρόνο, μέσα στο άπειρο του ουρανού και της θάλασσας, διάσπαρτης από ναούς και κατοικημένης από θεούς, ημίθεους και αιθέριες υπάρξεις που τις πράξεις τους ρυθμίζει η πλούσια παρακαταθήκη της αρχαίας μυθολογίας. Συνάμα, όμως, η αίσθηση του ζωντανού στοιχείου αυτής της αρχαιότητας εμψυχώνει την πηγαία αισιοδοξία ότι η αγάπη και η επιστήμη θα κυριαρχήσουν, οδηγώντας τους ανθρώπους σε ένα πολύ καλύτερο, αν και απροσδιόριστο, μέλλον. Συγκεκριμένα στο ποίημα «Ο νέος Ιάσων» ο Μαρτζώκης προεκτείνει τον αρχαίο μύθο με τρόπο, ωστόσο, που ευθυγραμμίζεται με το κεντρικό συμβολικό μήνυμά του: το ταξίδι του ανθρώπου-ηρωικό πρότυπο τον οδηγεί στη διαρκή αναζήτηση και κατάκτηση εμπειριών και αγαθών, πραγματικών και πνευματικών.

Ανάλογες με εκείνη του Μαρτζώκη επεξεργασίες του μύθου της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας συναντούμε, στις τρεις πρώτες δεκαετίες του 20ού αιώνα, επίσης σε ποιήματα του Πέτρου Βλαστού (1879-1941) (γνωστού επίσης με το ψευδώνυμο Έρμονας), του Σωτήρη Σκίτη (1879-1952) και του Κωστή Παλαμά (1859-1943).

Στη συλλογή του Βλαστού, *Αργώ* (1905), υπάρχουν τρία άτιτλα ποιήματα που λειτουργούν ως εισαγωγές στις τρεις ενότητες του βιβλίου: «Οι Κολχίδες», «Η νέμεση της Μήδειας» και «Η Αργώ». Παραθέτω τα ποιήματα. Πρώτα το εισαγωγικό ποίημα στην ενότητα «Οι Κολχίδες»:

Αρμάτωσα το μυθικό καράβι για ταξίδι  
θεόταχτο και πορφυρά πανιά άπλωσα και η πλώρη  
τις στοιχωμένες θάλασσες χαράκωνε και γύρω  
στην κουπαστή κυκλόφεγγαν οι χάλκινες ασπίδες.  
Αρμένιζα γι' απάτητες Κολχίδες και είχα τάμα

<sup>5</sup> Για περισσότερα στοιχεία, βλ. στη μελέτη μου, "Μαρτζώκης και Carducci...", *ό.π.*, 41-42.

<sup>6</sup> Βλ. *Στίχοι βάρβαροι και άλλα ποιήματα*, *ό.π.*, 109-110, 118 και 125.

ν' αρπάξω τη χρυσή προβιά του Φρίξου από το Δράκο,  
 μέσ' απ' το χνώτο της φωτιάς. Κι αγήφισα φουρτούνες,  
 τις Συμπληγάδες τις κακές, πύβουλες λάμιες κι όρνια,  
 και σε ακρογιάλι αξόρκιστο τη φυκιωμένη τέλος  
 άραξα Αργώ. Κι αντίκρυσα το μαγικό χρυσάφι  
 μέσ' σε ρουμάνι σκιαδερό και γύρω του βιγλίζαν  
 άγρυπνα τέρατα, στρυφνά μυστήρια. Και βοήθεια  
 λαχτάρησα – κι ω! στο βαθύ του Αιήτη το παλάτι  
 τα τραγικά να με κοιτούν της Μήδειας είδα μάτια!<sup>7</sup>

Στη συνέχεια, το εισαγωγικό ποίημα στη δεύτερη ενότητα «Η νέμεση της Μήδειας»:

Και ρίξαμε στη θάλασσα για να σωθούμε – ω κρίμα σου  
 αδερφικό! – μέλη παιδιού σπαρταριστά, και τ' άσπρα,  
 Μήδεια, τα χέρια σου έσταζαν ωμό κακόφλογο αίμα!  
 Και μάβρισε το πέλαγος φρικιάζοντας, μα πάντα  
 ξόρκια μας έσωζαν από θεριά κι αστραποκαίρια.  
 Ως που πια τ' ακροθάλασσα τα ελληνικά γέλασαν  
 μπροστά στην πλώρη και ναών καπνοί μάς χαιρετήσαν.  
 Μα το καράβι της χαράς και η ζούλια της πατρίδας  
 ξεδούλωσαν τα μάτια μου και ξέχασα τη Μήδεια  
 και γι' άλλη νύφη τοίμασα ρηγάτικα μαγνάδια.  
 Μα ποια φωνή ρεκάζοντας πλαντά μέσ' στο παλάτι;  
 Ω φλόγες, αίμα, παίδεμα! Τυφλός να μην το ξέρω  
 πως ειν' τα μάγια αξέγραφα της άγριας της αγάπης,  
 πως δε γλυτώνει ο πλερωμός μηδέ η Κλωθώ ξεχνάει!<sup>8</sup>  
 Τέλος, το εισαγωγικό ποίημα στην τρίτη ενότητα «Η Αργώ»:  
 Πάντα σε πέλαγα ανοιχτά, σε αλαργινές Κολχίδες,  
 σιδεροστήθω, αβούλιαχτη από ξέρες και μαίστρους,  
 ηρώισα, έτσι αρμένιζε, Αργώ! Στα ξάρτια σου ας σφυρίζουν  
 ο γραίγος και η βαρυνκαιριά, και η βίγλα ας ξαγναντέβει  
 τα στριγγλονήσια τ' άπιστα, του βράχου το διλάβι.  
 Και της Δωδώνης τη μιλιά στην πλώρη πάντα να έχεις,  
 κι ας παν τα παληκάρια σου ν' αδράξουν από κάστρα  
 κι από χμαιοφυλάχτες σπηλιές τις ρηγοπούλες.  
 Γιατί είσαι εσύ το αστραφερό της τόλμης το καράβι  
 και στα δεξιά σου πέτουνται τρεις πάντα αίτιο κλαδάτοι.

<sup>7</sup> Παραπέμπω στη συγκεντρωτική έκδοση των ποιημάτων του Πέτρου Βλαστού, *Η Αργώ και άλλα ποιήματα*, Οξφόρδη 1921, 11.

<sup>8</sup> *Ο.π.*, 97.

Καλόγνωμες όπου διαβείς σε παραστέκουν θείσες  
 κι όπου καλάρεις τα πανιά τις μάγισες σκλαβώνεις.  
 Να μη σκιαχτείς τις μάργελες Σειρήνες και την Κίρκη  
 μα τα κουπιά πάντα ας χτυπούν ασπρίζοντας το κύμα.<sup>9</sup>

Στα παραπάνω ποιήματα ολοκληρώνεται ένας κύκλος αναφοράς στην αργοναυτική εκστρατεία. Και στα τρία, παρνασσιστικής τεχνοτροπίας, ποιήματα αφηγητής είναι ο Ιάσοντας. Το πρώτο ποίημα αναπτύσσει τα θέματα του περιπετειώδους ταξιδιού, της άφιξης των Αργοναυτών στην Κοχλίδα και της προσπάθειας εκεί για την απόκτηση του χρυσόμαλλου δέρατος ως τη στιγμή της συνάντησης του Ιάσωνα με τη Μήδεια. Στο δεύτερο ποίημα ο αφηγητής Ιάσοντας, μετά την απόκτηση του χρυσόμαλλου δέρατος, περιγράφει, με αρκετά υπαινικτικό τρόπο, το πρώτο έγκλημα (αδελφοκτονία) της Μήδειας, την επίσης περιπετειώδη επιστροφή τους στην Ελλάδα, την εγκατάλειψη της Μήδειας από τον ίδιο και, τέλος, τα υπόλοιπα εγκλήματα που εκείνη διέπραξε για να τον εκδικηθεί (δολοφονία της νέας γυναίκας του Ιάσωνα Γλαύκης και παιδοκτονία των δύο παιδιών που απέκτησε με τον Ιάσωνα). Στο τρίτο ποίημα, που ολοκληρώνει την αναφορά στην αργοναυτική εκστρατεία τροποποιώντας το άδοξο, σύμφωνα με τον μύθο, τέλος του Ιάσωνα και της Αργώς, ο αφηγητής Ιάσοντας χαιρετίζει «της τόλμης το καράβι», την Αργώ, της εύχεται ατελεύτητα ταξίδια και εύχεται επίσης στο πλήρωμά του («τα παληκάρια σου») να έχει, παρ' όλους τους κινδύνους, παντοτινές περιπέτειες και κέρδη ανάλογα με εκείνα του πρώτου μυθικού ταξιδιού στην Κολχίδα. Και στο πρώτο και στο τρίτο ποίημα η μετατροπή της Κολχίδας του αρχαίου μύθου σε «Κοχλίδες» δείχνει ότι ο αρχαίος προορισμός προεκτείνεται συμβολικά στον στόχο των διηνεκών ταξιδιών του νέου Ιάσωνα και των νέων Αργοναυτών.

Τα ποιήματα του Βλαστού παρουσιάζουν ενδιαφέρον όχι τόσο επειδή αναφέρουν ή απηχούν πολλά επιμέρους συγκεκριμένα στοιχεία του μύθου της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας, εντάσσοντάς τα στη φανερά δημοτικιστική γλωσσική αισθητική του ποιητή, αλλά κυρίως επειδή πλαισιώνουν, ως εισαγωγικά ποιήματα των τριών ενοτήτων του βιβλίου, τα υπόλοιπα κείμενα της συλλογής του *Αργώ*. Πολλά από τα υπόλοιπα ποιήματα μπορούν να χαρακτηριστούν περιηγητικά, καθώς περιγράφουν τα ταξίδια του Βλαστού σε διάφορους τόπους και μάλιστα αρκετούς τόπους της Ανατολής. Αυτό γίνεται φανερό από τους τίτλους των επτά υποενοτήτων που περιλαμβάνει η πρώτη ενότητα του βιβλίου: «Αττικά», «Της Ρούμελης και του Μοριά», «Της Πόλης και του Φράγκου», «Προβέντσα και Ιταλία», «Ρήνος και Τραμουντάνα», «Κασμίρι και Πενταπόταμο» και «Της Ασίας». Όπως μάλιστα παρατηρούμε

<sup>9</sup> *Ο.π.*, 155.



και μόνο από τους τίτλους τα ποιητικά ταξίδια ξεκινούν από το επίκεντρο της Ελλάδας και καταλήγουν στην Ασία. Έτσι λοιπόν ο ποιητής Βλαστός, που αφηγείται τα ταξίδια του, είναι ένας νέος και ακούραστος ταξιδιώτης που, όπως ο Ιάσωνας, συνεχίζει με τη δική του ποιητική Αργώ το ταξίδι του μακρινού προγόνου του. Προφανώς για να υποδείξει αυτή την παραλληλία ή αυτή τη συνέχεια ο πολυταξιδεμένος Βλαστός επέλεξε να τιτλοφορήσει τη συλλογή του *Αργώ*.<sup>10</sup>

Το προλογικό και άτιτλο σονέτο της συλλογής του Σκίπη *Κολχίδες* (1930) αποτελεί ένα ακόμη εύγλωττο δείγμα ποιητικού κειμένου-συμβολικής αναφοράς στον μύθο των Αργοναυτών:

Δεν είναι μια... πολλές είν' οι Κολχίδες!  
 Και σ' όλες, ω αργοναύτη, ένας αγέρας  
 σ' έσπρωξε ανησυχίας, μ' ωραίες ελπίδες  
 πως θάύρεις το Χρυσόμαλλο το Δέρας.  
 Μα το Χρυσόμαλλο το Δέρας, είδες  
 πως σε καμιά γωνιά τούτης της Σφαίρας  
 δε βρίσκεται. Και ξενητιές, πατρίδες,  
 είδες σκιές πως είναι της Χιμαίρας.  
 Μα ταχ' από τα πριν – καθώς τόσοι άλλοι, –  
 δεν τόξερες αυτό; Κι όμως στιγμή  
 η ψυχή σου δε δίστασε η μεγάλη.  
 Κι είπες: – Ακόμα ένας χαμός τι βλάφτει! –  
 Ό,τι στο βάθος εποθούσες, μη  
 δεν ήταν τάχα ο τίτλος του Αργοναύτη;<sup>11</sup>

Σε συμφωνία με τα ποιήματα του Μαρτζώκη και του Βλαστού, και ο Σκίπης προεκτείνει τη μοναδική Κολχίδα του αρχαίου μύθου στον καθολικό προορισμό όχι ενός αλλά άπειρων ταξιδιών. Σε αντίθεση, όμως, με το αίσιο τέλος των ποιητικών ταξιδιών του Μαρτζώκη και του Βλαστού, το ταξίδι στο ποίημα του Σκίπη οδηγεί στον «χαμό». Αυτό, όμως, είναι και το ουσιαστικό σημείο με το οποίο ο Σκίπης τροποποιεί και, μέσω της τροποποίησης,

<sup>10</sup> Πρβλ. τις σχετικές κρίσεις του Παλαμά για την *Αργώ*, σε μελέτημά του υπό μορφή επιστολής που απευθύνεται στον Βλαστό: "Ιάσωνας, αρμάτωσες το μυθικό καράβι για ταξίδι ατόλημο προς τις ονειρευτές Κολχίδες. Αραδαριά περνούν εμπρός μας τα λαμπερά σου ονειροφαντάσματα με τα ξένα κάλλη και τα παράξενα ονόματα, τόποι και ζωγραφίες της Ανατολής και της Δύσης, βοριανές, μεσημεριάτικες, της Φύσης και της Τέχνης, κι ανάμεσά τους το αθάμητο πάντα, της Ελλάδας, της Μάννας γης, ονειροφάντασμα, σα μελωδία απέραντη βγενερική, σαν αναστένασμα που από καιρό σε καιρό κάνει λαχταριστά ν' ανασηκώνονται τα μαρμαρένια στέρνα του ταξιδευτή. Ηρωικό ταξίδι, μυστηρίων αφήγισμα και τεράτων προσπέρασμα (Στον Έρμονα τον ποιητή της "Αργώς")" (1905), *Άπαντα*, τ. 6, 429-438: 435).

<sup>11</sup> Σωτήρης Σκίπης, *Κολχίδες, Ποιήματα (1928-1929)*, Αθήνα 1930, 5.

προεκτείνει συμβολικά τον αρχαίο μύθο. Απευθυνόμενος ή, καλύτερα, διαλεγόμενος με τον αργοναύτη τού αποκαλύπτει, όπως και στον αναγνώστη, ότι ο σκοπός του ταξιδιού της Αργώς δεν είναι το χρυσόμαλλο δέρας, επειδή αυτό «σε καμιά γωνιά τούτης της Σφαίρας / δε βρίσκεται», αλλά το ίδιο το ταξίδι, η διαρκής αναζήτηση της χίμαιρας και η κατάκτηση του τιμητικού τίτλου του αιώνιου ταξιδευτή, του Αργοναύτη.

Σε συνάρτηση με τη συμβολική χρήση της Αργώς και των Αργοναυτών, έτσι όπως τη συναντήσαμε στα ποιήματα του Μαρτζώκη, του Βλαστού και του Σκίπη, υπενθυμίζω ότι στην περίοδο 1923-1927 εκδόθηκε στην Αλεξάνδρεια της Αιγύπτου το ελληνόγλωσσο λογοτεχνικό περιοδικό με τον εύγλωττο τίτλο «Αργώ».<sup>12</sup> Ο τίτλος δείχνει ότι η συντακτική ομάδα του περιοδικού το αντιλαμβάνονταν ως ένα πνευματικό ταξίδι για νέες κατακτήσεις της ελληνικής λογοτεχνίας και κριτικής.<sup>13</sup> Επίσης, δύο δεκαετίες αργότερα, την περίοδο 1942-1943, στη διάρκεια της Κατοχής, εκδόθηκαν στον Πειραιά τα 12 συνολικά τεύχη ενός ακόμη νεανικού λογοτεχνικού περιοδικού με τον τίτλο «Αργώ».<sup>14</sup>

Σε όψιμο χρόνο, το 1931, και στην προτελευταία του ποιητική συλλογή, *Περάσματα και χαιρετισμοί*, ο τότε εβδομήντα ενός ετών Παλαμάς συμπεριέλαβε το ποίημα «Η μουσική», το μοναδικό όπου εντοπίζεται μια αξιοσημείωτη αναφορά σε στοιχείο του μύθου της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας:

Ό,τι δετό και αργό  
φεύγα μακριά... Και να με!  
Πια δε φοβάμαι εγώ  
και καρτερώ. Έλα, δράμε.  
Τον έρωτα οδηγό  
στο διάβα μας κρατάμε.  
Σα να μας φέρν' η Αργώ  
στο χρυσό δέρας...

<sup>12</sup> Βλ., πρόχειρα, Αγ. Γκρέκου – Στ. Παπακυρίτσης, "Αργώ", *Λεξικό νεοελληνικής λογοτεχνίας*, ό.π., 176.

<sup>13</sup> Βλ. σχετικά τη δήλωση στο προγραμματικό σημείωμα του πρώτου τεύχους: "Λάτρεις του "Ωραίου του Μεγάλου και του Αληθινού", μια δράκα νέοι Αλεξαντρίνοι, ξεκινούμε προς τους άγνωστους πόλους της υπέρθεης Τέχνης με τη φιλοδοξία να βοηθήσουμε με την όποια μας δύναμη την ευγενικά νεοελληνική προσπάθεια για την πνευματική και ηθική απολύτρωση και ιδιαίτερα, ν' ανοίξομεν έναν καινούριο σταθμό εδώ στην Αλεξάνδρεια για την Ελληνική διανόηση και τα Ελληνικά γράμματα" (Αγ. Γκρέκου – Στ. Παπακυρίτσης, "Αργώ", *Λεξικό νεοελληνικής λογοτεχνίας*, ό.π.).

<sup>14</sup> Βλ. σχετικά, Αλ. Κ. Μπουφέα, *Τα λογοτεχνικά περιοδικά της Κατοχής*, Αθήνα, Εκδόσεις Σοκόλη 2006, 315-324 και, πρόχειρα, Αγ. Γκρέκου, "Αργώ", *Λεξικό νεοελληνικής λογοτεχνίας*, ό.π., 176-177.

Κάμε  
σε μιαν εκστατική  
στιγμή, στον ουρανό μας  
όπου η ζωή είναι μύθος  
κ' έχει πνοή και ο λίθος,  
να πάη μια μουσική  
μπετόβεια τ' όνειρό μας.<sup>15</sup>

Αυτό το αρκετά ασαφές ποίημα του Παλαμά (το πρόσωπο στο οποίο το ποιητικό υποκειμένο προτρεπτικά ή και παρακλητικά αποστρέφεται μένει άδηλο) φαίνεται να περιγράφει την αποδέσμευση του ποιητικού υποκειμένου από τα δεσμά της λογικής και του φόβου και την άφεσή του να παρασυρθεί στην ερωτική έκσταση και στο όνειρο, χάρη στη μαγική επενέργεια της μουσικής που, μάλιστα, ορίζεται με τη ρητή αναφορά σε έναν από τους κορυφαίους συνθέτες του ρομαντισμού, τον Μπετόβεν. Η ασάφεια του ποιήματος ίσως οφείλεται, ως ένα βαθμό, στη στιχουργική επιλογή του συνθέτου, γραμμένου στους συλλαβικά βραχείς ιαμβικούς οξύτονους εξασύλλαβους και παροξύτονους επτασύλλαβους, επιλογή που ωθεί τον Παλαμά στην ανάγκη να ανταποκριθεί πρωτίστως στις κατασκευαστικές δυσκολίες του ποιήματος σταθερής μορφής. Μέσα σε αυτό το στιχουργικά περιοριστικό και νοηματικά ασαφές πλαίσιο, η ανοδική κίνηση του ποιητικού υποκειμένου και του απροσδιόριστου συντρόφου του προς τον «ουρανό» του ονειρού παρομοιάζεται με το μυθικό ταξίδι της Αργώς και του πληρώματός της προς το «χρυσό δέρας», τον δικό τους εκστατικό και ονειρικό προορισμό.<sup>16</sup>

Ίσως μια βασική υπόθεση εργασίας για να εξετάσει κανείς στις γενικές της γραμμές την πρόσληψη της ελληνικής αρχαιότητας από τη νεότερη ελληνική ποίηση είναι ότι σε ολόκληρο τον 19ο αιώνα και μέχρι τον Μεσοπόλεμο η αρχαίοντα αντιμετωπιζόταν με διάφορους τρόπους που πάντως εναρμονίζονταν με τα ισχύοντα πολιτιστικά στερεότυπα γύρω από τον αρχαίο ελληνικό κόσμο. Έτσι στα παραδοσιακά ποιητικά κείμενα με θέμα την αργοναυτική εκστρατεία δεν εκδηλώνεται η δημιουργική αρχαιομάθεια, αλλά μια τάση επίδειξης της αρχαιομάθειας, που περιορίζεται σε κοινότητες ιστορικές ή μυθολογικές αρχαιοελληνικές αναφορές. Με άλλα λόγια, η ποσότητα και η προφάνεια αυτών των αναφορών δεν επιτρέπουν την

<sup>15</sup> Κωστής Παλαμάς, *Άπαντα*, τ. 9, 319.

<sup>16</sup> Μια ακόμη, μάλλον συμβατική, αναφορά στο καράβι της Αργώς και στον κυβερνήτη του Ιάσονα υπάρχει στο ποίημα του Παλαμά "Ο ύμνος της Αθηνάς, Δ'" (1889), στ. 23-27, ενταγμένη στο πλαίσιο της εξύμνησης της θεάς Αθηνάς: "Εσύ στον Άργο δύναμη φυσάς να μαστορέννη / το πλοίο το πρωτοτάξιδο που σχίζοντας το κύμα / κάνει στο αδούλωτο στοιχειό τον άνθρωπον αφέντη. / Εσύ το νου φανέρωσες του κόσμου κυβερνήτη / κι απάνου στην πλατεία στεριά και στα βαθιά πελάγη." (*Άπαντα*, τ. 1, 188).

αξιοποίησή τους ως λειτουργικών στοιχείων του ποιητικού κειμένου ή την κρυπτική υπογείωσή τους στο διακειμενικό υπόστρωμα του νεότερου ποιητικού έργου.

Εξαίρεση στα παραδοσιακά ποιητικά κείμενα με θέμα την αργοναυτική εκστρατεία αποτελεί το ποίημα του Άγγελου Σικελιανού (1884-1951), «Το τραγούδι των Αργοναυτών» (1919). Το ποίημα αυτό, έκτασης 272 στίχων είναι το τρίτο μέρος του συνθετικού ποιήματος *Το Πάσχα των Ελλήνων*. Αναφορές στην Αργώ και στους Αργοναύτες απαντούν και σε άλλα τρία, λίγο παλαιότερα, ποιήματα του Σικελιανού,<sup>17</sup> ωστόσο το «Τραγούδι των Αργοναυτών» όχι μόνο αναπτύσσει το θέμα των Αργοναυτών σε ένα ακέραιο ποίημα σχετικά μεγάλης έκτασης, αλλά και μπορεί να θεωρηθεί η περισσότερο σύνθετη και φιλόδοξη απόπειρα παραδοσιακού ποιητή να αξιοποιήσει τον μύθο της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας σε ένα κείμενο που είναι καθαρά και βαθιά αρχαιογνωστικό, όπως και το μεγαλύτερο μέρος της σικελιανικής ποίησης. Όπως ανέφερε ο ίδιος ο Σικελιανός το ποίημά του είναι ένας «μυητικός περίπλους»,<sup>18</sup> καθώς το ταξίδι των Αργοναυτών, ένα ταξίδι χαράς και πνευματικής απόλαυσης, δεν καταλήγει πουθενά και συνεχίζεται αιώνια. Όπως έδειξε ο Ανδρέας Κ. Φυλακτού, στο ποίημα, που λόγω της μεγάλης έκτασής του δεν είναι δυνατό να παρατεθεί εδώ, όχι μόνο αναπτύσσονται μυθολογικά θέματα της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας, όπως η κατασκευή της Αργώς, η ναυπήγηση του πλοίου και η περιγραφή του ταξιδιού, αλλά και απηχούνται, σε διάφορα σημεία, αρχαίες πηγές του μύθου, όπως τα *Αργοναυτικά* του Απολλώνιου του Ρόδιου, η *Βιβλιοθήκη* του Απολλόδωρου και οι *Εικόνες* του Φιλόστρατου.<sup>19</sup> Επίσης έχει ενδιαφέρον η συσχέτιση αυτού του ποιήματος από τον Φυλακτού με την ελληνική εκστρατεία στην Ουκρανία, το 1919, όταν ο ελληνικός στρατός συμμετείχε στη συμμαχική επέμβαση στη Ρωσία εναντίον των μπολσεβίκων.<sup>20</sup>

Ο Φυλακτού υποστήριξε συμπερασματικά, προτείνοντας μια γενική ερμηνεία του ποιήματος «Το τραγούδι των Αργοναυτών», ότι «οι Αργοναύτες του Σικελιανού είναι η ελληνική νεολαία, που εξορμά για να πραγματοποιήσει τη Μεγάλη Ιδέα».<sup>21</sup> Η άποψη αυτή δύσκολα υποστηρίζεται

<sup>17</sup> Πρόκειται για τα ποιήματα: "Νικητήρια" (1903), μέρος του "Διοτίμα" (από τη *Συνείδηση της Γυναίκας*, 1916) και μέρος του "Θεογονία" (από τη *Συνείδηση της Πίστης*, 1917). Και τα τρία παραπάνω ποιήματα εντοπίστηκαν και εξετάζονται από τον Αντρέα Κ. Φυλακτού, *Ο μύθος και η λήρα. Ο αρχαιοελληνικός μύθος στον "Αυρικό Βίο". Συμβολή στη μελέτη των πηγών και της ποιητικής του Άγγελου Σικελιανού*, Αθήνα, Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη 2003, 333-336. Για τη σχέση της ποίησης του Σικελιανού γενικότερα με τον μύθο της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας, βλ. ολόκληρο το κεφάλαιο "Αργοναυτική εκστρατεία" στο βιβλίο του Φυλακτού, *ό.π.*, 333-349.

<sup>18</sup> Βλ. σχετικά, Φυλακτού, *ό.π.*, 348.

<sup>19</sup> Βλ. Φυλακτού, *ό.π.*, 346-348.

<sup>20</sup> Βλ. Φυλακτού, *ό.π.*, 345-346.

<sup>21</sup> Φυλακτού, *ό.π.*, 349.

επαρκώς από στοιχεία του ίδιου του ποιητικού κειμένου του Σικελιανού, ωστόσο παρουσιάζει ενδιαφέρον επειδή προκύπτει μια πολύ ενδιαφέρουσα αντίθεση, αν σκεφτούμε ότι το πρώτο μοντέρνο ελληνικό ποίημα που ξαναπιάνει τον μύθο της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας είναι το ποίημα του Γιώργου Σεφέρη (1900-1971), «Μυθιστόρημα Δ'. Αργοναύτες» (1935). Η αντίθεση έγκειται στο γεγονός ότι το ποίημα του Σεφέρη εντάσσεται στην ποιητική σύνθεση *Μυθιστόρημα*, η οποία σηματοδοτεί σε μεγάλο βαθμό την αφετηρία της ελληνικής μοντέρνας ποίησης και παράλληλα εκφράζει τον καημό της Ρωμοσύνης, εξαιτίας της Μικρασιατικής Καταστροφής, του γεγονότος που σήμανε τη συντριβή της Μεγάλης Ιδέας. Αν, λοιπόν, το ποίημα του Σικελιανού υποδηλώνει την ορμητική εξόρμηση της ελληνικής νεολαίας, εκείνο του Σεφέρη διαπερνάται από την πίκρα για τη δραματική επιστροφή ή και τη συντριβή της:

- Και ψυχή  
 ει μέλλει γνώσεσθαι αυτήν  
 εις ψυχήν  
 αυτή βλέπτεόν:
- 5 τον ξένο και τον εχθρό τον είδαμε στον καθρέφτη.  
 Ήτανε καλά παιδιά οι συντρόφοι, δε φωνάζαν  
 ούτε από τον κάματο ούτε από τη δίψα ούτε από την παγωνιά,  
 είχανε το φέρσιμο των δέντρων και των κυμάτων  
 που δέχονται τον άνεμο και τη βροχή
- 10 δέχονται τη νύχτα και τον ήλιο  
 χωρίς ν' αλλάζουν μέσα στην αλλαγή.  
 Ήτανε καλά παιδιά, μέρες ολόκληρες  
 ιδρώναν στο κουπί με χαμηλωμένα μάτια  
 ανασαίνοντας με ρυθμό
- 15 και το αίμα τους κοκκίνιζε ένα δέρμα υποταγμένο.  
 Κάποτε τραγούδησαν, με χαμηλωμένα μάτια  
 όταν περάσαμε το ερημόνησο με τις αραποσυκιές  
 κατά τη δύση, πέρα από τον κάβο των σκύλων  
 που γαβγίζουν.
- 20 Ει μέλλει γνώσεσθαι αυτήν, έλεγαν  
 εις ψυχήν βλέπτεόν, έλεγαν  
 και τα κουπιά χτυπούσαν το χρυσάφι του πελάγου  
 μέσα στο ηλιόγεμα.
- 25 Περάσαμε κάβους πολλούς πολλά νησιά τη θάλασσα  
 που φέρνει την άλλη θάλασσα, γλάρους και φάκιες.  
 Δυστυχισμένες γυναίκες κάποτε με ολολυγμούς  
 κλαίγανε τα χαμένα τους παιδιά

- κι άλλες αγριεμένες γύρευαν το Μεγαλέξανδρο  
και δόξες βυθισμένες στα βάθη της Ασίας.
- 30 Αράξαμε σ' ακρογιαλιές γεμάτες αρώματα νυχτερινά  
με κελαηδίσματα πουλιών, νερά που αφήνανε στα χέρια  
τη μνήμη μιας μεγάλης ευτυχίας.  
Μα δεν τελειώναν τα ταξίδια.
- 35 Οι ψυχές τους έγιναν ένα με τα κουπιά και τους σκαρμούς  
με το σοβαρό πρόσωπο της πλήρης  
με τ' αυλάκι του τιμονιού  
με το νερό που έσπαζε τη μορφή τους.  
Οι σύντροφοι τέλειωσαν με τη σειρά,  
με χαμηλωμένα μάτια. Τα κουπιά τους
- 40 δείχνουν το μέρος που κοιμούνται στ' ακρογιάλι.  
Κανείς δεν τους θυμάται. Δικαιοσύνη.<sup>22</sup>

Το ποίημα του Σεφέρη είναι ένα κείμενο που συνδυάζει αρκετά και διαφορετικά μεταξύ τους αρχαιογνωστικά στοιχεία, αντλημένα από την ομηρική *Οδύσσεια* (στ. 40) έως τον *Αλκιβιάδη* του Πλάτωνα (στ. 1-4 και 20-21) και τη θρυλική ιστορία του Μεγαλέξανδρου (στ. 28). Ωστόσο, αυτά τα ποικίλα και χωνεμένα στο ποίημα στοιχεία συνενώνονται μέσα από το κοινό νήμα της βαθιάς ελληνικής παιδείας και καταλήγουν, με την υπαινικτική αναφορά των στίχων 39-40, στο κεντρικό για τη σεφερική ποίηση πρόσωπο του Ελπήνορα, του τραγικού και άδοξου συντρόφου του Οδυσσέα (σκοτώθηκε από ατύχημα στο παλάτι της Κίρκης), που μεταφέρεται πολλαπλασιασμένος στην ομάδα των συντρόφων του, των Αργοναυτών. Μάλιστα αυτοί οι σύντροφοι-Αργοναύτες ταξιδεύουν στον χρόνο της ελληνικής ιστορίας και ζωντανεύουν στο ιστορικό παρόν του ποιητή, όπως φαίνεται έκδηλα ιδίως στους στ. 24-32, στους οποίους το ποιητικό υποκείμενο μιλά στο πρώτο πληθυντικό πρόσωπο. Μεταφερμένοι στο παρόν, λίγα μόλις χρόνια μετά το βίωμα της Μικρασιατικής Καταστροφής, οι Ελπήνορες-Αργοναύτες γίνονται υποτακτικοί και αναισθητοί, «όλοι τους Ελπήνορες», όπως γράφει ο Edmund Keeley.<sup>23</sup> Ο Keeley, συγκεκριμένα, δείχνει πώς ο Ελπήνωρ, η κεντρική αντιρωική μορφή του ποιήματος, μεταφέρεται στον σύγχρονο κόσμο, μέσω των Αργοναυτών, για να προβληθεί η αντίθεση ανάμεσα στο τραγικό παρόν και το ένδοξο παρελθόν: «Η έλλειψη ανδρείας και ευφύιας στον Ελπήνορα, γίνονται η υποτακτικότητα και η αναισθησία του σύγχρονου κόσμου, που εδώ συμβολίζεται με το μάταιο ταξίδι ενός πληρώματος σημερινών Αργοναυτών. [...] Οι "σύντροφοι" που

<sup>22</sup> Γιώργος Σεφέρης, *Ποιήματα*, Αθήνα, Ίκαρος 1981<sup>13</sup>, 46-47.

<sup>23</sup> Έντ. Κήλυ, *Μύθος και φωνή στη σύγχρονη ελληνική ποίηση*, Μετάφραση Σπ. Τσακνιάς, Αθήνα, Στιγμή 1987, 103.

περιγράφονται εδώ προβάλλουν τη μετριότητα του παρόντος εν αντιθέσει με την αρχοντιά του παρελθόντος, μιαν αρχοντιά υποδηλούμενη στον υπαινιγμό των Αργοναυτών· ξαναζωντανεύοντας στον σύγχρονο κόσμο, είναι υποτακτικοί, ασπόνδυλοι, αναλλοίωτοι, ρηχοί, όλοι τους Ελήνηορες· ενώ οι παλιοί Αργοναύτες ήσαν ηρωικοί μέχρι αποθεώσεως. [...] Η αλλαγή τους τονίζεται ακόμη περισσότερο με την αναφορά στον Μεγαλέξαντρο και σε "δόξες βυθισμένες στα βάθη της Ασίας", πανάρχαιες δόξες χαμένες ανεπανόρθωτα, κι ωστόσο αναζητούμενες απ' αυτές τις ψυχές που σπαταλήθηκαν σ' ένα ταξίδι χωρίς τελειωμό». <sup>24</sup> Στο τέλος του ποιήματος, οι Αργοναύτες, αφού ξόδεψαν ολόκληρη τη ζωή τους στον αγώνα ενός μάταιου ταξιδιού, καταλήγουν, όπως ακριβώς ο αρχαίος Ελήνηορ αλλά και πλήθος Έλληνες στρατιώτες της μικρασιατικής εκστρατείας, θαμμένοι στο ακρογιάλι χωρίς κανείς να τους θυμάται.

Αν και το «Μυθιστόρημα Δ΄. Αργοναύτες» ανήκει στην κατηγορία των πολυσχολιασμένων από την κριτική σφαιρικών ποιημάτων, είναι ένα από εκείνα τα ποιήματά του για τα οποία ο, φειδωλός σε αυτοσχόλια, Σεφέρης στάθηκε ιδιαίτερα εύγλωτος. Συγκεκριμένα, στο δοκίμιό του «Μια σκηνοθεσία για την "Κίχλη"», γραμμένο υπό μορφή επιστολής στον Γιώργο Κατσιμπαλη, ο Σεφέρης έκανε μια αναδρομή στις εμφανίσεις του «χαρακτήρα» (ποιητικού προσωπείου) του Ελήνηορα σε ποιήματά του πριν από την «Κίχλη» και στάθηκε ιδιαίτερα στο «Μυθιστόρημα Δ΄. Αργοναύτες», αποσαφηνίζοντας τη σχέση ανάμεσα στον αποσιωπημένο στο ποίημα Ελήνηορα και τους συντρόφους του Αργοναύτες: «Στο *Μυθιστόρημα*, οι "Αργοναύτες", υποταγμένοι και σιωπηλοί, [είναι Ελήνηορες] το ίδιο χωρίς αμφιβολία. [...] Και είναι σωστό να μην τους θυμάται κανείς: δεν είναι ήρωες, είναι Ελήνηορες. Ίσως ρωτήσεις γιατί γράφω με συμπάθεια γι' αυτούς. Μα γιατί οι άνθρωποι που ανήκουν σ' αυτή την κατηγορία, ανάμεσα στους ήρωες (ομηρική έννοια, όχι, για όνομα του θεού, καρλαϊλική) και στους Θερσίτες, είναι οι πιο συμπαθητικοί. Ακόμη και ο ομηρικός Οδυσσεάς, όταν βλέπει τον Ελήνηορα πρώτον ανάμεσα στους νεκρούς, τον λυπάται και δακρύζει. Δε λέω: αγαπητοί ή αξιοθαύμαστοι· λέω: *συμπαθητικοί*, αισθηματικοί, μέσοι, και σπαταλημένοι». <sup>25</sup> Ανάλογα αντιρωικές είναι τόσο μια μαρτυρία για ένα εντέλει άγνωστο ποίημα του Σεφέρη με τίτλο «Αργώ», ενταγμένο σε μια σειρά ποιημάτων του με τίτλους ονόματα καράβια, όσο και

<sup>24</sup> Κήλυ, *ό.π.*, 102-103.

<sup>25</sup> Γιώργος Σεφέρης, *Δοκίμια. Δεύτερος τόμος (1948-1971)*, Φιλολογική επιμέλεια Γ. Π. Σαββίδης, Αθήνα, Ίκαρος 1984<sup>3</sup>, 30-56: 38-39. Το δοκίμιο "Μια σκηνοθεσία για την "Κίχλη"" γράφτηκε το 1949 και πρωτοδημοσιεύτηκε στην πλήρη μορφή του το 1974 στο δεύτερο τόμο των *Δοκιμών*.

μία άλλη, υπαινικτική μνεία του στην Αργώ και τους Αργοναύτες, εντοπισμένη σε άλλο ποίημα του *Μυθιστορήματος*.<sup>26</sup>

Ωστόσο, τον Νοέμβριο του 1948, δεκατρία χρόνια ύστερα από τους «Αργοναύτες» του *Μυθιστορήματος*, ο Σεφέρης κατέγραψε στο ημερολόγιό του, χωρίς όμως να το συμπεριλάβει ποτέ σε ποιητικό βιβλίο του, ένα ποίημα ή, ακριβέστερα, ένα ποιητικό σχέδιασμα με τίτλο «(Αργώ)»:

- Τα παραμύθια μου τα 'μαθα στα καράβια  
 όχι από ταξιδιώτες μήτε από θαλασσινούς  
 μήτε απ' τους άλλους που προσμένουν στα μουράγια  
 για πάντα ξέμπαρκοι ψάχνοντας τις τσέπες τους για τσιγάρο.
- 5 Πρόσωπα караβιών κατοικούν τη ζωή μου·  
 άλλα κοιτάζουν μ' ένα μάτι σαν τον Κύκλωπα  
 ακίνητα στου πελάγου τον καθρέφτη  
 άλλα έχουν το φέρσιμο του μέρμηγκα κι άλλα της πεταλούδας  
 άλλα προχωρούν σαν υποβάτες, επικίνδυνα
- 10 κι άλλα τα πήρε ο ύπνος του βυθού  
 ξύλα σκονιά κι αραβόπανα κι αλυσίδες.  
 Στο δροσερό σπιτάκι του περιβολιού  
 κάτω απ' τις γαζίες και τους ευκάλυπτους  
 κοντά στο σκουριασμένον ανεμόμυλο
- 15 κοντά στην κίτρινη δεξαμενή μ' ένα χρυσόψαρο μονάχα  
 στο δροσερό σπιτάκι που μύριζε λυγαριά  
 βρήκα ένα μπουσούλα καραβίσιο  
 αυτός μου 'δειξε τους αγγέλους των καιρών.<sup>27</sup>

Στον χρόνο της γραφής του ποιήματος, το 1948, οι εμπειρίες του Σεφέρη από πραγματικά καράβια, συνδεδεμένα με αρνητικά ή και οδυνηρά βιώματα, δεν αφορούσαν πια μόνο στα πλοία της Μικρασιατικής Καταστροφής, αλλά

<sup>26</sup> Συγκεκριμένα, σε επιστολή προς τον στενό φίλο του πεζογράφο Γιώργο Θεοτοκά, στις 13 Ιανουαρίου 1932, ο Σεφέρης, με αφορμή την αναφορά του στο πρώτο και πολύ γνωστό μυθιστόρημα του Θεοτοκά, *Αργώ*, που τότε ετοιμαζόταν (το πρώτο μέρος εκδόθηκε το 1933), γράφει: "Το περίεργο είναι που από τον περασμένο μήνα είχα κι εγώ στα σκαριά μια σειρά ποιημάτων με ονόματα καραβιών! Φυσικά, μια από τις μονάδες του στόλου λεγότανε κι αυτή "Αργώ". Υπάρχουν αλήθεια αλλόκοτες συμπτώσεις μεταξύ μας." (Γιώργος Θεοτοκάς & Γιώργος Σεφέρης, *Αλληλογραφία (1930-1966)*, Φιλολογική επιμέλεια Γ. Π. Σαββίδης, Αθήνα, Ερμής 1981, 70). Σε σημείωσή του ο Σαββίδης μάς πληροφορεί σχετικά: "Η σειρά αυτή των ποιημάτων, όσο ξέρω, δεν πραγματοποιήθηκε" (ό.π., 209). Επίσης, στο ποίημα "Μυθιστόρημα Ι", στους στίχους 12-13, "Ο τόπος μας είναι κλειστός. Τον κλείνουν / οι δυο μαύρες Συμπληγάδες" (*Ποιήματα*, ό.π., 55), ο Σεφέρης σημειώνει ότι αυτοί οι στίχοι γράφτηκαν "σύμφωνα με την ευχή της Μήδειας" στους στίχους 1-2 της *Μήδειας* του Ευριπίδη. Η σημείωσή του δείχνει ότι ο Σεφέρης γνώριζε πολύ καλά, όπως είναι αυτονόητο, την περίφημη τραγωδία.

<sup>27</sup> Γιώργος Σεφέρης, *Μέρες Ε' 1 Γενάρη 1945 – 19 Απρίλη 1951*, Αθήνα, Ίκαρος 1977<sup>2</sup>, 127-128.



και σε εκείνα του Δευτέρου Παγκοσμίου Πολέμου (τα πλοία της υποχρεωτικής εξορίας από την Ελλάδα και της επιστροφής στην πατρίδα), όπως και σε εκείνο της «Κίχλης», του βυθισμένου караβιού στον Πόρο, χάρη στο οποίο ο Σεφέρης έγραψε το ομώνυμο ποίημά του, ένα από τα ωριμότερα και καλύτερα έργα του. Ίσως επειδή οι εμπειρίες των πραγματικών караβιών ήταν πια τόσο ισχυρές στη ζωή του, το ποίημα φέρει τον αναφερόμενο στον μύθο της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας τίτλο, αλλά στο εσωτερικό του δεν διακρίνονται άλλα μυθολογικά ή αρχαιογνωστικά ίχνη. Μετά την πρώτη ενότητα του ποιήματος (στ. 1-11), όπου περιγράφεται η σχέση του ποιητή με καράβια που είναι σαν ζωντανά πλάσματα, στη δεύτερη ενότητα του ποιήματος (στ. 12-18) περιγράφονται αναμνήσεις από την παιδική ηλικία του ποιητή και, πιο συγκεκριμένα, από τις ευτυχισμένες και αξέχαστες στιγμές που ζούσε κάθε καλοκαίρι στο σπίτι της γιαγιάς του στα παράλια της Μικράς Ασίας (Σκάλα Βουρλών). Οι αναμνήσεις αυτές, στο τέλος του ποιήματος, εστιάζονται σε έναν «καραβίσιο μπούσουλα», μια ναυτική πυξίδα. Αδιάψευστος μάρτυρας ότι αυτή η ανάμνηση συνδέεται με τις καλοκαιρινές διακοπές της παιδικής του ηλικίας είναι ότι η ναυτική πυξίδα αναφέρεται στο ημερολόγιο του Σεφέρη και, συγκεκριμένα, στην περιγραφή της επίσκεψης που ο ποιητής έκανε το 1950, για πρώτη και τελευταία φορά ύστερα από τα παιδικά του χρόνια, στο σπίτι της γιαγιάς του στη Σκάλα.<sup>28</sup> Καταγράφοντας με συγκινητικό τρόπο αυτή την εμπειρία στο ημερολόγιό του, την Κυριακή 2 Ιουλίου 1950, ο Σεφέρης, ανάμεσα σε πολλά άλλα, θυμάται: «Εκεί, πολύ μικρός, είχα δει πρώτη μου φορά μια караβίσια πυξίδα, απομεινάρι από ένα ιστιοφόρο που είχε κάποτε ο παππούς μου. Αυτό το ναυτικό σύνεργο ασκούσε πάνω μου μια μυστηριώδη έλξη, σα να ήταν όργανο αλχημείας. Το περιεργάστηκα τόσο επίμονα που, τέλος, είχε πια διαλυθεί».<sup>29</sup> Στον τελευταίο στίχο του ποιήματος οι «άγγελοι των καιρών» είναι τα σημάδια του ταξιδιού της ανθρώπινης ζωής μέσα στον χρόνο. Συνδυάζοντας τα παραπάνω στοιχεία, αντιλαμβανόμαστε γιατί το ποίημα τιτλοφορείται με το όνομα του μυθικού караβιού του Ιάσονα και των Αργοναυτών. Το χρυσόμαλλο δέρας της παραδείσιας παιδικής ηλικίας του Σεφέρη έμεινε πίσω στη Σκάλα της Σμύρνης, οριστικά χαμένο στην ενήλικη ζωή του, στιγματισμένη από την εμπειρία караβιών που «πήρε ο ύπνος του βυθού», οδηγημένων στην καταστροφή.

Με αφορμή το ποίημα του Σεφέρη «Μυθιστόρημα Δ΄. Αργοναύτες» μπορούμε να παρατηρήσουμε ότι με τους σημαντικότερους ποιητές της γενιάς του 1930 σημειώθηκε μια καίρια αλλαγή στον τρόπο με τον οποίο θεωρείται ποιητικά η ελληνική αρχαιότητα. Η αλλαγή αφορά τόσο στη

<sup>28</sup> Βλ. Σεφέρης, *Μέρες Ε΄ 1 Γενάρη 1945 – 19 Απρίλη 1951*, ό.π., 198-202.

<sup>29</sup> *Ο.π.*, 201.

διαφοροποίηση από τον παλαιότερο τρόπο ποιητικής πρόσληψης της αρχαιότητας, όσο και στο γεγονός ότι ο νέος τρόπος πρόσληψής της αποκλίνει από τα πολιτιστικά στερεότυπα για τον αρχαίο ελληνικό πολιτισμό. Αυτό συνέβη, μεταξύ άλλων, επειδή οι τρόποι πρόσληψης της αρχαιότητας υπαγορεύτηκαν από τα ποικίλα αιτήματα αξιοποίησης του λογοτεχνικού παρελθόντος τα οποία καλλιεργήθηκαν από τις διάφορες εκφράσεις του ευρωπαϊκού μοντερνιστικού κινήματος, είτε η έκφραση ήταν ο αγγλοσαξονικός μοντερνισμός, στη γραμμή του οποίου κινήθηκε ο Σεφέρης, είτε ο γαλλικός υπερρεαλισμός, τις βασικές αρχές του οποίου ασπάστηκαν οι Εμπεϊρικός, Εγγονόπουλος και Κάλας.

Το ποίημα του Σεφέρη «Μυθιστόρημα Δ΄. Αργοναύτες» είναι το πρώτο μιας σειράς μοντερνιστικών ή μεταμοντερνιστικών ποιητικών επεξεργασιών του μύθου της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας. Όλες σχεδόν αυτές οι επεξεργασίες βασίζονται σε μια διαλογική σχέση με την αρχαιότητα η οποία, όπως το μεγαλύτερο μέρος της ελληνικής αρχαιόθεμης ποίησης του 20ού αιώνα, υπερβαίνει τη συνηθισμένη, από τον 19ο αιώνα μέχρι τις αρχές του 20ού αιώνα, πρακτική ενός αρχαιογνωστικού περιεχομένου που εναρμονίζεται με τον αρχαίο μύθο και τις αρχαίες και νεότερες λογοτεχνικές πραγματώσεις του· αντίθετα, η σχέση αυτή βασίζεται όχι μόνο στην απόκλιση από το βασικό περιεχόμενο του αρχαίου μύθου, αλλά και στην ανασκευή ή και την ανατροπή του. Έτσι στην περίπτωση των νεότερων ποιημάτων με θέμα την αργοναυτική εκστρατεία, η ανατροπή του μύθου έγκειται στην έκπτωση του συμβολικού νοήματός του: οι ήρωες του αιώνιου ταξιδιού και οι αξίες που αντιπροσωπεύουν όχι μόνο δεν υπάρχουν πλέον, αλλά έχουν αντικατασταθεί με διάφορα σύγχρονα ευτελή στοιχεία και καταστάσεις.

Στην περίπτωση του ποιήματος του Αντώνη Δωριάδη (γεννήθηκε το 1936), «Αργώ» (1971), η ποιητική επεξεργασία του μύθου συγχρονίζεται, για άλλη μια φορά, με την ιστορική συγκυρία της εποχής κατά την οποία γράφτηκε το ποίημα, τη δικτατορία των συνταγματαρχών. Το ποίημα του Δωριάδη είναι ένα προγραμματικά αντιδικτατορικό σύνθεμα που αναπτύσσεται σε 30 μέρη και στο τέλος του φέρει την ένδειξη: «Παρίσι, 1971».<sup>30</sup> Κρίνοντας από την επιγραφή που φέρει το ποίημα, επιγραφή όπου ο αναγνώστης πληροφορείται τον βασικό πυρήνα του μύθου της αργοναυτικής Εκστρατείας (για ποιο λόγο ο Ιάσων πρόκειται να πάει στην Κολχίδα και ποιοι είναι οι Αργοναύτες), καθώς και το περιεχόμενο του ποιήματος, μπορούμε να εικάσουμε βάσιμα ότι ο τίτλος, καθώς ανανακλά στις κοινωνικοπολιτικές συνθήκες της εποχής στην οποία γράφτηκε το ποίημα, λειτουργεί συμβολικά: όπως το ταξίδι της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας ήταν μια πολύ μεγάλη περιπέτεια, από ανάλογη περιπέτεια διέρχεται ο ελληνικός

<sup>30</sup> Βλ. Αντώνης Δωριάδης, *Ποίηση 1958-1978*, Αθήνα, Εκδόσεις Μπουκουμάνη 1979, 49-89.

λαός· ωστόσο, παρ' όλες τις δοκιμασίες, αυτή η περιπέτεια θα έχει αίσιο τέλος. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, το σύνθεμα του Δωριάδη, που σε μεγάλο βαθμό θυμίζει τα συνθετικά ποιήματα του Γιάννη Ρίτσου, είναι ένα σκιηκό ποίημα όπου ένας νέος άνδρας, ελληνικής καταγωγής, στη διάρκεια μιας νύχτας μιλά σε μια νέα, την αγαπημένη του, περιγράφοντάς της την κατάσταση της πατρίδας του. Αναμειγνύοντας ρεαλιστικά και αλληγορικά στοιχεία, καθώς και παραστάσεις του σύγχρονου κοινωνικοπολιτικού παρόντος με πολλές αναμνήσεις της ελληνικής αρχαιότητας, ο Δωριάδης συνέθεσε ένα αμφισβητησιακό ποίημα καταγγελίας του παρόντος αλλά και ελπίδας για ένα καλύτερο αύριο. Πέρα από τον τίτλο του, στο εσωτερικό του το ποίημα δεν έχει αναφορές στον μύθο της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας, ωστόσο ένα από τα τελευταία, επιλογικά ποιήματα αποσαφηνίζει ακριβώς τη σχέση του τίτλου του συνθέματος με το περιεχόμενό του. Πρόκειται για το ποίημα XXVIII:

Ω, αγαπημένη,  
είμαι τόσο ευτυχισμένος που μοιραστήκαμε τη νύχτα απόψε  
σαν ένα κομμάτι ψωμί, σαν ένα τσιγάρο,  
σα μια πράξη κοινής Αντίστασης  
στον κοινό μας εχθρό.  
Γι' αυτό σουμίλησα με τόσο πάθος απόψε για τούτη τη χώρα  
που είναι και χώρα σου, αφού μας ενώνει  
κοινή μας πατρίδα: η Ελευθερία.  
Ορκίσου λοιπόν, όπως όλοι σε τούτο το πλοίο  
τον αιώνιο όρκο στο όνομα του Πρώτου  
και Υπέρτατου Χρέους μας:  
Του Αγώνα.<sup>31</sup>

Στο ποίημα του Δωριάδη, λοιπόν, η Αργώ γίνεται το παγκόσμιο πλοίο του κοινού αγώνα όλων των λαών για την ελευθερία τους.

Με την ελληνική ποίηση που γράφτηκε στα μεταπολεμικά χρόνια και μέχρι σήμερα ο διάλογος με το αρχαιοελληνικό γραμματειακό και λογοτεχνικό παρελθόν γνώρισε μεγάλη ύφεση. Οι αιτίες είναι πολλές, τόσο ενδολογοτεχνικές, όσο και γενικότερα πνευματικές και κοινωνικές. Περιορίζομαι να υπενθυμίσω μία, πιθανόν πρωταρχική αιτία, διατυπώνοντάς την με ένα ρητορικό ερώτημα. Πώς να μιλήσεις για τους αρχαίους και με τους αρχαίους μετά από τον Δεύτερο Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο, με κυρίαρχο το αίσθημα της μεταπολεμικότητας, το αίσθημα δηλαδή ότι οι αξίες επάνω στις οποίες στηρίχθηκε ο Δυτικός Πολιτισμός αποδείχθηκαν πλάνες; Ο διάλογος πλέον των σύγχρονων Ελλήνων ποιητών με τον αρχαίο κόσμο δεν μπορεί

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<sup>31</sup> Δωριάδης, *ό.π.*, 86.

παρά να διέρχεται την αναγνωριστική οδό της σαρκαστικής ή και αυτοσαρκαστικής ειρωνείας.

Στα ποιητικά κείμενα, λοιπόν, που ακολουθούν συναντούμε καθαρά ειρωνικές ανατροπές του μύθου, ανατροπές που υποδεικνύουν την έκπτωσή του. Το πρώτο σχετικό παράδειγμα είναι το ποίημα του Ζάχου Σιαφλέκη (γεννήθηκε το 1954), «Ο θρίαμβος των κωπηλατών» (1982):

Οι ωραίες μέρες ωριμάζουν όπως τα φιλιά στις φυλλωσιές.  
Ταξίδια ηχηρά  
ανάμεσα σε σταλακτίτες και σε ναυαγούς  
κοντεύουν τώρα να τελειώσουν.  
Δακρύζουν οι επιβάτες της πρώτης θέσεως.  
Καράβια πνίγονται  
αλλά μέσα στη γενική θολούρα  
ο Ιάσων παντρεύει με το έτσι θέλω τους ναύτες του.<sup>32</sup>

Στο ποίημα του Σιαφλέκη, ποιητή επηρεασμένου από την υπερρεαλιστική παράδοση και, συνεπώς, από την εγγενή στα υπερρεαλιστικά κείμενα ειρωνεία, η ανατροπή του αρχαίου μύθου έγκειται καταρχάς στο άδοξο τέλος του ταξιδιού των Αργοναυτών: σε ειρωνική αντίθεση με τον τίτλο, όπου γίνεται λόγος για «θρίαμβο των κωπηλατών», που προφανώς είναι οι Αργοναύτες, στο εσωτερικό του ποιήματος τα «ταξίδια ηχηρά... κοντεύουν να τελειώσουν» και τα «καράβια πνίγονται». Αλλά η ανατροπή του αρχαίου μύθου κορυφώνεται με την τελική ενέργεια του επικεφαλής των Αργοναυτών Ιάσωνα που «παντρεύει με το έτσι θέλω τους ναύτες του», μετατρέποντάς τους σε συμβατικά πρόσωπα. Ο αρχαίος μύθος, λοιπόν, εκπίπτει «μέσα στη γενική θολούρα», καθώς ο ιερός σκοπός του ταξιδιού και οι ηρωικές πράξεις των κωπηλατών-(αργο)ναυτών όχι απλώς δεν μνημονεύονται καν αλλά, όπως επιτρέπει να εικάσουμε το ποίημα, έχουν οριστικά τελειώσει.

Το χαρακτηριστικότερο παράδειγμα της τάσης των νεότερων ποιητών για αυτοσαρκαστική ειρωνεία, με θεματικό επίκεντρο τον μύθο της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας, είναι το ποίημα του Γιάννη Πατίλη (γεννήθηκε το 1947) «Αργώ» (1989):

Για ένα πακέτο τσιγάρα  
Μια μπίρα το απόγευμα έξω απ' τον Ορχομενό  
Μια σκονισμένη δύση ανάμεσα σε δύο πούλμαν  
Θα κάνω ό,τι μου ζητήσεις Αναγνώστη  
Ρουτίνα οι Συμπληγάδες κι οι Σειρήνες  
Ο Ορφέας ένα σκυλάδικο εν περιλήψει

<sup>32</sup> Ζάχος Σιαφλέκης, *Ο θρίαμβος των κωπηλατών*, Αθήνα, Αίολος 1982, 55.

Η Σκύλλα και η Χάρυβδη μια πλήξη  
 Κι ο Πολυδεύκης συνοικιακή σχολή καράτε  
 Μόνο μια κούραση όπως κάθε εργαζόμενος  
 Που αναχωρεί πρώτη και δεκαπέντε απ' την Κοχλίδα  
 Του *Χρυσομάλλον Δέρατος* χαϊδεύοντας μικρά αναμνηστικά  
 Θα είμαι εκεί που μ' άφησες την τελευταία φορά  
 Προσωρινά κατάκοπο ανάμεσα σε δυο ακόμη άθλους  
 Καθώς ανάμεσα στα έπιπλα μιας μετακόμισης που φθίνει  
 Εξαιρουμένης της καρέκλας σου που φυσικά  
 Κανείς πλέον δεν κινδυνεύεις να στην πάρει  
 Όπως πολύ αν θυμάσαι φοβήθηκες παλιά  
 Όταν απρόσκλητο με είδες ξαφνικά να μπαίνω στο σαλόνι  
 Εκδικητής  
 Με μαυρισμένο βλέμμα μονοσάνδαλος αλήτης.<sup>33</sup>

Στο ποίημα του Πατίλη ο αφηγητής είναι ο ποιητής που απευθύνεται στον αναγνώστη του, ομολογώντας του ότι παραδίδεται οριστικά στις διαθέσεις του αναγνωστικού κοινού. Όλα τα στοιχεία του μύθου της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας, ανάμεσά τους και ορισμένοι βασικοί Αργοναύτες, όπως ο Ορφέας, ο Πολυδεύκης και ο ίδιος ο Ιάσων, τη φωνή του οποίου υποδύεται ο αφηγητής, όπως φαίνεται στους τελευταίους στίχους του ποιήματος, έχουν πλέον χάσει το ηρωικό πνεύμα τους, καθώς μεταφέρονται στη σύγχρονη ελληνική κατάσταση, κατάσταση που σηματοδοτούν από τη μια η τουριστική ανάπτυξη και από την άλλη η ηθική έκπτωση τόσο του ποιητή όσο και του αναγνώστη. Ιδίως ο βασικός ήρωας του μύθου, ο Ιάσων, προσωπείο του ποιητή-αφηγητή, έχει καταντήσει ένας αλήτης που έχει πάψει πια να απειλεί τον βασιλιά Πελία, τον αναγνώστη του. Το ποίημα του Πατίλη συγχρονίζεται με τη γενικότερη τάση των σύγχρονων Ελλήνων ποιητών για απομυθοποίηση του αρχαίου μύθου, έτσι όπως η τάση αυτή φαίνεται από τα περισσότερα αρχαιόθεμα ή αρχαιόμυθα ποιήματά τους, αλλά συνάμα διατηρεί μια μακρινή συγγένεια με το ποίημα του Σεφέρη για τους Αργοναύτες, καθώς και στα δύο ποιήματα η ανατροπή του αρχαίου μύθου έχει ως στόχο της να υποδείξει την έκπτωση του παρόντος.

Το μόλις τρίστιχο ποίημα του Πάνου Κυπαρίσση (γεννήθηκε το 1945), «Χρέος» (1992) ενέχει επίσης την ανατροπή του αρχαίου μύθου:

<sup>33</sup> Από τη συλλογή του Πατίλη *Γραφώς κάτοπτρον*, 1989. Παραπέμπω στη συγκεντρωτική έκδοση των ποιημάτων του Γιάννη Πατίλη, *Ταξίδια στην ίδια πόλη [Ποιήματα 1970-1990]*, Αθήνα, Ύψιλον/βιβλία 1993, 213. Το ποίημα φέρει στο τέλος του την ένδειξη: "Καλοκαίρι 1989".

Τώρα πρέπει να στο γυρίσω  
το χρυσόμαλλο δέρας  
περνώντας πάλι τις συμπληγάδες.<sup>34</sup>

Πρόκειται για ένα προφανώς ερωτικό ποίημα, όπου το ποιητικό υποκείμενο παίρνει τη φωνή του Ιάσονα και αποστρέφεται προς το άλλο πρόσωπο της ερωτικής σχέσης, για να εκφράσει, με το υλικό του μύθου, το μάλλον πικρό καταστάλαγμα της σχέσης. Ο στόχος επιτεύχθηκε, το χρυσόμαλλο δέρας κατακτήθηκε, τώρα όμως ήρθε η στιγμή του χρέους – κι εδώ έγκειται η ανατροπή του μύθου: το χρυσόμαλλο δέρας πρέπει να επιστραφεί στον αρχικό του κάτοχο και το ποιητικό υποκείμενο σ' αυτό το ταξίδι της ανταπόδοσης θα διατρέξει τους ίδιους κινδύνους με εκείνους του ταξιδιού της κατάκτησης.

Η ανάκληση στοιχείων του μύθου της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας εντοπίζεται και σε αρκετά ποιήματα των τελευταίων δέκα περίπου χρόνων, τα οποία όμως δεν θα σχολιαστούν εδώ για λόγους οικονομίας της μελέτης.<sup>35</sup> Το τελευταίο παράδειγμα, λοιπόν, κρίθηκε σκόπιμο να είναι μια ολόκληρη ποιητική συλλογή που φέρει τον τίτλο *Η αργοναυτική εκστρατεία* (1996), έργο του Δημήτρη Καλοκύρη (γεννήθηκε το 1948).<sup>36</sup> Αλλά ακόμη και η προσεκτική επισκόπηση των ολιγόστιχων ή και ολιγόλεκτων κειμένων, καθαρά σατιρικών ή ειρωνικών αποφθεγμάτων και παιχνιδιών με τη γλώσσα, που συγκροτούν τη συλλογή θα άφηνε τον αναγνώστη να αναρωτιέται ποια άραγε μπορεί να είναι η σχέση τους με τον τίτλο, εάν δεν υπήρχε το εισαγωγικό κείμενο «Αργώ· ή Αργότερα», στο οποίο προσδιορίζεται η σχέση του τίτλου με τα κείμενα που στεγάζει. Σε αυτό το δισέλιδο εισαγωγικό

<sup>34</sup> Πάνος Κυπαρίσσης, *Νησί χωρίς φύλλα*, Αθήνα, Λωτός 1992, 34.

<sup>35</sup> Βλ., π.χ., Αναστάσης Βιστονίτης, "Κύματα της μαύρης θάλασσας", *Χόμα από ουρανό. Ποίηση 1983-1995*, Αθήνα, Εκδόσεις Πατάκη 1996, 119-122· Σταύρος Ζαφειρίου, "Ηλικία στη νύχτα ε'", *Η άτροπος των ημερών*, Αθήνα, Νεφέλη 1998, 43· Μαρία Κυρτζάκη, "Μαύρη Θάλασσα" (από τη συλλογή *Μαύρη Θάλασσα*, 2000), *Στη μέση της ασφάλτου. Ποιήματα 1973-2002*, Αθήνα, Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη 2005, 275-277. Σημειώνω, επίσης, ότι στη συλλογή του Σπύρου Λ. Βρεττού, *Συνέβη*, Αθήνα, Εκδόσεις Γαβριηλίδης 2007, 45-52, περιλαμβάνεται μια ενότητα πέντε ποιημάτων τιλοφορημένη "Μήδεια", όπου τα κείμενα διαλέγονται φανερά με την ομώνυμη τραγωδία του Ευριπίδη. Παραθέτω, τέλος, το τραγούδι του γνωστού και καλλιτεργημένου στιχουργού Άλκη Αλκαίου, "Αργώ" (περιέχεται στο μουσικό έργο του Θάνου Μικρούτσικου "Υπέροχα μονάχοι", 2006, και ερμηνεύεται από τον Μανώλη Μητσιά): "Όλα τα βλέπω ρόδινα απόψε, / μέσα στον πυρετό μου την αγλή. / Γείρε στο πλάι μου, παλιέ μου πόθε / και μέχρι να 'ρθει η ανατολή. / λύσε τα φρένα, τα σχοινιά μου κόψε. / Μεσ το μυαλό μου έγιναν κουβάρι, / όσα έζησα κι όσα έχω ονειρευτεί. / Του χρόνου όλα τα σβήνει το σφουγγάρι / κι εσύ Αργώ με χάρτινο πανί, / σε σκοτεινά νερά έχεις σαλπάρει. / Φεύγει η αγάπη φεύγει σαν αέρας, / στου δρόμου την πολύβουη ερημιά. / Μην ψάχνεις το χρυσόμαλλο το δέρας / Κολχίδα δεν υπάρχει τώρα πια, / παιχνίδια είμαστε της κάθε μέρας. / Πάμε στον κόσμο υπέροχα μονάχοι, / μ' ένα παλιό τραγούδι χαρωπό. / Το τραγουδάνε οι θαλασσομάχοι / και λέει στο γλυκό του τον σκοπό / πως μάταιο ταξίδι δεν υπάρχει."

<sup>36</sup> Παραπέμπω στη συγκεντρωτική έκδοση των ποιημάτων του Δημήτρη Καλοκύρη, *Ατρακτος, Ποιήματα 1966-2001*, Αθήνα, Νεφέλη 2004, 361-405.

γραπτό του ο Καλοκύρης, αφού καταρχάς σχολιάζει διάφορα πραγματικά στοιχεία που συνδέονται με την προέλευση του μύθου της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας και συζητά, στη συνέχεια, το θέμα της σύνδεσης του μύθου με την ερωτική επιθυμία για το γυναικείο σώμα, καταλήγει με τις εξής διευκρινίσεις για τα περιλαμβανόμενα κείμενα:

Στον Ζωδιακό, που συνδέθηκε γρήγορα με τα Αργοναυτικά, η λαγνουργία της Λήμνου αντιστοιχεί στον Αιγόκερω, ενώ η Μήδεια με τον αστερισμό της Παρθένου, κάτω από το άστρο της οποίας διαγράφηκαν και οι περιπέτειες των στιχουργημάτων που ακολουθούν.

Όχι τόσο με απανθίσματα επισφαλούς σοφίας, όσο με αποστάγματα εκ σταφυλής παλαιών. Φράσεις διάσπαρτες στα περιθώρια τριάντα χρόνων στιχουργικής ανεπάρκειας, με κάποια χρονολογικά σήμαντρα εδώ κι εκεί. Λόγοι ανακατεργασμένοι και άλλοτε αυτοφωείς. Σοφίσματα, γραφίτες, διασκελισμοί, παρωδίες ρητορικών σχημάτων και υδροχαρή ψευδοθεωρήματα. Εκ γένει υποθήκες προς ναυτιλλομένους του ανθοσπάρτου.

Συνεπώς, από μία άποψη ένα τέτοιο πόνημα θα μπορούσε εύστοχα να χαρακτηριστεί «μια τρύπα στο νερό». Από μία άλλη, επίσης.

Ωστόσο δεν αγνοώ ότι αυτό αποτελεί και το αιτούμενο ιδεώδες των ερωτευμένων ες αεί.<sup>37</sup>

Η συγκρότηση του βιβλίου ήταν, λοιπόν, ένα είδος αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας του ποιητή Καλοκύρη στο δημιουργικό του παρελθόν. Ως άλλος Ιάσων επέστρεψε πίσω για να περιπλανηθεί στα «περιθώρια τριάντα χρόνων στιχουργικής ανεπάρκειας» και να συλλέξει από αυτά το χρυσόμαλλο δέρας της ποίησής του. Ωστόσο, αν και παραμένει «ερωτευμένος ες αεί» με το δημιουργικό ταξίδι της ποίησης, η αυτοσαρκαστική υπόνοια ότι κάθε σύγχρονη ποιητική αργοναυτική εκστρατεία δεν μπορεί παρά να είναι «μια τρύπα στο νερό» δίνει τον κυρίαρχο τόνο στο εισαγωγικό κείμενο.

Θα είχε ενδιαφέρον τα ποιήματα που σχολιάστηκαν παραπάνω να εξεταστούν παράλληλα με διάφορα ελληνικά πεζογραφήματα του 20ού αιώνα τα οποία επίσης επεξεργάζονται τον μύθο της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας. Ανάμεσα σε αυτά τα κείμενα ξεχωρίζουν τα μυθιστορήματα του Γιώργου Θεοδοκά, *Αργώ* (1933 και 1936), του Βασίλη Βασιλικού, *Η διήγηση του Ιάσωνα* (1953), του Επαμεινώνδα Γ. Μπαλούμη, *Για την Κολχίδα – Αργοναύτες* (1963) και το αφήγημα του Ανδρέα Εμπεϊρίκου, *Αργώ ή Πλους αεροστάτου* (1964). Μια τέτοια σύγκριση θα έδειχνε αν υπάρχουν συγκλίσεις ή αποκλίσεις ανάμεσα στις ποιητικές και τις πεζογραφικές επεξεργασίες του μύθου. Όπως, τέλος, θα είχε ενδιαφέρον να συγκρίνουμε τις λογοτεχνικές επεξεργασίες του μύθου της αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας με τους τρόπους που ο ίδιος μύθος προσλαμβάνεται σε εξωλογοτεχνικές του εκδοχές. Υπάρχουν,

<sup>37</sup> Καλοκύρης, ό.π., 363-364: 364.

π.χ., δύο τέτοιες, εξωλογοτεχνικές «ερμηνείες» του μύθου, οι οποίες αναβιώνουν το παλιό, ονειροπόλο ποίημα του Στέφανου Μαρτζώκη, σύμφωνα με το οποίο ο Ιάσων ήταν «αιθεροναύτης». Η πρώτη μαρτυρία είναι ότι μια πολύ δημοφιλής στην εποχή της αμερικανική διαστημική σειρά κινουμένων σχεδίων, παραγωγής 1979, με τίτλο «Star Blazers» μεταδιδόταν, στις αρχές της δεκαετίας του 1980, από την ελληνική τηλεόραση με τον τίτλο «Διαστημόπλοιο Αργώ». Η δεύτερη μαρτυρία είναι ότι, σε πλήρη αναντιστοιχία με τους σύγχρονους Έλληνες ποιητές που βιώνουν και εκφράζουν την έκπτωση του αρχαίου μύθου, υπάρχει μια σύγχρονη κοινότητα χρηστών του ελληνικού διαδικτύου που πιστεύει ότι η μυθολογία των αρχαίων Ελλήνων κρύβει τεχνολογικά θαύματα. Αυτή, λοιπόν, η κοινότητα ισχυρίζεται, όχι στο χώρο της ποιητικής ή της επιστημονικής φαντασίας αλλά στα σοβαρά, και προσπαθεί να αποδείξει ότι η Αργώ δεν ήταν πλοίο, αλλά διαστημόπλοιο που ταξίδεψε και σε άλλα πλανητικά συστήματα του Γαλαξία μας και ότι το ξύλο από το οποίο ήταν φτιαγμένη η Αργώ είχε τέτοιες ιδιότητες ώστε οι Αργοναύτες είχαν ασύρματη επικοινωνία με την Αθηνά και άλλους θεούς του Ολύμπου.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Βλ. τις ηλεκτρονικές διευθύνσεις: <http://www.diodos.gr/content/view/61/41/>,  
<http://www.diodos.gr/content/view/60/41/> και <http://www.diodos.gr/content/view/58/41/>.



Ketevan Gardapkhadze (Tbilisi)

## THE ARGONAUTICA IN THE WORKS OF GEORGIAN SYMBOLISTS

Symbolism as a literary trend entered Georgia at the outset of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1915 it was established in institutional terms, when a group of young poets formed a new literary order called 'Blue Horns'. It was the period when Georgian artistic consciousness became extremely feeble. Shabby imitations of the 19<sup>th</sup> century great authors brought almost to nonsense the literary life of the country. The new generation found it impossible to follow the path. The only way for them to fulfill their inherent vocation and calling was Symbolism.<sup>1</sup> The members of the Blue Horn shared completely the aesthetic principles of Symbolism, provided arguments for the necessity of establishing this trend in Georgia, looked for national foundation to build Symbolism on, tried to combine western European, Russian and Georgian outlooks, and give an original, peculiar character to Georgian Symbolism. 'We must shape our Georgian profile', Titsian Tabidze wrote, 'the basic experience of being a Georgian is our primary requirement. It should imply our temperament, our sensibility, our image. We will unite the sharpness of the West and the sunny relaxation of the East.'<sup>2</sup>

This very original property of Georgian Symbolism underlay the reception of ancient culture by Georgian Symbolists. I will dwell only on one point of the comprehensive topic called the reception of ancient culture in the works of Georgian Symbolists. This point is the cycle of Argonautic myths.

For French and Russian Symbolists, the Argonautica was the source of symbolic figures with strong passions and unforgettable events. Among the reasons compelling them to refer to the Argonautica was also the unbiased

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<sup>1</sup> The Legend of the Red Rose, Tbilisi, 1985, 238 (in Georgian).

<sup>2</sup> Blue Horns, 1990, 65 (in Georgian).

character of it, which enabled a poet to rise over earthly being and become initiated into perpetual values. What about Georgian Symbolists? What did the Argonautica mean for them? I will dwell on one group of Georgian Symbolists whose literary activities and works imply especially interesting and even controversial processes (G. Tabidze, V. Gaprindashvili, S. Shanshiashvili, etc.). Georgian Symbolists were unanimous in one of the theses – the understanding of the Argonautica as a cultural and historical phenomenon. They perceived the Argonaut myth as an inexhaustible source of human creativity, re-inviting epochs and encouraging the discovery of new layers in the meanings of these everlasting images. On the other hand, the Argonautica was the past of their own country; it was the point that linked the past glory of Georgia with the most important values of the world culture.

Throughout centuries, most of the interest was attracted not by the Argonautic voyage itself, but by Medea's image, which underwent remarkable metamorphosis. Euripides' *Medea* penetrated the whole European literature of the following period. The attempts to justify her deeds were made no earlier than the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. If Medea used to be perceived as a ruthless witch before, the writers of the following period presented her as a Barbarian woman deceived and dejected by Greeks.<sup>3</sup> Almost the whole Georgian literature, starting with Akaki Tsereteli, is aimed at the rehabilitation of Medea's image, while the Argonauts' voyage is perceived in a negative context.

The study of this issue in the works of Georgian Symbolists revealed two different pictures:

1. On the one hand, we have the literature which follows the existing line and presents Medea as the symbol of a deceived and dejected woman. Interestingly, the authors belonging to this group were distinguished by their innovative approach to the reception of ancient heritage. In 1922, the most Orthodox representative of Georgian Symbolism, Valerian Gaprindashvili wrote a thesis called 'Declaration – New Mythology', where, following a logical principle, he developed the idea that despite the productivity, the prolific character of ancient images in world literature, 'mythology has lost links with our consciousnesses.' The poet looked for other allusions, trying to replace the existing symbols with the new ones. 'Today, Greek gods are replaced with poets Chaterton, Rimbault. ... They fascinate poetic dream no less than Zeus and Apollo, Aphrodite and Athena. ... If there was Medusa Gorgon in the

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<sup>3</sup> E. Frenzel, *Stoffe der Weltliteratur, ein Lexicon Dichtungsgeschichtlicher Lang – Schnitte* Alfred Kröner Verlag, Stuttgart, 1976, 15; G. Hight, *Traditional Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature*, Oxford University Press, London, Oxford, New York, 1962, 9.

past, now there is Edgar and Maldaror, Gods are now replaced by heroes, Ophelia, Hamlet.<sup>4</sup>

The poets who agreed with the declaration did not offer any specially developed ancient plot or motif, or an ancient symbol to become the principle line of their poem owing to its implications. The only exception is the myth of the Argonauts. The verses and poems inspired by the Argonaut theme and Medea have one principle common property: the desire to justify Medea's behaviour (T. Tabidze, K. Nadiradze, V. Shanshiashvili, etc.).<sup>5</sup> Remarkably, S. Shanshiashvili went so far as to generalize the problem and consider it at a larger scale. This tendency is reflected in the poems *Media* and *Media and Helen* (The second poem consists of three parts, which in fact are independent poems. They are *Dementia*, *Jason and Reno* and *Fair Helen*). Although the plot of the first poem exactly repeats Euripides' *Medea* and the development of events is likewise identical, the author's attitude to the events is absolutely different. Reno is Trojan and Medea is Colchian, which means that both are from the East – thus the circle is made up in accordance with the poet's intention. He attempts to present the opposition of the East and the West and to show the moral privilege of the East. This idea is directly stated in *Fair Helen*. The only thing that interests the poet in the Trojan cycle is that although Helen brought so many disasters to Troy, she is still admired and loved in her husband's land, unlike Medea:

Here is a word-for-word translation of a fragment from the poem:

'But about Medea / he says nothing, / that the fair lady of Colchis / was so denounced by the West. / While Helen / was beloved and glorified.'

The following are Helen's words as she is mourning dead Paris:

'Your people have become fond of me, / while mine proved wicked – / this is how they treated Media.'<sup>6</sup>

The cycle of S. Shanshiashvili's poems was aimed at the rehabilitation of Medea's image. The poet needed more arguments, and that is why he composed the story of Reno abandoned by Jason. Thus he generalized the issue to the level of the East and the West.

The poets distinguished by the innovative approach to the reception of antiquity were absolutely traditional with respect to the Argonauts.

2. As concerns the reception of ancient traditions, a special poetic world is can be distinguished among Georgian Symbolists. In fact, it is unique in terms of profound and intensive allusions to Greek and Roman traditions. This is

<sup>4</sup> V. Gaprindashvili, Poems, Translations, Essays, Letters from the Poet's Archive, Tbilisi, 1990, 49 (in Georgian).

<sup>5</sup> T. Tabidze, Works in Three Volumes, 1966, vol.1, vol. 3 (in Georgian); K. Nadiradze, Poems, Tbilisi, 1992 (in Georgian); V. Gaprindashvili, Poems, Tbilisi, 1988 (in Georgian).

<sup>6</sup> S. Shanshiashvili, Works, vol. 1, Tbilisi, 1986, 307-311 (in Georgian).

the poetic world of Galaktion Tabidze. Although he was not the member of the Blue Horns, I find it essential to analyze his poems in this paper as he is the author of the best pieces of Georgian symbolic poetry. He was not confined to the standards of any poetic school. Surprisingly enough, the poet, who can be freely called Philhellenic, whose poems abound of ancient symbols and images, the principle pathos lying in the contexts made up of ancient images and notions, the poet whose works, either fully or partly, follow ancient plots, and who sometimes creates himself the world connected to various periods of ancient history, offers no poem based on special artistic treatment of the Argonaut theme. However, Galaktion uses terms and notions connected to the Argonaut legend at different levels of interpretation. These elements can be conventionally grouped into two:<sup>7</sup>

- 1) A mythological notion is presented as a symbol or a poetic argument, but the use of it is limited to a few lines. The notions imply in themselves the information necessary to understand the fragment of the poem and are closely related to the general structure and conceptual design of the poem.
- 2) The second group includes ancient terms and notions that tend to make up a system, a context relevant to the whole poem. The mythological notions make up a unity within the poem. In fact, the poet creates systems, although small, related to the Argonaut legend.

In Galaktion's poems, the introduction of the Argonaut theme is always connected with the reminiscences of the legendary past of Georgia. As an example, I will cite a fragment from his poem 'The Surami Fortress':

'Kartlos came to settle in our places, / that will not justify him, / the Golden Fleece in Colchis in 1350 disturbs the Argonaveli (Argoan).'<sup>8</sup>

The number 1350 has a very interesting position in the poem. In my opinion, it refers to the assumed date of the Argonauts' expedition. Obviously, through the key terms of the fragment Galaktion tries to link with each other Greek and Georgian traditional information as he presents the ancient past of Georgia. I would also like to dwell on one interesting element. The poet repeatedly uses the Greek appellation Argonaut through the form Argonaveli – Argoan. Evidently, either intentionally or unintentionally the poet reflects the Greek suffix of the appellation and makes it sound Georgian. As a result, he receives Argonaveli – Argoan. The poetic interpretation of the episodically used mythological image attests not only to the original poetic vision of Galaktion, but also to his profound awareness of each notion and his surprising ability to present poetic images in a double way: traditionally as

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<sup>7</sup> K. Gardapkhadze, *Ancient Terms and Notions in the Poetic Language of Galaktion*, Tbilisi, 1995 (in Georgian).

<sup>8</sup> G. Tabidze, *Works in Twelve Volumes*, 1996, vol. 7, 241 (in Georgian).

well as ingeniously and innovatively. As an example, I will cite another poem, which does not have a title. Here the poet puts a question:

What is gold / in the boundless blue of Achara?<sup>9</sup>

Along with the explanations that follow the question, we come across the following lines:

‘The belt of the Argonauts / the cloud in colorfulness.’<sup>9</sup>

So, the gold of Achara refers to something that is the most precious in Achara, including the legendary past, among whose most renowned pages are the Argonauts’ voyage. Colorfulness is the characteristic property of Acharian sky and nature, which is the Acharian ‘gold’, while the Argonauts with belts, who have come to Achara to take away the gold, bring in a certain conflict. Doubtlessly, the poet created an absolutely extraordinary poetic image. ‘The cloud of the Argonauts’ belt’ can be interpreted as the symbol of the shadow which brings a conflict into the harmonious world. Remarkably, the above-mentioned poem is the only piece where the Argonauts’ voyage is presented in a negative context. Galaktion is not interested in the outcome of the voyage. He is more concerned with what is related to the glory of Colchis. So, it is noteworthy that the terms used by Galaktion lack the meaning of oppositeness, characteristic of Greek mythological information and Georgian literary tradition. If we go back to the term ‘Argonaveli’, in Galaktion’s poem it has a positive sense and as it was mentioned above, acts as an indicator supposed to link the glorious past of Georgia with the most significant values of world culture. The same is true about Medea. Medea’s activities in Greece escape Galaktion’s attention. The poet is interested in Medea as the symbol of Colchian fame and therefore, presents the name as the symbol synonymous of Colchis. Other terms related to Colchis (Phasis, Ea, Dioskuria, etc.) also have a double function: on the one hand, they facilitate poetic reflection of mythological information as a system and are consequently used in their traditional meaning, and on the other hand, they convey the glory of Colchis.

The above-mentioned leads to the conclusion that the originality of Georgian symbolism was best exposed in the development of ancient themes, and in particular, of the Argonaut theme. The study revealed two different pictures: on the one hand, we have the literature, Galaktion Tabidze’s poetry, which lacks the meaning of opposition characteristic of Georgian literature in general; however, it does not offer even a single case of special literary treatment of the theme. On the other hand, we have a group of poets, who although were distinguished by their original outlook and innovative attitude towards the reception of ancient culture, remain nevertheless biased as concerns the treatment of the Argonaut theme.

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<sup>9</sup> G. Tabidze, Works in Twelve Volumes, Tbilisi, 1994, vol. 1, 279 (in Georgian).

Nikolai Gochev (Sofia)

## APOLLONIUS RHODIUS IN THE MODERN LITERATURE: THE INTERPRETATION OF ROBERT GRAVES

### 1. The unsuccessful First Version

In the postscript to his novel "The Golden Fleece" Graves tells us the following:

"When he recited the poem or a part of it in the Muses' Hall, he was met with a storm of hissing, caterwauling and a storm of plates for writing. He went away relatively safe and sound, but was afraid of a public persecution, because his rival, the court poet Callimachus declared him a "abominable ibis"; and he decided to leave Alexandria for a time. After several years he returned and recited publicly the revised version which got ovations even from his former enemies; so that after the position of a curator of the Library was vacated, king Ptolemy naturally appointed him as the next curator.<sup>1</sup>

The original version is not preserved, but its defect hardly was a lack of sonority and fascination. More probably, relying on the support of the Alexandrian women, Apollonius revealed in his epic too honestly the humiliations of Zeus by the Moon Goddess: what provoked the anger of their husbands."

And a little after:

"The mysteries that were added to the ordinary Greek rites from the classical epoch, were nothing other than revelation of ancient religious secrets to people, who weren't expected to divulge them in order to cause a public

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<sup>1</sup> Graves freely retells the two short *Vitae Apollonii*, published in the edition of the Scholia (C. Wendel, Berlin, 1935). There we find no mention about hissing, caterwauling or plate throwing, but the rest is exact – the anonymous authors indeed say, that the Apollonius work at first was met negatively, but the second version was applauded (*Zlatnoto runo. Pohodat na argonavtite*, 504-505. See note 2).

scandal; and in these mysteries the object of worship was the Goddess Mother... I believe, that the chief error of Apollonius was that he recited in a public hall a version of the Golden Fleece's tale, based upon ancient sources; and that this version sounded to the initiated as a desecration of their most deeply cherished religious beliefs."<sup>2</sup>

## 2. The version of Graves

The novel of Graves, although captivating and written with a good sense of humour, contains at some places his view on the "real history" of the Greek Gods, expressed in a simple, straightforward and rather too prosaic way. These passages do not look like parts of a book of fiction. In them he declares, that the old, non-Achaean (and moreover non-Indo-European) population of Thessaly, and even of all Greece, named "pelasgoi" worshiped one supreme female deity – the "Triple Goddess" (or the "White Goddess") – in different persons and named her with different names. The first (and the more peaceful) Greeks, coming from North – the Ionians and the Aeolians (called Minyans as well) – joined this matriarchal cult.

But the Achaeans, who invaded the peninsula several centuries later, imposed by force the cult to the God-Father and Warrior. They reformed (in a council at Olympia, convoked especially for this purpose) the local religion, created the classic pantheon with six gods and six goddesses, proclaimed the Goddess sister and obedient wife of Zeus and began to pursue the people who persisted in their adherence to the old religion.<sup>3</sup>

Otherwise the novel gives us a detailed account of the expedition, where virtually all sources for the Argonauts have been taken into consideration. Graves mentions them in the postscript. Except Apollonius, we have the versions of Pindar, Apollodorus, Diodorus of Sicily and Valerius Flaccus – all of whom, although in different style and length, present the full story. Some separate episodes are poetically adapted by Euripides in the famous tragedy; there are Theocritus and Ovid too; lastly, the scarce (but important, regarding its early age) information, given by Herodotus. Of course, there are a number of sources of minor importance.

There is a passage in the postscript, concerning the temporal standpoint of the teller, on which I would like to draw your attention. On the p. 511 Graves says:

"I render the story of Argonauts in the form of a historical tale; and every author of history must clearly express his point of view in the time. In this

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<sup>2</sup> During the work on this paper I was using the Bulgarian translation of the "Fleece" – Robert Greivs, *Zlatnoto runo. Pohodat na argonavtite*, translation by I. Vaseva, Fakel, 1993. The reverse translation to English is mine, N.G.

<sup>3</sup> Ch. III, "The Rise of the Olympians", *Zlatnoto runo*, 40-50.

case it would be inappropriate to tell it in the style of the XIII cent. B.C. – this would mean to write using poetic pictograms. It would be equally inadequate to write it from a present day position, because then I would have been compelled to render the dialogues in an unsuitably contemporary style; besides, that would have hindered me to believe sincerely the story.

The only plausible decision was to depict the events from the viewpoint of an epoch, when the faith in the legend was still alive, but preserving the necessary critical objectivity; and with a clear, but, on the same time, serious literary expression. This is the reason for using in some places phrases like "till the present day", and "today". The last page will suggest to the historians, that "today" means "no later than 146 B.C.", when Lucius Mummius sacks Corinthos. This is the year, when Argo, put in the temple of Poseidon, disappears for ever – maybe reduced to a heap of splinters by the drunken Roman soldiers."

What the Graves' reader could add, is that the story seems to be told by somebody, who knows who are the "real" ones among the Greek Gods, although prefers to represent priests, clairvoyants and believing-in-gods heroes rather than the gods themselves. And their "real" relations are the ones Graves sees as a historian of mythology, a poet and perhaps a psychologist. The main point is the superiority of the female Goddess, whose power over the mankind is usurped by her rebellious son; but usurped not without her condescending consent.

### **3. "The White Goddess" as aesthetic and history-of-culture manifesto**

The information I got about Graves when working on this paper, made me suppose that the "The White Goddess" is his most popular non-poetic and non-fictional text.

I'll say several words about this book not only because the theory, presented in it, practically coincides with the views of the teller in the "Golden Fleece", but also because – as Graves himself tells us – the very idea of this long essay was born in the process of the work on the novel. This explains why the two books appear in a relatively short time: the first edition of the "Fleece" is in 1944, and this of the "Goddess" – in 1948.<sup>4</sup> In a concluding note, written for the edition from 1960 he tells the following:

"I am often asked how I took to write the "White Goddess". The history is as follows.

In 1944 in a village in Devonshire, when I fled from the present day by working on a historical novel of the Argonauts, my work suddenly was interrupted. An obsessing idea forced me to get involved in the study of a

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<sup>4</sup> See the biography of Graves by Dr. Ian Firla – <http://www.robertgraves.org/bio.php>



subject I still didn't know and didn't understand. I stopped to trace on the vast military map of the Black Sea (and with the help of mythographs) the course of the Argonauts ship, who sailed from the Bosphorus to Baku and back. Instead, I was thinking about the mysterious Battle of the Trees, which occurred in ancient Britain, and all night I couldn't find peace; and the next day too, so that my pen barely followed my thoughts. For three weeks I wrote a book in 70 thousand words...

I'm not a mystic and I always avoided involvement in witchcraft, spiritualistic séances and yoga exercises; I never listened to predictions, didn't believe in automatic writing and so on. I live a simple peasant kind of life in the circle of my family and of a large number of mentally healthy and intelligent friends. I do not belong to any religious cult or secret society or philosophical sect, and I also don't trust my historic intuition, if it couldn't be verified by the facts.

But working on the book on the Argonauts, I discovered that the White Goddess of mount Pelion becomes more and more important for my narrative... I, who suddenly fell under the power of the European White Goddess, wrote about her totems in the context of the Argonauts' story and plunged in the ancient secrets of her cult Wales, Ireland and all over the world.

When, immediately after the war, I returned to Majorca, I started working again on the book which I already called "The White Goddess", and wrote in more details about the Holy King as a divine victim of the Moon Goddess, keeping in mind that every poet, who honours his Muse, should somehow die for his Goddess whom he worships – just like the King died..."<sup>5</sup>

#### **4. Graves and the new Western spirituality**

These facts I drew your attention on, give us reason to admit, that the story of the Golden Fleece whose largest version we owe to Apollonius, influenced the views of R. Graves as a poet and as a historian, and at the same time was artistically worked out by him on the ground of these same views. It seems, that the Graves' "Fleece" is expected to be read as the "real story" of the Argonauts, told from the viewpoint of an enlightened but at the same time initiated Greek author from the last centuries B.C.

Besides, "The Golden Fleece" is produced according to a conception for the ancient mythology and the western religion, which, as Graves suggests, is

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<sup>5</sup> This text, together with the full Russian translation of the "White Goddess" is available at <http://www.druids.celtica.ru/page.php?pagename=greivs>. Russian translation by L. Volodarskaja. The reverse English translation is mine.

founded largely on the mythological researches of J. G. Frazer.<sup>6</sup> They both belong to a tradition in the European humanities, whose representatives do not regard themselves as Christians, reject the Eurocentrism and work for the cultural emancipation of the East and in general of the non-Western world from the European (or Euro-American) domination. Lastly, they are people who oppose the spirit of the classical European academism and try to reconsider the role of the university in the Western societies and its claim to dominate the education and even the spiritual life of the West.

This tradition include and is supported by many influential non-academic intellectuals, among whom I would prefer to mention the English and American followers of Mme H. Blavatsky; a little earlier, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in Germany; and from the XVIII century – Voltaire.

The new that Graves is offering us, is that he writes a lot of poetry and thinks about himself mainly as a poet; that, secondly, in difference to Blavatsky, he doesn't pretend for possessing any exceptional spiritual abilities; and thirdly, what seems to me very important, he lived two terrible wars. Maybe exactly this experience gave him strong reason to doubt the alleged superiority of Western civilization and the truth of its main religion. But nevertheless he expresses a kind of religious hope. At the end of his conclusion to the "White Goddess" from 1960 he writes:

"The idea of a Creating Goddess was rejected by the Christian theologians almost two thousand years ago, and by the Jewish theologians even earlier. Most scientists, caring for their social comfort, worship God; but nevertheless I do not understand why a belief in the creation of the universe by a God-Father seems to them more scientific than the belief in the creation of this artificial system by a Goddess-Mother...

Since the source of creative power in poetry is not the scientific education, but the inspiration (no matter what the scientists would say), then why not name as its source the Lunar Muse, since in Europe this is the oldest and most common term defining the source of inspiration? According to the ancient tradition, the White Goddess appears through human beings – that could be a priestess, a prophetess, a queen mother. No poet, dedicated to the Muse, thinks about the Muse herself, but always thinks about the woman, in whom the Goddess at least partially is incarnated; just like an Apollonian poet

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<sup>6</sup> "Sir James Frazer was able to keep his beautiful rooms at Trinity College, Cambridge, until his death by carefully and methodically sailing all around his dangerous subject, as if charting the coastline of a forbidden island without actually committing himself to a declaration that it existed. What he was saying-not-saying was that Christian legend, dogma and ritual are the refinement of a great body of primitive and even barbarous beliefs, and that almost the only original element in Christianity is the personality of Jesus." ("The Whites Goddess", ch. XIII, cited also in the article "The White Goddess" in the English Wikipedia).

is unable to perform properly his function, if he doesn't live under the power of a monarchy or quasi-monarchy. But the poet, who really worships the Muse, is capable to distinguish between the Goddess as the supreme incarnation of power, glory, wisdom and female love from one hand, and the ordinary woman, whom the Goddess makes Her representative for a month, a year, seven years or perhaps more – from another hand. The Goddess is eternal, and perhaps he will know Her again through another woman.

Prophets like Moses, John the Baptist or Mohammed, speaking in the name of the male deity, say: "So said God!" I am not a prophet of the White Goddess and I'll never venture to utter: "So said Goddess!" But since poetry came to the world, the poets, who worship the Muse, usually speak with love: "In all the universe there is nobody above the Triple Goddess!"

### **5. A reader's impression**

At a certain place<sup>7</sup> Graves says, that a poet might be evaluated as such, taking into consideration the degree in which he is familiar with the Goddess and is able to depict "Her and Her island". And adds: "Shakespeare had known her and had been afraid of her."<sup>8</sup> As a reader of Graves I would dare to share, that even before the acquaintance with this book, I already was convinced that he is obsessed by a painful fear of the presence of a kind of woman. She is a woman, longing for power, who establishes a relationship with an influential man, dominates him and weaves intrigues against everybody else, hoping to rule through him. She does not love him, but uses him and is always ready to sacrifice him and to look for another, who would fit for the same purpose. Livia in "I, Claudius" is like that, Theodora and Antonina in "Count Velisarius" are like that, Ino, in the very beginning of the "Fleece" is like that. They are images of a woman, who exerts over the man the power, given to her from the Goddess and thus revenges for the subjugation, imposed on her by force and counter-naturally in the epoch of the old Achaeans. She is not a personification of the Muse, but of Hecate. Graves was afraid of this woman.

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<sup>7</sup> "The White Goddess", ch. I.

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, ch. XXIV.

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### **MEDEA IN A. EMBIRIKOS' *ARGO OR AEROSTAT FLIGHT***

Andreas Embirikos, a well-known Greek surrealist poet offers another interesting interpretation of the Argonaut theme in his prose work *Argo or Aerostat Flight*.

The writer does not follow the story-line of the myth, as it could be expected, but offers an interesting attempt of surrealistic interpretation of the myth. Various lexical units, characters and scenes, chaotically scattered in the work, allude to the Argonauts' voyage and the tragic story of Jason and Medea.

The plot of Andreas Embirikos' work follows two story-lines. The first is the family drama of a history lecturer of the Santa Fe De Bogotá University, and the second is the flight of the aerostat Argo. In the present paper, I will not dwell on how the pathos of the entire Argonaut legend is rendered in the work; neither will I focus on its psychoanalytical aspect. The objective of the paper is to find out if the work reflects Medea's image, and if so, comment on the Embirikos' interpretation of the mythical character. It is very important to bear in mind that *Argo or Aerostat Flight* is a surrealistic work, where the subconscious is more important than the conscious, and where associative thought prevails. However, the subconscious does not necessarily mean ununderstandable, existing somewhere beyond logics. Much of what represents the product of the subconscious in an artistic work is definitely perceptible, irrespective of whether the process of its artistic accomplishment is prevailed by a logical or intuitive principle. We can see there beauty as well as sense, and receive semantic as well as aesthetic information.

It should be stated from the very start that neither of the so-called characters of the work is directly and unambiguously related to Medea. In my opinion, Medea's image is reflected in all the six female characters of the work. Each of them is associated either with a particular character trait of the

traditional mythical image, or with one of the motifs of her story. In my opinion, eight associative elements can be singled out in Embirikos' work: 1. Woman's affection for the man who is unacceptable for her parents; 2. Woman's relationship with the world of plants; 3. Unfaithfulness and jealousy; 4. Sister-and-brother relationship; 5. The call against murdering the innocent; 6 Prophetic gift; 7. Abduction of a woman with the *Argo*; 8. Miraculous ascension to the sky. Now let us consider how these motifs are developed in the work and what associations they may stir.

1. One of the central characters of the work is an eighteen-year-old Columbian girl, Carlotta, the daughter of Don Pedro Ramirez, who is in love with her neighbour, a rich farmer Pablo Gonzalez. Although Carlotta's father is categorically against their love, the girl goes on seeing Pablo. Her father threatens that if she does not stop seeing him, he will take her back to the convent. Besides, Carlotta's father does not allow her to attend the most significant celebration of the city, the flight of the *Argo*.

In this particular case, Carlotta is associated with Medea, who falls in love with Jason. Pablo Gonzalez, the ineligible suitor in the eyes of Carlotta's father, is associated with Jason, who came to Aeetes with unfriendly intentions. Carlotta, who goes against her father's will, resembles Medea, who betrayed her father.

2. Every time when Carlotta appears in the story, she is either holding a bunch of flowers in her hands, or is surrounded with flowers. "Dressed in a loose skirt, and holding a bunch of flowers in her hands, she was running to him"<sup>1</sup>, "... the branches of trees and bushes swiftly filled up with flowers and birds and fruit, and eighteen-year-old Carlotta – as the girl has now become Carlotta – stood beneath the trees and waited as Donna Isabella."<sup>2</sup> The setting for love relations between Carlotta and Pablo, and for her death, is the garden, the hay-stack.<sup>3</sup> Carlotta's world, filled with flowers and plants, may also be associated with Medea, whom the goddess Hecate taught how to prepare magic drugs. Owing to this divine knowledge, Medea is intrinsically linked with the world of plants in ancient tradition.

3. Another significant female character of the work is Isabella, Carlotta's mother and Don Pedro Ramirez' wife, who died young from some disease. The author characterizes her as a jealous wife. However, Isabella' jealousy is not ungrounded as Don Pedro is notorious for his love affairs. In this case, parallels can be drawn between Isabella, abandoned by Don Pedro, and Me-

<sup>1</sup> Α. Εμπεϊρίκος, *Αργώ ή πλους αεροστάτου*, ύψιλον/βιβλία, 1980, 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-29.

<sup>3</sup> Α. Εμπεϊρίκος, *Αργώ ή πλους αεροστάτου*, ύψιλον/βιβλία, 1980, 67.

dea, abandoned by Jason." ... You pretend, you say you love her and play the role of a lover with the woman whom you do not love any more"<sup>4</sup> – these are the thoughts of Don Pedro Ramirez, whose love for his wife has faded away. At a certain stage, he realizes that he does not love his wife Isabella any more – analogically with Jason, who, after years of happy life with Medea, decides to break up his family ties and marry Creusa, the daughter of Creon, king of Corinth. In my opinion, this episode accentuates the motif of husband's unfaithfulness and loss of love for one's wife, which reminds of Euripides' tragedy.

4. A female image of relatively less significance is a fifteen-year-old acrobatess, who performed acrobatic tricks at the ceremony of the flight and attracted people's attention. However, the majority of the crowd was viewing the gigantic sphere. Interestingly, the girl was accompanied with her brother, who was playing the tambourine. The acrobatess and her brother may be related to the 'sister-and-brother' theme of the Argonaut legend. They may be associated with Medea and Apsyrtus, who on Aeetes' order pursued Medea after she left Colchis together with the Argonauts.

5. Another female character of the work is a likewise fifteen-year-old girl, who attended the ceremony. When a photographer took up a camera to take a picture of the people on board the Argo, she shrieked in a desperate voice: 'Don't kill, don't kill ... they are innocent', and fell down unconscious. In my mind, this quite unexpected yell is the repercussion of the scene of child-slaughter in Euripides' tragedy.<sup>5</sup>

Another female character is an old matchmaker, who emerges from the crowd gathered at the ceremony and prophesies an earth-quake in Santa Fe De Bogotá. In my opinion, this scene is associated with Medea's prophetic gift, which is clearly presented in the Forth Pythian Ode of Pindar: 'Hear me, sons of great-hearted men and gods. I declare that one day from this sea-beaten land the daughter of Epaphos will have planted within her a root of famous cities at the foundations of Zeus Ammon.'<sup>6</sup>

6. Likewise noteworthy is the image of Marianna, who is not in fact a real character – she is the fruit of Ernesto Larie-Nanse's imagination. Ernesto is a Frenchman, who is among the people on board the Argo. She is a prostitute, who asks the Frenchman to kill two peasants, and promises to stay with him

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>5</sup> Euripides, *Medea*, Everyman's Library, The Plays of Euripides in English, translated by M. Wodhull, 1934, 111.

<sup>6</sup> Pindar, *Olympian Odes, Pythian Odes*, The Fourth Pythian Ode, 14-15, the Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, University Press, 2002.

overnight. Marianna, existing in Ernesto's imagination, can be associated with vengeance and the murder of Creon and his daughter. Three interesting details can be singled out: the requirement to kill the peasant women, the death of a man in black and Marianna's words 'I will show them who the real whore is ...'. Marianna's wish to have the peasant women killed is motivated by her desire to revenge. This phrase can be related to quite a number of words from Euripides' *Medea* expressing Medea's haughtiness.

7. Another important character of the work is a fifteen-year-old girl with chocolate-colour complexion, an inmate of a children's asylum, who is also attending the ceremony. She presents a Russian admiral, Verkhoi, with a parrot sitting in a cage on behalf of the inmates of the asylum. The admiral on his part takes her up in his arms, kisses her and gives her a golden watch. He is so fascinated with the girl that as the *Argo* is taking up, he jumps out, seizes the girl and takes her with him to the *Argo*. This episode stirs miscellaneous associations: the golden watch and the Golden Fleece, the *Aerostat Argo* and the ship *Argo*, the *Argo's* flying up to the sky, and the chariot of Helios, the *Aerostat Argo* takes away a woman, which may be the repercussion of the abduction of Medea with the *Argo*, while the ascension of the chocolate-colour girl, sitting in the *Aerostat*, can be associated with the Euripidean scene when a chariot sent by Helios carries away Medea and her dead children.<sup>7</sup> It is not difficult to trace parallels between the girl and Medea as well as between admiral Verkhoi and Jason.

So, Medea can be regarded as the prototype of the female characters of *Argo or Aerostat Flight* by A. Embirikos. The mythological image is presented through various aspects. Very often, the character of Embirikos' work is not even mentioned by name. Even an almost unknown, peripheral character can stir associations with Medea. Carlotta in love and Medea in love – the choice of both is unacceptable for their fathers; Carlotta's and Medea's relationship with plants; the acrobatess and her brother – Medea and Apsyrtus; the chocolate-colour girl, abducted by the Russian admiral, and Medea taken away by Jason; jealous Isabella and jealous Medea, both abandoned, as their husbands' love for them has faded away; vengeful and haughty Medea and Marianna. Although Medea is not mentioned in Embirikos' work, all the female images of it imply certain elements or motifs, the unity of which is related to the integrated image of Euripides' *Medea*. All key aspects of Medea's image can be found in the six female characters of the work; although the author does not repeat the story of Medea and Jason, the impression it leaves is definitely associated with the myth. The application of

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<sup>7</sup> Euripides, *Medea*, 1934, 112.

particular traits of the single image of Medea to several characters does not appear unnatural for the surrealist principle of thought.

The work of Embirikos unites the elements, which although do not make up a single logical context, are anyway distinguished for their clearly expressed definiteness, which I would even call their mimetic nature. A. Embirikos' *Argo or Aerostat Flight* is another proof to attest to the idea that in his creations, associative links may be distinct and even systemic, as Embirikos amply presented the traits and motifs related to the traditional image of Medea through the female characters of the work.



Nani Khelaia, Ramaz Shengelia,  
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**NEW INFORMATION ABOUT THE PLANTS  
FROM MEDEA'S GARDEN AND THEIR USE FOR MEDICAL  
PURPOSES IN TRADITIONAL AND MODERN MEDICINE**

The story of Medea and the Argonauts is eventually unwrapped of its mythological veil. The existence in ancient Colchis (the 13<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries) of a garden with healing plants associated with Medea's name was studied as early as by Greek and Roman authors of ancient world.

Later, a German scholar, Ioakhim Kurt Shprengel (1766-1833) started his works about the History of Medicine with a chapter devoted to ancient Colchian medicine. Referring to the sources available (mostly Greek and Roman), he argued that none of the countries but ancient Colchis was known as the initial cradle of world medical culture. Moreover, he regarded the widely admitted medicine of the kingdom of Pontus as the successor to the Colchian medicine. He noted that the origins of the world medicine were rooted in Colchian civilization. Referring to various initial sources, and mostly to the "Orphic Argonautica" by pseudo-Orpheus, he studied the healing plants growing in the kingdom of Pontus, the Caucasus, Iberia and Colchis, namely in Medea's Garden. Having studied medical properties of these plants, he stated that Medea used to prepare various medications, poisons and anti-poisons, which later Mithridates the Eupator, the great king of Pontus, used in his medical practice as remedies against a number of diseases, cases of intoxication and poisoning.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sprengel K., Test Versuch einer pragmatischen Geschichte der Arzneykunder. Zweyter Abschnitt, Alteste Kolchische Medicin, Halle, 1821, 44-55.

A Georgian scholar and physician, professor Mikheil Shengelia (1916-1999), devoted several researches to the issues on the locality of Medea's Garden, to collecting information about the plants growing therein and about their habitat, as well as to the identification of their names. In his work he analyzed in detail notes and fragments attested in various initial sources, once again pointed to the actual existence of the garden and offered relatively fresh and comprehensive information about the names of 58 plants.<sup>2</sup>

Our studies targeted the following directions:

1. Specify the names of the plants growing in Medea's Garden and identify them;
2. Look for the information about the use of these plants in traditional medicine.
3. Look for the information about the use of these plants in modern medicine.

According to the "Orphic Argonautica", on the garden territory grew 29 species (the work offers a list of these species) and many poisoning herbs (the latter are not listed). The sorceress Medea, with the help of Artemis (Hecate) used to gather here healing herbs.<sup>3</sup>

The "Orphic Argonautica" is translated into Georgian by N. Melashvili. She notes that the author of the "Orphic Argonautica" had perfect knowledge of nature. Having done her best to provide comprehensive comments, the author nevertheless admits that the nomenclature should be studied by experts.<sup>4</sup>

K. Shprengel did not even discuss the first three plants of Medea's garden, and commented on the rest 26 according to the works of Dioscurides, Pliny, Theophrastus and Galen.<sup>5</sup>

M. Shengelia almost shared the idea of identification of these plants; he only completed the plant list with the ones from K. Shprengel's work. He noted that according to K. Shprengel's data, 36 species grew in Medea's garden. However, Ch. D. Kuptsis added 5 more species to the list of the plants growing in Medea's garden. Such inclusion could have been based on various sources, or on the interpretation of the "Orphic Argonautica".<sup>6</sup>

We have put together the results of K. Shprengel and M. Shengelia only with regard to Medea's garden. We found it necessary to present the existing

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<sup>2</sup> Shengelia M., *Ancient Colchian-Iberian Medicine*, Tbilisi, 1979, 203 (in Georgian).

<sup>3</sup> *Orphica*, Rec G. Herminus, Lipsiae, 1805, (916-925), 168-170 (in Greek).

<sup>4</sup> Pseudo-Orpheus, *Argonautica*, Translated by N. Melashvili, Tbilisi, 1977, 39, 123 (in Georgian).

<sup>5</sup> Sprengel K., *Test of Pragmatic History of Medical Art*, Article 2, *Ancient Colchian Medicine*, Halle, 1821, 44-55.

<sup>6</sup> Shengelia M., *Ancient Colchian-Iberian Medicine*, Tbilisi, 1979, 203 (in Georgian).

data side by side, in a single table in order to compare them and venture our own opinion on the definition of particular plants' names.

**The table of the versions to be compared:**

The sequence follows the one in the "Orphic Argonautica"	K. Sprengel's version	M. Shengelia's version	Our version
1. davfnai	1. -	1. Laurus nobilis	1. Laurus nobilis
2. kravneiai	2. -	2. Cornus mas	2. Cornus mas
3. platavnisoi	3. -	3. Platanus occidentalis, P. Orientalis	3. Platanus orientalis
4. ajsfovdelo"	4. Asphodelus ramosus	4. Asphodelus ramosus	4. Asphodeline
5. kluvmenov"	5. Lathyrus clymenum	5. Lathyrus climenum	5. Lathyrus climenum
6. ajdivanto"	6. Adiantum capillus	6. Adiantum capillus	6. Adiantum capillus-veneris
7. qrivon	7. Solanum insanum	7. Solanum insanum, S. dulcamara	7. Solanum dulcamara
8. kivpeiron	8. Cyperus rotundus	8. Cyperus rotundus	8. Cyperus rotundus
9. ajri;serewvn	9. Verbena supina	9. Verbena supina, V. officinalis	9. Verbena officinalis
10. aj-nemwvnh	10. Anemone coronaria	10. Anemona coronaria, A. fascicularis	10. Anemone fasciculata
11. o{rminon	11. Salvia horminum	11. Salvia horminum, S. officinalis	11. Horminum
12. eijrivsi-mon	12. Sisymbrium polyceratum	12. Sisymbrium policeratum. S. irio, S. loeselli, S. officinalis	12. Iris lazica

13. kiklamiJ"	13. <i>Cyclamen hederacifolium</i>	13. <i>Cyclamen europaeum</i> , <i>C. persicum</i> , <i>C. ibericum</i>	13. <i>Cyclamen</i>
14. soicav"	14. <i>Lavandula stoechas</i>	14. <i>Lavandula stoechas</i>	14. <i>Lavandula stoechas</i>
15. paionivh	15. <i>Peonia officinalis</i> , <i>P. corallina</i>	15. <i>Peonia officinalis</i> , <i>P. abchasica</i> , <i>P. tenuifolia</i> , <i>P. caucasica</i> , <i>P. carthalinica</i>	15. <i>Peonia officinalis</i>
16. kavterne"	16. <i>Mentha cervina</i>	16. <i>Mentha aquatica</i> , <i>M. longifolia</i> , <i>M. piperita</i> , <i>M. pulegium</i>	16. We could not determine
17. mandragovrh"	17. <i>Atropa mandragora</i>	17. <i>Mandragora officinalis</i>	17. <i>Mandragora officinalis</i>
18. povliovn	18. <i>Teucrium montanum</i>	18. <i>Teucrium montanum</i> , <i>T. chamaedrus</i> , <i>T. polium</i>	18. <i>Teucrium trapezunticum</i>
19. divktamnon:	19. <i>Origanum dictamnus</i>	19. <i>Origanum dictamnus</i> , <i>O. maiorana</i> , <i>O. vulgare</i>	19. <i>Origanum dictamnus</i>
20. krovko"	20. <i>Crocus</i>	20. <i>Crocus sativus</i> , <i>C. speciosus</i>	20. <i>Crocus sativus</i>
21. kavrdamon:	21. <i>Lepidium sativum</i>	21. <i>Lepidium sativum</i> , <i>L. campestre</i>	21. <i>Elettaria cardamomum</i>
22. kh'mo"	22. <i>Micropus erectus</i>	22. <i>Micropus erectus</i>	22. <i>Micropus erectus</i>
23. smivlax	23. <i>Smilax aspera</i>	23. <i>Smilax aspera</i>	23. <i>Smilax aspera</i>
24. camaivmhlon	24. <i>Matricaria chamomilla</i> , <i>Anthemis nobilis</i> ,	24. <i>Matricaria chamomilla</i> , <i>Anthemis nobilis</i> ,	24. <i>Chamomilla</i>

	Pyrethrum parthenium	Pyrethrum parthenium	
25. mhvkwn	25. Glaucium luteum	25. Glaucium luteum	25. Glaucium
26. ajlkeivh	26. Malva tournefortiana	26. Malva tournefortiana	26. Malva
27. pavnake"	27. Ferula opopanax, Pastinaca lucida, Echinophora tenuifolia	27. Ferula opopanax, F. assafoetida, F. galbaniflua	27. Ferula opopanax
28. kavrpason	28. Valeriana tuberosa	28. Valeriana tuberosa, V. officinalis	28. Carpesium
29. ajkovniton	29. Aconiton cammarum, A. lycocotnum, A. ochroleucum	29. Aconitum caucasicum, A. tuscheticum, A. anthora	29. Aconitum orientale

Botanical-systematic and taxonomic study, taking into account ecotopological data, enabled us to trace corrections in past examinations. We identified the names of 28 different plants. As shown in the table, seven plants were identified at the level of genus, twenty-one – at the level of species, and their binary nomenclature was indicated. We have modified the binary nomenclature of five plants, we couldn't agree with description of one plant: in particular, in the "Orphic Argonautica", kavterne" is characterized as having many branches (polivknhmovn), but in a Latin footnote it is presented as a variety (kateivdwlo"), which is a vascular plant (katavdendro") with multiple (multiplicandi) bended down (katav) leaves. Its morphological structure is different from the Mentha kind.<sup>7</sup>

The study revealed that part of those plants is still widespread within as well as outside Georgia. None of them is a Georgian endem, some were brought into Georgia and are cultivated here at present as well, while others

<sup>7</sup> Orphica, 1805, (916-925), 168-170 (In Greek); Dhmtravkh" D., Mevga lexiko;n th" eJllhnikh" glwvssh", V, Aqhvnaï, 1939; Hederici B., Lexicon Graeco-Latinum et Latino-Graecum, Romae, MDCCC, XXXII; Pape W., Griechische-Deutsches Bandwörterbuch. Braunschweig, I, 1908; Gagnidze R., Vascular Plants of the Georgian Nomenclatural Catalogue, Tbilisi, 2005, 247.

do not grow in Georgia; they used to be imported from foreign countries and are still imported nowadays.<sup>8</sup>

Medea successfully applied medical plants growing in her garden for the treatment of various diseases, for relieving symptoms or for preventive purposes. According to Greek-Roman sources, Medea used to treat barrenness, psychical diseases, various kinds of wounds, she could relieve pain symptoms. For these purposes, she applied ointments, which she prepared with her own hands, she was skilled in cosmetic manipulations, etc. However, it is not specified which particular plant or combination of plants she used in each particular case.

We attempted to collect information about the use of the plants from Medea's garden in traditional medicine. Such information survived through written records as well as oral tradition.

For this purpose we examined eight Georgian medical manuscripts of the 10<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Four of them had been studied and published by various authors; we treated the remaining four manuscripts as well and prepared them for publication.<sup>9</sup>

We also studied Georgian medical-ethnological material, which we collected during scientific expeditions. Systematization and analyses showed us that the material includes centuries-old information about healing plants that used to be applied and were approved.<sup>10</sup>

We also collected information from modern medical literature about the remedial properties of the plants from Medea's Garden and evaluated its authenticity.

In compliance with the materials obtained, we grouped the plants into the following categories:

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<sup>8</sup> Makashvili A., Botanical Dictionary, Tbilisi, 1951, 260 (in Georgian); Гроссгейм А., Растительные богатства Кавказа, Москва, 1952, 611; The Flora of Georgia, vol. I-XIV, Tbilisi, 1971-2003 (in Georgian).

<sup>9</sup> Гроссгейм А., Растительные богатства Кавказа, Москва, 1952, 611; The Flora of Georgia, vol. I-XIV, Tbilisi, 1971-2003 (in Georgian); Kananeli, Ustoro Carabadini ('Matchless Medical Book'), Tbilisi, 1997, 665 (in Georgian); Kophili Khoja, Tsigni Saakimoi (Medical Book by Khoja Kopili), Tbilisi, 1936, 381 (in Georgian); Panaskerteli-Tsitsishvili Z., Samkurnalo Tsigni-Carabadini (Medical Book), Tbilisi, 1978, 508 (in Georgian); Bagrationi D., Iadigar Daudi, Tbilisi, 1938, 741 (in Georgian); Georgian Medical Manuscripts:

a) H-414. Carabadini Kargi da Margebeli ('A Medical Handbook, Good and Benevolent'), the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> c., 95.

b) H-916 Abram Mtsereli, Carabadini Martali da Cheshmariti ('A Medical Book, True and Authentic'), the 17<sup>th</sup> c., 82.

c) H-3045 Saeqimo Tsigni ('A Medical Book'), the 18<sup>th</sup> c., 221.

d) F 46-6 Azrumeli, Tsnobari ('Reference Book'), the 18<sup>th</sup> c., 55.

<sup>10</sup> Хелаиа Н., Лекарственные растения в грузинских медицинских рукописях XVI-XVIII веков, Киев, 1985, 19.

To the first group were assigned nine different officinal plants. They are thoroughly studied and applied in our national as well as foreign traditional and modern medicine (*Aconitum orientale*, *Carpesium*, *Chamomilla*, *Glaucium*, *Horminum*, *Lavandula stoechas*, *Origanum vulgare*, *Paeonia officinalis*, *Solanum dulcamara*).<sup>11</sup>

The second group includes sixteen different plants, which are studied partially. They are used only in traditional medicine (*Adiantum capillus-veneris*, *Anemone fasciculata*, *Cornus mas*, *Crocus sativus*, *Elletteria cardamomum*, *Cyclamen*, *Cyperus rotundus*, *Ferula opopanax*, *Iris lazika*, *Lathyrus limenum*, *Laurus nobilis*, *Malva*, *Mandragora officinalis*, *Smilax aspera*, *Teucrium trapezunticum*, *Verbena officinalis*).<sup>12</sup>

The third group includes three different plants. We failed to obtain in the sources available any information regarding their healing qualities or their use in the traditional or modern medicine (*Asphodeline*, *Micropus erectus*, *Platanus orientalis*). We believe that the future study of these plants will enable us to make objective conclusion about their reliability and the appropriateness of their use. This will facilitate their thorough and purposeful study, and will point to the necessity either to apply them in Modern Medical practice, or to ban their use.

They are attested in the "Orphic Argonautica" as existing on the territory of Medea's garden. The definition of their names is the task of the future and we plan to continue our researches in this direction.

The results of the study lead to the conclusion that the healing qualities of the plants growing in Medea's garden are unquestionable, and this may serve as the evidence attesting to the actual existence of Medea's garden.

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<sup>11</sup> The Fund of the Museum of Georgian History of Medicine, Tbilisi, 1960-1990; Eristavi L., *Farmacognozia*, Tbilisi, 2005, 675 (in Georgian); Муравьева Д., *Фармакогнозия*, Москва, 198, 656.

<sup>12</sup> Шретер А., *Лекарственная флора Кавказа*, Москва, 1979, 368; Ковалёва Н., *Лечение растениями*, Москва, 1972, 350; *Полная энциклопедия народной медицины*, Москва, 1998, vol. 1: 751, vol. 2: 799; *PDR for Herbal Medicines*, Montvale, New Jersey, 1998, 1244.

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### THE RECEPTION OF THE ARGONAUTS BY LORD BYRON

At the age of twenty one Lord Byron started his travels to the east visiting Portugal, Spain, Turkey, Malta and Greece. He never reached Georgia though he had planned that is reflected in his poetic lines of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*:

Yet once again, adieu! Ere this the sail  
That wafts me hence is shivering in the gale;  
And Afric's coast and Calpe's adverse height,  
And Stamboul's minarets must greet my sight;  
Thence shall I stray through beauty's native clime  
Where Kaff is clad in rocks, and crown'd with snows sublime.

Comments which appear in many publications confirm that under "beauty's native clime" Byron meant Georgia.

When Byron approached the Bosphorus from the Black Sea he dared to climb the Cyanean Symplegades that were supposed to be the fabled ones the Argonauts passed on their way to seek the Golden Fleece. It was the nurse's dole in the Medea that encouraged him. He wrote about it in a letter to his friend saying: "Had not this sublime passage been in my head, I should never have dreamed of ascending the rocks." When standing on the very summit of those blue rocks he composed a rollicking six-line parody of the nurse's dole:

O How I wish that an embargo  
Had kept in port the good ship Argo!  
Who, still unlaunch'd from Grecian docks,  
Had never pass'd the Azure rocks;  
But now I fear her trip will be a  
Damn'd business for my Miss Medea.



When the ram with a golden fleece vaulted into the air, it had a boy and a girl on its back, the two children of Athamas, the king in Thessaly. Taking his course to the east, the ram crossed the strait between Europe and Asia. The girl named Helle fell from his back into the sea which from her was called Hellespont. The mythological Hellespont or the present Dardanelles is especially famous for its myth of brave Leander crossing the strait for his beloved Hero.

The ram with a golden fleece continued his career and brought the boy and the fleece to the kingdom of Colchis, Medea's homeland.

According to Apollonius of Rhodes when the ship Argo sailed towards Colchis, the ominous wing-beats of a huge eagle were heard by the Argonauts with Jason. Fluttering her enormous wings that bird of prey flew to the Caucasus mount where Prometheus was chained to rip open his flesh and tear his liver.

The present paper that focuses mainly on Medea, Prometheus, Leander and Hellespont argues that the reception of the Argonauts by Byron is special.

In literature the East stirred the souls of Romantic poets and writers. Byron produced "Childe Harold" as the result of his journey to the East – Spain, Portugal, Malta, Turkey and Greece. On Greece he said the following: "If I am a poet I owe it to Greece."

Of course, the Argonauts and the connected characters were a rich source of stylistic allusions for poets and artists of different ages. But in case of Byron all seems to be distinguished.

Byron's poetry is a unique example of a text that extremely abounds with quotations and allusions as stylistic means when biblical, mythological, literary or historical images are called forth as vessels into which new contents are poured, offering a kind of interplay between the meanings.

The whole world appears to be reflected in Byron's consciousness as a result of his voracious reading and highly developed imagination.

According to Thomas Moore since the age of five Byron was an avid and omnivorous reader, perusing everything that came his way.<sup>1</sup>

In case of Byron the function of allusions as stylistic means appears to be absolutely unique. Lord Byron not only alludes to mythological, biblical, literary or historical characters, but is mystically guided by them in real life. To be more precise Byron is in constant touch with them challenging them and competing with them, thus reincarnating their lives and images. With

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<sup>1</sup> Th. Moore, *Letters and Journals of the Lord Byron: With Notices of His Life*, 2 vols., London, John Murray, 1830-31.

Byron allusions are beyond the limits of stylistic means and become the real ways of his life.

Byron crossed the Hellespont in emulation of Leandre.

Leander was a youth of Abydos, a town of the Asian side of the strait which separates Asia and Europe. On the opposite shore in the town of Sestos lived the maiden Hero, a priestess of Venus. Leander loved her, and used to swim the strait nightly to enjoy the company of his mistress, guided by a torch which she reared upon the tower, for the purpose. But one night a tempest arose and the sea was rough; his strength failed, and he was drowned. The waves bore his body to the European shore, where Hero became aware of his death, and in her despair cast herself down from the tower into the sea and perished.

The story of Leander's swimming the Hellespont was looked upon as fabulous, and the feat considered impossible, especially due to the icy currents, till Lord Byron proved its possibility by performing it himself.

Byron alludes to this story in "The Bride of Abydos" and in the poem "Written after Swimming from Sestos to Abydos". The Poem is written after crossing the Dardanelles – the mythological Hellespont, famous in real life for its icy currents thus bringing to life Leander's experience as an example of courage and devotion. The poem confirms not only his feat but the poet's talent to humour it:

#### **Written after Swimming from Sestos to Abydos**

If, in the month of dark December,  
Leander, who was nightly wont  
(What maid will not the tale remember?)  
To cross thy stream, broad Hellespont!

If, when the wintry tempest roared,  
He sped to Hero, nothing loth,  
And thus of old thy current poured,  
Fair Venus! how I pity both!

For my, degenerate modern wretch,  
Though in the genial month of May,  
My dripping limbs I faintly stretch,  
And think I've done a feat to-day.

But since he crossed the rapid tide,  
According to the doubtful story,  
To woo, – and – Lord knows what beside,  
And swam for Love, as I for Glory;

'Twere hard to say who fared the best:  
 Sad mortals! thus the Gods still plague you!  
 He lost his labour, I my jest:  
 For he was drowned, and I've the ague.

Byron anew linked Europe and Asia not only through his poetry that is so rich with Eastern motifs but established a symbolic bridge through his feat.

Since Byron's time the feat has been achieved by others including our contemporary swimmers – Nick McCann from Nottingham, Byron's home place and Henri Kuprashvili from Tbilisi; yet it remains a test of strength and skill in the art of swimming.

Byron's early poetic lines include the translation of the nurse's dole from Euripides' *Medea*. Comparison with the original Greek shows that a considerable liberty has been taken with the original.

In Euripides, a chorus of Corinthian women contemplate, sympathetically, the plight of Medea, a cast-off, foreign wife with two small children and nowhere to go. Love, they reflect, can take either of two forms: a madness of desire and strife, or a temperate attraction leading women peacefully to the marriage bed. The first is Medea's situation; the Chorus itself prays fervently to be granted the second. Two kinds of love figure in Byron's translation as well, but neither involves the marriage bed.

"Whose heart may mingle pure with mine / With me to live, with me to die", – are Byron's words from the translation, though this scenario is alien to Euripides.

Byron develops and creates his own image of Medea to follow the lines "With me to live, with me to die". Byron is haunted by this image in most of his female characters to start from early pieces including his final unaccomplished masterpiece "Don Juan". But at the same time Byron is aspiring to Colchian Medea and is in search for her in real life. He fell in love with a simple Venetian woman, Margarita Cogni in so far as she reminded him of Medea, whom he brought to Palazzo Mochenigo to live with him. The letter of Moore dated 19 September 1818 is one of several describing Margarita Cogni:

"I am sure if I put a poniard into the hand of this one, she would plunge it where I told her, – and into me, if I offended her. I like this kind of animal, and am sure that I should have preferred Medea to any woman that ever breathed. You may, perhaps, wonder that I don't in that case take to my wife. But she is a poor mawkish, moral Clytemnestra (and no Medea) who likes to be vindictive according to law... (BLJ VI. 68 and XI 197)."

But in another letter Byron speaks on Lady Byron as of "mathematical Medea". If Colchian Medea was a sorceress Miss Anabella Millbank, his

future wife, attracted him not only due to her talent of poetry, but due to her deep knowledge of mathematics as well. Byron never deserted her like Jason. It was Lady Byron who appeared to be involved into a slander and scandal against the poet, divorced him and became his most dangerous and revengeful enemy. But it's worse saying, that on the day of the divorce she locked herself in her room rolling across the floor in the agony from pain of separation as if having in mind Byronic words on Medea: "With you to live with you to die." Separation was not less painful for Byron himself:

Every feeling hath been shaken;  
Pride, which not a world could bow,  
Bows to thee – by thee forsaken,  
Even my soul forsakes me now:

Fiery love and demonic revenge distinguished his beloved ladies including famous and notorious Lady Caroline Lamb, the wife of the future Prime Minister of Britain.

"Your heart – my poor Caro... what a little volcano! That pours lava through your veins" – wrote Byron indulgently in 1812. This volcanic lady from a highly aristocratic family proved to be as vindictive and revengeful as Lady Byron or Jason's Colchian spouse, far more dangerous than a baker's wife, Margarita Cogni though he had enough of her tantrums in Palazzo Mochenigo in Venice.

Lord Byron's "Manfred" caused a lot of discussion as to whether it was borrowed from Marlowe, Goethe or Aeschylus. Byron remarked that he had never read Goethe's "Faust", as he knew no German, and he also denied Marlowe as his progenitor. However of "Prometheus Bound" by Aeschylus he wrote the following:

"Of the "Prometheus" of Aeschylus I was passionately fond as a boy, (it was one of the Greek plays we read thrice a year at Harrow;) indeed that and the "Medea" were the only ones, which ever much pleased me. The Prometheus if not exactly in my plan, has always been so much in my head, that I can easily conceive its influence over all or anything that I have written."

Napoleon who succeeded in toppling legitimist monarchs, who managed to liberate the oppressed, had become an idol for a liberally-minded progressive young lord.

Byron's attachment to Napoleon appears to be complicated. Byron equates Napoleon to Prometheus and at the same time is aspiring to the contemporary hero. Byron considers Napoleon to be a liberator.

The critical attitude to his beloved figure permits Byron to distinguish a hero who fought against despotic regimes from that of an emperor striving to

dominate the continent. "I deny nothing but doubt everything" – are Lord Byron's words.

Disappointed in Napoleon, Byron aims to produce deeds far more important and significant than composing poetry.

At the age of 26 the author of "Childe Harold" announced an apparently quite serious resolution to withdraw from poetry. "No one should be a rhymer who could be anything better..."

In April, 1814 a Gazette Extraordinary announced the abdication of Fontainebleau.

Next morning the poet violated his vows by composing "Ode to Napoleon Bounaparte" – the strictest condemnation of Napoleon ever done in poetry.

#### I

'Tis done – but yesterday a King!  
 And arm'd with Kings to strive –  
 And now thou art a nameless thing:  
 So abject – yet alive!

"Ode to Napoleon" offers a whole gallery of great men of the world from ancient times to George Washington, the Cincinnatus of the west, as compared to Napoleon. Prometheus is among them in stanza XVI:

#### XVI

Or, like the thief of fire from heaven,  
 Wilt thou withstand the shock?  
 And share with him, the unforgiven,  
 His vulture and his rock!  
 Foredoom'd by God – by man accurst,  
 And that last act, though not thy worst,  
 The very Fiend's arch mock;  
 He in his fall preserved his pride,  
 And, if a mortal, had as proudly died!

Byron very much hoped that Napoleon would reincarnate Prometheus but, alas, in vain.

Disappointed in Napoleon, at least subconsciously, Byron aims to reincarnate the mythological liberator. And it took him exactly ten years from composing the "Ode" on the 10<sup>th</sup> April, 1814, to fulfil the mission of the liberator of Greece and die as proudly as Prometheus did.

Byron died on 19<sup>th</sup> April, 1824. His death at Missolonghi in Greece shocked the world and unified Hellas.

Many European Philhellenists supported the liberation of Greece from Turkey but they shed blood in their literary lines only. Byron was an exception to dedicate himself to Greece.

As it appears Napoleon is a long-lasting attachment for Byron. In our opinion this attachment proves to be artistic and is aimed to perform Napoleon on the very stage of life.

*Performing* Napoleon Byron was *perfecting* him through his acts.

Granting the Emperor's hegemony in the realm of deeds Byron refused to defer in the realm of words. "As Napoleon had conquered by battles, so Byron would conquer by poetry."<sup>2</sup>

"Triumphs won by words outlast triumphs won by deeds",<sup>3</sup> but we are happy to add that the Byronic victory was never gained by words only.

Byron won the victory mainly by his devotion and self-sacrifice. It was the unique case when power of words and power of deeds coincided and converged. Byron never spared his life, he showed the world his readiness to die and died for Greece – the point that was missing in the Napoleonic legend. Byron became the symbol of disinterested patriotism and with the final winning of Independence, his name became even brighter in Greece.

Before closing I would like to add that the Argonauts, Medea, Prometheus, Hero and Leander are the focal points that help us trace the cultural links not only between Byron and Greece but between Byron and Georgia as well.

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<sup>2</sup> J. Clubbe, *Napoleon's Last Campaign and the Origins of Don Juan*, *The Byron Journal*, London, 1997, 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Medea Metreveli (Tbilisi)

**THE TENDENCIES TO REHABILITATE MEDEA'S IMAGE  
IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY EUROPEAN LITERATURE  
(CH. WOLF, M. KARAGATSI)**

*'In fact, there was something special in this woman,  
that excited so many minds, and it seemed  
they were unable to free themselves from her.'*

*Christa Wolf, Medea: Voices*

Euripides' *Medea* has inspired a lot of writers since ancient times till nowadays. It is owing to the great tragedian that Medea became one of the most interesting and popular images for world literature. Bearing in mind many various interpretations, the 20<sup>th</sup> century European literature is distinguished by especially interesting tendencies. The one of "acquitting" Medea is particularly remarkable. There are various motivations. If Georgian writers are more concerned with discharging Medea from moral responsibility, European literature turns her image into a certain symbol of accomplishment of the so-called feminist ideas in modern world. This common tendency may be detected in the work by different writers separated by a remarkable chronological distance, who were less likely to be acquainted with each other's works. In my paper, I will dwell on the novel *The Great Chimaera* (1953) by M. Karagatsis, a 20<sup>th</sup> century Greek writer, and the novel *Medea: Voices* (1998) by a German writer Christa Wolf. These two books are completely different. *The Great Chimaera* describes the life-story of a French woman, Marina Reiz and indirectly alludes to Medea, while *Medea: Voices* is completely based on the myth. Anyway, both works reflect very interesting tendencies for the interpretation of the message conveyed through the image of Medea.

The novel *The Great Chimaera* is distinguished for original parallels between its central character, Marina, and several mythological images (Helen, Phaedra, Jocasta, Medea) out of which an allusion to Medea is the most essential. Marina is related to Medea in double ways: through her personal attitude to the mythological character and through the key episodes of her life that resemble Medea's tragedy. M. Karagatsis unambiguously resorts to Medea as a prototype to create Marina's artistic image, and offers a completely different and original way of rehabilitating the mythological character.<sup>1</sup>

In the novel, Marina can be identified with Medea at several levels: 1. both are strangers – Medea was brought to Greece by Jason in the same way as Marina by Yannis; however, their functions are partly reversed. According to ancient Greek tradition, Jason took the barbarian woman to civilized Hellas, while Yannis brings Marina from civilized and emancipated France to patriarchal and less emancipated Greece. 2. Marina, like Medea, finds it difficult to adapt herself to Greek society. 3. Marina unintentionally becomes the murderer of her children (her six-year-old girl dies because of her negligence, while her suicide as she was in the family way equals the murder of a yet unborn baby), while according to Euripides, Medea kills her two boys purposefully. 4. Suicide is the only way-out for both characters: "But for this (Marina says about the baby in her belly), I would die, get released."<sup>2</sup> These words are the repercussion of Euripides' Medea: "I am undone, I have resigned all joy in my life, and I want to die."<sup>3</sup>

Karagatsis does not deny that Medea killed her children; however, he looks for a certain "good reason". *The Great Chimaera* presents a number of other parallels as well. We learn from Marina's recollections that she was educated in classical philology and her doctoral thesis dealt with the interpretation of Medea's image. She remembers how she addressed the Examination Board at the presentation of her thesis: "Medea fostered pathos in me. A woman, who killed her children because of erotic jealousy, is she a psychopath or not? This was the question that puzzled me. ... No, she is not a psychopath. If she was, she would not have inspired the genius of Euripides, who never looked among maladies for the themes for his tragedies. Medea is a psychological individual, whose mind is blinded by erotic pathos in the same way as this could happen to any ordinary individual. According to this

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<sup>1</sup> Metreveli M., For the Relationship of Marina with Euripidean Medea according to M. Karagatsis' novel *The Great Chimaera*, The Proceedings of the Republic Conference I, KSU, Logos 2003, 130-133.

<sup>2</sup> Καραγάτσης Μ., *Η Μεγάλη Χίμαιρα*, Αθήνα, 2001, 318.

<sup>3</sup> Euripides, *Medea*, The Loeb Classical Library, 1994, 2001, 227-228.



unusual conclusion, a person who is not capable of experiencing such pathos is not physiological."<sup>4</sup>

Marina's pathetic words in defence of Medea evidently persuaded the professors, who used to regard her with scepticism, in the rightness of her arguments and she was conferred the doctoral degree. So, Marina was fond of Medea's pathos since her young age. She found quite logical what Medea, driven by erotic pathos, committed with blinded mind. And later in her life, her fondness for Medea developed into her assimilation with the mythical character.

Feeling the parallels between Medea and herself, Marina tried to drift apart from her "mythic prototype" after she became pregnant with her second child. This is attested by the following fragment from the novel: "From that very day when she felt herself pregnant, she did not take *Medea* from the table."<sup>5</sup>

This episode implies the desire of a woman to avoid the curse of killing her second child. However, her suicide, which at the same time means the murder of her unborn child, does not allow her to overcome the "Medea complex".

Marina, the central character of *The Great Chimaera*, is French. Her nationality makes her appear different, distinguished in Greek society, which she eventually confronts. The author mentions several times that the woman is "alien" to Greeks. I find it relevant to cite a fragment where the author presents Marina and her mother-in-law, Ana Reiz, as the opposing sides: "It is impossible for these two women to live under the same roof. They are put apart by the infinite gap that lies between the countries, peoples and the differing consciousness. One is the daughter of brave fair-haired vikings, greedy for gold and pleasure. The other is Asian, with secluded spirit, in whose veins flows the blood of real sailors. They fight the waves, in order to sell the fruits of the earth. Some regard the sea as the means, and others as the target."<sup>6</sup>

Marina and her mother-in-law are united by a common sorrow beside the bed of the dying child. However, the author again accentuates the difference in their nationalities: "The seas, the mountains, the rivers that set apart Normandy and Cassos, again stretch out between them ... The Norman and the Asian definitely felt the infinite distance that put them apart, different

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<sup>4</sup> Καραγάτσης Μ., *Η Μεγάλη Χίμαιρα*, 24.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*; 298.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*; 65.

bloods, which made their hearts beat in different ways. Nothing united them any more."<sup>7</sup>

Karagatsis aims to present the status of a woman, her concept of freedom, her attitude to the problem. His method is very interesting. The conflict should be discussed at two levels. On the one hand, the writer brings a strange woman into the context of the Greek society, into Greece and shows how she "adapts herself" to the Greek reality. He is interested if this is possible, or if the attempt is doomed to a failure. On the other hand, the author resorts to another device to make the conflict more severe and to give it tragic colouring. The opposition becomes more conspicuous when he accentuates Marina's nationality: Marina is French, which accounts for her conflict with Greek society, the conflict with old and firm traditions.

Karagatsis' intention is clear. He aims to show the reader the conflict between two cultures, two nations, two societies. In this respect, France is the antipode of Greece. The conflict and the tragic end of the character is inevitable. For Marina, rejected and ousted by the society, the suicide is the only way for survival, for preserving her own self, for becoming free, while Euripides' Medea ends with apotheosis, which in fact means that Medea leaves the world of mortals. So, the parallels between Marina and Medea in Karagatsis' novel are conceptual in their essence, as Marina embodies all what was essential in Euripides' tragedy: the free and emancipated woman.

The novel *Medea:Voices* by Christa Wolf is distinguished by unusual architectonics. In a highly original way, the novel is divided into 11 chapters, each introduced by the quotations of well-known writers. Each chapter is named after one of the characters of the novel – in fact, the characters represent the voices, the thoughts of the characters.<sup>8</sup> "This new form of narration developed in parallel with other methods. It was only later that I heard the voices and realized that this way enabled me ... to present each literary figure equally and at the same time present Medea from an entirely different angle with all of her controversial character"<sup>9</sup>, Christa Wolf writes.

Although the novel is based on Euripides' tragedy (it follows the central plot elements of the myth), the author is principally opposed to a number of questions related to Medea, thus attempting to restore the earlier version existing in pre-Euripidean sources. And finally, what is Christa's Medea like? Is she a barbarian, a savage, a sorceress, or simply an emancipated, free

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid; 260.

<sup>8</sup> Danelia M., Literary Interpretation of the Myth about Medea in Christa Wolf's Work, The Proceedings of the Republic Conference I, KSU, Logos 2003, 68-73.

<sup>9</sup> Christa Wolf, *Medea: Stimmen*. Voraussetzungen zu einem Text, München, 2000, 80.

woman, who is unable to get used to injustice and fights for self-assertion in the patriarchal world at the expense of her life?

Medea abandoned her fatherland Colchis only because she could not bear injustice, when Aetes, willing to retain his royal power, let mad women dismember Apsyrtus. "I went with Jason as I could not bear any more to stay in this irrecoverable, doomed Colchis"<sup>10</sup>, says Medea. She shares the fate of her aunt, Circe, who also had to leave Colchis when she opposed the king together with her supporters. Circe was accused of crime and was ousted from her fatherland.

When presenting Medea's character, the author accentuates such properties as *pride, defiance and fearlessness*.

*Pride* – Jason noticed this character trait of Medea already in Colchis and could not hide his admiration:

"I saw how proudly she went down the streets of her country, holding up her head, how everyone around greeted her, how they talked to her. She seemed to be flying freely and boldly on the waves of universal wonder."<sup>11</sup>

It was her pride that the Corinthians could not forgive her and interpreted as arrogance. According to Laocoon, the astrologist of the king, "the court was bothered with her pride".<sup>12</sup> In spite of this, Laocoon is fascinated with Medea and can not hide his admiration for Colchian women in general. They are so much different from Corinthian women, who have become the slaves and shadows of Corinthian men. "Well, how should I tell her that the Corinthians attribute her self-confidence to arrogance and that is why they hate her. ... However, other Colchian women are none the less. They do the hardest work, and still walk around with their heads up as if they were the wives of the nobles. The surprising thing is that they can not walk otherwise. I like this habit of theirs, but it worries me as well."<sup>13</sup>

In Colchis, Medea's mother taught her the following: "if some time anyone wants to ruin you, they will first have to kill your pride. This is truly so, and will be so for ever", Medea recollects.<sup>14</sup>

And truly, Medea is unable to tolerate the stern patriarchal society of Corinth, where a word or a thought of a woman is of no value. She openly confronts Greek society by her deeds and explains her behavior to Jason in the following way: "I have not come here from Colchis to go around humble."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Christa Wolf, *Medea:Voices*, translated into Georgian by M. Mirianashvili, Tbilisi, 2004, 67.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*; 26.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*; 32.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*; 112.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*; 10.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*; 43.

Medea exasperated the Corinthians with her *defiance* as well. She ruined the stereotype of an obedient woman, acceptable for the Corinthians, and in this way put herself and her children in a great danger. "As if she was playing with fire on purpose. Her manner of walking also has something defiant in itself. Yes, defiant, this is exactly the right word"<sup>16</sup>, says Jason.

Medea does not restrict herself and behaves as a queen even in the palace, at the festive dinner of the king. "I behaved like a queen. I wished to irritate the king. But am I not a queen? I am an offspring of the king"<sup>17</sup>, Medea says.

Medea opposes the Corinthians in their fundamental manners. Despite Jason's numerous warnings, she goes around with her hair down: "Neither does she stop walking around with that wild disheveled hair! She never has them gathered, as it suits married Corinthian women. ... Shameless!"<sup>18</sup>

Even the free and delightful laugh of Medea is the object of judgments: "Only she laughs so, why should we bear her impudent laugh?"<sup>19</sup> Turon says to Glauce.

Medea's appreciation of Corinthian discontent with her is quite sensible and although she clearly sees the approach of her death, she does not lose her temper. *Fear* is alien to her. Medea has found the fearsome mystery of Corinth and has unveiled it although she understands that the Corinthians will never forgive her. "What is the use of pondering and grieving. I would act like this anyway and would not end up my days in this world of gods. There is even no air left here for me to breathe in"<sup>20</sup>, says Medea.

Medea is truly distinguished in the Corinthian society. She is not like obedient wives of Corinthian men, for which the Corinthians detest her even more. "The Corinthian say I am reckless in the same way as I used to be. For them each woman, who has a bit of wits, is reckless. While the wives of those Corinthians remind me of thoroughly trained, tamed animals"<sup>21</sup>, says Medea.

Corinthian women cannot even utter a word in the company of their husbands, which is intolerable not only for Medea, but for other Colchians as well. "The right for the first word belonged to men; more than that, they are supposed to speak instead of women."<sup>22</sup>

Even Jason believes that it is necessary to kill even a slight expression of free will in women. This is a commonly accepted opinion in Corinth. "We

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid; 30.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid; 8.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid; 43.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid; 92.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid; 127.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid; 9.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid; 51.

should keep women in our captivity like slaves. We should kill in them any will to resist."<sup>23</sup>

Medea could not accept Oystros' advice to live in a shadow and do not irritate people, because she simply could not live so. Here Medea admits that some inner forces drove her to the floor of the accused, and served as a reason for ousting her from the city. "All right, I, Medea, am a witch, if you wish so. But who are you? Strangers, savages. You will never see my fear and humiliation"<sup>24</sup>, says Medea.

Christa Wolf's Medea is a free, emancipated and accomplished woman, who calls on others to express their own feelings, thoughts and desires. "Do not deny yourself any thought, even on the most shameful desires."<sup>25</sup>

The writer completely relieves Medea of the responsibility for killing her children. Unlike Karagatsis' novel, Christa's Medea does not commit suicide in order to free herself. Medea is ousted from Corinth, which is the same as the escape from the oppressive society of Corinth.

So, the novels discussed above imply typological parallels as concerns the understanding of Medea's image. Both, Marina-Medea and Medea of Christa Wolf, are the symbols of feminist ideas. Both have to live in the society where female rights are rather limited. In one case, the protest ends in a suicide, while in the other case, the central character is ousted. These novels, written in the 1930s and the 1990s, have common pathos. Besides, as the author of the Great Chimera is a man, we may conclude that the so-called "feminist protest" is indirect in the first case, and direct in the second.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid; 148.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid; 130.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid; 98.

Ketevan Nadareishvili (Tbilisi)

## MEDEA IN THE CONTEXT OF MODERN GEORGIAN CULTURE

The central figure of the Argonautic mythos – Medea still remains to be much discussed in modern Georgia, the phenomenon of this legendary woman still excites our society remarkably. One can observe this excitement in various cultural contexts – be it a TV program discussing films, a new theatrical performance or even her statue designed to be erected.

Why are we so anxious about her? At first glance the answer seems simple – It is difficult for our society to accept the Euripidean interpretation of Medea – the very interpretation, which made Medea's image so popular all over the world. The phenomenon of a mother, killer of her children appeared very difficult to accept for the national consciousness. But on the other hand Medea is the first well-known Georgian, the figure so closely connected with Georgia's glorious past. Thus the problem around Medea is caused by this very complexity. What should we do? Should we speak about her, just neglect her, or interpret her differently from Euripides? Discussing it we come up against the problem identified as "the Medea complex", which exists in Georgia's reality.

The article aims to discuss the main tendencies in modern Georgian interpretations about Medea in order to create a picture of Georgian nation's attitude towards Medea's phenomenon. As we focus this time on the main tendencies of Medea's interpretations, we choose to discuss only the key productions and to discuss them all too briefly.

Just a few words about the history of the attitude towards Medea. One can't find in ancient Georgian writing any literary interpretation of the Argonauts' myth, though Georgians were familiar with this cycle.<sup>1</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> The episode concerning Jason sowing the teeth of the dragon in the earth is presented in the eleventh century Georgian translation of the Pseudo-Nonnos Mythological Commentary on

reason of it was the above mentioned one – the image of a mother-killer appeared to be inconsistent with the national character. Only in 60-ies of the XIX century – during the crucial period of our nation's awakening, when the raising of patriotic spirit became urgent, the literature turned to the Argonautic myth – the desire to depict the "gold abundant Kolchis" prevailed over the neglect and terror towards Medea.

In order to present the true picture of Georgia's glorious history an outstanding Georgian poet and a very important public figure Akaki Tsereteli wrote the poem "Media". The poem depicts the glorious days of Kolchis, when the Argonauts had just arrived here for the Golden Fleece. Medea, so active in this segment of the myth, is a totally passive young maiden here, neither helping Jason, nor killing her brother. Her only fault, if it can be called a fault, is her love towards Jason, the abuser of her country. The aim of the author was Medea's complete rehabilitation, but it caused her artistic image to lose its luster. What is here left from Medea? A Kolchian woman as the evidence of Georgia's glorious past recorded in the ancient sources. And yet, the poet failed to make Medea's image popular in Georgia.

Now let's turn to another artistic medium – theatre, which from the XX century onward began to play a very important role in Georgia's culture. Before the October revolution the Georgian professional theater especially favored the ancient tragedy, but never once staged Euripides' "Medea" – the negligence already familiar to us from the literature. The ice started to break only in 60-ies of the XX century, when the famous Georgian director A. Chkhartishvili decided to stage Euripides' "Medea". The news was not welcomed with enthusiasm. Some people criticized the theatre from the patriotic viewpoint; others considered the creation of Euripides as alien to the contemporary audience.<sup>2</sup> The director himself fully acknowledged the delicacy and the complexity of the problem facing him. He wrote: "What is the reason, that we took a dislike to the famous tragic image of a Georgian woman, pushed her aside and left her to "others?" In his opinion Medea's image couldn't have been abused and insulted in Euripidean tragedy, as the aim of tragedy was catharsis – tragedy had to raise a hero to ethical heights through torture no matter how burdensome his crime was. The price Medea paid for her vengeance was terrible self-torture, believed the director.<sup>3</sup> Chkhartishvili invited Veriko Anjaparidze, an outstanding actress, to play Medea. In 1992 the actress was proclaimed by British Academy of Arts as

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Gregory of Nazianzus' "Oratio funebris in laudem Basilii Magni". Otkhmezuri T., Pseudo-Nonniani in IV Orationis Gregorii Nazianzeni Commentarii, Versio iberica (Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca 50, Corpus Nazianzenum 16), Turnhout-Leuven, 2002, 270-273.

<sup>2</sup> Kiknadze V., Theatre and Time, Tbilisi, 1984, 269.

<sup>3</sup> Chkhartishvili A., "Interview", Theatrical Tbilisi, 1962, 5-6, 5-7.

one of the ten best actors in the world.<sup>4</sup> At first the actress refused to play the role. Her explanation of the refusal is very significant: "Although I admire ancient tragedy. ... Medea, murderer of her own children, always frightened me to horror."<sup>5</sup> The director began to prepare the Georgian audience. "Writers speak..." – a special cycle of articles appeared in the periodicals aiming to clear the way for comprehending Euripides' tragic genius. Chkhartishvili started to stage the play without Veriko Anjaparidze. During the rehearsals he was playing Medea's role himself. After some hesitation the actress agreed to play Medea.<sup>6</sup>

This performance – A. Chkhartishvili's "Medea" was considered to be an extremely significant work of art and what is very important for our discussion – the play was an attempt to get rid of "the Medea complex". The main innovations of Chkhartishvili interpretation seem to be the following: first, Medea's Kolchian origin was especially stressed in the performance. Betrayal of Kolchis, of her motherland and not of love became the main issue and the source of Medea's tragedy. Anjaparidze's Medea decides to kill the children only at the last moment, when Creon and Creusa have already perished. Thus Medea explains the murder of children as a compelled act, committed by mother in order to avoid their being killed by the Corinthians. And third, Medea doesn't escape with the dragon-chariot. She is left alive to be tortured, visually separated by a stone-wall from the society of men forever.

As we have mentioned above, the performance had a great success both among the audience and in the critical press. Though alongside admiration, certain criticism was also expressed regarding the interpretation of Medea. Here is one of such approaches: "There are controversial points. The tragic essence of Medea's character is not fully acknowledged. The interpretation doesn't expose the very fact of Medea bearing in her the force that causes her ruin. The essence of the character isn't disclosed from this aspect."<sup>7</sup>

Still the ice was in the process of breaking. In addition, another version about killing Medea's children existed in the ancient sources. Georgian scholars of Classical Philology investigated Argonauts' mythos narrated in the ancient sources in detail. They paid special attention to the versions of the myth told by Parmeniscus and Didymus. In their writings, the children were murdered by the Corinthians, who afterwards declared that it was Medea who

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<sup>4</sup> "Chiaureli Sophiko" – the article in: *Who is Who in the Modern World*. Biographic edition in many volumes, Moscow, International Biographic Centre, 1999, 373.

<sup>5</sup> Ninikashvili K., Veriko Anjaparidze, Album, Tbilisi, 1968, 97.

<sup>6</sup> We discussed this performance in detail at the I International Conference of the Theatre Studies in Athens, 2005. The article is forthcoming in the papers of the conference.

<sup>7</sup> Mumladze D., *Modern Georgian Directors*, Tbilisi, 1973, 34.



did it. A well-known specialist of the ancient history and writer L. Sanikidze decided to use this version to give a different story of the Georgian princess. He presents in two of his writings his own interpretation of the Argonauts' cycle: "The Story of the Kolchian Maiden", a large narrative and a drama "Medea". In the preface to his narrative Sanikidze remarked, that there is much fantasy in his book alongside with well-known stories about the Argonauts. "But this isn't prompted only by the principle of fiction. The matter is that almost every Greek author seemed to be biased. They tended to belittle the achievements of "alien-barbarian peoples and extolled excessively the deeds of their compatriots... The author tried to reconstruct, at least approximately, the proper picture of the relationship of Ancient Kolchis and Greece."<sup>8</sup> Sanikidze aimed to free Medea from the crime he believed she never fulfilled and was only ascribed to her. Notwithstanding the fact, that Tsereteli's and Sanikidze's writings interpret the myth differently, they both are the representations of one, clear-cut tendency of Medea's reception. In addition one case is also worth mentioning here. L. Sanikidze's drama "Medea" appeared to be quite a popular play staged frequently in various regional theatres of Georgia during 60-80-ies of the XX century. Yet, despite its popularity neither the drama, nor the novel could be considered a successful work of art. Significant is also a fact, that in the leading theatres of Georgia, forming the image of the Georgian theatre, L. Sanikidze's version was never staged. "The Kolchian Maiden", the opera (composer B. Kvernadze), whose libretto was based on this play was the only exception.<sup>9</sup>

While speaking about the "Medea" on the Georgian scene, the ballet "Medea" staged on the motifs of Euripides' tragedy is also to be mentioned (Choreographer G. Aleksidze). The ballet is significant first of all as a musical-choreographic embodiment of the Euripidean tragedy. Libretto's author G. Aleksidze not only retained the main feature of Medea's artistic image – killing of the children by mother herself, but based on it the whole performance. Besides, some significant changes are made. The action takes place in two temporal dimensions – in past and in present, so almost the whole legend is presented before the audience. As the ballet aims at portraying the psychological images of the heroes, their feelings and their emotional experiences Jason's and Creusa's love and Medea's jealousy become its leading themes. Critics considered the performance as the first successful monodrama in the Georgian ballet history.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Sanikidze L., *The Story of the Kolchian Maiden*, Introduction, Tbilisi, 1963.

<sup>9</sup> Kapanadze G., "Birth of the New Opera," *The Georgian Theatre's Day*, 1998. 14. I; Bibileishvili I., "The Tragedy of the Kolchian Maiden", *People Newspaper*, 1997, 7-13. X.

<sup>10</sup> Balanchivadze E., "R. Gabichvadze's Ballet "Medea", *Soviet Art*, 1979, 3, 34-38; Nadareishvili L., "The Revived Myth", *Zaria Vostoka (Dawn of the East)*, 1979. 18. VI.

One of the recent productions of "Medea" was staged in the newly opened "Free Theatre" in 2002 by the director Gocha Kapanadze. The performance was a kind of compilation of Euripides', Anuilh's and Kapanadze's versions. The director endeavored to show Medea's innocence and, in his own way, tried to develop the aforementioned version of the myth, in which Medea didn't kill her children. The programme of the play quotes the sources of this version (Parmeniscus, Didymus). However, it is worthy of mention that the actors themselves don't refer to these authors during the play. Therefore in case a spectator hasn't read the program, he can't guess that Medea too has her "defenders". Thus when at the end of the play Medea treads Euripides' charges under her feet, the audience is confused, it watches the woman obsessed with hysterics without bringing any argument against Euripides. This was exactly the case why the critic L. Chkhartishvili regarded the performance as weak from the point of view of dramaturgy.<sup>11</sup>

There are other novelties in the plot as well. The new characters are introduced, those of Destiny and Circe, Medea's aunt. Destiny stays on the stage throughout the whole play and conveys her attitude towards the characters without uttering a single word, merely through mimics and movements. Medea constantly struggles with her; at the end she is nevertheless defeated. Grieved, she begins to justify herself: "All what is written here is a total lie. Thousands of lies have been invented about me. O, Euripides, why don't you tell all around my true story! Yes, I loved my father, my brother, my motherland, but this is something you can't understand, because you belong to the race of the unfortunate."<sup>12</sup>

It seems to me, that the critics were right in noticing the main flaw of Kapanadze's version – an attempt to explain events by the proud, self-respecting nature of Georgians. Hence, this leads again to relating the attitude existing in the society towards Medea – "the Medea complex" with certain character traits of the nation.

The clear-cut new tendency in the Georgian literature of interpreting of the Argonaut's myth starts, in our opinion with O. Chiladze's roman "A Man Was Going down a Road", published in 70-ies of the XX century. The epos in prose of so called "mythological plan" explores the argonautic cycle without aiming to "restore" the legend. Here the famous myth, as the critic correctly notes, appears to be a tool for the allegoric denouement of the real story "placed" in the fabula.<sup>13</sup> Allegoric denouement of mythology already in the Hellenistic period was a widespread mode of myth interpretation. O. Chiladze

<sup>11</sup> Chkhartishvili L., "The New, but Improper Life of Medea", Theatre and Life, 2004, 6, 15.

<sup>12</sup> Chkhartishvili, 2004, 15.

<sup>13</sup> Merkviladze O., "The Movement of the Modern Novel", Criticism, 1977, II, 68.

develops this approach with excellence and presents the history of the Golden Fleece as an attempt of the Greeks to conquer Kolchis.

The legendary Cretan king Minos makes the plan how to conquer Kolchis. Sending Phrixos (not a prince, but a son of a very poor family) with a ram, who had to settle in Kolchis, was the first step of this plan. According to this plan, Jason's real mission was not obtaining the fleece, but to be killed in Kolchis by the Kolchians. After Jason's murder fulfilling of the third, final step would have been possible – then the Greeks could invade Kolchis, claiming, that they were only taking vengeance for Jason's murder. But Minos' plan was not destined to be fulfilled. Medea's love for Jason appeared to be the reason it failed.

O. Chiladze concludes his story of the Argonauts' expedition with their escape from Kolchis. Medea's story is ended by her leaving Kolchis as well. So discussing Chiladze's Medea we can speak only about what was she like in Kolchis and what was her function in the Argonauts' expedition to Kolchis.

Medea – the daughter of the powerful king of Kolchis – Aeetes lives in the rich, lucky and undisturbed country. Trained by Aeetes' sister Kamar, a sort of a witch, Medea from the childhood was skilled in the secrets of nature. By the time the Argonauts arrived in Kolchis, she is a young maiden, who sees Jason for the first time in a dream and woken up is already in love with the unseen foreigner. Neither Cypris, nor fire-breathing bulls nor other folk-tale attributes are found in the novel. All Medea's actions are caused by love. Because of this tragic force she becomes the betrayer of her father and her country – she helps Jason to obtain the Golden Fleece by making Aeetes fall asleep into an artificial sleep, while Jason creeps into the palace and steals the fleece. As in the myth afterwards she helps Jason to kill her brother by treachery, thus giving the Argonauts a chance to escape from the chasing Kolchians.

As we see, the function of Medea in this novel is very like of Medea's function in Apollonius Rhodius' "Argonautica", and in the whole Chiladze's Medea can be considered to be so-called "Helper-Maiden" type as well. The aim of the writer isn't the rehabilitation of Medea. He strives to depict subtle psychological portrait of the heroine, to give the original motivation of Medea's actions and portray her inner world in the moment, when two forces – love and obligation have a desperate struggle in her soul.

Discussing the main tendencies of Medea's modern Georgian interpretations in various artistic mediums her receptions in visual art requires a separate investigation.<sup>14</sup> Though to create a more or less full picture we

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<sup>14</sup> See Gia Bughadze's article in this volume.

would like to treat briefly Medea's interpretations in Georgian monumental sculpture as well.

In 70-ies of the last century in Abkhazia, in Bitchvinta, on the coast of the Black sea the magnificent monument of the outstanding Georgian sculptor M. Berdzenishvili was erected. The huge, 8 meters high monument presents Medea, agitated like the sea, and her children in an extremely tense moment. The mother, overwhelmed with passion warmly puts hands on her children. Medea appears to be a beloved heroine of the artist. Naturally, he acknowledged fully the complexity of the artistic interpretation of this very controversial heroine. According to the well-known art critic Kagan for the comprehension of the monument Berdzenishvili used the principle "non finito", the principle of incompleteness of the artistic text.<sup>15</sup> The sculpture's content is not definite and straightforward just as Medea herself is full of paradoxes and contradictions. The sculptor allows the audience to decide themselves – is this woman ready to kill her children? Or maybe she tries to defend them from someone, even defend from herself? A very interesting solution in our mind. Such an understanding makes Berdzenishvili's sculpture quite original and an extremely interesting art image, considered to be one of the most original interpretations of this heroine in Georgian culture.

A few months ago in Batumi, in the central square a monumental sculpture of Medea was erected. The news about erecting the statue again caused anxiety. The debate about Medea was still traditional and very familiar.

In this context the sculptor's interpretation of Medea deserves attention. Devi Khmaladze's Medea presents the figure of a woman standing on a high pedestal. Clothed in a long gown, she holds the Golden Fleece in her right hand, which she holds to the side. The golden parts of the monument (the fleece, the crown, the collar) grant the sculpture a spirit of solemnity and grandeur.

In our mind, this interpretation presents Medea mainly as a symbol of the wealth and strength of Kolchis and as such appears to be a kind of Georgia's visiting card. All that is tragic and ambivalent in her nature, her tremendous passions and her storms of emotion are left behind.<sup>16</sup> It seems to us, that this monument continues the traditional tendency of the interpretation of Medea's by laconic forms characteristic to this kind of art.

Thus to sum up all we have discussed in this paper, we can say, that the main tendencies of the approach towards Medea in modern Georgian

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<sup>15</sup> Kagan M., *The High Art of Merab Berdzenishvili and the Problems of the Artistic Culture of XX-XXI Centuries*, Tbilisi, 2006, 27.

<sup>16</sup> Chichinadze N., "The Sculpture of Medea in Batumi", 24 Hours, 2007.7.VII.

receptions include: silence, negligence, attempts to blame others and to rehabilitate her, considering her as a symbol of the glorious past and the new, original interpretations of the Argonautic cycle in the whole. But "The Medea complex" still exists in Georgia's reality and the question, is this complex an obstacle for us to create high artistic representations of this very important heroine, still remains unanswered.

Walter Puchner (Athens)

**Η ΜΗΔΕΙΑ ΤΟΥ FRANZ GRILLPARZER (1821)  
ΣΤΗ ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΗ ΤΟΥ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥ ΧΑΤΖΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ  
(1915, 1927)**

Η ελληνική πρόσληψη της ευριπίδειας "Μήδειας" χαρακτηρίζεται από ένα διπλό παράδοξο: έως την παράσταση της "Μήδειας" το 1942 στο Εθνικό Θέατρο σε σκηνοθεσία του Τάκη Μουζενίδη, το έργο παίζεται, με εξαίρεση την παράσταση στα αρχαία που οργάνωσε ο Γεώργιος Μιστριώτης με τους φοιτητές του το 1903, σχεδόν μόνο σε διασκευές: του Franz Grillparzer (1821), του Cesare Della Valle (1824, γραμμένο το 1814)<sup>1</sup>, του Louis Cicconi και του Ernst Legouvé (1854)<sup>2</sup>. Το ελληνικό κοινό βλέπει διασκευή του

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<sup>1</sup> M. Carlson, *The Italian Stage from Goldoni to d'Annunzio*, London 1982, 55.

<sup>2</sup> Παραλείπω εδώ τη συζήτηση για μια αμφιλεγόμενη διασκευή του Alfieri, καθώς και τη διασκευή του Ιωάννη Ζαμπέλιου, ακολουθώντας τη διασκευή του Della Valle (Α. Βασιλείου, "Η Μήδεια του Ιωάννη Ζαμπέλιου και το ιταλικό πρότυπό της", *Στέφανος. Τιμητική προσφορά στον Βάλτερ Πούχνερ*, Αθήνα 2007, 167-176). Ο Πλάτων Μαυρομούστακος εξηγεί το φαινόμενο ως εξής: "This preference for adaptations of Euripides' tragedy over the ancient Greek play itself is the product of a double difficulty. The first is related to the conditions of development of theatre activity in Greece, which had not yet managed to attain an advanced level of acting and directing. The star-actresses of that era did not really face the interpretative questions posed by the Euripidean play; their acting abilities were better suited to simple plays centring on the emotional upheavals of love and jealousy. The second difficulty has to do with the education of a public used to performances of Italian opera (mainly through the tours of various Italian companies) or of Greek melodramas, and to productions of nationalistic plays exploiting ancient themes. The formation of professional troupes during the 1860s is a reflection of these conditions, which prevailed until the 1890s, when the first important modern Greek playwrights appear" (P. Mavromoustakos, "Medea in Greece", E. Hall, F. Macintosh, O. Taplin (eds.), *Medea in Performance 1500-2000*, Oxford 2000, 166-179, ιδίως, 166). Για τις διασκευές της Μήδειας βλ. E. Frenzel, *Stoffe der Weltliteratur*, Stuttgart 1970, 475-479 (με βιβλιογραφία), για άλλες διασκευές J. Schondorff (ed.), *Medea. Euripides, Seneca, Corneille, Cherubini, Grillparzer, Jahn, Anouilh, Jeffers, Braun*, München/Wien 1963, με πρόλογο του Karl Kerényi.

δράματος για την παιδοκτόνο εκδικήτρια του προδομένου έρωτα για πρώτη φορά το 1865 από την Adelaida Ristori στα ιταλικά στη διασκευή του Legouné (ή του Della Valle), παράσταση που δίνεται την ίδια χρονιά και στην Πόλη<sup>3</sup>. Εκεί ακολουθούν διάφορες ερασιτεχνικές παραστάσεις, από το 1870 ως το 1890 και επαγγελματικές, με αντιφατικές πληροφορίες από τον Τύπο για το ποια διασκευή σε ποια ελληνική μετάφραση χρησιμοποιήθηκε<sup>4</sup>. Το μόνο βέβαιο είναι πως δεν πρόκειται για τη διασκευή του Grillparzer, του οποίου το πρωτότυπο παίχθηκε για πρώτη φορά, ως τρίτο μέρος της τριλογίας "Το Χρυσούν Δέρας" ("Das goldene Vließ") το 1821<sup>5</sup>, το έτος της έναρξης της Ελληνικής Επανάστασης, στο Burgtheater της Βιέννης με ιδιαίτερη επιτυχία σε δύο βραδιές (το προλογικό "Der Gastfreund" σε μία πράξη και "Die Argonauten" σε τέσσερις πράξεις σε μια βραδιά), ενώ η πεντάπρακτη "Μήδεια" σταδιοδρόμησε, μόνη της αμέσως σε πολλές γερμανικές σκηνές<sup>6</sup>. Ολόκληρη η τριλογία έμεινε και στην Ελλάδα στη σκιά του τρίτου μέρους της, της "Μήδειας", η οποία παίχθηκε αρκετές φορές, ενώ ολόκληρο η τριλογία μόνο μία φορά (1920).

Η βεβαιότητα ότι στις ελληνικές παραστάσεις του 19<sup>ου</sup> αιώνα δεν χρησιμοποιήθηκε το έργο του Grillparzer βασίζεται στο γεγονός ότι πριν από το 1915 δεν είχε μεταφραστεί στα ελληνικά· επιπλέον κανένα έργο του Αυστριακού δραματουργού δεν είχε μεταφραστεί στα ελληνικά και το όνομά του ήταν παντελώς άγνωστο<sup>7</sup>. Τον ανακαλύπτει στην κυριολεξία η λογοτεχνική γενιά του 1880, μαζί με άλλους συγγραφείς στο συρμό της "βορειομανίας" και του "ιψενογερμανισμού", όπως λεγόταν τότε η στροφή

<sup>3</sup> Για τις παραστάσεις αυτές καθώς και τη γενικότερη παρουσία της Ristori στην Ελλάδα βλ. Α. Αλτουβά, "Η επίδραση της Adelaide Ristori (1822-1906) στην ελληνική θεατρική πρακτική. Το παράδειγμα της Πιπίνας Βονασέρα (1838 ή 1842 – 1927)", *Στέφανος. Τιμητική προσφορά στον Βάλτερ Πούχγερ*, Αθήνα 2007, 95-104.

<sup>4</sup> Χρ. Σταματοπούλου-Βασιλάκου, "Το αρχαίο ελληνικό δράμα στις ελληνικές παραικίες: Το παράδειγμα της Κωνσταντινούπολης το 19<sup>ο</sup> αιώνα", *Το θέατρο στην καθ' ημάς Ανατολή: Κωνσταντινούπολη – Σμύρνη. Οκτώ μελετήματα*, Αθήνα 2006, 37-94 (*Παράβασις* 3, 2000, 191-219), ιδίως, 57 εξ., 61, 74 και *pass.* Η Βασιλείου αναφέρει, πως είναι η εκδοχή του Della Valle (ό. π., 167).

<sup>5</sup> Για την τριλογία βλ. σε επιλογή: H. Tenschert, *Grillparzer und die antike Literatur*, Diss., Wien 1933; R. Stiefel, *Grillparzers "Goldenes Vließ". Ein dichterisches Bekenntnis*, Bern 1959; G. Heiserüber, *Franz Grillparzers "Vließ"-Trilogie auf der deutschen Bühne*, Diss., Köln 1960; J. Kaiser, *Grillparzers dramatischer Stil*, München 1961; Th. C. van Stockum, "Grillparzers Medea-Trilogie "Das goldene Vließ" und ihre antiken Vorbilder", *Neophilologus* 47 (1963) 120-125; B. Breitenbuch, *Ethik und Ethos bei Grillparzer*, Berlin 1966 κτλ.

<sup>6</sup> Βερολίνο 1822, Μόναχο και Βρέμη 1823, Αμβούργο και 1825 στη Βαϊμάρη (H. Kindermann, *Theatergeschichte Europas*, τόμ. 5, Salzburg 1962, 343 εξ.).

<sup>7</sup> Για την πρόσληψη του Grillparzer στην Ελλάδα βλ. Β. Πούχγερ, "Η Αυστρία στα ελληνικά γράμματα και το ελληνικό θέατρο", *Το θέατρο στην Ελλάδα. Μορφολογικές επισημάνσεις*, Αθήνα 1992, 223-282, ιδίως, 268-274.

προς τον μοντερνισμό<sup>8</sup>. Ποιήματα του Grillparzer βρίσκονται μεταφρασμένα μόλις το 1913<sup>9</sup>. Η "Ahnfrau" παίζεται για πρώτη φορά ως "Η προμάμη ή Το στοιχειό του πύργου" στο Βασιλικόν Θέατρον το 1905, την ίδια χρονιά "Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen" ως "Ηρώ και Λεάνδρος"<sup>10</sup>, και τα δυο μεταφρασμένα από τον Κωνσταντίνο Χατζόπουλο, ενώ η "Σαυφή" μεταφράζεται το 1906 από τον Εμμανουήλ Δαβίδ<sup>11</sup>. Και αυτή είναι η δεύτερη έκπληξη: η σχεδόν για 100 χρόνια καθυστέρηση στην πρόσληψη του Grillparzer στην Ελλάδα, σε μια εποχή όπου οι προσληπτικές ταχύτητες φτάνουν πλέον σε ρεκόρ<sup>12</sup>. Ειδικά τη "Μήδεια" του Grillparzer ανεβάζει για πρώτη φορά η Μαρίκα Κοτοπούλη το 1915 σε μετάφραση του Κωνσταντίνου Χατζόπουλου, παράσταση που κρατάει στο ρεπερτόριό της και επαναλαμβάνεται το 1920 (ολόκληρη η τριλογία), το 1927, το 1928 και το 1930<sup>13</sup>. Γοητεύτηκε ιδιαίτερα από αυτόν τον πρωταγωνιστικό ρόλο<sup>14</sup>. Η μετάφραση αυτή δημοσιεύεται μόλις το 1927<sup>15</sup>. "Το στοιχειό του πύργου" παίζεται ακόμα και το 1918 και το 1927, το "Ηρώ και Λεάνδρος" το 1924<sup>16</sup>. Ο άγνωστος στον ελληνικό 19<sup>ο</sup> αιώνα Grillparzer δίνει ένα δυναμικό παρόν στην εποχή του Μεσοπολέμου, συγκερνώντας τον Ρομαντισμό με τον Νεορομαντισμό και γεφυρώνοντας περίπου έναν αιώνα με την αρχαία του ελληνική θεματική<sup>17</sup>. Το ότι η απρόσμενη άνθηση αυτή του Grillparzer

<sup>8</sup> Β. Πούχνερ, "Οι βόρειες λογοτεχνίες και το ελληνικό θέατρο. Ιστορικό διάγραμμα και ερευνητικοί προβληματισμοί", *Κείμενα και αντικείμενα. Δέκα θεατρολογικά μελετήματα*, Αθήνα 1997, 311-354 και του ίδιου, "Modernism in Modern Greek Theatre (1895-1922)", *Κάμπος. Cambridge Papers in Modern Greek* 6 (1998), 51-80.

<sup>9</sup> G. Veloudis, *Germanograecia. Deutsche Einflüsse auf die neugriechische Literatur 1750-1944*, 2 vols., Amsterdam 1983, 289.

<sup>10</sup> *Παναθήναια* 9 (1904/5), 132 εξ., *Νουμάς* 3/172 (1905), 7 εξ. Βλ. Γ. Σιδέρης, *Ιστορία του νεοελληνικού θεάτρου 1794-1944*, τόμος πρώτος 1794-1908, Αθήνα 1990 (1950), 254.

<sup>11</sup> Σιδέρης, *Ιστορία*, ό. π., 48.

<sup>12</sup> Για την έννοια της προσληπτικής ταχύτητας βλ. Β. Πούχνερ, "Καθυστέρηση; Η παράμετρος του χρόνου στις προσληπτικές διαδικασίες κατά την πορεία της νεοελληνικής δραματοποιίας από το Κρητικό θέατρο ως το μεταπολεμικό δράμα", *Ράμπα και παλκοσένικο. Δέκα θεατρολογικά μελετήματα*, Αθήνα 2004, 473-487.

<sup>13</sup> Για διανομές κτλ. Γ. Σιδέρης, *Το Αρχαίο Θέατρο στη Νέα Ελληνική Σκηνή 1817-1932*, Αθήνα 1976, 258 εξ., 285, 332, 365, 395, 403. Για τις παραστάσεις της ευριπίδειας "Μήδεια" στην Ελλάδα βλ. Π. Μαυρομούστακος, "Παραστασιογραφία", στον τόμο: Ευριπίδης, *Μήδεια*, Μετάφραση – Εισαγωγή – Σχόλια, Αθήνα 1993, 159-186, για τις ελληνικές παραστάσεις των Legouné και Grillparzer στον Μεσοπόλεμο βλ. Α. Βασιλείου, *Εκσυγχρονισμός ή παράδοση; Το θέατρο πρόζας στην Αθήνα του Μεσοπολέμου*, Αθήνα 2005, 139, 273 εξ., 491 εξ.

<sup>14</sup> Βλ. φωτογραφία από την πρεμιέρα του 1915 στον τόμο του Γ. Ανεμογιάννη, *Μαρίκα Κοτοπούλη. Η φλόγα*, Αθήνα 1994, 151.

<sup>15</sup> Veloudis, ό.π., 480.

<sup>16</sup> Σιδέρης, *Το Αρχαίο Θέατρο*, ό. π., 288 εξ., *Νέα Εστία* 1 (1927 Α), 113.

<sup>17</sup> Ο Βελουδής αποδίδει αυτό στο κλασικιστικό γούστο του κοινού της εποχής και παραπέμπει και στην "Ηλέκτρα" του Hofmannsthal, που έκανε παρόμοια καριέρα στα θέατρα του Μεσοπολέμου: "Die verhältnismäßig starke Präsenz Grillparzers ist im Zusammenhang mit dem immer



συσχετίζεται με τις προσπάθειες αναβίωσης της αρχαίας τραγωδίας φανερώνει και η χρονική συγκυρία: το 1927, τη χρονιά των πρώτων Δελφικών Γιορτών εμφανίζεται παράσταση της γερμανικής διασκευής της "Μήδειας" στο Ηρώδειο σε σκηνοθεσία του Θωμά Οικονόμου, πράγμα που θεωρήθηκε από την κριτική ιεροσουλία<sup>18</sup>, ενώ στην Επαγγελματική Σχολή Θεάτρου ο Φώτος Πολίτης, ο κατεξοχήν ερμηνευτής της αρχαίας τραγωδίας σ' εκείνη τη φάση της αναβίωσης<sup>19</sup>, ανεβάζει στην Επαγγελματική Σχολή Θεάτρου την "Προμάμμη ή Το στοιχείο του πύργου", ενώ επίσης την ίδια χρονιά ανεβάζει στο Καλλιμάρμαρο Στάδιο την "Εκάβη" με την Μαρίκα Κοτοπούλη στον πρωταγωνιστικό ρόλο. Τα κλασικιστικά/ρομαντικά στοιχεία του Grillparzer αποδεικνύονται στις αισθητικές αντιλήψεις της εποχής συμβατά με το ίδιο το πνεύμα της αρχαίας τραγωδίας.

Αυτό βέβαια είναι το κατόρθωμα της μετάφρασης του Κωνσταντίνου Χατζόπουλου, ο οποίος το 1915 είχε στο ενεργητικό του ήδη μια σειρά από έξοχες θεατρικές μεταφράσεις από τα γερμανικά<sup>20</sup>, κυρίως αυτή του πρώτου

noch herrschenden klassizistischen Geschmack des griechischen Publikums und mit der (Wieder-)Belebung des klassisch-griechischen Dramas, vornehmlich der Tragödie, zu dieser Zeit zu verstehen..." (Veloudis, *Germanograecia*, ό. π., 493). Ωστόσο πρόκειται για υφολογικά πολύ διαφορετικά δραματικά έργα. Πιο καίρια είναι η επισήμανση, πως η σταδιοδρομία αυτή συσχετίζεται με τις προσπάθειες αναβίωσης της αρχαίας ελληνικής τραγωδίας.

<sup>18</sup> Βασιλείου, ό. π., 274.

<sup>19</sup> Β. Πούγχερ, "Ο Φώτος Πολίτης ως σκηνοθέτης αρχαίας τραγωδίας. Οι επιδράσεις του Max Reinhardt στο ελληνικό θέατρο του 20<sup>ου</sup> αιώνα", *Ιστορικά νεοελληνικού θεάτρου*, Αθήνα 1984, 121-137.

<sup>20</sup> Για το θεωρητικά γραπτά του Χατζόπουλου για το θέατρο βλ. Μ. Λάζου, "Ο Κωνσταντίνος Χατζόπουλος και το θέατρο", Ε. Γ. Καψωμένος et al. (επιμ.), *Πρακτικά Επιστημονικού Συμποσίου: ο Κωνσταντίνος Χατζόπουλος ως συγγραφέας και θεωρητικός*, Αθήνα 1998, 319-332 και Γ. Λαδογιάννη, "Κ. Χατζόπουλος: όψεις μιας 'θεωρίας' του δράματος", *αυτόθι*, 303-317. Τέτοια κείμενα βρίσκονται συγκεντρωμένα στο βιβλίο: Κ. Χατζόπουλος, *Κριτικά κείμενα*, επιμ. Κ. Ανεμούδη-Αρζόγλου, Αθήνα, Ίδρυμα Ουράνη 1996. Για τις δημοσιευμένες μεταφράσεις βλ. Στρ. Χοραφάς, *Συμβολή στη βιβλιογραφία του Κ. Χατζόπουλου*, Αθήνα 1983, 7, 17-19, 22 και για τα διάσπαρτα αποσπάσματα Χ. Α. Καραόγλου, "Επίμετρο. Αθησαύριστες δημοσιεύσεις του Χατζόπουλου", *Πρακτικά, ό. π.*, 82-87. Για τις θεατρικές μεταφράσεις στο σύνολό τους (και τις χειρόγραφες) βλ. Ε. Σταυροπούλου, "Για τις θεατρικές μεταφράσεις του Κώστα Χατζόπουλου", *Στέφανος. Τιμητική προσφορά στον Βάλπερ Πούγχερ*, Αθήνα 2007, 1183-1193. Είναι συνολικά 31: μεταξύ τους η "Ιφιγένεια εν Ταύροις" του Γκαίτε (έκδοση 1910, 1916 και 1920, παράσταση 1904), "Φάουστ" (1916, 1921, παράσταση 1904), "Έγκμοντ" (έτοιμο το 1905, ανέκδοτο), "Επιθεωρητής" του Gogol (χειρόγραφο), από τον Grillparzer "Ηρώ και Λεάνδρος" (1905 παράσταση, χειρόγραφο), "Μήδεια" (1915, σώζονται τέσσερα χειρόγραφα) "Η Προμάμμη ή το στοιχείο του Πύργου" (χειρόγραφο 1904, απόσπασμα στο *Νουμά Γ'*, αρ. 134, 1905, 2-4, παίχθηκε το 1904 και 1905), Friedrich Halm, "Ο γιος της ερήμου" (παράσταση 1905), Hauptmann, "Ο αμαξιάς Ένσελ" (παράσταση το 1902), "Η βουλιασμένη καμπάνα" (απόσπασμα στο *Νουμά Δ'*, αρ. 182, 1906, 4-5, παράσταση το 1906), "Ηλέκτρα" του Hofmannsthal (σε τρία χειρόγραφα, απόσπασμα στα *Παναθήναια* ΙΒ', τόμ. Γ', τεύχ. 265, 1911, 101-2), "Ο μαθητής" (*Ο Διόνυσος Β'*, 1902, τεύχ. 5, 253-260), του Ίψεν "Αρχιτέκτων Σόλνες", "Πεερ Γκυντ" (έκδοση Αθήνα 2001), "Όταν ξυπνήσωμε νεκροί" (σε συνέχισε στον *Διόνυσος* 1901), "Η κυρά

μέρους του "Φάουστ" στη δημοτική και σε στίχο, η οποία θα παιχθεί σχεδόν έως το τέλος του 20<sup>ου</sup> αιώνα στο θέατρο, παρά την ύπαρξη άλλων σημαντικών μεταφράσεων, όπως αυτή του Καζαντζάκη 1937/42<sup>21</sup>. Η μετάφραση του Χατζόπουλου έχει τον εξής τίτλο: Φραντς Γκριλλπαρτσερ (Franz Grillparzer), *Μήδεια. Τραγωδία σε πράξεις τέσσερες*, Μετάφραση Κωσταντίνου Χατζόπουλου, Εκδοτικός οίκος «Ελευθερουδάκης» Α. Ε., εν Αθήναις 1927, σελ. 110 (8<sup>ο</sup>). Αυτό που παρατηρεί ο προσεκτικός αναγνώστης αμέσως είναι το γεγονός, πως αναφέρονται τέσσερεις πράξεις, ενώ η τραγωδία του Grillparzer έχει, ως γνωστό, πέντε πράξεις (Tragödie in fünf Aufzügen). Το δεύτερο είναι η συνειδητή χρήση μιας προχωρημένης, κάπως ψυχαρικής δημοτικής (Κωσταντίνος, τέσσερες). Και στα δύο σημεία θα επανέλθουμε.

Μια άλλη έκπληξη είναι το γεγονός, πως η μετάφραση είναι σε πεζό λόγο, ενώ το γερμανικό πρωτότυπο ήταν έμμετρο. Άρα το 1915 ο Χατζόπουλος δεν επανέλαβε το τόλμημα του «Φάουστ» στην αρχή του αιώνα, που ήταν μεταφρασμένος όχι μόνο σε δεκαπεντασύλλαβους αλλά και με ζευγαρωτή ρίμα<sup>22</sup>. Αυτή η αισθητική επιλογή συσχετίζεται με μια διαφορετική στρατηγική, η οποία τεκμηριώνεται σε όλη τη μετάφραση: μια πιο ρεαλιστική, ακόμα και νατουραλιστική απόδοση του κειμένου και της σκηνικής δράσης. Ο Χατζόπουλος δεν εκλαμβάνει την τραγωδία του Grillparzer ως έργο κλασικιστικό/ρομαντικό, αλλά ως έργο πιο μοντέρνο· βλέπει τη Μήδεια όχι τόσο στο σκοτεινό μεγαλείο της βάρβαρης μάγισσας που εκδικείται για τον προδομένο της έρωτα, αλλά τη βλέπει σε συνάρτηση με την ψυχοπαθολογία της Ηλέκτρας, όπως εμφανίζεται στην «Ηλέκτρα» του Hofmannsthal, η οποία παίζεται την ίδια εποχή με μεγάλη επιτυχία στις ελληνικές σκηνές<sup>23</sup>. Έτσι και η ανεβασμένη ποιητική γλώσσα του

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της θάλασσας" (παράσταση 1906), "Η σπασμένη στάμινα" του Kleist (δόθηκε στο Βασιλικό το 1905), "Άσωτος" του Raimund (παράσταση 1903), Σαίξπηρ "Δωδεκάτη Νύχτα" (χειρόγραφο 1903, παράσταση 1904), "Θεοδώρα" του Sardou (χειρόγραφο), του Strindberg "Ο πατέρας" (χειρόγραφο), "Πάσχα" (δημοσιεύεται στο *Διώνυσο* σε συνέχειες 1902), "Προ του δρόμου" (*Λογοτεχνία Α'*, τεύχ. 2, 1920, 65-68), Sudermann "Κλεμμένη ευτυχία" (χειρόγραφο 1902, παράσταση 1903) κτλ. Οι παραστάσεις αναφέρονται όλες στο Βασιλικό Θέατρο.

<sup>21</sup> Β. Πούχνερ, "Ελληνικές μεταφράσεις του Φάουστ Α' του Γκαίτε στον 20<sup>ό</sup> αιώνα (Χατζόπουλος, Καζαντζάκης, Θεοδορακόπουλος, Εναγγελάτος, Μάρκαρης). Μια απόπειρα εξιχνίασης μεταφραστικών στρατηγικών", *Μνείες και μνήμες. Δέκα θεατρολογικά μελετήματα*, Αθήνα 2006, 407-462. Η μετάφραση του Χατζόπουλου φιλοτεχνήθηκε γύρω στα 1900, δημοσιεύτηκε όμως μόλις το 1916.

<sup>22</sup> Βλ. Πούχνερ, "Ελληνικές μεταφράσεις του Φάουστ Α'", ό. π.

<sup>23</sup> Η "Ηλέκτρα" μεταφράζεται το 1902 (Veloudis, ό. π., 323 εξ., Α. Μυγδάλης, *Ελληνική βιβλιογραφία Γκέργαρτ Χάουπμαν (1899-1984) και Ούγκο φον Χόφμανσταλ (1901-1986)*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1988), παίζεται στην Αθήνα το 1911 και 1912 (Γ. Σιδέρης, *Το αρχαίο θέατρο στη νέα ελληνική σκηνή 1817-1932*, Αθήνα 1976, 248, 250, 252; Β. Πούχνερ, "Η Αυστρία στα

πρωτότυπου, που εκπέμπει μεγαλοπρέπεια και στιχουργική περιποίηση ακόμα και στο σκοτεινό πάθος της βασιλοπούλας της Κολχίδας ή ακόμα και στη ελεεινή στάση του Ιάσονα, όταν προσπαθεί να δικαιολογήσει τα αδικαιολόγητα, «προσγειώνεται» στο πιο πεζό ύφος μιας στρωτής και ρέουσας δημοτικής, που σαφώς απλοποιεί τον εκφραστικό πλούτο των γερμανικών του Grillparzer και φέρνει όλη την υπόθεση σ' ένα πιο λαϊκό επίπεδο, του αστισμού της belle époque της Αθήνας του Πρώτου παγκόσμιου πολέμου. Παρόμοια στρατηγική παρατηρήσαμε και στον «Φάουστ», όμως εκεί ο πολιτικός στίχος και η ρίμα δίνουν μια άλλη χάρη και ένα άλλο πνεύμα στο δραματικό σύνθεμα, ενώ εδώ η γλώσσα είναι σχεδόν νατουραλιστική, είναι δραστική, πρακτική. Σε μερικά σημεία ο μεταφραστής προσθέτει και σκηνικές οδηγίες, για να κατευθύνει καλύτερα τη σκηνική δράση: η όλη δουλειά του αποπνέει την εμπειρία της θεατρικής πράξης και πρακτικής.

Ο Χατζόπουλος εισάγει και άλλα θεατρικά τρικ να μεταφέρει το έργο στα γούστα της εποχής, που ήταν το «καλοστημμένο» ή «καλογραμμένο» έργο της γαλλικής σχολής του 19<sup>ου</sup> αιώνα<sup>24</sup>. Το έργο αρχίζει και τελειώνει στη μετάφραση με ένα leitmotiv της Μήδειας: «Τελείωσε» ρωτάει το σκλάβο στην αρχή της Α' πράξης, που θάβει το χρυσό δέρας στη γη, και «Ε, τελείωσε;» ρωτάει την Γκόρα προς το τέλος, η οποία μόλις μετέφερε το θανατηφόρο δώρο στην Κρέουσα, που τη σκοτώνει και παραδίνει το παλάτι στις φλόγες. Αυτή η λέξη κλειδί, «τελείωσε», δεν υπάρχει στο γερμανικό πρωτότυπο, όπου χρησιμοποιούνται για το ίδιο γεγονός διάφορες εκφράσεις (es ist vollbracht, es ist geschehen, bist du fertig κτλ.). Πρόκειται λοιπόν για μια συνειδητή στρατηγική να δοθεί ένα λεκτικό συμβολικό «πλαίσιο» του έργου στην αρχή και το τέλος: όπως θα δούμε, η παράλειψη της Ε' πράξης έχει να κάνει με αυτό το «τετέλεσθαι», το οποίο στη γλώσσα του Ψυχάρη είναι το «τελείωσε».

Ο μεταφραστής επίσης ακολουθεί μια τακτική, που ήταν προσφιλής στις μεταφράσεις της εποχής, που συχνά πλησιάζουν τις διασκευές: ενώ παρακολουθεί πιστά το νόημα και την πορεία των γεγονότων, παραλείπει, εδώ με φειδώ, πού και πού ορισμένους στίχους, δίστιχα ή και τετράστιχα, ελαφρώνοντας μεγάλες ρήσεις από τον βαρύ ποιητικό φόρτο που έχουν, και αυξάνοντας το ρυθμό του διαλόγου<sup>25</sup>. Ενώ η απόδοση των νοημάτων είναι εν

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ελληνικά γράμματα και το ελληνικό θέατρο", *Το θέατρο στην Ελλάδα. Μορφολογικές επισημάνσεις*, Αθήνα 1992, 223-282, ιδίως σ. 269)

<sup>24</sup> Βλ. Β. Πούγχερ, "Το μυθιστορηματικό περιπετειώδες δράμα, έργα 'με θέση' και έργα 'χωρίς θέση' στις ελληνικές σκηνές του 19<sup>ου</sup> αιώνα. Η κληρονομιά του 'καλοφτιαγμένου' έργου στην ελληνική δραματολογία του 20<sup>ου</sup> αιώνα", *Η πρόσληψη της γαλλικής δραματολογίας στο νεοελληνικό θέατρο (17<sup>ος</sup>-20<sup>ος</sup> αιώνας). Μια πρώτη σφαιρική προσέγγιση*, Αθήνα 1999, 81-115.

<sup>25</sup> Για την τεχνική αυτή βλ. και Β. Πούγχερ, "Η διασκευή της *Ερωφίλης* του Γεωργίου Χορτάτση από το Αμφι-Θέατρο στο Δημοτικό Περιφερειακό Θέατρο Κρήτης 1996, ήτοι: Τι κερδίζει και

γίνει πολύ πιστή, υφολογικά παρατηρείται μια μετατόπιση σ' ένα του ποιητικού μεγαλείου σ' ένα πιο απλό επίπεδο. Μερικά παραδείγματα: όταν στην πρώτη σκηνή η Μήδεια σπάει το κοντάρι από το χρυσό δέρας, ο Χατζόπουλος αποδίδει το εμφιατικό και ποιητικό «So brech ich dich und senke dich hinab / In Schoß der Nacht, dem dräugend du entstiegst» με ένα πιο δραστικό, πιο ρεαλιστικό «Νά, σε σπάζω και σε ρίχνω στον κόρφο της νύχτας απόθε βγήκες». Μαζί με την υφολογική απλοποίηση συμβαδίζουν και οι συντομεύσεις: η Μήδεια δικαιολογεί το θάψιμο του χρυσού δέρατος με το λόγο, πως δεν της προσφέρει πια καμιά προστασία: το γερμανικό πρότυπο είναι εκτενέστερο: «Der Schutz mir gab? / Weil mehr nicht Schutz er gibt, als er mir gab, / Vergrab' ich sie. Ich bis beschützt genug». Ο Χατζόπουλος διαλύει τα περίπλοκα υπερβατά, που κρατούν το ρυθμό του στίχου: «Γιατί δεν το μπορούν, γιατί τα θάβω. Καλά είμαι φυλαγμένη». Η ρητορική ερώτηση παραλείπεται (σ. 8). Με τον ίδιο τρόπο το «Oder Beschäftigung / Für eines Fürsten fürstlich hohe Tochter» γίνεται «Έργο ταριαστό σε μία βασιλοπούλα» (σ. 9), στο «ανεβασμένο» «So sprich» του κλασικού θεάτρου της Βαϊμάρης και της Βιέννης ανταποκρίνεται ένα λαϊκό «Ε, λέγε» (σ. 11), και υψιμετοί ποιητικοί αφορισμοί όπως «Weggehaucht die Vergangenheit, / Alles Gegenwart, ohne Zukunft» γίνονται «Τα περασμένα σβήνουν και μένει μόνο το σήμερα. Και αύριο δεν υπάρχει» (σ. 10). Υπάρχει δηλαδή κάτι σα σχεδόν συστηματική τακτική της αποφυγής της «υψηλής» ποίησης.

Από την άλλη όμως ο μεταφραστής επιτυγχάνει και αποσαφηνίσεις και φραστικές συμπυκνώσεις: το «από λεύτερος, σύζυγος, πατέρας!» του Ιάσονα (σ. 17) είχε στα γερμανικά ένα «Von trotz'gen Wilden Vater und Gemahl», όπου ο στιχοουργικός ρυθμός και η ποιητική εικόνα μετατρέπονται σε δραστικό σκηνικό λόγο, που διευκολύνει τους ηθοποιούς σ' ένα ρεαλιστικό παίξιμο: το νατουραλιστικό ύφος άλλωστε ήταν το μεγάλο επίτευγμα του Θωμά Οικονόμου, για τον οποίο ο Χατζόπουλος έκανε τις μεταφράσεις του από τα γερμανικά<sup>26</sup>. Έτσι μετατρέπεται και η ωραία ποιητική εικόνα «Getreulich wälzest du den schweren Stein, / Der rück sich rollend immer wiederkehrt / Und jeden Pfad versperrt und jeden Ausweg» σε μια πραγματολογική απόδοση: «Κυλάς αιώνια το βαρύ λιθάρι και μπαίνει εμπρός και φράζει κάθε δρόμο» (σ. 19). Σπάνια συναντά κανείς και περιπτώσεις πιθανής παρανόησης<sup>27</sup>. Νεολογισμούς και σύνθετες λέξεις αποδίδονται με

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τι χάνει ο σύγχρονος σκηνοθέτης στην προσαρμογή ενός αριστουργήματος της κλασικίζουσας δραματογραφίας στους ρυθμούς της εποχής μας;», *Δάφνη. Τιμητικός τόμος για τον Σπύρο Α. Ευαγγελάτο*, Αθήνα 2001, 289-302.

<sup>26</sup> Δ. Σπάθης, "Η Ιφιγένεια του Γκαίτε και η συμμετοχή της στην πορεία του νεοελληνικού θεάτρου", *Στέφανος. Τιμητική προσφορά στον Βάλτερ Πούχνερ*, Αθήνα 2007, 1129-1142.

<sup>27</sup> Π. χ. σ. 23 "Veruchten Treibens klagte man mich an" αποδίδεται ως "Για πράξεις μικρές με καταγγείλαν".

απλοποίηση: «Du arme, kleine, nestentnommene Bru» με «Φτωχά μικρά δυστυχισμένα!» (σ. 27). Παρατηρούνται επίσης κάποιες μικροαλλαγές στην υπόθεση: στον Grillparzer ο Βασιλιάς της Κορίνθου προσφέρει εξ αρχής προστασία για όλη την οικογένεια («Mir und den Meinen?»), στον Χατζόπουλο μόνο για τον Ιάσονα («σου είπα εσένα – Έλα!»), πράγμα που κάνει τη Μήδεια να μην έρθει στη θυσία: στον Grillparzer αυτό τεκμηριώνεται από στην αρνητική συμπεριφορά και στάση της Κρέουσας, στον Χατζόπουλο η Μήδεια όμως λέει: «Από το στόμα του άλλα άκουσα» (σ. 29), από το στόμα του βασιλιά. Σε μερικές περιπτώσεις αυτή η τακτική της συντόμευσης παραλείπει και έξοχους στίχους το προτύπου<sup>28</sup>.

Αυτό είναι το τίμημα αυτής της μεταφραστικής στρατηγικής. Από την άλλη το έργο γίνεται πιο εύκολο στο ανέβασμα, για ηθοποιούς και θεατές, σε μια εποχή, που ο Χρηστομάνος έχει απορρίψει την «Τρισεύγενη», γιατί δεν είχε αρκετά μελοδραματικά στοιχεία, κι ακριβώς το 1915 η ποιητική μοναχοκόρη του Παλαμά ανεβάζεται για πρώτη φορά στο θέατρο από τον Οικονόμου σε συντομευτική διασκευή και με ρεαλιστικό-ηθογραφικό ύφος, και γίνεται αποτυχία<sup>29</sup>. Μολοντούτου ο Χατζόπουλος είναι έμπειρος στον δραστικό σκηνικό λόγο. Έτσι υπάρχουν χωρία, όπου το νέο πεζό και ρεαλιστικό ύφος του τον δικαιώνει. Π. χ. όταν μετά την αγγελία του Κήρυκα, πως ο Ιάσοντας και η Μήδεια για τους Έλληνες θεωρούνται εξόριστοι και ο Βασιλιάς της Κορίνθου τον σώζει, αναγγέλλοντας τους γάμους του με την κόρη του Κρέουσα, κι έτσι η μόνη που πρέπει να φύγει είναι τελικά η Μήδεια, ο ρόλος της ανέρχεται στις δραματικές διαστάσεις του μεγάλου πρωταγωνιστικού ρόλου της εποχής. Πρέπει να φανταστούμε την Κοτοπούλη να λέει τα εξής: «Πρέπει να φύγω; Ε! τότε έλα μαζί μου. Κοινή όπως το φταίσιμα ας είναι κ' η ποιηή! Θυμάσαι τον παλιό μας όρκο; Να μην πεθάνει ο ένας μας μόνος. Ένα σπίτι, ένα κορμί κι ένας χαμός! Τον κάμαμε αντικρύ στο θάνατο. Κράτησέ τον τώρα κι έλα!»<sup>30</sup>. Αυτή η γλώσσα υποβοηθεί τον

<sup>28</sup> Π. χ. σ. 47, όπου ο Ιάσοντας στοχάζεται για την τύχη του: "Es ist des Unglücks eigentlichstes Unglück, / Daß selten drin der Mensch sich rein bewahrt. / Hier gilt's zu lenken, dort zu biegen, beugen. / Hier rückt das Recht ein Haar und dort ein Gran, / Und an dem Ziel der Bahn steht man ein anderer. / Als der man war, da man den Lauf begann; / Und dem Verlust der Achtung dieser Welt / Fehlt noch der einz'ge Trost, die eigne Achtung". Ο πραγματική δυστυχία της δυστυχίας είναι, πως δεν μένει καθυρός στο τέλος έχεις γίνει άλλος, και την περιφρόνηση του κόσμου συμπληρώνει και η δική σου.

<sup>29</sup> Για τα γεγονότα του 1903 και του 1915; βλ. τώρα Β. Πούγγερ, *Ο Παλαμάς και το θέατρο*, Αθήνα 1995, 408 εξ. και 469 εξ.

<sup>30</sup> Σσ. 56 εξ. Βλ. και τη συνέχεια, όταν ο Ιάσοντας αρνείται: "Μιαρή, δος μου πίσω τον Ιάσονα!" – Μήδεια: "Θέλεις πίσω τον Ιάσονα; – Να παρ' τον! – Μα ποιος μου δίνει εμέ τη Μήδεια πίσω; Μην ήρθα εγώ στον τόπο σου να σε γυρέψω; Μην ήρθα να σε πάρω εγώ με δόλο απ' τον πατέρα σου; Να σου βιάσω, ναι, να σου βιάσω την αγάπη, να σ' αρπάξω απ' την πατρίδα σου και να σε ρίξω στο περιγέλιο και στο χλευασμό των ξένων; Να σε σπρώξω στο κρίμα και στην ανομία; Με λες μιαρή! Αλλοίμονο, είμαι! Μα πώς αμάρτησα όμως και για ποιον; Αν με μισούν

υποκριτή σε μια ρεαλιστική απόδοση του ρόλου, αντίθετα ο Grillparzer τον υποχρεώνει σε μια πιο στατική απαγγελία, και ό,τι και να κάνει θα κυριαρχήσει ο ποιητικός λόγος.

Όσο προχωράει το έργο ο Χατζόπουλος γίνεται πιο τολμηρός στις επεβάσεις και εμπιστεύεται περισσότερο το θεατρικό του ένστικτο. Έτσι π. χ. παραλείπει το επιλογικό χωρίο στο φινάλε της Β΄ πράξης (σ. 61), δίνοντας τον τελευταίο εντυπωσιακό λόγο στην ίδια τη Μήδεια πριν φύγει από τη σκηνή<sup>31</sup>. Είναι φανερό πως ο μεταφραστής δουλεύει για την πρωταγωνίστρια και τον εντυπωσιασμό, που εκείνη προκαλεί στο κοινό με τη μεγάλη έξοδο. Στο ψυχαρικό ύφος του πετυχαίνει και ορισμένες ωραίες ποιητικές εικόνες. Π.χ. «Στη σιωπηλή την άβυσσο ας κλώθ' η νύχτα!», αποδίδοντας το «Ob dem schweigenden Abgrund / Brüte die Nacht!». Ο μεταφραστής λόγος ρέει ανεμπόδιστα και δημιουργεί τη δική του αισθητική: «...στον ώμορφο καιρό που σμίξαμε στη χλωρασιά της νιότης μας». Στη Δ΄ πράξη οι συντομεύσεις είναι πιο αισθητές, κυρίως στη μεγάλη σκηνή της Μήδειας με τα παιδιά της, όπου τα μικρά αποκοιμούνται. Ο βασιλιάς έχει ξεθάψει το χρυσό δέρας με τα μαγικά της Μήδειας, και αυτή στέλνει την πιστή Γκόρα να δώσει στην Κρέουσα τα μαγικά της δώρα, τα οποία θα τη θανατώσουν και θα βάλουν φωτιά στο παλάτι. Κι όταν γυρίσει έντρομη αυτή με λόγια φρίκης, η Μήδεια εκστομίζει το συμβολικό «Ε, τελείωσε;» και τρέχει να τελειώσει εκείνη με τα παιδιά της. Πάλι είναι η Γκόρα ο μαντατοφόρος των κακών· πήγε στο περιστύλιο και είδε το έγκλημα, πο είχε διαπράξει η Μήδεια, «(Ορμά ξέφρενη από το περιστύλιο και πέφτει γονατιστή στη μέση της σκηνής, σκεπάζοντας το πρόσωπο με τα χέρια): Τι είδα! – Τρομερό!». Και εμφανίζεται επιβλητικά η πρωταγωνίστρια με το εντυπωσιακό τρόπο του τελικού φινάλε, κρατώντας το *instrumentum fatale*: «(Η Μήδεια βγαίνει από το περιστύλιο κρατώντας με το αριστερό χέρι ένα μαχαίρι, ενώ με το δεξι της σηκωμένο προστάζει σιωπή)» (σ. 110).

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φαρμακερά, αν με διώγουν και αν με θανατώνουν αυτοί εδώ, έχουν δίκιο να το κάμουν, γιατί εμί' ένα μιανό τρομερό πλάσμα, μιαν άβυσσο και σκιάχτρο και για με την ίδια. Όλος ο κόσμος μπορεί να με καταραστεί, συ μόνον όχι! Συ μόνον όχι, μοναχή αφορμή της φρίκης! Εσύ!" (σ. 57). Σε δραματικά αποκορυφώματα ο Χατζόπουλος ποντάρει στις ερμηνευτικές ικανότητες της Κοτοπούλη και όχι στην όποια γλωσσική και στιχουργική του δεινότητα.

<sup>31</sup> Μήδεια: "Πίσω! Ποιος τολμά ν' αγγίξει τη Μήδεια; Σημείωσε την ώρα που φεύγω, βασιλιά! Πίστασέ με, δεν έχεις δει χειρότερα – Τόπο! Πηγαίνω! την εκδίχηση παίρνω μαζί μου!" (σ. 61). Στο γερμανικό πρότυπο ακολουθεί ακόμα μια φράση του Βασιλιά, που βλέπει την κόρη του να τρέμει· εκείνη αναρωτιέται, αν είναι σωστό αυτό που κάνουν· γιατί αν είναι σωστό, ποιος θα μπορούσε να τους κάνει κακό; Υπάρχει επομένως μια διαφορετική αντιμετώπιση της τεχνικής του φινάλε: ο Χατζόπουλος προτιμά τη μεγάλη έξοδο της πρωταγωνίστριας που αφήνει τις φοβερές απειλές της να αιωρούνται πίσω στη σκηνή, ενώ τον Grillparzer ενδιαφέρει το ηθικό ζήτημα: η θάα Κρέουσα υποψιάζεται από τα λόγια της Μήδειας πως διαπράττουν ένα άδικο που θα φέρει τη συμφορά.

Με την εμπειρία του θεάτρου του βεντετισμού, ένα τέτοιο φινάλε δεν πρέπει να καταστραφεί με περιττές επιλογικές λεπτομέρειες. Ο Χατζόπουλος κοντολογίς κόβει όλη την Ε΄ πράξη, σύντομη μεν (περ. 7 σελίδες) και με επιλογική λειτουργικότητα, αλλά για τον Grillparzer αυτή περιείχε όλο το «δίδαγμα» του έργου, το οποίο έγκειται στο χριστιανικό μοτίβο της ματαιότητας των επιγείων. Ο μεταφραστής δίνει όλο το βάρος στο θεατρικό εφέ, αφήνοντας μια σειρά από ανοιχτά ζητήματα εκκρεμή· δεν ενδιαφέρουν άλλωστε το κοινό της εποχής, που έχει εθιστεί στα εντυπωσιακά φινάλε π. χ. ενός Ξενόπουλου<sup>32</sup>. Να δούμε από κοντά τι περιείχε η Ε΄ πράξη του Grillparzer. Στο μισοκατεστραμμένο παλάτι ο Βασιλιάς ανακρίνει την Γκόρα για την τύχη της κόρης του (μόνο εκείνη την είδε πεθαιμένη), ενώ εκείνη θρηνεί για τα παιδιά και υμνεί το αγέρωχο ύφος της Μήδειας. Μέσα στον πόνο του για τις συμφορές που του έφερε, ο Βασιλιάς διώχνει και τον Ιάσονα. Στην τελευταία σκηνή (σημειωτέον το έργο διαθέτει πράξεις αλλά όχι σκηνές) αυτός βρίσκεται μόνος και εξαντλημένος σε ερημικό δάσος, όπου ούτε ο αγρότης, μόλις ακούσει ποιος είναι, δεν θέλει να του δώσει νερό. Τότε εμφανίζεται μπροστά του η Μήδεια, φορώντας το χρυσό δέρας. Απευθύνει τα τελευταία λόγια της στον άπιστο και ελεεινό άντρα της<sup>33</sup>: Να είναι πιο δυνατός στο να υποφέρει παρά στις πράξεις του («Und sei im Tragen stärker als im Handeln»). Το μήνυμα του Grillparzer και η ερμηνεία της ευριπίδειας τραγωδίας έγκειται εν τέλει σε ένα ανοιχτό τέλος, όπου κυριαρχεί το πνεύμα της χριστιανικής ματαιότητας. Στο φινάλε το εκφράζουν στίχοι με σχεδόν πινδαρική μεγαλοπρέπεια: «Was ist der Erde Glück? – Ein Schatten! / Was ist der Erde Ruhm? – Ein Traum!» – Της γης η ευτυχία ποια; – Μια σκιά! / Της γης η δόξα ποια; – Ένα όνειρο! – «Du Armer! Der von Schatten du geträumt! / Der Traum ist aus, allein die Nacht noch nicht» – Κακόμοιρε! Που ονειρεύτηκες σκιές / Το όνειρο τελείωσε, μα όχι και η νύχτα. - Και ακολουθεί η κατακλείδα, σε διάλογο με τον Ιάσονα, που ελεεινολογεί τον εαυτό του, η οποία συνοψίζει το δίδαγμα της διασκευής του Grillparzer: «Trage!» ... «Dulde!» ... «Büße!» – Υπόφερε – υπόμενε – μετανοήσου.

Τέτοιο χριστιανικό λεξιλόγιο από τα ψυχοφελή αναγνώσματα και το θρησκευτικό κατηχητικό, έκφραση της πιο «μεσαιωνικής» ματαιότητας, δεν μπορούσε να ακουστεί στα εύθυμα θέατρα της Αθήνας της παρατεταμένης

<sup>32</sup> Βλ. για τις αναλύσεις των πρώτων έργων του Β. Πούχνερ, "Τα πρώτα δραματικά έργα του Γρηγόριου Ξενόπουλου, ήτοι η (σχεδόν) αποτυχημένη θεατρική σταδιοδρομία του Νέστορα της ελληνικής δραματογραφίας στη στροφή του αιώνα", *Αναγνώσεις και ερμηνεύματα*, Αθήνα 2002, 171-265.

<sup>33</sup> Και εδώ υπάρχουν ωραίοι και δυνατοί στίχοι. Π. χ. "Dir scheint der Tod das Schlimmste; / Ich kenne ein noch viel Ärgeres: elend sein" ή "Nicht traur' ich, daß die Kinder nicht mehr sind, / Ich traure, daß sie w a r e n und daß w i r sind". Επιγραμματικοί στίχοι με συμπεκνωμένο νόημα.

belle époque, όταν εκείνη προσπάθησε να ανταποκριθεί στην υψηλή και δύσκολη αποστολή της να καταπιαστεί με την κληρονομιά της αρχαίας τραγωδίας. Τι δουλειά είχε σ' αυτά τα συμφραζόμενα η «ματαιότητα ματαιοτήτων τα πάντα ματαιότης»; Πιστεύω πως δεν ήταν μόνο δραματουργικοί λόγοι που οδήγησαν τον Χατζόπουλο στην αποβολή ολόκληρης της Ε' πράξης του Grillparzer, εμμένοντας στην ανήκουστη πράξη, το «τετέλεσθαι/τελείωσε», της παιδοκτονίας και αφήνοντας ανοιχτές τις συνέπειες της απέχθειας δολοφονίας των αθώων υπάρξεων για όλους τους εμπλεκόμενους, αλλά και ιδεολογικοί – το σύνθημα της χριστιανικής ματαιότητας από το στόμα της Μήδειας για έναν Έλληνα της εποχής είναι ακατανόητο –, γιατί 1) κάτι τέτοιο δεν εναρμονίζεται με το πνεύμα της αρχαίας τραγωδίας σ' αυτήν τη φάση της πρόσληψης και 2) δεν αρμόζει εν γένει στο πνευματικό κλίμα της εποχής των επιθεωρήσεων και του βουλεβάρτου με λίγη επίφαση κουλτούρας και ίσως δεν είναι και της ιδιοσυγκρασίας του Χατζόπουλου, που ενδεχομένως τοποθετεί τη χριστιανική διδαχή σε άλλα συγκείμενα. Ο Grillparzer πραγματικά έρχεται από άλλη εποχή και θα υποστεί τις συνέπειες.

Το θέατρο του βενετισμού βρήκε την απλή και εντυπωσιακή λύση και ο Χατζόπουλος, από τους πιο σοβαρούς μεταφραστές στην αρχή του 20<sup>ου</sup> αιώνα, υπηρετεί πιστά το σύστημα. Με σύμμαχο την Κοτοπούλη αφήνει ελεύθερο το θεατρικό του ένστικτο και αποκόβει ένα δραματουργικό περίσσειμα, που κατά επικρατούντα γούστα δεν εξυπηρέτησε σε τίποτε, αλλά μείωνε κατά πολύ ένα εντυπωσιακό φινάλε. Στον πατριωτικό ενθουσιασμό των Βαλκανικών Πολέμων και λίγο πριν από τον εθνικό διχασμό κατασταλτικά συνθήματα, όπως αυτά του Grillparzer, δεν χρειάζονται. Η διασκευή θα σταθεί στη φρίκη και το ρίγος του λαϊκού εγκλήματος: μητέρα Γεωργιανή σκοτώνει τα δύο της παιδιά, που είχε με τον Έλληνα άντρα της.

Μολοντούτο οι θεατρικές μεταφράσεις του Χατζόπουλου, που σφράγισαν το σοβαρό θέατρο μιας ολόκληρης εποχής, θα έπρεπε να ξαναεκδοθούν ως γλωσσικά μνημεία, δραματικά δείγματα του μαχόμενου δημοτικισμού στον προφορικό λόγο της σκηνής.



Volker Riedel (Jena)

### STEPHAN HERMLINS NACHERZÄHLUNG DER ARGONAUTENSAGE VON 1974

Der Lyriker, Novellist, Essayist und Übersetzer Stephan Hermlin ist 1915 in Chemnitz geboren worden. 1935 ging er ins Exil – u. a. nach Palästina, Großbritannien, Spanien, Frankreich und der Schweiz. 1945 kehrte er nach Deutschland zurück, zunächst in die amerikanische und dann 1947 in die sowjetische Besatzungszone. Er gehörte zu den namhaftesten Schriftstellern der DDR und war auch auf vielfältige Weise kulturpolitisch tätig – vor allem im PEN-Zentrum und in der Akademie der Künste. Zeit seines Lebens bekannte er sich zur sozialistischen Weltanschauung und geriet zugleich als kritischer und sensibler Intellektueller, der sich in zunehmendem Maße der Diskrepanzen zwischen Ideologie und Realität bewußt wurde, mehrfach in Konflikt mit der Führung der SED. 1997 ist er in Berlin gestorben.

Stephan Hermlin hat ein verhältnismäßig schmales, aber geistig wie ästhetisch hochstehendes Werk hinterlassen. Obwohl es weniger als das von Erich Arendt, Franz Fühmann, Peter Hacks oder Heiner Müller durch antike Sujets bestimmt ist, gehört er doch zu jenen Autoren, für die das klassische Altertum von größerer Bedeutung gewesen ist. Er war ein guter Kenner der antiken Literatur<sup>1</sup>, ließ in seine publizistischen Arbeiten gelegentlich Anspielungen auf griechische und römische Verhältnisse einfließen<sup>2</sup>, polemisierte gegen

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<sup>1</sup> Vgl. Stephan Hermlin, Kassberg. In: Hermlin, Erzählungen. 2., erw. Aufl. Berlin, Weimar 1970, 255; Stephan Hermlin, An "Sinn und Form". In: Hermlin, Lektüre 1960-1971, Berlin, Weimar 1973, 241; Stephan Hermlin, Abendlicht, Leipzig 1979, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Vgl. Stephan Hermlin, Tagebuch. In: Hermlin, Begegnungen 1954-1959. Berlin 1960, 65; Stephan Hermlin, Bericht über eine Insel. In: Hermlin, Lektüre, 19; Hermlin, Abendlicht, 119, 124; Stephan Hermlin, Meine Zeit. In: Sinn und Form 38 (1986), 916; Stephan Hermlin, Dies ist das Schicksal der Antifaschisten: Sisyphus zu sein. In: Junge Welt, 16, September 1988, 3-5.

einen militaristischen Mißbrauch des Altertums<sup>3</sup>, wies auf die 'Pfleger des antiken Erbes' in ostdeutschen Verlagen hin<sup>4</sup> und nahm sich Autoren wie Livius, Sueton und Plutarch zum Vorbild für seine Porträts antifaschistischer Widerstandskämpfer<sup>5</sup>. Weiterhin hat Hermlin in seinem lyrischen und erzählerischen Werk antike Motive verwendet – und er hat 1974 im Kinderbuchverlag eine Nacherzählung der Argonautensage veröffentlicht.

In älteren Untersuchungen zur Antikerezeption in der DDR-Literatur ist der Schriftsteller unberücksichtigt geblieben<sup>6</sup>, und auch in einer 1977 erschienenen Monographie unter dem Titel "Stephan Hermlin und die Tradition" wurde nur gelegentlich darauf eingegangen<sup>7</sup>. Ein einziger Aufsatz von 1985 ist diesem Thema gewidmet<sup>8</sup> – handelt es aber auf acht Seiten ab und erfaßt das Phänomen nur ansatzweise, weil er sich auf die Auswahlgaben seiner Gedichte beschränkt, die Erstdrucke in den Bänden "Wir verstummen nicht", "Zwölf Balladen von den Großen Städten", "Die Straßen der Furcht" und "Zweiundzwanzig Balladen"<sup>9</sup> aber außer acht läßt. Ich habe hin und wieder in

<sup>3</sup> Vgl. Stephan Hermlin, Not und Hoffnung der deutschen Literatur. In: Hermlin, *Begegnungen*, 209, 214; Stephan Hermlin, Franz Fühmann. In: Hermlin, *Lektüre*, 29 f.; Hermlin, *Abendlicht*, 84.

<sup>4</sup> Vgl. Stephan Hermlin, Das "alte Wahre" und wir. Brief an Rudolf Alexander Schröder. In: Hermlin, *Äußerungen 1944-1982*. Hrsg. von Ulrich Dietzel. Berlin, Weimar 1983, 131; Stephan Hermlin, *Eine Festrede*. Anlässlich der Jubiläumsveranstaltung des Reclam Verlages 1978. Ebd., 394.

<sup>5</sup> Vgl. Stephan Hermlin, In einer dunklen Welt. In: Hermlin, *Erzählungen*, 242.

<sup>6</sup> Vgl. Ernst Günther Schmidt, Die Antike in Lyrik und Erzählliteratur der DDR. In: *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena. Gesellschafts- und sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* 18 (1969) 4, 123-141 / 20 (1971) 5, 62; Dorothea Gelbrich, Antikerezeption in der sozialistischen deutschen Lyrik des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts. Die Begründung einer neuen Rezeptionstradition im lyrischen Schaffen Bechers, Brechts, Maurers und Arendts. Diss., Leipzig 1974 [Maschinenschr.].

<sup>7</sup> Vgl. Wolfgang Ertl, Stephan Hermlin und die Tradition. Bern [u. a.] 1977 (Europäische Hochschulschriften 1, 206), 81, 100 f., 123. – Auch Klaus Werner läßt in seinem Aufsatz "Stephan Hermlin und die Tradition" (in: *Sinn und Form* 27 [1975], 323-327) Hermlins Beziehung zur Antike außer acht.

<sup>8</sup> Vgl. Elke Mehnert, Zu einigen Aspekten der Antikerezeption Stephan Hermlins. In: *Weimarer Beiträge* 31 (1985), 621-628. – Einzelne Hinweise finden sich auch bei Manfred Durzak, Versuch über Stephan Hermlin. In: *Akzente* 23 (1976), 256-267. Zu Hermlins Ikaros-Rezeption vgl. weiterhin Bernhard Greiner, Der Ikarus-Mythos in Literatur und bildender Kunst. In: *Michigan Germanic Studies* 8 (1982), 98-105; Silvia Schlenstedt, Umgang mit einer mythischen Figur. Das Ikarus-Motiv in der neueren DDR-Lyrik. In: *Neue Deutsche Literatur* 35 (1987) 8, 97 f.

<sup>9</sup> Vgl. Jo Mihaly, Lajser Ajchenrand, Stephan Hermlin, *Wir verstummen nicht. Gedichte in der Fremde*. Zürich 1945; Stephan Hermlin, *Zwölf Balladen von den Großen Städten*. Zürich 1945; Stephan Hermlin, *Die Straßen der Furcht*. Singen 1947; Stephan Hermlin, *Zweiundzwanzig Balladen*, Berlin 1947. – In den Bänden "Dichtungen" (Berlin 1956) und "Gedichte" ([Mit einem Nachwort von Gerhard Wolf.] 2. Aufl. Leipzig 1971 [Reclams Universal-Bibliothek 124]) sind mehrere Gedichte mit antiken Motiven entweder nicht aufgenommen oder in ihrer Motiv-

allgemeineren Zusammenhängen auf das lyrische Frühwerk Bezug genommen<sup>10</sup> und kann im Rahmen meines heutigen Themas nur den knappen Hinweis geben, daß Hermlin bereits in einer Zeit, als ein affirmativ-optimistischer Umgang mit den antiken Sujets dominierte, die leidvollen Züge im Schicksal vor allem des Odysseus und des Ikaros betonte und daß der tragische und elegische Charakter dieser Gedichte geradezu eine Vorwegnahme der kritisch-problematisierenden Rezeption bedeutete, die für die Folgezeit charakteristisch wurde – in der Lyrik insbesondere bei Erich Arendt und Peter Huchel. Auch in "Arkadien" von 1949 wird das idyllische poetische Motiv bitter entlarvt – die Erzählung handelt von der Hinrichtung eines Verräters durch französische Partisanen –, und in "Kassberg" (1964) erscheint (wie bei anderen Dichtern auch) eine Heimkehr des Odysseus als nicht mehr möglich: "Die Freier sind fort, und mit ihnen Penelope."<sup>11</sup>

In den sechziger bis achtziger Jahren des 20. Jahrhunderts nun haben der Kinderbuchverlag und der Jugendverlag Das Neue Leben eine Reihe von illustrierten Nacherzählungen antiker Sagen und Werke mit hohem literarischem und künstlerischem Anspruch veröffentlicht. Am Beginn stand Franz Fühmanns Adaptation der Homerischen Epen unter dem Titel "Das Hölzerne Pferd", dem später noch der (Fragment gebliebene) "mythologische Roman" "Prometheus" folgte<sup>12</sup>; andere Autoren verfaßten Nacherzählungen der Sagen von Herakles (Rolf Schneider und Hannes Hüttner), von Orpheus und Eurydike (Werner Heiduczek) oder von Daidalos und Ikaros (Gerhard Holtz-Baumert)<sup>13</sup>. In diesem Zusammenhang schrieb Stephan Hermlin das Buch

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struktur verändert worden. Aus den fünfziger Jahren stammen nur noch das Gedicht "Epon", in dem Analogien zwischen den Perserkriegen und dem griechischen Bürgerkrieg nach 1945 anklingen, und "Der Tod des Dichters", ein Nachruf auf Johannes R. Becher in der dritten asklepiadeischen Strophe.

<sup>10</sup> Vgl. folgende Arbeiten des Verfassers: Antikerezeption in der Literatur der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Berlin 1984, 78 f., 104, 204; Antikerezeption in der deutschen Literatur vom Renaissance-Humanismus bis zur Gegenwart. Eine Einführung. Stuttgart, Weimar 2000, 332-334; Metamorphosen des Odysseus-Bildes. In: Riedel, "Der Beste der Griechen" – "Achill das Vieh." Aufsätze und Vorträge zur literarischen Antikerezeption II. Jena 2002 (Jenaer Studien 5), 43, 233; "Er flog zu hoch hinaus. Er sah die welt wie nie." Aspekte der Ikaros-Rezeption in der deutschsprachigen Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts. In: Ost-westlicher Ikarus. Ein Mythos im geteilten Deutschland. [Ausstellungskatalog.] (Hrsg. von Max Kunze.) Stendal, 2004, 53 f.

<sup>11</sup> Stephan Hermlin, Erzählungen (wie Anm. 1), 117-134, 259.

<sup>12</sup> Vgl. Franz Fühmann, Das Hölzerne Pferd. Die Sage vom Untergang Trojas und von den Irrfahrten des Odysseus. Nach Homer und anderen Quellen neu erzählt, Berlin 1968; Franz Fühmann, Prometheus. Die Titanenschlacht. Nach Aischylos, Hesiod, Homer, Apollodoros und anderen Quellen. Berlin 1974; Franz Fühmann: Prometheus. Die Zeugung. Rostock 1996.

<sup>13</sup> Vgl. Rolf Schneider, Die Abenteuer des Herakles. Nach alten Sagen neu erzählt, Berlin 1978; Hannes Hüttner, Herakles. Die zwölf Abenteuer. Nach Apollodoros, Hesiod, Homer, Euripides und anderen Quellen, Berlin 1979; Hannes Hüttner, Herakles. Der Dank der Götter. Nach Apol-

"Die Argonauten", das von dem bedeutenden Maler und Bildhauer Fritz Cremer illustriert worden ist.<sup>14</sup>

Die Nachdichter sind dabei durchaus unterschiedlich vorgegangen, haben sich teils eng an die überlieferten Versionen angelehnt, teils andere Akzente gesetzt, teils sogar neue Konzeptionen entwickelt und neue Handlungselemente eingeführt. Am weitesten ging Franz Fühmann in seinem auf fünf Bände konzipierten Prometheus-Roman.<sup>15</sup> Hermlins Nacherzählung der Argonautensage bezeichnet geradezu den Gegenpol. Sie umfaßt etwa 80 Seiten und ist weitgehend den bekannten Handlungszügen verpflichtet. Deutlich folgt Hermlin in der Auswahl und im Ablauf der Ereignisse sowie in der Übernahme einzelner Fakten den "Schönsten Sagen des klassischen Altertums", die der schwäbische Schriftsteller und Publizist Gustav Schwab 1838/40 nacherzählt hatte und die seitdem mehrfach neu herausgegeben worden sind: einem Werk, dem große Bedeutung bei der Vermittlung antiker Mythen vor allem an *junge* Leser zukommt, dem allerdings auch einige glättende und trivialisierende Züge nicht abgesprochen werden können. Darüber hinaus hat Hermlin von neuem Apollonios Rhodios (der schon für Schwab die Hauptquelle gewesen war) und – wie er es in einem Brief formuliert<sup>16</sup> – "das Einschlägige im Ovid" gelesen. Auf spezifisch Ovidische Züge allerdings – wie den Konflikt zwischen Iason und Hypsipyle auf Lemnos, die Verjüngung des Aison oder die Zerstückelung des Pelias – hat er verzichtet. Von Valerius Flaccus hat Hermlin kein einziges charakteristisches Element übernommen, und auf eine unmittelbare Benutzung Apollodors deutet ebenfalls nichts hin.

Wichtiger als die Frage nach den Quellen ist die nach dem Charakter, nach den Akzentuierungen der Hermlinschen Nacherzählung. Zunächst einmal hat der Autor die ziemlich breite und berichtartige Erzählung Schwabs gekürzt und vom Kompositionellen und Sprachlichen her poetisiert. Bereits der "Einstieg" ist hochdramatisch: König Pelias bringt in Iolkos dem Poseidon ein Opfer dar, "als er jählings erblaßte" – weil er nämlich den Jüngling mit nur *einem* Schuh erblickte, vor dem ihn das Orakel gewarnt hatte.<sup>17</sup> Danach erst wird – und dies in wenigen Sätzen – die doppelte Vorgeschichte enthüllt. Hermlins Nacherzählung ist kompositionell auf die Ereignisse in

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Iodor, Hesiod, Homer, Euripides und anderen Quellen. Berlin 1987; Gerhard Holtz-Baumert, Daidalos & Ikaros, Berlin 1984; Werner Heiduczek, Orpheus und Eurydike, Berlin 1989.

<sup>14</sup> Stephan Hermlin, Die Argonauten, Berlin 1974.

<sup>15</sup> Vgl. folgende Arbeiten des Verfassers: Franz Fühmanns "Prometheus". In: Weimarer Beiträge 26 (1980) 2, 77-96; Die Antike im Werk Franz Fühmanns. In: Riedel, Literarische Antikerezeption. Aufsätze und Vorträge. Jena 1996 (Jenaer Studien 2), 262-266.

<sup>16</sup> Stephan Hermlin, Brief an Elke Mehnert, 20. Oktober 1983. In: Mehnert (wie Anm. 8), 626.

<sup>17</sup> Hermlin, Die Argonauten (wie Anm. 14), 5 f.

Kolchis hin ausgerichtet, während die Heimfahrt (die bei Apollonios wie ein Konglomerat phantastischer Abenteuer wirkt) stark verkürzt wurde; die relativ autonome Geschichte von Medeia in Korinth aber (von Apollonios gar nicht erst in die Handlung der "Argonautika" einbezogen) wird zwar nur knapp resümiert, aber als wirkungsvoller Abschluß gebracht.

Während Hermlin auf zahlreiche Details der Schwabschen Nacherzählung verzichtet, übernimmt oder verstärkt er sozial relevante Züge, die partiell schon von seinem Vorgänger auf der Grundlage der "Argonautika" herausgearbeitet worden waren. Das betrifft zum einen die schärfere Akzentuierung des Konfliktes zwischen Pelias und Iason. (Pelias ist bei Hermlin ebenso wie bei Schwab und im Unterschied zur gesamten antiken Überlieferung – mit Ausnahme von Pindar – ein unrechtmäßiger Herrscher.) Zum anderen aber betrifft es die Betonung vorbildlicher, solidarischer Züge: Einbezogen wird der "Wohltäter der Menschheit" Prometheus, der durch den Adler des Zeus gefoltert wird und dessen Blut in der Salbe der Medeia enthalten ist, die Iason unverwundbar macht<sup>18</sup>; bei der Gewinnung der Medeia für Iason wirkt der Phrixos-Sohn Argos mit, während sie etwa bei Apollodor und Ovid einzig aus Liebe handelt<sup>19</sup>; daß Herakles eine Quelle hat hervorspringen lassen und die Argonauten gerettet hat, wird besonders hervorgehoben<sup>20</sup>.

Im Zusammenhang mit dieser Humanisierung ist auch die Milderung mancher barbarischer Vorgänge zu sehen: Der Zweikampf zwischen Pollux und Amykos führt nur zur Niederlage, nicht zum Tod des Bebryken-Königs<sup>21</sup>; Medeias Bruder Apsyrtos wird zwar getötet, aber nicht zerstückelt<sup>22</sup>; Iasons Vater Aison bleibt am Leben, und auch die von Medeia veranlaßte Tötung des Pelias durch dessen Töchter ist entfallen<sup>23</sup>.

Diese leichte ideelle Überhöhung des Mythos korrespondiert allerdings mit einer Akzentuierung elegischer und tragischer Züge. So heißt es bereits

<sup>18</sup> Ebd., 38, 49. – Vgl. Apollonios Rhodios 2, 1247-1259 und 3, 844-870; Gustav Schwab, Die schönsten Sagen des klassischen Altertums. Nach seinen Dichtern und Erzählern. 3. Aufl. Leipzig 1965, Bd. 1, 93, 104.

<sup>19</sup> Ebd., 46 f. – Vgl. Apollonios Rhodios 3, 440-916; Schwab, Bd. 1, 99-104.

<sup>20</sup> Ebd., 77 f. – Vgl. Apollonios Rhodios 4, 1432-1449; Schwab, Bd. 1, 129.

<sup>21</sup> Ebd., 24-26. – Dagegen meldet Apollonios Rhodios (2, 94-97) unverhüllt den Tod des Amykos, und Gustav Schwab (Bd. 1, 85) deutet ihn an.

<sup>22</sup> Ebd., 64. – Dagegen wird Apsyrtos bei Apollodor (1, 9, 24), der sich hierbei wohl an die älteste Version der Sage hält, von Medeia zerschnitten, und seine Gliedmaßen werden einzeln in die Tiefe geworfen, um die verfolgenden Kolcher aufzuhalten; und bei Apollonios Rhodios (4, 477-481) schneidet Iason die Glieder ab und kostet das Blut, um sich vom Mord zu entsühnen. Bei Schwab (Bd. 1, 119) wird, ebenso wie bei Hermlin, der Tote sofort begraben. (Übrigens gebraucht Hermlin, in Anknüpfung an Schwab, die Namensform "Absyrtos".)

<sup>23</sup> Ebd., 81 f. – Schwab erwähnt ebenfalls nicht den Tod des Pelias (Bd. 1, 132), hatte aber bereits zuvor den Tod des Aison gemeldet (Bd. 1, 73). Bei Hermlin übernimmt Aison "seltsamerweise" wieder den Thron.

frühzeitig, als Herakles die Argonauten verläßt: "Herakles aber ging seinen einsamen Weg, von dem die Sage berichtet."<sup>24</sup> Schwab hingegen läßt ihn, im Anschluß an Apollonios, dorthin gehen, "wohin ihn die Bestimmung des Zeus rief".<sup>25</sup> Vor allem erfolgt eine Distanzierung von dem anfangs mit Sympathie gezeichneten Iason. Mit dem Raub des Goldenen Vlieses tritt ein Umschwung in seinem Schicksal ein: Aus dem mutigen und furchtlosen Kämpfer wird ein Streber nach Ehre und Ruhm.<sup>26</sup> Die Vorgänge in Korinth – bei deren Schilderung sich Hermlin an die seit Euripides traditionelle Sicht auf den Kindermord hält – sind die letzte Konsequenz eines langwährenden Fehlverhaltens. "In diesem Augenblick überdachte Iason sein ganzes Leben. Er hatte das Gewaltigste versucht, er hatte das nie geschaute, von allen ersehnte Goldene Vlies gesucht und gefunden, er hatte die Edelsten um sich gesammelt und mit ihnen gemeinsam unaussprechliche Gefahren, Kälte und Hitze und die immerwährende Nähe des Todes ertragen. Er hatte das Goldene Vlies in die Heimat zurückgebracht, wo es wieder in irgendeinem heiligen Hain hing, schon jetzt fast vergessen. Um des großen Zieles willen hatte er Lüge und Verrat und viele Verbrechen auf sich genommen."<sup>27</sup> Bei Schwab begeht Iason Selbstmord; Hermlin läßt es offen, ob er sich "in sein Schwert gestürzt" oder "in einer Art Erstarrung seinem Tode entgegengelebt" habe.<sup>28</sup>

Mit der Akzentuierung leidvoller Züge knüpft Stephan Hermlin in seiner Nacherzählung der Argonautensage an den Grundton seiner frühen Gedichte an. Ist aber dort das Leid noch mit Zuversicht gepaart oder läßt es sogar Raum für heroisierende Analogien, so führt es nunmehr zu Enttäuschung und Resignation, wird der Prozeß der Desillusionierung bis zum bitteren Ende ausgestaltet.

Hermlins Argonauten-Rezeption reiht sich ein in den kritisch-problematisierenden Umgang mit dem antiken 'Erbe' bei zahlreichen Dichtern des 20. Jahrhunderts – namentlich seit den sechziger Jahren. Dies läßt sich an Gestalten wie Prometheus, Herakles, Odysseus oder Ikaros verfolgen – während bei diesen aber eine zumeist recht zustimmende Sicht vehement umgekehrt wurde, ist Iason bereits im griechischen Mythos selbst und in der weltliterarischen Tradition ein mehr oder weniger zwiespältiger oder gebrochener Held. Problematische Züge hatte er – um uns hier auf die deutsche Literatur nach 1945 zu beschränken – auch in Anna Seghers' Erzählung "Das Argonautenschiff" (1948), in der Iason den Menschen nicht nur Erkenntnis,

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<sup>24</sup> Ebd., 24.

<sup>25</sup> Schwab, Bd. 1, 84. – Vgl. Apollonios Rhodios 1, 1315-1320.

<sup>26</sup> Vgl. Christian Emrich, Weltliteratur für junge Leser – neuerzählt. In: Neue Deutsche Literatur 28 (1980) 9, 138.

<sup>27</sup> Hermlin, Die Argonauten, 86-88.

<sup>28</sup> Ebd., 88. – Vgl. Schwab, Bd. 1, 136.

sondern auch Leid brachte und schließlich infolge eigenen Versagens von der Argo erschlagen wurde, und in Elisabeth Langgässers Roman "Märkische Argonautenfahrt" (1950), in dem sich eine Pilgerreise letztlich als Hadesfahrt offenbart.<sup>29</sup> In Christa Johannsens Roman "Flug nach Zypern" (1969) ist Iason "Verführbar zu jedem Zweck, jedem Angebot offen", und die Fahrt der Argonauten erscheint als ein fragwürdiges Unternehmen, das charakterisiert ist durch die Diskrepanz zwischen dem illusionären Optimismus des Aufbruchs und dem kläglichen Ergebnis: "Betrug am Anfang – Verrat und Verrat – Verbrechen am Ende."<sup>30</sup> Auch Axel Schulze schildert in der Erzählung "Die Zeder des Argonautenschiffes" und in dem Gedicht "Argonauten" von 1966 und 1973 einen gefährlichen und unrechtmäßigen Vorgang.<sup>31</sup> Besonders kraß entlarvt Heiner Müller in seinem Stück "Verkommenes Ufer Medeamaterial Landschaft mit Argonauten" (1982) Iason als Kolonisator.<sup>32</sup> Schließlich ist auch in Christa Wolfs Roman "Medea. Stimmen" (1996) – der vor allem die Ereignisse in Korinth zum Gegenstand hat und der die bislang radikalste Umwertung der Kindermordproblematik in der Weltliteratur darstellt – Iason eine bedenkliche Gestalt, und die Fahrt der Argonauten erscheint im Rückblick als wenig heldenhaft und sinnvoll.<sup>33</sup>

Die Vielschichtigkeit des Sagenkreises um Iason, Medeia und den Argonautenzug läßt in diesem antiken Mythos ein beträchtliches kritisches Potential deutlich werden und erklärt, warum gerade *er* sich als besonders geeignet erwies, die Ambivalenz historischer Vorgänge und individueller Entwicklungen, die Dialektik von historischem Aufbruch und tragischem Scheitern – namentlich unter den Erfahrungen des 20. Jahrhunderts – immer wieder künstlerisch zu reflektieren.

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<sup>29</sup> Anna Seghers, Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben, Berlin, Weimar 1975-1980, Bd. 10, 126-143; Elisabeth Langgässer: Märkische Argonautenfahrt. Roman. Hamburg 1950.

<sup>30</sup> Christa Johannsen, Flug nach Zypern. Roman. Berlin 1969 (Zitate: S. 134, 67).

<sup>31</sup> Sonntag 21, 1966, 43, 7; Axel Schulze: Zu ebener Erde. Gedichte, Halle 1977, 96.

<sup>32</sup> Heiner Müller, Werke. Hrsg. von Frank Hörmigk, Frankfurt am Main 1998-2005, Bd. 5, 71-84.

<sup>33</sup> Christa Wolf, Medea: Stimmen, Roman, München 1996.

Sophie Shamanidi (Tbilisi)

## THE ETHNIC ASPECT OF PERCEPTION OF MEDEA AND HELEN

Medea has been discussed at the conference in many different ways. A number of interesting ideas have been expressed about the interpretations of her image in different periods and literatures. I will try to analyze the same character from a slightly different ethno-social angle. I will also draw a parallel with another mythological character – Helen, and with the public attitude towards her.

Medea and Helen are two very popular images, which have always invited controversial opinions in European culture.

It is common knowledge that ancient literature treated two versions of the Helen myth. The first one finds Helen guilty, while second one presents her as a victim. However, even Helen's obvious 'misconduct' (the first version) invites various attitudes: 1. Helen was unfaithful to her husband and followed Paris, which means that she behaved inappropriately and deserves censure (Hesiod, Aeschylus, Euripides, Ovid, Seneca, Virgil, Alceus), 2. Helen was unfaithful to her husband, but it was not her fault (Gorgias, Socrates) and 3. Helen was unfaithful to her husband and she did it right (Sappho). In the second version, Helen is innocent, naturally, as she has not even been in Troy (Euripides, Stesichorus).<sup>1</sup> The reception of Helen's images in the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century literature is no less diverse. Modern European authors present her in many different ways.<sup>2</sup> Unlike European literature, Modern Greek writing is

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<sup>1</sup> For the interpretation of Helen's image in antiquity see RE, VII, 2, 2824-2835; RML; DNP, 5, 278-280.

<sup>2</sup> For the interpretation of Helen's image in European literature see Frenzel E., *Die Stoffe der Weltliteratur*, Stuttgart, 1981, 301-306.



quite biased towards this character. Greek authors mainly picture Helen in light colors and even try to acquit her.<sup>3</sup>

Modern Greeks regard Helen as the symbol of national pride. Helen embodies the absolute worldly beauty and consequently, she renders what is the most important in modern times for the perception of Greek civilization – beauty and harmony. Unlike their ancient forefathers, the tendency for censuring Helen almost equals to a zero point and clearly prevails what, unflattering for we may call the idealization of Helen's image. In Greek

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<sup>3</sup> Helen first appeared in Modern Greek writing in 1899. The text belonged to Kostas Palamas, a distinguished poet and public figure of those times. The poem is quite small, and is epigraphed with a few lines from Euripides' *Helen* (33-36), which points to the myth version referred to. The poem is a certain 'autobiographic' account: a woman tells the story of her genealogy, narrates how the Trojan War started because Paris abducted a shadow created by the gods, etc. The ending lines of the poem are devoted to the full rehabilitation of Helen: 'I am untouchable, pure, unattainable. I am Helen.'

In about the same period (1956) the famous Greek writer Nikos Kazantzakis dwells in his *Report to Greco* on the story of how Stesychorus created 'Palynodia'. He finds quite convincing the second version of the myth and interprets the events in his own way: he ascribes Stesychorus' taking back his words to his reason.

Another Greek apology of Helen is the poet Angelos Sikelianos. He frequently refers to her image in his poem; however, the mythic character is presented as the symbol of beauty and her other aspects are not highlighted. In 1919 Sikelianos published quite a sizeable, 32-line poem called *A Hymn to Helen*, where Helen is in fact presented as the equal of gods. In the poem *Heraclides*, Sikelianos gives Goethe a good scolding for portraying Helen in an unflattering role: how could a German poet dare such a blasphemy!

Helen reappeared in Greek prose after a 30-year pause. Now she is dedicated a poem by a modernist poet, a Nobel Prize winner George Seferis (*Helen*, 1953). He intended to show the absurdity of war rather than rehabilitate Helen's image. Like his predecessors, Seferis used the second version of the myth. Already the epigrammatic part of the poem cites the words from Euripides' *Helen* pointing out that it was not she who went to Troy but her shadow.

Helen's image is widely used in the works of another modernist poet Takis Sinopoulos. In 1957 he published a poem called *Helen*. In fact, the whole poem is the confession of a poet in love with Helen. The epithets referring to Helen emphasize not only her beauty (beautiful, fair, unseen, airy, etc.), but also her purity: untouched, unattainable, uncorrupted, virgin, high, all-bright, untarnished, etc. This poem is especially remarkable as it is the first occasion in Modern Greek writing that Helen is identified with no less than Hellas openly and emphatically.

Iannis Ritsos offered an altogether different interpretation of Helen's image. In 1970, Ritsos used the devices characteristic of European literature to create play-monologue *Helen*, where the popular mythic character is pictured in an strange, unusual context. This is a monologue of an elderly and forgotten once-fair Helen. The acting character, as well as all the characters she mentions, is deheroized. Despite the most natural description of old and miserable Helen and her being, Ritsos nevertheless puts emphasis on, and I could even say, worships Helen's past beauty. Helen, already fairly old, remembers that all what happened was the divine will: 'There was no use to watch them [Paris and Menelaus]. The gods had predetermined the outcome of the war. And after a while, Paris, washed by the goddess and smiling, awaited me lying on my bed ...' (see Shamanidi S., Fair Helen, The Cause of the War or an Innocent Victim, Kutaisi, 2003, 320ff. (in Georgian)).

literature, her beauty rendered irrelevant all what could smear her image in this way or other.

As concerns Medea, it is common knowledge that two stages have been distinguished in the attitude towards her – pre-Euripidean and post-Euripidean. There is no instance of negative attitude in pre-Euripidean texts, while post-Euripidean literature is dominated by a definitely negative image (but for the exceptions where Euripides is accused of taking a bribe and inventing a lie).<sup>4</sup>

European literature is distinguished by a definitely controversial attitude to Medea – some authors present her as a character with the most appalling, negative functions, while others try to exonerate her: as a rule, such texts are based on feminist principles.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly to Greek writers' attitude to Helen, modern Georgian literature is quite biased when interpreting Medea's image and does not spare efforts to relieve her of the murderous reputation.

The Medea theme was introduced in Georgian literature by Akaki Tsereteli. He wrote a play called *Media* (Me + Dia meaning I + a female, woman), which was at first designed as a trilogy: *Media in Colchis*, *Media in Hellas* and *Media Back in Homeland*. However, the initial idea failed to be implemented and the poet published in 1875 only the first part of it called *Media*. He referred to Apollonius' *Argonautica* as the source for his play; however, the title he gave to the plot describing the events in Colchis was the same as that of the Euripidean play. This leads to the thought that the poet evidently wished to depict already in this poem the events taking place in Colchis and on the other hand, to create a certain exposition for a better presentation of Medea and in order to prepare the reader to the changes (in the mythic plot as well as in Medea's image) forthcoming in the remaining part of the trilogy. We may suppose that the second play was intended to imply reference with Euripides' *Medea*, while the third play would probably be fostered by the poet's own imagination. Evidently, Medea's return to her homeland aimed at her complete rehabilitation and at neutralizing the motivation of her leaving Colchis. The play renders unaltered all key points of the Argonauts' visit to Colchis; however, the motivations are principally modified. All acquire a new context. In order to provide 'grounded'

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<sup>4</sup> For the interpretation of Medea's image in antiquity, see RE, XV, 1, 28-65; RML; DNP, 7, 1091-1093; Gordeziani R., *Argonauts*, Tbilisi, 2007 (in Georgian).

<sup>5</sup> For the interpretation of Medea's image in modern European literature, see Frenzel E., *Die Stoffe der Weltliteratur*, Stuttgart, 1981, 482-486; Modern Greek Playwrights' interest in Medea remarkably increased by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Around 10 plays were devoted to the Medea theme in the 1990s. For more details, see the following articles in this volume: I. Darchia, Bost's *Medea*; K. Tsintsadze, *Medea in Modern Greek Dramaturgy*.

arguments against the Euripidean version, the author had to start the narrative from the point when Medea and Jason first met in Colchis. Each scene of Medea's and Jason's meeting show that Jason deceives her. The poet tried to accentuate Medea's 'naivety' and Jason's perfidy, thus providing in advance for all necessary implications aimed at holding Jason unquestionably responsible for all bound to happen in future.

Another Georgian writer to treat the Medea theme in dramatic terms is Levan Sanikidze. Being at the same a historian he was well aware of ancient sources regarding the Argonaut legend as well as modern European interpretations of it. Levan Sanikidze followed Akaki Tsereteli's principle of rehabilitating Medea, and even went further than his predecessor: he presented Medea as the best wife, an extremely caring mother, as a deeply Philhellenic person, whose help to the Greek people was not limited to the medical sphere, as before each battle she used to give her husband the plans for military activities and consequently, was the guarantee for Jason's ever-victorious campaigns. However, the ungrateful Greeks treated her in an appalling way: they murdered her children and intended to kill her as well. Differently from all ancient traditional stories, Sanikidze's play ends with a suicide – Medea sets on fire her house, her garden and is wrapped in flames herself.

Levan Sanikidze's *Medea* was performed on the Georgian stage many times: between 1962 and 1984 the play was staged in seven theaters of Georgia, while in 1997, it was even staged in the Opera House under the name *The Colchian Daughter* (composed by B. Kvernadze, libretto by L. Sanikidze).<sup>6</sup>

The Medea theme reappeared in Georgian literature several times: I can mention *Aetes* by Valerian Kandelaki (1975). Although it does not even feature Medea as a heroine, other characters' words clearly suggest the author's attitude to Medea.

Another piece of literature devoted to Medea is Giorgi Kornapeli's poem *Medea*. It is also aimed at the rehabilitation of her image. The poet refers to Medea with the following epithets: tortured, doomed, the victim, bewitched. Evidently, the author ascribes her deeds to libido: 'The spell oozed through the belt of the virgin.'

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<sup>6</sup> If we bear in mind that Euripidean *Medea* was staged in Georgia only once, and involved many difficulties, as it became possible only after a serious psychological preparation of the actors and public (at first, Veriko Anjaparidze even refused to play Medea's part), it becomes clear why the theme of Medea's rehabilitation is so relevant to Georgian society. Probably, the outstanding popularity of Sanikidze's *Medea* in Georgia was conditioned by this very fact, rather than its dramatic value.

Several years ago *Medea* again appeared in one of Tbilisi theater halls. This time it was staged by a young director Gocha Kapanadze. Although the author of this stage version must have been aware not only of the Euripidean tragedy, but also of many various modern receptions of it, he nevertheless failed to escape the Georgian tradition of interpreting Medea's image and the influence of his immediate predecessors. Already the advertising leaflet included the names of the ancient Greek authors who denied Medea's involvement in the appalling murders and ascribed her ill fame to Euripides' fancy. Naturally, this pathos was rendered in the play as well. The performance is opened by the Chorus, which functions as the Messenger. We learn from the Chorus's part that the Corinthians not only killed Medea's children, but also bribed Euripides in order to 'rescue the image of the Hellenes' and blame Medea for all!

I can not help pointing to the author's endeavor to accentuate the foreign origin of Medea and Circe (Medea's aunt and one of Odysseus' lovers): Medea complains that she has forgotten the Colchian language and asks her to speak to her in Colchian, which is followed by Circe's part in the Mengrelian language. Apart from this, Medea performs Mengrelian *Nana (Lullaby)* after her dialogue with Jason.

In the final monologue, Medea tears the books (evidently, Euripides), which she believes tell a lie: 'Miserable Euripides, may you be cursed! Why do not you tell the world the true story: how the violent Corinthian mob hacked up my children in the Heraion; how you took five golds, how you embellished your head with a laurel wreath and went up the pedestal of the Olympus, how you became the first tragedian of Hellas. And made me the murderer of my children ...', 'I have not slaughtered my children, haven't, haven't! ...' The Mengrelian *Nana* can again be heard in the finale. It could be a logical ending to the prologue but for one point: Medea kills her children herself and even provides an explanation for her behavior: 'I will immediately implement the appalling intention. Otherwise, I will leave my children to the enemy. It makes no difference; they will not be able to escape death. They would better be deprived of life by their own mother.' I believe that this very aspect – the discrepancy between Medea's deeds and her appreciations – is the original finding of the director and even proves innovative as concerns the interpretation of Medea's image. However, the above-mentioned also attests that although the director has Medea kill her children with her own hands, he nevertheless is unable to resist the temptation of presenting the facts that point to the opposite and to exonerate his heroine.

Quite recently, director Levan Tsuladze staged in the Musical Comedy Theater Akaki Khidasheli's play called *The Colchian Sex*. The play does not

mention Medea's children at all, and the main focus is absolutely different, as can be expected from the title.

The above-mentioned attests that if the attitude towards Helen and Medea these is more or less balanced in world literature – some finding them guilty, and others exonerating them – the literature of those nations who identify themselves with the heroines is quite biased. Bearing this in mind, I wanted to find out the public attitude towards these characters, especially among such a sensitive community as the students. For this purpose, I carried out the following experiment:

For several years, I gave a course of lectures *Ancient Tradition and Modern Literature* to Georgian and Greek students. The lectures accentuated the reception of Helen's and Medea's images in modern literature. Although European literature has diverse attitude to them as mentioned above, the functions of these two ladies are negative rather than positive. If we attempt to define their personalities with a couple of words, we will presumably use the definition 'unfaithful wife' in the first case and 'murderous mother' in the second one.

The experiment was carried out in the following way: Georgian and Greek students were to answer the questions 'Is Medea guilty or not?' and 'Is Helen guilty or not' with just one word, either 'yes' or 'no'. 95% of Georgian students gave a negative answer to the first question, and a positive answer to the second one. We had the same picture with the Greek students, but in the reverse way: 100% percent found Medea guilty, while none of them blamed Helen.

The Greek students tried their best to exonerate Helen and provided many different arguments in her favor. The same was true about the Georgian students, who advocated Medea. Part of students denied Medea's killing her children, attributing this fact to Euripides' fancy, while others, although admitting the murder, tried to defend her saying that when a person is deeply humiliated, they may be do anything. The majority of my students are Orthodox Christians, and many of them are church-goers. So, I wanted to find out how they appreciated her action in terms of Christian morality. The answer was highly surprising: – that's all right but Medea was pagan, wasn't she.

Although both Medea and Helen are mythical characters and our contemporary society is no more supposed to identify themselves with a particular character, the genetic memory of people proves very lasting. It sometimes makes a person experience unconsciously the deeds of their ancestors, either heroic or vice versa. And if the deed is unworthy, they may try their best to exonerate the character. Recently, a monument was erected to Medea in Batumi. The public response was very sharp. People protested in

every possible way: through essays in newspapers, television speeches, demonstrations – as they believe that a monument should not be erected to the children-murderer. At any lecture and in any program devoted to an ancient theme the following question will inevitably come up: Did Medea really kill her children? Even the television screening of Pasolini's *Medea* provoked newspaper essays – not critical, but pathetic – this time, Pasolini was the target of contempt, and Medea was again defended. Medea as a character went beyond the domain of fiction and art. If we take Georgian example, her behavior is discussed in the way as if she were a real historical individual and not a mythological or literary character, and her deed is appreciated as something blemishing our national consciousness. I can add in the end that such circumstances one again speak of Euripides' genius, whose creation excites our souls even 25 centuries later.

Erasmia-Louiza Stavropoulou (Athens)

## Ο ΑΡΓΟΝΑΥΤΙΚΟΣ ΜΥΘΟΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΠΟΙΗΣΗ ΤΟΥ ΓΙΑΝΝΗ ΡΙΤΣΟΥ

Είναι γνωστό ότι ο Γιάννης Ρίτσος στήριξε το θέμα αρκετών από τα καλύτερα ποιήματά του σε πρόσωπα και επεισόδια της ελληνικής μυθολογίας. Αν και η Αργοναυτική εκστρατεία δεν του ενέπνευσε καμιά μεγάλη ποιητική σύνθεση, όπως ο Τρωικός πόλεμος ή ο Μυκηναϊκός και Θηβαϊκός κύκλος, σε εννέα ολιγόστιχα ποιήματα από τις συλλογές *Μαρτυρίες* και *Επαναλήψεις*, εκμεταλλεύτηκε τον μύθο των Αργοναυτών.<sup>1</sup> Είναι γεγονός ότι ο μύθος αυτός δεν γονιμοποίησε την έμπνευση των νεοελλήνων λογοτεχνών στο βαθμό που αυτό συνέβη με τον μύθο του Τρωικού πολέμου. Ωστόσο, το γεμάτο περιπέτειες ταξίδι της Αργώς χρησιμοποιήθηκε ως σύμβολο τόσο του εξωτερικού αγώνα της ζωής όσο και της πορείας προς την εσωτερική αυτογνωσία. Η συμμετοχή στην εκστρατεία πολλών από τους σημαντικότερους ήρωες, θνητούς και ημίθεους, εκείνης της εποχής, προσέδωσε στο μύθο το χαρακτήρα του ομαδικού αγώνα και ο εξιδανικευμένος κοινός στόχος, η απόκτηση, δηλαδή, του χρυσόμαλλου δέρατος, θεωρήθηκε ως η συμβολική απεικόνιση της προσπάθειας για την κατάκτηση ενός ιδανικού.

Στη λογοτεχνική παραγωγή της γενιάς του '30 το ταξίδι της Αργώς εντάχθηκε αφενός στο πολύ ευρύτερο θέμα του ταξιδιού (και μάλιστα του θαλασσινού ταξιδιού) που αναπτύχθηκε τότε σε πλάτος και βάθος ιδιαίτερα στην ποίηση. Αφετέρου συνδέθηκε με την εκστρατεία στη Μικρά Ασία και

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<sup>1</sup> Αναλυτική περιγραφή του μύθου της Αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας βλ. στο *Ελληνική Μυθολογία*, Γενική εποπτεία Ι. Θ. Κακριδής, τόμ. 4, Εκδοτική Αθηνών, 126-187. Βλ. και τα λήμματα: «The Golden Fleece» και «Medea» στο *Companion to Literary Myths, Heroes and Archetypes*, edited by P. Brunel, Routledge, London and New York, 1996, 464-467 και 769-778.

την καταστροφή του '22, ειδικότερα στους λογοτέχνες που ήρθαν από την Ανατολή. Ο Γιώργος Σεφέρης στο ποίημα «Αργοναύτες» (*Μυθιστόρημα*) συνδέει ακριβώς το ταξίδι της Αργώς με τα δεινά της Μικρασιατικής εκστρατείας, το θάνατο των στρατιωτών, την περιπλάνηση των προσφύγων αλλά και την λήθη που σκέπασε τόσο τα κατορθώματα όσο και τα δεινά τους: «*Κανείς δεν τους θυμάται. Δικαιοσύνη*».<sup>2</sup> Από την άλλη, ο Γιώργος Θεοτοκάς στο μυθιστόρημα *Αργώ*, (τίτλος που χρησιμοποιήθηκε σε πολλά κείμενα της εποχής), δίνει και τις δύο πλευρές του μύθου, τη θετική, δηλαδή την προσπάθεια εκπλήρωσης ενός σημαντικού στόχου και την αρνητική, την αρπαγή του χρυσόμαλλου δέρατος και το βίαιο τέλος των πρωταγωνιστών του: «*Στα μάτια τους, το караβάκι της Αργώς ταξίδευε κιόλας προς τις μεγάλες θάλασσες και τις μεγάλες φουρτούνες, προς το άγνωστο, προς το Χρυσόμαλλο Δέρα, που τους σαγηνεύει και τους ενθουσίαζε, χωρίς να μπορούν να το καθορίσουν. Το Χρυσόμαλλο Δέρα. Το ζύπνημα του ελληνικού πνεύματος, η δημιουργία, η Αναγέννηση, η Δόξα...*»<sup>3</sup>

Τα ποιήματα του Ρίτσου είναι, βέβαια, πολύ μεταγενέστερα από τα προηγούμενα κείμενα. Ο χρόνος της γραφής τους αλλά και η αριστερή ιδεολογία του ποιητή καθρεφτίζονται στο συσχετισμό του μύθου με τα σύγχρονα γεγονότα. Προκαταβολικά μπορώ να πω ότι για τον Ρίτσο αυτό το περιπετειώδες ταξίδι συμβολίζει τους αγώνες του ελληνικού λαού και γενικότερα της ανθρωπότητας για έναν κόσμο ελευθερίας και κοινωνικής δικαιοσύνης. Στόχος, λοιπόν, της ανακοίνωσής μου είναι να δείξω ακριβώς πώς ο Ρίτσος προσεγγίζει με την ποίησή του αυτό τον αρχαίο μύθο: αφενός διαβάζοντας με τρόπο κριτικό την αρχαία μυθολογία, αφετέρου σχολιάζοντας με τρόπο έμμεσο αλλά πολύ παραστατικό σύγχρονα γεγονότα.

Όπως έχει ήδη παρατηρηθεί από την κριτική, στις *Μαρτυρίες* και τις *Επαναλήψεις* αποτυπώνονται δύο αξιοσημείωτα χαρακτηριστικά της δημιουργικής πορείας του: πρώτον, η καλλιέργεια – παράλληλα με τις μεγάλες σε έκταση συνθέσεις του – σύντομων, ολιγόστιχων, ενίοτε επιγραμματικών ποιημάτων.<sup>4</sup> Το δεύτερο χαρακτηριστικό είναι ότι με αφετηρία τη Δεύτερη Σειρά των *Μαρτυριών*, αλλά, πολύ περισσότερο μέσα στις *Επαναλήψεις*, θέματα εμπνευσμένα από την αρχαία ιστορία και μυθολογία, που ήδη είχε χρησιμοποιήσει ο Ρίτσος στις μεγάλες συνθέσεις της *Τέταρτης*

<sup>2</sup> Γιώργος Σεφέρης, *Ποιήματα*, Ενδέκατη έκδοση, Ίκαρος, Αθήνα 1977, 47.

<sup>3</sup> Γ. Θεοτοκάς, *Αργώ*, τόμ. Α', Ογδοη έκδοση, Βιβλιοπωλείον της «Εστίας», Αθήνα, 1980, 58; Βλ. και άλλες αναφορές στο τόμ. Α', 56-58, 310 και τόμ. Β', 172-175.

<sup>4</sup> Π. Πρεβελάκης, *Ο ποιητής Γιάννης Ρίτσος. Συνολική θεώρηση του έργου του*, Κέδρος, Αθήνα, 1981, 322-323; Βλ. και τις παρατηρήσεις της Χ. Προκοπάκη, «Η πορεία προς τη Γκραγκάντα ή οι περιπέτειες του οράματος», *Αφιέρωμα στον Γιάννη Ρίτσο*, Κέδρος, Αθήνα, 1981, 308.



*Διάστασης*, περνούν και στα ολιγόστιχα ποιήματά του.<sup>5</sup> Έτσι οι δύο αυτές συλλογές φαίνονται να συνδέονται ως ένα βαθμό όχι μόνο θεματικά αλλά και ως προς τον τρόπο της γραφής τους.

Επομένως το ακόλουθο γενικό σχόλιο του Ρίτσου για την Πρώτη Σειρά των *Μαρτυριών*, ένα από τα ελάχιστα αυτοαναφορικά κείμενα του ποιητή, μπορεί να χρησιμεύσει ως οδηγός του αναγνώστη και για τις δύο ποιητικές συλλογές: «*Τα ποιήματα [αυτά] δε διστάζουν να ξεπερνούν την ουδέτερη παρατήρηση [...] και να τείνουν προς έναν ορισμό, προς μια ακριβολογία, συνομιλία, και μάλιστα, κάποτε, προς μίαν εξακρίβωση αιτιών, προς μια επεξήγηση, κι ακόμη προς μια συγκεκριμένη υπόδειξη, παρότρυνση, νουθεσία, λύση, συμπέρασμα και συμβουλή. Όχι, βέβαια, πάντα: μα συχνά, – στο βαθμό που η καθαρότητα της τέχνης μπορεί να επιτρέψει τη διαχυτικότητα της εξομολόγησης ή τη σχολαστικότητα της διδασκαλίας, και στο βαθμό που η φυσική, ασκημένη κ' επίκτητη σεμνότητα της ποίησης, δίνει το δικαίωμα στον ποιητή να πάρει τη θέση και το ύφος του εξομολογούμενου, του εξομολογητή, του ηθοπλάστη, ή και του δάσκαλου ακόμη.*»<sup>6</sup> Μπορούμε, λοιπόν, να πούμε προκαταβολικά ότι πρόκειται γενικά για ποιήματα «διδασκτικά», στα οποία χρησιμοποιείται ο αρχαίος μύθος ή η ιστορία ως γνώση κοινή που μοιράζεται ο ποιητής με τους αναγνώστες του, ως ένα πρώτο επίπεδο επικοινωνίας για να προχωρήσει κατόπιν στον βαθύτερο σχολιασμό, το φωτισμό και την αποκάλυψη άλλων πτυχών των γνωστών μυθολογικών θεμάτων του.

Η κριτική έχει ήδη υποστηρίξει ότι – ιδιαίτερα στα εμπνευσμένα από τη μυθολογία κείμενα – η ποίηση του Ρίτσου σχετίζεται ως ένα βαθμό με την ποίηση του Καβάφη, όχι στα θέματα αλλά στον τρόπο γραφής με τις παρενθέσεις, «*όταν αποξενώνουν – στην μπρεχτική σημασία του όρου – μια "θέση" που διατυπώθηκε στ' αμέσως προηγούμενα*», με τις ερωτήσεις, «*όταν αίρουν ή αμφισβητούν – προσωρινά – την καταφατικότητα μιας προηγούμενης "θέσης"*» και με τη «*νοηματική αμφισημία*».<sup>7</sup> Θα ήθελα να συμπληρώσω εδώ ότι, όπως θα δούμε και στα ποιήματα που θα σχολιάσω στη συνέχεια, οι δύο μεγάλοι ποιητές μοιράζονται και ένα άλλο κοινό χαρακτηριστικό: στους τελευταίους στίχους των ποιημάτων τους με ένα ανατρεπτικό σχόλιο μεταβάλλουν την προοπτική με την οποία παρουσιάζονται ως το σημείο εκείνο να αντιμετωπίζουν το θέμα τους.

<sup>5</sup> Βλ. «*Ο Ρίτσος από το 1957 και εξής προσεγγίζει το αρχαίο ελληνικό παρελθόν και χρησιμοποιεί στο έργο του θέματα από την τραγωδία, τη μυθολογία ή την ιστορία*» (Γ. Γιατρομανωλάκης, «*Ιστορική επιφάνεια και βάθος, Μελέτη πάνω σε δυο συνθέσεις του Γιάννη Ρίτσου*», *Αφιέρωμα...*, ό.π., 196); Βλ. και Προκοπάκη, ό.π., 315, 321-322, 328-333.

<sup>6</sup> Γιάννης Ρίτσος, «*Σαν εισαγωγή στις "Μαρτυρίες"*», *Μελετήματα*, Δεύτερη έκδοση, Κέδρος, Αθήνα, 1980, 99.

<sup>7</sup> Γ. Βελουδής, «*Ο καθαφικός Ρίτσος*», *Αφιέρωμα...*, ό.π., 181.

Από τα εννέα σχετικά ποιήματα, που θα με απασχολήσουν εδώ, δύο βρίσκονται στις *Μαρτυρίες* (Σειρά Δεύτερη), με τίτλο αντίστοιχα «Απ' την Αργοναυτική εκστρατεία» και «Φινέας», και είναι γραμμένα το 1964-1965.<sup>8</sup> Δύο, επίσης, είναι ενταγμένα στις *Επαναλήψεις* (Σειρά Πρώτη): πρόκειται για τα «Στη χώρα των Βεβρύκων» και «Το τέλος των Σειρήνων»: η σύνθεσή τους έγινε την ίδια μέρα: στις 16 Ιανουαρίου 1965.<sup>9</sup> Τα υπόλοιπα πέντε ανήκουν στις *Επαναλήψεις* (Σειρά Δεύτερη), συλλογή που γράφτηκε ολόκληρη το 1968 στο Στρατόπεδο συγκέντρωσης πολιτικών κρατουμένων στο Παρθένι Λέρου. Πρόκειται για τα: «Τα μήλα των Εσπερίδων, Ι» (30 Μαρτίου) «Τα μήλα των Εσπερίδων, ΙΙ» (31 Μαρτίου), «Το χρυσόμαλλο δέρας» (5 Μαΐου), «Ο Τάλως» (6 Μαΐου) και «Η παρακμή της Αργώ» (7 Μαΐου).<sup>10</sup> Αξίζει να επισημανθεί ότι με βάση τις ημερομηνίες γραφής των ποιημάτων σχηματίζονται μικρές ομάδες κειμένων, γραμμένες την ίδια ή τις αμέσως επόμενες μέρες. Μπορούμε, λοιπόν, να πούμε ότι έτσι δημιουργούνται μικρές θεματικές υποενότητες στις οποίες ο ποιητής καταθέτει διαφορετικές όψεις του προβληματισμού του πάνω στο ίδιο θέμα.

Αν και λόγω του περιορισμένου χώρου που μου αναλογεί δεν έχω τη δυνατότητα να σχολιάσω αναλυτικά τα ποιήματα, επισημαίνω ότι όλα χωρίζονται σε τρεις ανισομεγέθεις αλλά ευδιάκριτες ζώνες από την άποψη της ανάπτυξης του θέματος. Στην πρώτη ο αφηγητής εκθέτει τα γεγονότα ακολουθώντας αρκετά πιστά την γνωστή μυθολογική παράδοση, στη δεύτερη προσθέτει ένα σχόλιο πάνω στο επεισόδιο που αφηγείται, υπογραμμίζοντας το ιδιαίτερο στοιχείο που θα τον απασχολήσει ενώ στην τρίτη, όπως ήδη σημείωσα, πραγματοποιεί μια ανατροπή φωτίζοντας το θέμα του από διαφορετική σκοπιά.

Είναι ακόμη αξιοσημείωτο ότι σε ορισμένα από τα ποιήματα αυτά («Φινέας», «Στη χώρα των Βεβρύκων» και «Το τέλος των Σειρήνων») ο τρίτοπρόσωπος αφηγητής αναφέρεται στο σχετικό επεισόδιο του μύθου, κρατώντας σταθερή χρονική και συναισθηματική απόσταση από αυτό. Στα υπόλοιπα ο τόνος είναι διαφορετικός: ο πρωτοπρόσωπος αφηγητής αναφέρεται μέσω του α' πληθυντικού προσώπου σε μια ομαδική συνείδηση, ένα «εμείς» που όχι μόνο σχολιάζει τα γεγονότα, αλλά έχει και ένα βαθμό συμμετοχής σ' αυτά, ανήκει σε μια ομάδα συντρόφων. Επιπλέον σε τρία ποιήματα διαμορφώνεται μια σαφής διαφορά ανάμεσα στο χρόνο που εξελίσσεται ο μύθος και στη σημερινή εποχή της αφήγησης μέσω της περιγραφής του χώρου ή χρονικών ενδείξεων («Τα μήλα των Εσπερίδων, ΙΙ»,

<sup>8</sup> Βλ. τώρα Γιάννης Ρίτσος, *Ποιήματα*, Τόμος Θ', Κέδρος, Αθήνα, 1989, σ. 267 και 268 αντίστοιχα.

<sup>9</sup> Βλ. τώρα Γιάννης Ρίτσος, *Ποιήματα*, Τόμος Ι', Κέδρος, Αθήνα, 1989, και τα δύο στη σ. 28.

<sup>10</sup> Βλ. τώρα Γιάννης Ρίτσος, *Ποιήματα*, τόμος Γ', ό.π., τα ποιήματα αντίστοιχα στις σ. 49-50, 50, 61, 62, 62-63.

«Ο Τάλως» και «Η παρακμή της Αργώς»). Ο τρόπος γραφής των ποιημάτων επηρεάζει ουσιαστικά τόσο το είδος του σχολιασμού όσο και την ποσοτική και ποιοτική διαβάθμιση αυτού του σχολιασμού.

Αν και όλα αυτά τα ποιήματα γράφτηκαν στο διάστημα μια πενταετίας, αντικατοπτρίζουν δύο πολύ διαφορετικές περιόδους όχι μόνο της ζωής του ποιητή αλλά και της συνολικής ιστορίας του τόπου. Τα πρώτα χρόνια της δεκαετίας του '60 διακρίνονται για τον άνεμο σχετικής ελευθερίας που σάρωνε τις καταπιεστικές απαγορεύσεις των προηγούμενων δεκαετιών, καθώς η πολιτική, κοινωνική, πολιτιστική και πνευματική ζωή της Ελλάδας βρισκόταν σε ανοδική πορεία μετά το τέλος του εμφύλιου πολέμου και του απόηχού του κατά την προηγούμενη δεκαετία. Το ίδιο διάστημα αποτέλεσε μια ιδιαίτερα δημιουργική περίοδο της ζωής του ποιητή, που γράφει, μεταφράζει και εκδίδει αρκετά έργα του.<sup>11</sup> Αντίθετα, τα ποιήματα που γράφτηκαν το 1968, όταν βρισκόταν στην εξορία με κλονισμένη την υγεία του, αποτυπώνουν, μέσα από τους ποιητικούς τους συμβολισμούς και τις μεταφορές, το τραγικό κλίμα του δεύτερου χρόνου της στρατιωτικής δικτατορίας του 1967, αλλά και της διάσπασης, το Φεβρουάριο του 1968, του ελληνικού κομμουνιστικού κόμματος, ενώ στον ορίζονται μαζεύονταν ήδη σύννεφα για την ανάλογη τύχη της ευρωπαϊκής αριστεράς το καλοκαίρι της ίδιας χρονιάς.

Η διαφορά ανάμεσα στις δύο χρονικές περιόδους είναι ορατή στον τρόπο με τον οποίο προσεγγίζεται η μυθολογία σε μια σειρά ποιητικών σχολίων στη συλλογή του 1968.

Αφενός ο Ρίτσος διατυπώνει απαξιωτικά σχόλια για τους αρχαίους μύθους είτε για τη σκληρότητά τους είτε κυρίως για την αδυναμία τους να λειτουργήσουν παρηγορητικά στον σύγχρονο άνθρωπο:

*Επαναλήψεις, – λείε, – επαναλήψεις δίχως τέλος· – τι κούραση, θε μου·  
όλη η αλλαγή στις αποχρώσεις μόνον – Ιάσων, Οδυσσέας, Κολχίδα, Τροία,  
Μινώταυρος, Τάλως, – και σ' αυτές ακριβώς τις αποχρώσεις  
όλη η απάτη και μαζί η ομορφιά – δικό μας έργο.  
«Ο Τάλως»<sup>12</sup>*

*μπήκαμε μέσα κι ανατρέξαμε και πάλι στη Μυθολογία, αναζητώντας  
κάποια βαθύτερη συσχέτιση, μια μακρινή, γενική αλληγορία  
να πραιώνει τη στενότητα του ατομικού κενού. Δε βρήκαμε τίποτα.*

*«Ούτε η Μυθολογία»<sup>13</sup>*

<sup>11</sup> Για τη ζωή του Ρίτσου βλ. Α. Κώττη, *Γιάννης Ρίτσος, Ένα σχεδιάσμα βιογραφίας*, Ελληνικά Γράμματα, Αθήνα, 1996.

<sup>12</sup> Οπου και στη σημ. 9, σ. 62.

<sup>13</sup> Οπου και στη σημ. 9, σ. 51.

Αφετέρου υπογραμμίζει ότι η εποχή στην οποία ζει είναι εποχή αντιηρωική, οι αρχαίοι μύθοι μπορεί να έχουν λησμονηθεί ή να προσεγγίζονται με διαφορετική προοπτική:

*Έτσι που ζέπεσαν οι ανθρώποι, οι ιδέες, οι λέξεις, μήτε πια που  
νοιαζόμαστε για παλιές ή για πρόσφατες δόξες  
(«Και διηγώντας τα»)<sup>14</sup>*

*Μετά το θάνατό τους, πολλές μεταμορφώσεις περάσανε οι ήρωες  
στη φαντασία εκείνων που επιζήσαν – φυσικές ή παράδοξες· – [...]  
Ω, αλήθεια,*

*πολλά προσφέρανε στους Έλληνες, πριν και μετά το θάνατό τους,  
ακόμη κι έτσι - δηλαδή σα φίδια ή σα λιοντάρια.*

*Τώρα.*

*παρακάσανε οι ήρωες: πέρασε η μόδα τους. Κανένας  
δεν τους επικαλείται πια μήτε τους μνημονεύει. Όλοι ζητάμε αντιήρωες.*

*[...]*

*«Μεταμορφώσεις»<sup>15</sup>*

Οι μύθοι, λοιπόν, σύμφωνα με τον Ρίτσο, μοιάζουν μεταξύ τους και η κριτική ανάγνωσή τους εξαρτάται από τον κάθε αναγνώστη και την εποχή στην οποία ζει. Το πρόβλημα του ηρωισμού, του καθορισμού του ποιος είναι ήρωας ή αντιήρωας, της παρουσίας των συναισθημάτων και των κινήτρων των προσώπων που ζουν πλάι σε έναν ήρωα, είναι από εκείνα που τον απασχολούν σε πολλά ποιήματά του, ιδιαίτερα στην *Τέταρτη Διάσταση*, στο πλαίσιο πάντα του κοινωνικού του οράματος αλλά και του αλληλένδετου βαθύτατου υπαρξιακού προβληματισμού του.

Στον κύκλο των Αργοναυτικών το πρόβλημα αυτό εξετάζεται σε διάφορες πτυχές του με ιδιαίτερα διεισδυτικό τρόπο. Πρώτα απ' όλα ο ποιητής παραμένει πιστός στην παραδεδομένη αφήγηση του συνολικού μύθου. Επισημαίνω, πάντως, ότι επιλέγει να μιλήσει όχι για τα κορυφαία πρόσωπα του μύθου, τη Μήδεια και τον Ιάσονα, αλλά για μερικά δευτερεύοντα, όπως ο Φινέας, ή ο Ύλας. Ο Ρίτσο φαίνεται να υποστηρίζει ότι οι αληθινοί ήρωες δεν είναι μόνο οι πρωταγωνιστές αλλά και εκείνοι για τους οποίους γίνεται ελάχιστος λόγος στα βιβλία και στους «μύθους». Από την άλλη, σύμφωνα με το ποίημά του «Μεταμορφώσεις» οι πολιτικές εξελίξεις ή στενότερα οι κομματικές διεργασίες μπορούν να μεταβάλουν την αξιολογική προοπτική με την οποία αντιμετωπίζεται ένα πρόσωπο ή η μνήμη του, ενώ ο απλός κόσμος έχει πάντα ανάγκη από ήρωες. Ο Ρίτσο δεν

<sup>14</sup> Όπου και στη σημ. 9, σ. 43.

<sup>15</sup> Όπου και στη σημ. 9, σ. 40.

προσπαθεί να ερμηνεύσει με ιστορικούς όρους τους στόχους της πρώτης αυτής κατά τη μυθολογία μας πανελληνίας εκστρατείας, ότι δηλαδή αποτελεί τον απόηχο της μετανάστευσης Ελλήνων προς τον Εύξεινο Πόντο και τη Μαύρη Θάλασσα. Δεν τον απασχολεί, επίσης, η τύχη των προσώπων μετά την επιστροφή τους από την Κολχίδα, αναφέρεται μόνο στο τέλος του караβιού, της μυθικής Αργώς. Δεν παρουσιάζει τις επιτυχίες της εκστρατείας, το θρίαμβο του Ιάσονα, την επιτυχημένη πανελλήνια εκστρατεία, τις νίκες και την υπερπήδηση των εμποδίων αλλά κυρίως τα λάθη, τις αδυναμίες, ακόμη και την αδιαφορία των τρίτων για το κατόρθωμα, ενώ σημαντικό αλλά όχι θετικό ρόλο παίζουν και οι θεοί. Μάλιστα, καθώς πρόκειται για μύθο εστιασμένο στη δράση και όχι στις συγκρούσεις ή στις ψυχολογικές μεταπτώσεις των προσώπων, στα ποιήματα αφηγείται επεισόδια και δεν προβάλλει πρόσωπα.

Για να δώσω μερικά στοιχεία για το καθένα από αυτά τα ποιήματα, θα αρχίσω με τον Φινέα του ομότιτλου ποιήματος, ο οποίος ήταν ο ηλικιωμένος μάντης που βοήθησε τους Αργοναύτες να αντιμετωπίσουν με επιτυχία το πρόβλημα των Συμπληγάδων, αφού τον απήλλαξαν πρώτα από την θεϊκή τιμωρία, δηλαδή τις Άρπυιες που άρπαζαν το φαγητό του. Στο ποίημα αυτό ο Ρίτσος αφηγείται συνοπτικά αλλά πιστά το σχετικό επεισόδιο. Στους τελευταίους στίχους όμως παρουσιάζει τον Φινέα απομονωμένο στη μοναξιά του να στενοχωριέται από την απουσία των αρπακτικών πουλιών και του θορύβου που έκαναν ανοιγοκλείνοντας οι Συμπληγάδες πέτρες. Η κατάληξη αυτή είναι δυσερμηνευτή, εκτός αν προσέξουμε ότι μέσα στο ποίημα ο Φινέας του τίτλου δεν κατονομάζεται αλλά αποκαλείται τρεις φορές «γέροντας». Αν δούμε το ποίημα αυτό στο πλαίσιο ενός υπαρξιακού προβληματισμού, τότε εδώ ο Ρίτσος σχολιάζει την αδυναμία των γερόντων να δεχτούν κάποια μεταβολή στη ζωή τους και την έλλειψη αντοχής τους στη μοναξιά ή υπογραμμίζει ευρύτερα την ανικανότητα των ανθρώπων να προσαρμοστούν στην αλλαγή της ζωής τους ακόμη και αν είναι προς το καλύτερο. Αν, όμως, το διαβάσουμε ως πολιτικό σχόλιο, τότε γίνεται σαφές ότι σχολιάζει τη βασανισμένη ζωή στην οποία είναι συνηθισμένοι οι αριστεροί αγωνιστές.

Ανάλογα στο ποίημα «Το τέλος των Σειρήνων» ο ποιητής εστιάζει σε κάποιον που δεν είχε δυνατό χαρακτήρα, όπως οι άλλοι Αργοναύτες. Πρόκειται για τον «*ασυλλόγιστο Βούτη*», που δεν μπόρεσε να αντισταθεί στο τραγούδι των Σειρήνων κι έπεσε στη θάλασσα, σώθηκε όμως από τη θεά Αφροδίτη και απέκτησε μαζί της ένα γιο. Η περιπέτειά του, λοιπόν, παρά το τί θα ανέμενε ο αναγνώστης, είχε αίσιο τέλος. Αν και δεν είναι εύκολο να κάνουμε υποθέσεις για το ποιον χαρακτήρα συμβολίζει ο Βούτης, επισημαίνω ότι το ποίημα κλείνει με το αίσθημα της απελευθέρωσης και με την αναφορά σε «πνιγμένους φόβους».

Στο ποίημα «Στη χώρα των Βεβρύκων» σχολιάζει την ιστορία του συντρόφου του Ηρακλή Ύλα, που χάθηκε στη Μυσία. Όμως, στους τρεις τελευταίους στίχους έχουμε μια χαρακτηριστική περίπτωση αμφισημίας, καθώς μας δίνεται ως πιθανή μια άλλη εκδοχή του μύθου, όχι δηλαδή ότι οι Αργοναύτες εγκατέλειψαν τον Ύλα εκεί μαζί με τον Ηρακλή, που τον αναζητούσε, όπως αναφέρεται στη μυθολογία, αλλά ότι ίσως οι δύο σύντροφοι είχαν κανονίσει εκ των προτέρων αυτό τον τρόπο για να αποφύγουν τη συνέχεια του ταξιδιού. Στο κείμενο δεν κατονομάζεται ο Ηρακλής, που, ως σημειωθεί ότι απασχολεί τον Ρίτσο σε αρκετά ποιήματα της Δεύτερης Σειράς των *Επαναλήψεων*.<sup>16</sup> Αυτός ο τρόπος της ελλιπούς πληροφόρησης του αναγνώστη, που πρέπει να γνωρίζει το μύθο για να αναληφθεί σε ποια πρόσωπα αναφέρεται ο ποιητής, είναι συνηθισμένος στον Ρίτσο.<sup>17</sup>

Στα υπόλοιπα ποιήματα, στα οποία κυριαρχεί το συλλογικό «εμείς», ο ποιητής/αφηγητής ενδιαφέρεται να δώσει μια συνολική αποτίμηση της Αργοναυτικής εκστρατείας, κάνοντας παράλληλα σαφή διάκριση ανάμεσα στον απλό κόσμο («εμείς») και την όποια ηγεσία.

Σε δύο από τα ποιήματα αυτά («Απ' την Αργοναυτική εκστρατεία» και («Η παρακμή της Αργώ») θέτει καθαρά το ζήτημα της μνήμης: πρόσωπα και κατορθώματα ξεχάστηκαν από τους νεότερους και παρά τις πληροφορίες που έχουν σωθεί, έγιναν «μισοπραγματικά, μισό του ονείρου» («Απ' την Αργοναυτική εκστρατεία»). Μάλιστα, καθώς «όλα περνάνε, γερνάνε, φηναίνουν -οι ωραίες γυναίκες, οι άθλοι, τα ποιήματα-» («Η παρακμή της Αργώ»), η ουσία των γεγονότων χάνεται και απομένει μια μίμηση πράξης, μια τελετή κενή περιεχομένου, που κανένας δεν σέβεται:

*Η μεγάλη πομπή, μέσ' απ' τα δάση,  
με πυρσούς, με στεφάνια, με αυλούς, μ' εφηβικούς αγώνες. Λαμπρό αφιέρωμα,  
αλήθεια,  
η γερασμένη Αργώ, στο ναό του Ποσειδώνα. [...]  
Τότε, ένας γέροντας ναύτης  
έφτυσε προς στα πόδια του, τραβήχτηκε στ' ασύλλιο δίπλα και κατούρησε.*

<sup>16</sup> Βλ. και άλλα ποιήματα για τον Ηρακλή στην ίδια συλλογή: «Ο Ηρακλής κι εμείς», «Υπόμνηση», «Για τον Ιόλαο», «Τα μήλα των Εσπερίδων, Ι», «Τα μήλα των Εσπερίδων, ΙΙ», «Ακράϊο», «Αγγειογραφία του βου π.Χ. αιώνα» (όπου και στη σημ. 9, σ. 46, 47, 48, 49-50, 50, 51-52, 52).

<sup>17</sup> Βλ. για παράδειγμα τα ποιήματα «Συνέπειες», «Προσέγγιση», «Πρίσματα», τα οποία αναφέρονται αντίστοιχα το πρώτο στον Αλκιβιάδη και τα άλλα δύο στον Οδυσσέα, χωρίς όμως να κατονομάζονται τα πρόσωπα (*Επαναλήψεις*, Σειρά Πρώτη, όπου και στη σημ. 9, σ. 21, 25, 29).

Ακόμη και οι «θεοί» δεν είναι διατεθειμένοι ή δεν μπορούν να βοηθήσουν τους ανθρώπους στις μεγάλες δυσκολίες της ζωής τους («Απ' την Αργοναυτική εκστρατεία»).

Εν μέρει συνδέονται με την Αργοναυτική εκστρατεία τα δύο ποιήματα για την απόκτηση των χρυσών μήλων των Εσπερίδων, θέμα το οποίο αποτελεί ουσιαστικά έναν άθλο του Ηρακλή. Μόνο στο πρώτο γίνεται μια μικρή αναφορά στους Αργοναύτες: *«Μας άρεσε ακόμη που οι Αργοναύτες είδαν μέσ' απ' το πλοίο τους, λίγο πιο πέρα απ' τη λίμνη Τριτωνίδα, του Δράκοντα το πτώμα και τις Εσπερίδες λυπημένες.»* Σ' αυτό το ποίημα σχολιάζεται το επεισόδιο με τον Τιτάνα Άτλαντα, που κρατούσε στους ώμους του τις κολόνες του ουρανού, ενώ στο δεύτερο η κατάληξη του άθλου του Ηρακλή, η επιστροφή δηλαδή των μήλων από την θεά Αθηνά στον Κήπο των Εσπερίδων.

Το ιδιαίτερο ενδιαφέρον που παρουσιάζουν σχετίζεται με τον έντονα αρνητικό σχολιασμό των μύθων που διατυπώνεται σ' αυτά:

*Δεν μας αρέσαν τα ημιθεικά, τα θεϊκά, τα υπερανθρώπινα. Ο μύθος πολύ μπλεγμένος, με πολλές εκδοχές, – δεν ξέραμε το τι εννοούσε· απλώς μαντεύαμε πως έκρυβε πολλά και μικρόλογα·*

«Τα μήλα των Εσπερίδων, I»

*Κι ίσως νά 'θελαν έτσι να δείξουν  
το μάταιο των άθλων ή τον αιώνιο κύκλο – ανιαρές φιλοσοφίες.*

«Τα μήλα των Εσπερίδων, II»

Το ενδιαφέρον τους εστιάζεται επίσης σε μian άλλη διάσταση των αρχαίων μύθων που προβάλλει ο Ρίτσος. Εννοώ την αισθητική τους αξία και τη σημασία τους για την παραγωγή καλλιτεχνικών έργων:

*Τούτη η μικρή πονηρία [...]  
όλο το μύθο τον έφερνε στα μέτρα μας, δίνοντάς του ταυτόχρονα  
κάποιον αόριστο και οικείο φωτισμό, μια αισθητική σχεδόν λαμπρότητα.*

«Τα μήλα των Εσπερίδων, I»

*Άλλωστε μένει και το κέρδος αυτό: τα δύο αγεία του Μειδία και του Αχεμόρου.*

«Τα μήλα των Εσπερίδων, II»

Το ποίημα για το χάλκινο γίγαντα Τάλω, τον φύλακα της Κρήτης, που εμπόδιζε τα πλοία να πλησιάσουν τις ακτές της Κρήτης, διαφέρει αρκετά από τα υπόλοιπα. Όπως και το ποίημα «Το τέλος των Σειρήνων» αναφέρεται σε έναν αντίπαλο των Αργοναυτών, τον οποίο συνάντησαν και εξουδετέρωσαν στο ταξίδι της επιστροφής τους. Είναι, όμως, το πιο σκοτεινό και απαισιόδοξο από όλα. Σ' αυτό ο Ρίτσος προβάλλει την άποψη, που είδαμε προηγουμένως, ότι δηλαδή τα μυθολογικά ηρωικά κατορθώματα μοιάζουν μεταξύ τους σαν κουραστικές επαναλήψεις και ανάλογα με τον τρόπο που τα

βλέπουμε φαίνονται ψεύτικα ή ωραία («*όλη η απάτη και μαζί η ομορφιά – δικό μας έργο*»). Η παρομοίωση των καθημερινών ανθρώπων με τον Τάλω, που είχε μία μοναδική φλέβα σφραγισμένη με ένα καρφί, προκαλεί το φόβο του θανάτου. Ποιοι είναι αυτοί οι άνθρωποι; Μιλάει άραγε για τους αριστερούς αγωνιστές και για το πιθανό τέλος της ιδεολογίας που οδηγεί στο θάνατο. Ίσως παράλληλα να αναφέρεται σε όλους τους ανθρώπους που ζούν μια ψεύτικη και ανούσια καθημερινότητα στηριγμένοι στις θυσίες των άλλων («Ο Τάλω»).

Στο καλύτερο ποίημα με τον τίτλο «*Το χρυσόμαλλο δέρας*», ο συμβολισμός είναι φανερός και η θέση του Ρίτσου σαφής. Χρησιμοποιεί, βέβαια, το χρυσόμαλλο δέρας με την καθιερωμένη σημασία του, δηλαδή ως σύμβολο κάθε μεγάλου οράματος και στόχου, και την εκστρατεία για την απόκτησή του ως αλληγορική παρουσίαση των αγώνων για την κατάκτηση αυτού του στόχου. Διαπραγματεύεται, όμως, αυτό το θέμα με τρόπο πρωτότυπο και ιδιαίτερη έμπνευση, καθώς μάλιστα η χρονική στιγμή της συγγραφής (8 Μαΐου 1968) είναι εξαιρετικά φορτισμένη από γεγονότα που του επιβάλλουν να μιλήσει αλλά ταυτόχρονα του απαγορεύουν να διατυπώσει με άμεσο τρόπο τη γνώμη του.

Το αρχικό ερώτημα «*Τι το θέλαμε το χρυσόμαλλο δέρας*», που αφήνει την πίκρα της μεγάλης «δοκιμασίας», συνεχίζεται στην πρώτη ενότητα με την απαρίθμηση των τραγικών περιστατικών που συνόδεψαν την προσπάθεια του Ιάσονα για την κατάκτηση του στόχου (τους αλλεπάλληλους θανάτους, τα εμπόδια, την κούραση, τους αγώνες). Ο Ρίτσος γράφει κλεισμένους σε στρατόπεδο πολιτικών κρατουμένων και μόλις έχει πραγματοποιηθεί η διάσπαση του ελληνικού κομμουνιστικού κόμματος. Πέρα από την ευρύτερη σημασία που μπορούμε να τους δώσουμε, οι φράσεις «*η καινούργια δοκιμασία*» και οι «*ανώφελοι αγώνες*» υποδηλώνουν αυτά τα γεγονότα.

Πολύ περισσότερο η απόκτηση του δέρατος δημιουργεί τεράστια προβλήματα σ' αυτόν που το κατόρθωσε: «*σε φωτίζει ακέριον, σε δείχνει – στόχο κι αυτών κι εκείνων: [δεν] σ' αφήνει μήτε μια στιγμή στον ίσκιο, σε μια δική σου ελάχιστη γωνιά, να κρυφτείς, να γυμνωθείς και να υπάρξεις*». Κάθε βαθιά πίστη, λοιπόν, και στην προκειμένη περίπτωση στο κοινωνικό όραμα, αλλά και κάθε στόχος που εκπληρώνεται, κάθε επιτυχία που κατακτάται, σε κάνει δημόσιο στόχο επιθέσεων και κριτικής. Προπάντων οι αριστεροί αγωνιστές στην Ελλάδα είχαν να αντιμετωπίσουν διώξεις και φυλακίσεις από το κράτος αλλά και κριτική από τους συντρόφους τους, γίνονταν, όπως λέει ο στίχος «*στόχος κι αυτών κι εκείνων*».

Εκτός όμως από την πολιτική διάσταση υπάρχει και η καθαρά υπαρξιακή, που αφορά στην αγωνιώδη και δύσκολη πορεία του ατόμου στη ζωή, αλλά και η καλλιτεχνική, η προσπάθεια τελείωσης ενός έργου όπως στην περίπτωση του Ρίτσου. Στο ποίημα τονίζεται γενικά ότι κάθε άτομο που



φτάνει με αγώνες στην επιτυχία του σκοπού του έχει κατόπιν να αντιμετωπίσει το δύσκολο αγώνα να διατηρήσει ό,τι κατέκτησε, αγώνας που διαρκεί ολόκληρη τη ζωή του.

Ωστόσο, με τον τελευταίο στίχο του ποιήματος ο Ρίτσος εξουδετερώνει όλες τις προηγούμενες αρνητικές σκέψεις, εξισώνοντας την ίδια τη ζωή με τον αγώνα όχι για την απόκτηση αλλά για την κατοχή και φύλαξη του αποκτημένου δέρατος, του κατακτημένου σκοπού: *«Όμως, τι θα 'ταν η ζωή μας δίχως τούτο το χρυσό (καθώς λέμε) μαρτύριο;»*

Το ερώτημα, λοιπόν, του Καβάφη: *«Και τώρα τι θα γένουμε χωρίς βαρβάρους»* («Περιμένοντας τους βαρβάρους») το οποίο αναφέρεται σε έναν ματαιωμένο στόχο που θα μπορούσε να δώσει κάποιο νόημα στη ζωή, καθώς και η πρόταση του ίδιου ποιητή στο ποίημα «Ιθάκη» να απολαμβάνει κανείς την πορεία προς το στόχο, που κάποτε αποδεικνύεται σημαντικότερη από τον τελικό προορισμό, βρίσκουν ολοκληρωμένη απάντηση σ' αυτό το ποίημα του Ρίτσου.<sup>18</sup> Δεν έχει σημασία μόνο η χάραξη υψηλών στόχων, η προσπάθεια δεν ολοκληρώνεται μόνο με το φτάσιμο στην κορυφή γιατί αυτή η κορυφή δεν είναι το τέρμα αλλά η αρχή μιας δύσκολης πορείας για την οποία χρειάζεται επαγρύπνηση, συνέπεια και νέες προσπάθειες.

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<sup>18</sup> Βλ. Κ. Π. Καβάφης, *Ποιήματα, Α' (1896-1918)*. Φιλολογική επιμέλεια Γ. Π. Σαββίδης, Ίκαρος, Αθήνα, 1969, «Ιθάκη», 23-24 και «Περιμένοντας τους βαρβάρους», 107-108.

Dorothea Tabakova (Sofia)

### **MEDEE D'EURIPIDE SUR LES SCENES BULGARES**

"Médée" d'Euripide, cette tragédie modèle qui pousse à l'extrême les passions humaines, a toujours représenté une grande tentation pour les metteurs en scène. La chance de dépasser la limite même du tragique serait attractive pour les meilleures actrices, comme le rôle de Hamlet l'est pour les acteurs. Pourtant, pour une période de presque 90 ans, le théâtre bulgare ne s'est adressé que trois fois à ce texte. Etant donné que cette tragédie entre dans le programme de l'enseignement de belles lettres de l'école secondaire bulgare à partir des années 10 jusqu'aux 40 du XXe siècle, elle a connu 9 traductions en langue bulgare, dont les éditions sont réparties entre 1912 et 1946, mais le théâtre semble rester de côté dans sa réception.

La première réalisation scénique bulgare en 1929 sur la scène du Théâtre Populaire a son préambule dans une tournée du théâtre russe MHAT en Bulgarie. Pour la première fois, la troupe de MHAT complète visite la Bulgarie en 1920; ensuite, une partie de cette troupe fait le choix d'une vie d'artistes émigrés – pour ne pas dire nomades; ce petit groupe, après un long séjour dans différents pays européens, surtout l'Allemagne, débarque en Bulgarie en 1924 avec sa "Médée". L'actrice qui joue le rôle de Médée, M. Guermanova, est en même temps metteur en scène. Selon la critique de certains périodiques culturels bulgares<sup>1</sup>, ce spectacle est fondé sur un pathos plutôt lyrique que tragique. Le coloris national russe – au niveau du geste, la récitation rythmique et chantante, la mimique et même l'habit rappelant celui d'une nonne – fait de Médée de Guermanova une héroïne russe.

Selon l'opinion du critique Yartsev, cette "Médée" est trop intime, frôlant le passage de la tragédie vers le drame, "pas assez crue pour la tragédie ancienne, loin des hauteurs du ciel au-delà des étoiles". Mais ce qui

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<sup>1</sup> Yartsev P., Médée, in: Zlatorog, 1925, 2, 153-154.

représente pour nous un intérêt particulier, c'est l'acteur qui joue le rôle d'Égée: un certain Nikolaï Massalitinov.

Au bout de quelques années, le Théâtre Populaire invite cette personne même pour la fonction de metteur en scène principal: depuis l'époque de sa naissance ce théâtre national a compté jusque là sur des directeurs étrangers de différents pays slaves. Or, d'abord refusant, mais ensuite acceptant le poste, après avoir créé une école théâtrale et mis en scène quelques pièces contemporaines, N. Massalitinov décide de faire sa propre "Médée". Étant donné qu'en ce moment le texte d'Euripide a été traduit en langue bulgare deux fois, l'une en passant par une langue intermédiaire, l'autre de l'original, mais en prose – une traduction volontairement littéraire réalisée par Alexandre Balabanov – le metteur en scène confie à ce dernier la tâche d'une version poétique et scénique.

A. Balabanov est un des fondateurs de la philologie classique en Bulgarie, helléniste de formation allemande, poète et traducteur, bohème, une personnalité connue et aimée parmi les intellectuels de l'époque. Il retravaille sa traduction prosaïque en vers, puisant, d'après ses propres mots, dans "le langage simple qui vient de la vie et non pas des livres, parfois même rude, comme l'exige cette pièce qui n'est nullement un drame de salon."<sup>2</sup> Son travail est interactif: il accepte de nombreuses suggestions de la part de N. Massalitinov, de l'actrice Teodorina Stoïcheva et du poète D. Pantelev. Le résultat est une version bulgare puissante, énergique, passionnée.

Pour placer cette première mise en scène de "Médée" dans le contexte culturel de la Bulgarie en 1929, il faut souligner que le choix d'une tragédie ancienne est avant tout un acte relevant le prestige du théâtre national, presque indépendamment des qualités du spectacle lui-même. Le département de philologie classique est inauguré il y a 8 ans seulement (un des fondateurs est ce même Balabanov); le désir de rattraper est énorme. L'idée de l'antiquité que se fait la génération de Balabanov est, dans un certain sens, anti-historique: d'un côté, le respect Winkelmanien pour les absolus éthiques et esthétiques de l'époque classique reste immuable, et de l'autre, la spécificité historique est réduite à un certain nombre de realia, alors que la pensée et les sentiments des anciens leurs semblent universels et accessibles.

Cela dit, nous ne sommes pas étonnés de lire dans les notes de Massalitinov que "le chœur dans "Médée" personifie l'âme sublime de la Grèce antique cultivée"<sup>3</sup>, ni d'apprendre qu'il attribue un comportement statique aux femmes corinthiennes qui représentent par les positions de leurs

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<sup>2</sup> Euripide, *Médée*, trad. A. Balabanov, Sofia, 1945 (2), préface d'A. Balabanov, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Massalitinov N., Euripide, *Médée*. In: Massalitinov N., Mémoires, articles, correspondance, Sofia 1987, 239.

corps des sculptures anciennes. Cette stature a été empruntée au spectacle russe où Massalitinov prenait part comme acteur, ainsi que la musique pour le spectacle.

La critique n'est pas unanime sur les qualités de cette "Médée". Même les plus favorables avouent que T. Stoycheva n'a pas assez de force et de personnalité pour le rôle de Médée;<sup>4</sup> les moins bienveillants déclarent à ce propos qu' "il n'y a pas de "Médée" sans Médée"<sup>5</sup> et que, par conséquent, le spectacle est un échec. Le désir de fidélité aux réalités est la motivation de la sévérité de certains d'entre eux; ils critiquent la cape rouge de Médée dont elle ne cesse de manipuler non pas par le mauvais goût de cette trouvaille, mais par le manque de fidélité historique aux vêtements de l'Antiquité.<sup>6</sup>

La deuxième réalisation scénique de "Médée" est une oeuvre du metteur en scène Lyuben Groys au théâtre dramatique de Plovdiv en 1978, c'est-à-dire presque un demi-siècle après la première. Elle est présentée aussi sur la scène du théâtre antique à Plovdiv, découvert pendant des fouilles archéologiques et ensuite reconstruit. Groys, qui en ce moment a une riche expérience avec plusieurs auteurs bulgares, mais aussi avec Shakespeare et Molière, fonde son spectacle sur une analyse psychologique originale. Pour lui, Médée n'est pas seulement une femme passionnée abandonnée par son mari; fuyant sa Colchide natale, elle a les ambitions de créer un nouveau type de rapports humains, un nouveau modèle de famille et d'amour; c'est la trahison vis-à-vis de ce modèle qu'elle n'arrive jamais à pardonner à Jason. Groys suppose aussi que, par sa médiocrité et par l'incapacité de rester au niveau de ses propres exploits, Jason est en train de corrompre Médée et finit par réussir – à sa propre perte. Le paradoxe: Jason, le civilisé, transforme Médée, la barbare, en criminelle.<sup>7</sup>

Comme son prédécesseur, il consacre beaucoup d'efforts au coloris ancien, mais, à la revanche, il ne le fait pas au premier degré. Pas de pseudo-colonnes, pas d'imitation des positions des sculptures anciennes: la scène est vide et sombre, l'avant-scène couverte de sable – peut-être le sable où un jour Jason ira dormir, anéanti, sous la proue d'Argo; les costumes sont tissés à la main, semblables plutôt à des panneaux décoratifs qu'aux chitons grecs, celui de la héroïne brun rougeâtre, celui de Jason avec des reflets dorés évoquant la toison d'or. Le texte qu'il utilise est toujours la version de Balabanov, mais il le retravaille pour en moderniser le langage. Pendant la période de travail sur

<sup>4</sup> Voir p. ex. Mitov D. B., *Médée*, In: *Literaturen glas*, 31, le 30 avril 1929; Stefanov G., *Médée* sur notre scène, In: *Bulgarska rech*, 1929, 4-5, 169-171, etc.

<sup>5</sup> Skitnik S., *Médée*, In: *Zlatorog*, 1929, 5, 263-265.

<sup>6</sup> Pushkaryova V., *Médée*, In: *Zarya*, 3, mai 1929, 118-119.

<sup>7</sup> Groys L., *Médée*, ou comment on crée un criminel. In: Groys L., *Le théâtre toujours en vie*, vol. I, Sofia 2002, 163-164.

la tragédie il étudie les textes de Platon et d'Aristote et la littérature secondaire disponible.

L'actrice qui joue le rôle principal, Tsvetana Maneva, talentueuse, imposante, est sans doute un excellent choix.

La réalisation la plus récente (2006) est celle de Diana Dobрева, actrice de talent et de tempérament fugueux, participant dans certains spectacles du Laboratoire théâtral Sfumato – un lieu devenu traditionnel pour des expériences d'avant-garde et de spectacles pour un public intellectuel plus qu'exigeant. Le spectacle porte un titre palindrome: "MEDEAEDEM", évoquant la "Medeamaterial" de Mueller. Possédant de par la nature l'extérieur et le tempérament convenable pour le rôle de Médée – silhouette majestueuse, cheveux noirs longs, un talent pour le théâtre extatique – elle fait sa propre mise en scène, avec la scénographie impressionnante de Marina Dodova. C'est une réalisation beaucoup plus du mythe secondaire littéraire que du texte d'Euripide. Plusieurs textes différents, celui de "Medeamaterial" de Mueller, des fragments de Borges, Ovide, Vasco Popa, ainsi que des paroles écrites par Dobрева elle-même s'entremêlent sur scène. Le noir et le blanc dominent la scène, le blanc de l'amour de Médée et le noir de son désespoir. Au final, c'est le gris qui triomphe: une pluie de cendres grises scintillantes tombant sur la tête et le corps de la nourrice, recouvrant les vies brisées de Jason et de Médée. L'espace est tordu comme sur un tableau d'Escher: on voit Médée disparaître dans le sol et aussitôt descendre du haut – la logique même du haut et du bas est annulée.

Un creux au centre de la scène se transforme tantôt en lit d'amour, tantôt en image du bateau Argo, pour finir comme tombeau. La toison d'or ressemble à un attribut de guerre, un heaume difforme et majestueux. Recouvrant sa tête de cet objet, Jason semble découvrir sa véritable nature.

Les paroles de passion, d'un érotisme raffiné, que Médée et son bien-aimé échangent, sont écrites par Dobрева elle-même. Ce dialogue est doublé par les caresses de leurs pieds nus qui évoquent les mâts et les voiles d'Argo. J'aimerais mentionner ici une belle trouvaille: des mots tendres que Médée prononce dans une langue incompréhensible sont en réalité des mots bulgares prononcés à l'envers, marquant à la fois les origines barbares de Médée et son désir de retour, de recul qui ne pourra jamais se réaliser. Une Médée au-delà du rationnel, secouant ses cheveux noirs dans son désespoir d'amante et de mère, tuant son enfant par un geste de tendresse infinie: c'est la Médée de Dobрева. Elle reçoit le prix théâtral bulgare le plus renommé, l'"Askeer", pour ce spectacle.

En conclusion, la première impression que, dans la réception bulgare, la fameuse tragédie d'Euripide a représenté un intérêt plutôt littéraire et scolaire est démentie par la qualité des spectacles réalisés et par leur reflet puissant

dans les textes de la critique théâtrale. La version poétique de Balabanov est préparée pour les besoins du théâtre, créant de cette manière un précédent d'interaction entre metteur en scène et traducteur de pièces de théâtre ancien en Bulgarie qui, depuis lors, sera la chance d'apparition de versions moins académiques mais plus convaincantes et de meilleure qualité poétique.

Les trois Médées bulgares tracent une périodisation de la réception du drame ancien au XXe siècle. Commenant par la recherche d'exactitude du coloris de l'Antiquité, compris au niveau de l'extérieur, elle passe par le stade où cette fidélité acquiert un aspect plus profond, la recherche d'une adéquation à la pensée philosophique et éthique de l'époque. Le stade final est le renoncement à l'idée même de lecture historique et le passage vers l'intertextualité et un théâtre où le geste et le mouvement l'emportent sur la parole.

Tamara Tcheishvili (Tbilisi)

### *MEDEA BY THEO VAN GOGH*

On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2004 being in Amsterdam, I witnessed the storm-wise shock the whole country was affected by, due to the murder of Theo van Gogh.

#### *The end of the happy chaos*

Theo van Gogh – a prominent Dutch journalist, writer, TV celebrity, film director was murdered by a Muslim extremist due to his negative stance on Islam, reflected with his usual cynicism in his documentary film *Submission*. The Dutch press wrote that the strangled throat of Theo van Gogh became the symbol of expression of free will, free speech and so called ‘The end of the happy chaos’. After the trauma caused by the death of the popular film director the traditionally tolerant and free nation limited entry of immigrants into the country.

#### *Wrongly understood idealism*

In the words of van Gogh, we are living in a nightmare, called the wrongly understood idealism, or ‘the happy chaos’.

The criticism of the film director – cynicism-tainted free speech toward the Dutch press, actors, film directors, writers and all the people who were part of the Dutch ‘establishment’ was reflected in the controversial articles, books and film of van Gogh. He was often involved in debates with various politicians. Due to his cynical style he was often seeking refuge on his website under the ironic nickname of *The Healthy Smoker*, with reference to his smoking habits as opposed to the ‘political incorrect’ attitude of the public towards the smoking.

Politicians were often the primary targets of his cynicism. After the political motivated murder of Pim Fortuyn (the unconventional politician the "divine bold man" as van Gogh commonly referred to, 2002), he filmed the

films 6<sup>th</sup> *May* and *Medea* (in 6 series, 300 minutes in total) where he continues his severe ideological crusade against the established political elite.

Avro Television, a Dutch media-project creates an initiative aimed at staging of the Greek tragedies. Remarkably, it is Theo van Gogh who initiates the first project by producing *Medea*. Theo van Gogh usually refused funding from the film industry preferring to fund his films by his own or friends' funds and with the help of his loyal sister (script director and composer) to produce controversial films without financial or ideological sponsor attached to them.

My interest towards Theo van Gogh's life and production increased when I learned about the existence of his *Medea*; it was of my particular interest to learn his reasons for choosing this very tragedy and whom he wanted to confront thereby; what did he want to say by filming this well-known tragedy.

#### *Theo van Gogh's Medea*

The Theodor Holman's script, created with co-authorship of van Gogh, is based on Euripides's *Medea* but deployed place on the contemporary Dutch political scenery.

It is difficult to discuss Euripides without considering the democratic, liberal and intellectual values of his times. By the same token, it is difficult to speak of Theo van Gogh's oeuvres without taking into consideration the democratic politics, 'political correctness' and 'political idealism' of his times, that this self-made film director often confronted (Theo van Gogh was even joking often ironically that if he inherited his predecessor's – a famous painter's heritage (that his family gifted to the Dutch state) he would willingly invest it in the ideological battle that takes place in his movies.) For the film director, this modern form of dramaturgy was a powerful medium to confront the society immersed in 'political correctness' and 'wrongly understood idealism'.

It is by staging Euripides's *Medea*, by describing psychologically tense relations of Medea and Jason that he tries to depict the real state of 'idyllic politics in an idyllic country' with his typical cynicism: politicians with their intrigues, dirty games and interests, and ever-prominent mass-media, to which van Gogh assigns a task of a sort of 'choir'.

It is remarkable how skilful the script writers are in expressing the context of Euripides's work, key elements, characters, psychological sphere and at the same time adjusting this all to the modern reality: depicting contemporary politicians and normal citizens, making them real, convincing, tragic and ironic, applying van Gogh's irony and cynicism.

*Medea* – the name of the film – and two main characters: Jason and Medea, are the only two names taken from the antique work. Aietes's,



Medea's father's prototype is represented as Mr. Moyra, i.e. Mr. Destiny, because in the modern Dutch political reality the politician who often utters the words like 'people', 'for the people', 'in coram publico' etc. are doomed for failure, falling prey to the political intrigues. Van Gogh sympathizes to Moyra, the 'escape goat' as we see him in the film, by naming him (albeit once) by the first name – Theo. Similarly, the film director applies the tool often used in dramaturgy – characterizing each of the characters accompanied by the dramatic-lyrical music, semantics, and the symbolism of color of clothes they are wearing.

At the funeral of mother Moyra, the daughter of the Prime Minister (Moyra) meets a man that intrigues her: Jason is a young, attractive, ambitious real estate tycoon. Also, we learn that Mr. Moyra has a problem of political nature. Medea reveals that he is a suspect in a corruption scandal. Jason offers Medea a helping hand but Jason's shaken image, connections with the real estate mobs could potentially create more problems for Moyra. Medea and Jason, nevertheless, become allies.

The film develops further around Jason's character: the film director shows Jason's path of becoming a modern Dutch politician.

Jason is a character without any family ties – even on his credit card both first and last names are written as 'Jason'. Despite his financial affluence he has even higher ambitions – to enter politics. The scandal around Moyra is an ideal opportunity for Jason to enter the political arena. Mr. Moyra is his political idol. Medea's mother is an aspirator to enter the politics and Medea Moyra the desired mother of his future children. The family harmony that Jason lacked and sees at the Moyra's, become fatal for him.

The family complex inspires Jason's monologues that we witness in the beginning of each of the series; when preparing for the election speeches; reference to his non-existing ideal family and children; Jason is obsessed by the thought of running the country as a family! At a certain point we see, symbolically, that four months are left before him becoming the Prime Minister and the birth of his children. Four months before he can run the country as family and create the reality where he wants his children to grow up. For Jason there is no boundary dividing the family and the politics; For him it is important to have family to run the country and run the country for his children to live in the ideal reality. This is the key political alibi that is meant to justify his later betrayal of Medea and more importantly betrayal of his political principles.

Owing to Medea, who takes charge of the political campaign, Jason becomes more and more popular day by day. The TV talk shows are the medium for Jason to convince the people that he will stand for their interest. People, according to his words, applaud him in the streets of the Hague and

the mass-media names him ‘the people’s choice’ or ‘the king of the people’. As in Euripides’s *Medea*, in van Gogh’s work we do not see any genuine interest on Jason’s behalf toward the people. The virtual people whom we never see in the film are one more cynical reminder of the film director of idleness of the people and obsolescence of the ‘people’s choice’ ‘plastic politician’.

Creon and Creusa – Minister Medelinck and his daughter Anna – friends of the Moyra family that actually caused the death of Moyra are themselves active participants in the corruption case. Betrayal of Medea and Jason, and political intrigues are the chosen tactics of the two for reaching out to the Prime Minister seat. Unfortunately, from Medea Moyra they get hold of the corruption-related materials and if revealed Jason is doomed for politically death. The People’s ‘King’ or ‘Slave’ – the question that Jason asks himself when he has to ask her rival to marry his daughter in order to achieve the dream.

Jason cancel his political marriage but still witnesses the death of Medea and his children. Like the tragic ending of the Euripides’s tragedy, the future of characters and that of the country left without a Prime Minister remains equally unclear in Theo van Gogh’s *Medea*. Each of the characters goes through the painful road with the tragic ending because, in Theo van Gogh’s words the pain incurred upon to a human (in a ruthless-cynical way) is the only way to wake him up to ‘the pseudo idealism’ and ‘the wrongly understood idealism.’

Euripides’s work *Medea* is often perceived as the criticism of his contemporary lifestyle and culture. Likewise, Theo van Gogh wrapped the modern political reality into the Euripide’s tragic story and presented to the public as the soap film series. This is perhaps the easiest way to convey the message to the modern society and to show the reality that the modern film director made tragic and cynical at the same time: ‘the nightmare named the wrongly understood idealism.’

Ketevan Tsintsadze (Tbilisi)

### MEDEA IN MODERN GREEK DRAMATURGY

In the 1990s, after a long period of silence, Modern Greek playwrights started to take vigorous interest in the themes about Medea. The following plays featuring Medea were composed in the mentioned period: Bost's *Medea* (1993), a comedy, however unexpected this may sound, Kharis Lambidis' *Who Killed Medea's Children* (1981), Vasilis Boundouris' *Another Medea* (1990), Maria Kekou's *Medea, The Snake-Handed Fury of Passions* composed in the same year, Vasilis Zioghas' *Medea* (1995) and two short plays by Konstantinos Bouras *Medea in Athens* and *Medea's Death* (1997). The present paper will focus on the plays by Kharis Lambidis, Vasilis Boundouris, Maria Kekou and Vasilis Zioghas, as they are closer to each other in terms of their genre affiliation.

Greek authors attempt to present the well-known myth through their own interpretation, although they fall short of being original. While modern world features Medea in a bold modernist light and often even sounds most unexpected and scandalous with regard to Medea, Greek playwrights go on paving their way through the labyrinths of numerous mythological versions, confining themselves to philological researches accomplished in belles-lettres style.

The plays of my immediate interest are not based only on the Euripidean tradition. The authors make synthesis of various sources and present the conclusion which they find acceptable. For the first time following so many centuries, Kharis Lambidis and Vasilis Boundouris relieve Medea of the shameful libel of her own children's murderer in an attempt to restore historical justice. Thus they rehabilitate Medea, one of the last representatives of the matriarchal world, who patriarchy has kept throughout centuries entangled in the maze of slander in pursuit of hiding away its own shabbiness. As concerns Maria Kekou's and Vasilis Zioghas' Medeas, they take after the Euripidean heroine and deprive their children of life by themselves; however, the

fact of child-slaughter is veiled in metaphysical obscurity and is presented as a symbolic killing to be treated in philosophical terms, rather than as the vengeance by a coldhearted murderer.

Modern Greek playwrights take particular interest in Eumelos' tradition (later replicated by Pausanias), which presents Medea as the rightful heir to the Corinthian throne, and although sources say nothing about Medea's Corinthian origin, Greek dramatists make use of this very aspect, enriching the centuries-hardened symbolic image with new traits. Namely, they regard Medea's arrival in Corinth not as something accidental, but as a thoroughly premeditated step and offer the portrait of a politically active woman, acceptable for the feminism-ridden 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this regard, Vasilis Boundouris' drama *Another Medea* is especially significant. In the preface to the play, Vasilis Boundouris admits to being a secret supporter of matriarchate, and states that his play is aimed not only at destroying the murderous image of Medea created by Euripides the Woman-Hater, but also at rendering the proud feelings of the women who protested against injustice and criminal nature of patriarchal society.<sup>1</sup>

The author achieves his goal presenting Medea as a genuinely feminist woman, whose soul is not burdened with appalling crimes. However, the play leaves an impression that despite the bold statements, the author nevertheless supports the stand of the masculine half of the world, and attempts to convey the following message: A woman who is desperate for freedom and power loses the image of a desired woman, which results in her female tragedy; besides, Boundouris' Medea is not completely discharged from the responsibility of killing her children. Apart from blaming Medea in her own ill fate, Boundouris ascribes the child-slaughter to her excessively ambitious nature, thus leaving her the murderer of her own children in an indirect way.

Kharis Lambidis' *Who Killed Medea's Children* is also written after Eumelos' tradition. The Drama is altogether realistic in terms of its plot; the author generalizes Medea's story and touches the problems that could freely come up in any society of any period. Similarly to Boundouris' play, Lambidis' Medea also claims her rights to the Corinthian throne. However, this is no more a mere struggle for power on the part of an ambitious woman; this is the protest of an idealist woman against injustice, the protest of a woman who despite her personal adversity, retains good reason and succeeds in uniting society against tyranny. In my opinion, Lambidis attempted to use Medea's image to show how one may become a victim of one's own ideals. Medea's initial mistake was her taking Jason, a stranger from a remote land, who at first sight seemed to be seeking adventures, for Mr. Right (or rather Mr.

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<sup>1</sup> Β. Μπουντούρης, *Η Άλλη Μήδεια*, εκδόσεις Γκοβόστη, 1990, 8.

Knight) and her falling in love with him. However, the reality proved absolutely different as soon as she left Colchis. After Jason failed to justify Medea's expectations, she started to mould a hero of him by herself. The task proved rather tiresome for both, which drove their relations to a deadlock.

Lambidis' Medea is a feminist, like Boundouris' character. However, unlike her counterpart, she feels that she loses interest in life and struggle without Jason and asks him to come back. Lambidis' Medea does everything for the sake of love and tries to restore justice for the sake of her husband's and children's future. Her tragedy lies in her excessive wishes, which collide with the interests of more powerful individuals, and as a result, she loses her future together with her love.

Maria Kekou's *Medea, The Snake-Handed Fury of Passions* was composed after Euripides' play. However, in the introductory note to one of its editions, the author writes: 'In this particular play, Medea and Jason are a very modern couple from the neighboring apartment, whose family conflict reveals the everlasting clash between sexes and is lost in the depths of the pre-historic period.'<sup>2</sup>

Maria Kekou's play does not aim to comment on Medea's behavior or add new traits to her image; it simply once again reminds us that archetypes are everlasting and can be found at any time and in any place. The difference lies only in details, which are trifle and unable to change the essence of the story. The author states: 'Medea's myth can fit any period, as it points to and warns against the danger of extreme liberty of woman as a negative archetype.'<sup>3</sup>

Vasilis Zioghas' Medea is quite a complex play. Apart from being a playwright, its author takes a vigorous interest in ancient philosophy and various religions, which had great impact on his works and even puzzles the reader. *Medea* abounds of quite unexpected symbols. For example, the chorus is replaced here by no less than The Trinity, which, however, is the unity of pagan goddesses. Medea is the daughter of God the Creator, borne to him by a mortal woman as a human to live an earthly life. Medea takes both of her children back to her womb and, exhausted with awful pains, commits suicide; then she transforms into a single unity and sets off towards the eternity. Medea's last words imply an interesting allusion to the New Testament: 'Why hast thou forsaken me, Father?'

Since such fragments may take us far away and considering the time-limit, I will fail anyway to give appropriate answers to all relevant questions, I will only attempt to comment on how Zioghas understands Medea.

<sup>2</sup> M. Κέκκου, *Μήδεια, η οφιοπλόκαμη ερινύα των πόθων*, εκδόσεις Υπατία, 1990, 15.

<sup>3</sup> M. Κέκκου, *Μήδεια, η οφιοπλόκαμη ερινύα των πόθων*, εκδόσεις Υπατία, 1990, 14.

Although the plot is well-known at first sight, Zioghas succeeds in presenting everything from a different angle. He regards the hacking up of Absyrtus as a divine game, symbolically conveying the idea of Medea's giving up her own past. According to her own words, Medea did evil only to herself, while the human eye perceived the fact as an appalling murder. Medea is a goddess, and unlike her above-described counterparts, gives up not only the royal but also the divine throne for Jason's sake, starts to live an average mortal's life and is satisfied with the least. Medea is full of love; she loves people although they are afraid of her. Medea loves Jason despite his unfaithfulness, and is unable to do him any harm; moreover, the goddess is ready to give up her immortality provided Jason is with her. But the divine patience also has limits; on the verge of her endurance and enraged with the misery of mortals, she abandons the earthly life and takes her children away with her to keep them away from injustice. Zioghas offers an interesting interpretation of Medea's image. Unlike other dramas, the central character of Zioghas' play is omnipotent and capable of attaining her aim by a mere thought. However, she is most helpless and most feminine, and at the same time as she is ready for love with all her being. She is the symbol of a woman-wife who does her best not to wound her husband's pride by exposing her powers; she even forgets about her faculties and cries as an average woman when she is in trouble. Medea is the symbol of a woman-mother, who is affectionate and caring with her little children, her decisions are not selfish – she does not go wherever she wishes, but after a long meditation and conflict with her own self, she decides to take them away from the infinite evil of the humankind. In my mind, Vasilis Zioghas, who keeps closest to the Euripidean tradition, is anyway Medea's most vigorous advocate, perceiving her primarily as a tender woman.

The overview of the four dramas enabled me to make some conclusions: For some unknown reasons, the highlighting of Medea's theme in Modern Greek dramaturgy coincides with the growth of the Georgian Diaspora in Greece, and again for certain reasons, some Greek playwrights accentuate Medea's Greek origin. Besides, although some of the authors try to liberate her from the shameful label of murderous mother, they unintentionally remain the followers of the existing tradition, and their efforts are limited to loud and bold words. For example, Vasilis Boundouris writes in the preface to his play that after Euripides wrote *Medea*, no one on the earth has ever given this name to their child; such a statement sounds queer if we consider that out of the six members of the Chair of Modern Greek Studies of our Institute, two are called Medea.

Greek playwrights widely use the Medea theme to promote feminist ideas. However, Greek authors' fondness for feminism is a bit strange if we bear in mind that since the 1990s and on, women have been most active in every field

of Greek social and political life, and what is more, the very theme of feminism has already proved outdated in the rest of the world.

Anyway, the above-mentioned plays are certainly valuable as first of all, they remind us of the perpetual nature of archetype and second, irrespective of whether Medea kills her children or not, her tragedy is the discrepancy between her opportunities and desires.