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**THE UNFORGETTABLE FIRE: MEDEA'S DREAMS IN POXY 4712**

*"Tu che guardi verso di me / hai visto i tori nel  
sonno / ed hai lasciato Madrid.*

*Stai nei miei occhi e racconti / le Sirene e gli  
inganni / del tuo sogno che va"*

(G. Nannini)

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

fr. 1.5-16

Κ]ολχίδης ἀρήσονται ὄμω[  
ὡ]ς φαμένη λέκτρ]οιο καταμ[  
κ]άππεσε· κекκλι]μέ]λη] δετο[  
ἡ]ρέμα δὲ βλεφ[ά]ροι ] καταπτ[

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

<sup>2</sup> On this dream, one of the most debated passages in the entire Apollonius (and a well-known subject in antiquity, judging from the title of the Thessalian pantomime Μηδείας ὄνειρος: see Luc. *salt.* 53), see Fränkel 1957, 16-17. Hunter 1989, 163-167. Sansone 2000, 159-162. Walde 2001, 175-184 (with earlier bibliography).

<p> λ[. ]ν ὑπο[. . . .]οισιν ἀν[  οἶα καθυπνώουσα· διὰ κραδίη[  μειθῆραι σοβέεσικρον· ἀποπρ[  Αἰσιονίδην ὀρά[ασθ]αι· ἀεὶ δ'ἔνικ[  ὁ ξένος ἢ ταύροισ[ι] πεπαρμένοις  ἀνδ[ρο]φόνους γενετῆρος· ὑπ[. ]  ]ν καὶ πού τι κεκ[. ]  ]ρυσε[. ] κυκωφίμεν </p>	<p>10</p> <p>15</p>
fr. 2	
<p> δι[  ειθ[  ταυρ[  ημί  ἀρπ[  ὑπν[. ]  πλήσειε[  φεὔγελεη[  ἔννεπ[.  πῦρ ἄφατ[  καίπ[. ]], ε[  ὑπνος οἶ  μερμηρα[.  δεῖμα καὶ ἐκ κίε]φά]λῆς  τ]αύρων γάρ σ]τ]ομ]ατ  έ]κ]χυμένην [.]ο[.  εἰ]λυφῶων ἄτε κυμ[  . ]], ἦν δὲ κρωσσοῖο κί  . ]]προχέειν· τόσον [.  έ]κ] λεχέων ἀνέπαλτ[ο] </p>	<p>5</p> <p>10</p> <p>15</p> <p>20</p>

## 1.

Ll. 6-10 of fr. 1 have one and the same subject, namely Medea. The sense we gather from the remains is the following: "Having uttered these words, she fell back on the bed<sup>3</sup>; once she lay down... [something]<sup>4</sup>... Then slowly on her eyelid(s)...[here we have the blank of l. 9] as if asleep."

<sup>3</sup> I have not found any convincing solution for the second hemistich of l. 6, though I would incline to restore there an accusative depending on κατά, e. g. εἰνήν in the last foot, preceded by an adjective. Syntactically, this would match structures like e. g. Ap. Rhod. 3.927 πεδίοιο κατὰ στίβον; semantically, this would create with λέκτροιο a hendiadys otherwise attested in tragedy, as Aesch. *Pers.* 543 λέκτρων εἰνάς ἀβροχίτωνας or Eur. *Alc.* 925 λέκτρων κοίτας ἔς ἐρήμας and Eur. *Iph. Taur.* 859 ἔς κλισίαν λέκτρων δόλιον; the difference between λέχος / λέκτρον (the underlying bed) and εἰνή (the sheets / blankets) is clear from many passages of Greek literature (e. g. the last couplet of Nonn. *Dion.* 25. 572-3 λαοὶ δ'ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα χαμιστρώτων ἐπὶ λέκτρων / ἔσπερίη μετὰ δόρπον ὀρειάδι κάππεσον εἰνή). Should we take λέκτροιο with either κατὰ or κάππεσον, I believe this would imply the

Let us take a look at line 9. I believe the first word, which d'Alessio did not identify, should be read as  $\mu\upsilon\epsilon\nu$ , imperfect from the verb  $\mu\acute{\upsilon}\omega$ , "to close, esp. to close one's eyes (or mouth, or ears)", with an object as in *Il.* 24.637 οὐ γάρ πω μύσαν ὄσσε ὑπὸ βλεφάροισιν ἐμοῖσιν (of Priam's sleeplessness since the day of Hector's slaughter), or absolute<sup>5</sup>. What the first editor took as traces of a *lambda* preceded by a lost letter belong in fact to the second half of a *my*, in the very peculiar shape this letter has e. g. in *l.* 13, where d'Alessio himself remarked: "μ is traced in an anomalous way that could suggest λλ, but no doubt μ was meant." The *hypsilon* under the very evident circumflex accent had already been suggested by the first editor.

At the end of the line, the dot of ink after *ny* must belong, for metrical reasons, to a vowel: its high position rules out any other possibility except *hypsilon*. With *ανυ*, the most attractive integration is the rare adjective ἀνύστακτος, "sleepless", an adjective not attested before Gregory of Nyssa, and always connected with a word meaning "eye"<sup>6</sup>. Here, ἀνύστακτος might be connected to the lost dative in the first half of the line, and it might describe the state of Medea's eyes prior to this moment, in a sort of oxymoron heightening the salvific value of her present sleep. I have two suggestions for the lost dative: given that ὀφθαλμοῖσιν is ruled out on palaeographical grounds (no trace of the high vertical of the φ can be detected on the

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(implausible) image of Medea falling down from the bed (as e. g. in *Od.* 10. 559 ἀλλὰ καταπικρὸν τέγεος πέσειν): καταπίπτω is construed with several prepositions (περί + dat., ἐν + dat., ἐπί + dat. or acc., ἐς + acc., ἀμφί + acc.) or with the simple dative (see esp. Nonn. *Dion.* 24. 331 ἐρημάδι κάππεσον εὐνή; 34. 86 ἀσχαλῶν ὑπ' ἔρωτι κατηφέι κάππεσον εὐνή), never with κατά + gen. For the latter construction I can find no parallel outside of Ps.-Luc. *Ocyrus* 73 κείται κατ' εὐνῆς ὑπτιος βεβλημένος (with a different verb, however). It is easy to imagine that a pregnant adjective should have qualified Medea's bed, the bed she kisses before leaving Colchis for good in *Ap. Rhod.* 4. 26, "the place of her virginity" (Beye 1982, 136), and one of the remote protagonists of Euripides' tragedy (cp. Boedeker 1997, 141).

<sup>4</sup> The easiest solution for the sequence δετο is δὲ το, whereby the most likely solution is a form of the adj. τόσος, probably referring to Medea's sorrow. de Stefani's conjecture τόσην κούφιζε μέριμναν implies a form of relief occurring upon her lying down in bed, as in *Hom. Od.* 18. 188-89 (but things look differently e. g. in *Od.* 19. 524-29; see also by contrast *Ap. Rhod.* 3. 671-672 ἐκ θαλάμου θαλαμόνδε διαμπερές, ᾧ ἔτι κούρη / κέκλιτ' ἀκηχημένη, δρύϊεν δ' ἑκάτερθε παρειάς; *Theocr.* 2. 86-7).

<sup>5</sup> For a very interesting use of the verb  $\mu\acute{\upsilon}\omega$  (not unknown to Hellenistic and later poetry: *Nic. fr.* 74. 56; *Tryphiod.* 15; *Nonn. Dion.* 26. 132) in the sense of "to close slowly one's eyes, as if in sleep" cp. e. g. *Gal. in Hipp. epid.* 3.17a.554, 3-5 K.: οὐ γὰρ ὡς οἱ κατὰ φύσιν ἔχοντες ἔκοιμάτο, ἀλλὰ δι' ἄρρωστίαν τῆς δυνάμεως ἄκων ἔμμεν, ὡς μὴ δυνάμενος τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἀνεωγότας ἔχειν, ἔκλειε τε αὐτοὺς καὶ σμικρὰ κατεκοιμάτο.

<sup>6</sup> Either ὀφθαλμός or ὄμμα: I refer to *Greg. Nyss. in s. Ephr., PG* 46.829.51; *Theod. Stud. epist.* 11. 47; *Mich. Psell. theol.* 101.74; *enc. in matrem* 518 Crisc.; *Mich. Attal. hist.* 196. 12. The only other possibility for our line would be a form of the verb ἀνυγραίνω, in a context similar to *Ps. Luc. Amor.* 3. 20 τῶν ὀμμάτων αἱ βοαὶ τακερῶς ἀνυγραίνοντο; 14. 22 τακερόν τι καὶ βέον ἐν τοῖς ὄμμασι πάθος ἀνυγραίνων.

papyrus), one possibility is the diminutive δ[ι]ματ[ι]οισιν, not unknown to Hellenistic poetry (see Call., *SH* 305.1), but a more intriguing one, powerfully backed by the aforementioned Homeric line (*Il.* 24. 637) is [βλεφά]ροισιν, which also has interesting matches in Hellenistic and later poetry, particularly together with the noun ὀπωπαί, "eyeballs" or "pupils"<sup>7</sup>.

My tentative reading for *Il.* 9-10 thus runs:

μῦ[ε]ν ὑπὸ [βλεφά]ροισιν ἀν[ι]στάκτοισιν ὀπωπᾶς  
οἶα καθυπνώουσα.

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

If this is accepted, we find ourselves confronted with l. 8, whose subject must be Medea<sup>8</sup>: it is very unlikely that the same word βλέφαρον could be repeated in two subsequent lines; we might thus look for a different integration for the lacuna after ἡρέμα δέ<sup>9</sup>. While I have no really convincing suggestion for the second hemistich<sup>10</sup>, I observe that d'Alessio's φ is *littera incerta*, only the top and the bottom of a long vertical being actually extant (these traces suit both φ and ψ). Therefore, I put forward very cautiously the hypothesis that here we might read

ἡρέμα δὲ βλεψ[ι]ασα καταπτ[ι]

The *iunctura* ἡρέμα βλέπειν, in the sense of "to see faintly", "to look with faint eye", is indeed very rare, but it occurs in three significant passages by Aristotle, all variously dealing with visions or dreams<sup>11</sup>. It designates a

<sup>7</sup> See Opp. *cyn.* 3. 348-349 τοίην μὲν πυρβέσσαν ὑπὸ βλεφάροισιν ὀπωπαί / μαρμαρυγὴν στράπτουσιν. Naumach. 67 Heitsch μηδὲ μέλαινε τεοῖσιν ὑπὸ βλεφάροισιν ὀπωπᾶς. Q. Smyrn. 12. 414 λευκαὶ δ' ἄρ' ὑπὸ βλέφαρ' ἔσταν ὀπωπαί. See also Ap. Rhod. 2. 109 δρύψε δέ οἱ βλέφαρον, γυμνὴ δ' ὑπελείπετ' ὀπωπή. For ὀφθαλμός see Opp. *cyn.* 1. 421 ὀφθαλμοὶ χαροποῖσιν ὑποστίβοντες ὀπωπαῖς.

<sup>8</sup> Mūen in l. 9 syntactically rules out solution as βλεφάροισι καταπτερος ἀμφεχύθη νύξ (for which see e. g. Q. Smyrn. 8. 313) or the like with ὕπνος as subject (on the model of e. g. Od. 23. 309 or Hes. fr. 294. 4 M.-W.: see Mosch. *Eur.* 3 and Bühler 1960, 50-51).

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted in passing that the adv. ἡρέμα is far from common in hexametric poetry (which is why its meaning in the present context has been debated, either "a little" or "slowly", see de Stefani 2006). The only comparable instance I could find is Opp. *cyn.* 4. 343-4, where the leopards προσώπατα δ' ἔς χθόνα διαν / ἡρέμα νευστάζουσι κάτω, and then fall asleep.

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

<sup>11</sup> Arist. *meteor.* 3.4.373b ἡρέμα καὶ οὐκ ὀξὺ βλέποντι (see also 1.6.343b παραβλέπουσι δ' ἡρέμα τὴν οὐρανόν); and particularly Arist. *insomn.* 3.462a19-24 πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ἐνίοις συμβαίνει καὶ αἰσθάνεσθαί τῃ καὶ ψόφῳ καὶ φωτὸς καὶ χυμοῦ καὶ ἀφῆς, ἀσθενικῶς μέντοι καὶ οἷον πόρρωθεν ἤδη γὰρ ἐν τῷ καθεύδειν ὑποβλέποντες, ὅ

sort of weak visual perception, occurring either before a vision, or inside a dream as a remnant of the external world: it occurs in Aristotle when the philosopher is describing the first steps of the psychic processes leading to dreams, those still half-way between awakesness and sleep<sup>12</sup>.

Whatever we make of l. 8, we must remark that in his work *De insomniis*, probably the most important Greek treatise on the physiology of dreams (little is known of Theophrastus' and Demetrius of Phalerum's works on the subject), Aristotle believed that dreams were originated by the movement of perceptions (κίνησις τῶν αἰσθημάτων) from the sense organs through the blood back to the "principle of perception" (ἀρχὴ τῆς αἰσθήσεως), namely the heart, which a tradition starting with the tragedians had consecrated as the true *sedes* of dreams<sup>13</sup>. It is thus no surprise that in l. 10 we find καρδίη: the μινθηραὶ (a very rare word for φρουτίδες, *curae*, "sorrows", see d'Alessio *ad loc.*) stand here for the "imaginative movements" (or κινήσεις φανταστικά) that run through (διὰ καρδίης) or shake the heart (διὰ καρδίην)... σοβέεσκον<sup>14</sup> and mouth in the δόξα (an aorist form of the verb δοκέω most probably stood at the end of l. 11) of what we perceive as dreams<sup>15</sup>. According to Plato's *Timaeus*, it is precisely by closing our eyelids that we are able to dream<sup>16</sup>, which might also explain our author's detailed description in ll. 7-9.

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ἡρέμα ἐώρων φῶς τοῦ λύχνου καθεύδοντες, ὡς ῥοῖτο, ἐπεγερθέντες εὐθὺς ἐγνώρισαν τὸ τοῦ λύχνου ὄν.

<sup>12</sup> For a detailed and extremely accurate discussion of Aristotle's often complicated and contradictory statements see van der Eijk 1994, 36-52. The vision described in *de insomn.* 3.462a19-24 is not listed by Aristotle among proper dreams, yet its mechanism is presented as entirely identical with that of dreams: see van der Eijk 1994, 44-45 and 244-246.

<sup>13</sup> See van der Eijk 1994, 46; van Lieshout 1980, 39-40.

<sup>14</sup> The verb σοβέω – totally unknown to poetical language – should perhaps be regarded as more or less equivalent to other verbs of shaking or violent motion: see e. g. Ap. Rhod. 3. 1104 (quoted foll. note); 4. 351 δὴ ῥά μιν ὀξεῖαι καρδίην ἐλέλιξαν ἀνῆαι; Maiist. 42-44 κακῶ θ' ὑπὸ δείματι πᾶσαν / ἦῶ τε νύκτας τε περὶ καρδίην ἐλέλιζεν / τάρβος θειοπόλοιο.

<sup>15</sup> Designating the dreamer's first "impression" about the vision that appears to him, δόξα is a *terminus technicus* in Aristotle's *de insomniis*: see van der Eijk 1994, 42-45. As for δοκέω + inf. see Ap. Rhod. 3. 619, 4. 666 and especially Ap. Rhod. 4. 1480, with the structure δοκεῖν ἰδέσθαι, very similar to ours (see also McLennan 1973, 64). A possible solution for the end of l. 10 is διὰ καρδίης δ' ἀλεγεινῆαι (see e. g. Ap. Rhod. 3.1103 τῆς δ' ἀλεγεινότηται καρδίην ἐρέθεσκον ἀνῆαι; also 3. 764 ἀλεγεινότητον ἄχος). I am not sure I understand the syntax behind de Stefani's infinitive ἐποροῦσαι. Magnelli 2006, 11, suggests δέ οἱ αἰεὶ (perhaps less likely in view of the other αἰεὶ in l. 12).

<sup>16</sup> Plat. *Tim.* 45e-46a (see van Lieshout 1980, 120-121; in *Tim.* 45e the verb συμμύω is used of the eyelids). Lulofs 1947, xxix believed in Plato's influence on Aristotle, whereas van der Eijk 1994, 48 note 20 is much more skeptical: on the issue see also Preus 1968. My impression is that the principles of perception theory in the two philosophers are of course very different, yet in some single images they might actually concur.

But what does Medea actually dream? Ll. 11-14 guarantee that she dreams of Jason, and particularly of his slaughter either by the bulls' horns or by Aetes' murderous swords. I shall simply append here some tentative reconstructions of these lines:

οἶα καθυπνώουσα· διὰ κραδίη[ς δ' ἄλεγυιναι  
 μινθῆραι σοβέεσ[κ]ον· ἀπόπροθεν αὐτὸν ἔδοξεν  
 Αἰσινίδην ὀρ[ά]σθ[αι]· ἀεὶ δ' ἐνὶ κείτο πυρῆσιν  
 ὁ ξένος ἢ ταύροις[ι] πεπαρμένοις ἢε μαχαίραις  
 ἀνδροφόνοις γενετῆρος· ὑπ. .[

If in l. 11 ἀπόπροθεν is right, then Medea perceives in the distance a vague resemblance of Jason: this fits in well with the dynamic of her dream, and particularly with the remarkable πόρρωθεν in Aristotle's passage quoted above note 11<sup>17</sup>. Another possibility might be ἀποπροθορόντα δ' ἔδοξεν (or -όντ' ἐδόκησεν) / Αἰσινίδην ὀράσθαι, recalling Ap. Rhod. 3. 1280 νηὸς ἀποπροθορών, where the very Apollonian verb ἀποπροθρώσκω<sup>18</sup> is used precisely of Jason leaping off the ship in order to fight against Aetes' bulls; but in our papyrus of course there is no room for νηὸς or the like. Again in l. 12, ἐνικ- cannot correspond to ἐνικάππεσε (another Apollonian verb)<sup>19</sup>, for the good reason that ἀεὶ needs an imperfect. We thus have to separate ἐνὶ from κ-: one possibility (albeit little in keeping with our context) is to read something like ἐνὶ κύμασι (or καύμασι) πῖπτεν / πίπτων<sup>20</sup>, the other is to postulate that Medea sees Jason already dead, ἀεὶ δ' ἐνὶ κείτο πυρῆσιν: the verb κείμαι is never composed with the preposition ἐνὶ, but this preposition is very common in new compound verbs created by Hellenistic poets<sup>21</sup>, and is often used in similar syntactical *Wendungen* (e. g. Ap. Rhod. 3. 63 ἐνὶ σθένος ἔπλετο γυίοις; Mosch. *Eur.* 6 ἐνὶ κνώσσουσα δόμοισιν). In ll. 13-4, despite the ἀνδροφόνου ταῦροι of Nonn. *Dion.* 11. 190 and 294, and despite Nonn. *Dion.* 36. 455 ταυρέοις κεράεσσι πεπαρμένον ἄνδρα

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

<sup>18</sup> Later conspicuously used by *Arg. Orph.* 545 νηὸς ἀπο προθορόντας, ὅθι ξένος ἐν ψαμάθοισι / κείται ἀποφθίμενος. On Apollonius' fondness for this kind of compound verbs (e. g. 3. 267 ἀποπρολιπόντες; 3. 1311 ἀποπροβαλῶν etc.) see Redondo 2000, 137.

<sup>19</sup> See Ap. Rhod. 3. 655 λέκτροισι πρηγῆς ἐνικάππεσεν εἰλιχθείσα. Also Dionys. fr. 18r.7 Heitsch ἐνικάππεσε πόνι[τ]ω]. Magnelli 2006, 11 supports ἐνικάππεσε.

<sup>20</sup> The verb πίπτω is very often construed with ἐνὶ, see e. g. Ap. Rhod. 1. 506 ἔπεσον δ' ἐνὶ κύμασιν Ὀκεανοῖο, but also Ap. Rhod. 1. 1027; 2, 1012; 4, 1292. De Stefani 2006 suggests ἐνὶ καύμασι φλεχθείς.

<sup>21</sup> See e. g., only in Apollonius' third book, 3. 413 ἐνιβάλλομαι; 528 ἐνιτρέφομαι; 655 ἐνικάππεσεν; 973 ἐνιπεπτημίαν; 1185 ἐνισπείρας.

δαμάζει (certainly reminiscent of this passage), it is safer to take *ἀνδροφόνους* with a different noun than *ταύρους*: good guesses might be e. g. Magnelli's *ἡὲ μαχαίραις* or my *ἡ βελέεσσιν*<sup>22</sup>. The following lines are too difficult to restore, but in l. 15 *κεκ . .* might in fact hide *κεκομ[μέν]* (limbs cut off from Jason's body?)<sup>23</sup>, and on l. 22 there is again a mention of fire.

No speculation is possible on the dream's development, nor on its relationship with Medea's dream in Apollonius Rhodius 3. 616-636, where Medea intervenes to help Jason out of his toil. Indeed, comparisons can be established with other Apollonian passages: the alternative prospected in ll. 13-14, as noted by Magnelli, recalls Ap. Rhod. *Arg.* 3. 459-460 *τάρβει δ'ἀμφ'αὐτῷ, μὴ μιν βδες ἡὲ καὶ αὐτός / Αἰήτης φθείσειεν*. A verbal echo links ll. 11-12 of our papyrus with the introduction to the first secret meeting between Jason and Medea, namely Ap. Rhod. 3. 960-961 *ὡς ἄρα τῇ καλὸς μὲν ἐπήλυθεν εἰσοράσθαι / Αἰσονίδης, κάματος δὲ δυσίμερον ὤρσε φααιθεῖς*; this passage is also interesting because it is followed (ll. 962-65) by a sort of medical protocol describing Medea's erotic emotion upon the apparition of the hero. It is unlikely that these analogies are accidental.

Our text belongs to a poem that paid great attention to the process of Medea's falling asleep and starting to dream: this might have something to do with the general attention devoted to Medea's eyes in extant literature, from Euripides (*Med.* 92-93 *ὄμμα ταυρουμένην*) to Apollonius (e. g. 3. 444-45; 886; 1008-1010; 1161 *ὕγρα δ'ἐνὶ βλεφάροις ἔχεν ὄμματα*; 4. 698-99), from Grillparzer down to Pasolini and Ariel Dorfman. But the wording might also be reminiscent of Aristoteles' physiological doctrine on dreams, which would be in keeping with the interest for natural sciences typical of Hellenistic epic, as witnessed chiefly by Apollonius himself in his *Argonautica*<sup>24</sup>.

## 2.

Let us come back for a moment to the first legible line of fr. 1: l. 5. "The Colchian women will pray..." As we learn from the subsequent formula *ὡς φαμένη*<sup>25</sup>, this is clearly the last line of a monologue, where Medea envisages

<sup>22</sup> See Q. Smyrn. 1. 348 *ἴπποι δ'ἀμφὶ βέλεσσι πεπαρμένοι ἢ μελίησιν* (cp. also 11. 307). Nonn. *Dion.* 28. 121 *ἐκ κεφαλῆς βελέεσσι πεπαρμένους εἰς πόδας ἄκρους*. It is remarkable that the term *ἀνδροφόνους* occurs only once in Apollonius' *Argonautica* (4. 701), and implicitly refers to Jason and Medea after Apsyrtos' murder.

<sup>23</sup> Remember Apsyrtos' *μασχαλισμός* in Ap. Rhod. 4. 477-481.

<sup>24</sup> See Erbse 1953, 186-189. Solmsen 1961, 195-196. Fusillo 1994, 95-100 (on the link between Medea's dream in Apollonius and Herophilus' theory of dreams).

<sup>25</sup> Perhaps reminiscent of *Il.* 22. 460-1 *ὡς φαμένη μεγάροιο διέσσυτο μαινάδι ἴση / παλλομένη κραδίην*. See also Call. *Hec.* fr. 260.62-4 Pf. = *SH* 288.62-4 *τὴν μὲν ἄρ'ὡς*

the malediction sent over her by the Colchian women. A perfect parallel, as noted by d'Alessio, is Ap. Rhod. 3. 794-795 καὶ κέν με διὰ στόματος φορέουσαι / Κολχίδες ἄλλυδις ἄλλαι ἀεικέα μωμήσονται, where Medea thinks of the Colchians' blame in case she committed suicide after helping Jason against her father (3. 785-798)<sup>26</sup>.

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

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

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φαμένην ὕπνος λάβε, τὴν δ' αἴουσαν. / καδραθέτην δ' οὐ πολλὸν ἐπὶ χρόνον, αἶψα γὰρ ἦλθεν / σπιθίβεις ἄγχαυρος (reworking *Od.* 15. 493-495).

<sup>26</sup> In our fragment, the choice of the verb ἀράομαι in a negative sense (not a simple invocation or desire, as in most epic occurrences, cp. Hom. *Il.* 6.115; *Od.* 1. 164; Ap. Rhod. 1. 159; Opp. *hal.* 4. 577) might be reminiscent of another famous passage where a son thinks about the consequences of acting against his mother's will, namely Telemachus' words in *Od.* 2. 135 ἐπεὶ μήτηρ στυγερὰς ἀρήσετ' Ἐρινύς (if he marries her to a suitor without her consent; on Erinyes in Apollonius see Vagnone 1994). But of course in our passage ἀρήσσονται might be construed with an infinitive in the preceding line or with a different clause (see e. g. *ep. adesp.* 3. 14 Pow. οὐδὲ γὰρ Ἀργείους θανέειν ἰαρήσομαι αὐτῆ, and *Il.* 9. 172 ὄφρα Διὶ Κρονίδῃ ἀρρῶμεθ' αἶ κ' ἐθελήσῃ). In either case, I would prefer to read ὁμῶς (very frequent in this metrical sedes, see Ap. Rhod. 1. 99; 321; 896 etc.), perhaps in a structure like ὁμῶς ἐμὲ Χαλκιδότῃν τε, ὁ ὁμῶς αὐταὶ τε καὶ ἄνδρες.

<sup>27</sup> Sainte-Beuve 1879.

<sup>28</sup> See Fusillo 2001, esp. 146. On Medea's monologues see Fusillo 1985, 352-355 and Paduano 1972, 11-59.

<sup>29</sup> See Fusillo 1985, 349-350; Fusillo 2001, 145: the movement from thoughts to words in this section is described by Barkhuizen 1979, 35. On 3. 446-47, see Walde 2001, 175-177.

<sup>30</sup> See the brilliant analysis by Fusillo 1985, 350-351 and Paduano 1972, 38-39.

<sup>31</sup> Barkhuizen 1979, 36-47. Paduano 1972, 40-41 rightly observes that the insomnia in 3.751 corresponds *per oppositum* to a sort of "struttura onirica" (see also below n. 39).



precisely the sequence dream + monologue that will enjoy the widest success in later authors, starting from the opening of Moschus' *Europa*<sup>32</sup>.

Whereas Medea's monologues in the *Argonautica* are made of reflections on her dreams or on her unconscious thoughts, in our papyrus sleep and dream come at the end of Medea's *Qual*, and probably objectivate in vivid images the fears and anguish cumulated in the heroine's *Selbstgespräch*. This difference poses even more urgently the question of relationship and priority between our poem and Apollonius, but it should also affect our view on the one similar instance of a sequence monologue-dream in the (otherwise scanty) ancient Argonautic literature<sup>33</sup>, namely Valerius Flaccus 7.141-145 (occurring right after Medea's monologue in 7.128-140):

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

The narrative structure of this passage – opened by a *dixerat haec* which closely recalls our ὡς φημὲν<sup>34</sup> – has been read as a deliberate variation of the Apollonian model, obtained by eliminating any reference to the intervention of Argos<sup>35</sup>. Yet our fragment might suggest that this arrangement in fact clings back to a Greek source other from Apollonius. It would be tempting to identify our poem with the lost work postulated by *Quellenforscher* such as Venzke and Vian as a source of Valerius Flaccus and the *Orphic Argonautica*, in all those cases where the plot of these two works coincides against Apollonius: a first step in this direction has already been made by d'Alessio, who compared the description of the bulls in our fragment 2 with Val. Fl. 7.570ff.<sup>36</sup> The most remarkable of these *errores coniunctivi*, so to speak, concerns the handling of Medea's and Aeetes' prophetic dreams in

<sup>32</sup> See Bühler 1960, 60-61 ("Moschos hat den ganzen Ablauf der Szene übernommen", *scil.* from Apollonius). On the literary relationship between monologues and dreams in Apollonius see Walde 2001, 178-179. On its literary and psychoanalytical implication see Fusillo 1994.

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

<sup>34</sup> See Perutelli 1997, 237.

<sup>35</sup> Adamietz 1976, 92-94 (see esp. 94: 94: "Aus dem im Monolog ausgedrückten Widerstreit der Gefühle erwächst der Wunsch nach Ruhe und Schlaf"). On this issue see also Eigler 1988, 98-99. On Medea's dream in Valerius as indebted to Apollonius and to Virgil, but oriented towards the highlighting of the psychological description over the action proper see the acute analysis by Perutelli 1994 and more generally Perutelli 1997, 31. On Medea's dream see also Caviglia 2002, 19-21.

<sup>36</sup> d'Alessio 2005, 56 and 78.

an earlier stage of the narration, just after Jason's arrival at Colchis<sup>37</sup>. And I must remind that d'Alessio has recently identified the lost Hellenistic *Argonautica* by Cleon of Kourion – about which more will be said in a moment – as a possible source for the eccentric itinerary of the Argonauts from Iolkos to Colchis in Valerius<sup>38</sup>.

## 3.

Finally, a few words on fragment 2. It is so badly preserved that no restoration of its lines is possible beyond the intelligent supplements proposed by the first editor. That these lines dealt with the same dream as fr. 1 is likely given the mention of sleep (ὑπν- ll. 6 and 12), bulls (ταυρ- l. 3) and abductions (ἄρπ- l. 5); in l. 8, while the morphology and syntax of φεύγε(ε) remain no less mysterious to me than the (optative?) πλήσειε in l. 7, ἐλεη- might belong to the idea of Medea's pity for Jason's feared death, cp. Ap. Rhod. 3.462 and 761, both passages occurring at the end of sad *rêveries*. Indeed, an interesting comparison can be issued with Ap. Rhod. 3.744-754, where ὕπνος occurs twice, and Medea's sleepless thought contemplates precisely Jason's slaughter by the bulls (cp. here ll. 15-17)<sup>39</sup>.

Are there any clues to unmask the structure of these lines? L. 9 ἔννεπ most probably closed a direct speech (perhaps another monologue by Medea, or a dialogue in the dream?)<sup>40</sup>, and what follows must belong to the narrator's voice, as can be gathered from ll. 10, 13 and 14. In fact, I would take the πῦρ ἄφατον in l. 10 as referring not to a material, "unspeakable" fire, but rather as the usual metaphor for love (the adjective ἄφατος is conspicuously used of Eros in Ap. Rhod. 3.129)<sup>41</sup>. In l. 13 μέρμηρα, most probably in the plural, is a

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

<sup>38</sup> d'Alessio 2000, 102-104.

<sup>39</sup> See esp. 3. 751-755 ἀλλὰ μάλ' οὐ Μήδεϊαν ἐπὶ γλυκερὸς λάβειν ὕπνος· / πολλὰ γὰρ Αἰσονίδαο πάθω μελεδήματ' ἔγειρε / δειδυῖαν ταύρων κρατερὸν μένος, οἷσιν ἔμελλε / φθεῖσθαι ἀεικελίη μοῖρῃ κατὰ νειδὸν Ἄρηος. / Πικνὰ δέ οἱ κραδίη στηθέων ἔντοσθεν ἔθουεν.

<sup>40</sup> ἔννεπεν as such in the first feet never concludes a speech (in Ap. Rhod. 1.241 it introduces one), but the verb ἐν(ν)έπω often occurs with this role in Callimachus (and already in Pindar): on this complicated issue see Führer 1967, 23-26 and Fantuzzi 1988, 66-67; on the *Schlußformeln* of Medea's monologues in Apollonius see Paduano 1972, 43.

<sup>41</sup> Aphrodite to Eros: τίπτ' ἐπιμειδιάς, ἄφατον κακόν; On this adjective, and its possible connection to the Apollonian concept of ἀμφασία, see the intelligent words of Paduano 1972, 99. The metaphor of fire, very common in Hellenistic poetry (just think of Theoc. 2.82 and

perfect *pendant* to μενθήραι in fr. 1, 11<sup>42</sup>. In l. 14 δέιμα is a psychological state very common with dreams<sup>43</sup>, and ἐκ κεφαλῆς – I believe – points to Medea pulling off her hair<sup>44</sup>, out of desperation for what she is seeing (γάρ in l. 15; ll. 15-17 certainly depict the fire coming out of the bulls' jaws<sup>45</sup>, a vision that comes to an end with Medea's definitive awakening in l. 20<sup>46</sup>).

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

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

131-134), has a special frequency and weight in Apollonius' third book (see e. g. *Arg.* 3.291-297; 773; 1018; Nyberg 1992, 37-43) and occurs often for Ovid's *Medea* (*met.* 7.9, 17 and 77).

<sup>42</sup> See esp. *Il.* 2. 2-3 Δία δ'οὐκ ἔχε νήδυμος ὕπνος / ἀλλ' ὃ γε μερμήριζε. The sense of μέρμηρα as "the *cura* occurring before sleep" is well discussed by d'Alessio 2005, 77.

<sup>43</sup> See e. g. Maiist. 42 (quoted above note 14). Mosch. *Eur.* 16-17 ἦ δ' ἀπὸ μὲν στρωπῶν λεχέων θόρε δειμαίνουσα / παλλομένη κραδίην. *Ap. Rhod.* 3. 695-6 τῆς δ'αἰνῶς ἄτλητος ἐπέκλυσε θυμὸν ἀνίη / δέιματι, οἷ' ἔσάκουσεν (Chalciopie upon knowing of Medea's dreams); 3. 810; 4. 685 ἀπὸ δέιματα πέμψεν ὀνειρώων. Incidentally, δέιμα will be the name of the statue dedicated to Medea's sons in Corinth: see Paus. 2.3.7 and Johnston 1997, 46-49 and 55-57.

<sup>44</sup> The same gesture in *Ap. Rhod.* 4.18-19 πυκνά δὲ κουρίξ / ἔλκομένη πλοκάμους γοερῆ βρυχήσατ' ἀνίη. For ἐκ κεφαλῆς referring to this practice (generally in the act of mourning) see e. g. *Hom. Il.* 10.15 and 22.77-78, and *Q. Smyrn.* 13.115-6 αἶ δ' ἀλεγεινῶς / ἐκ κεφαλῆς τίλλοντο κόμην (of the Trojan women, described in l. 114 as παλλόμεναι κραδίην).

<sup>45</sup> The wording should be compared with *Ap. Rhod.* 3. 230-231 and 410 = 496 ταύρω χαλκόποδε στόματι φλόγα φυσίωυτε. In l. 16 ἐκχυμένην must definitely refer to the φλόξ, see Paul. *Sil. descr. S. Soph.* 208-209 οὐχ οὕτως ἀκάχησεν ἀπαίθερος ἐκχυμένη φλόξ / ἀνέρας.

<sup>46</sup> On the linguistic implications of l. 20 ἐκ λεχέων ἀνέπαλτο, a phrasing that returns identical in Nonn. *Dion.* 7.156 (Semele after a nightmare; on Nonnus' imitations of book 3 of Apollonius' *Argonautica* see Vian 2001, 296-307), see d'Alessio 2005, 78; on the literary image of the "Erwachen" from dreams see Bühler 1960, 60-63. The image in ll. 18-19 of our fr. 2 is obscure, perhaps connected with the famous similitude of Medea's soul with sunbeams reflected by wavy water in a vessel (*Ap. Rhod.* 3.755-760; so tentatively d'Alessio), or perhaps with the fascinating comparison of dreams with reflections of images on a liquid surface, to be read in Arist. *de insomn.* 3.461a14-18.

made the object of a comparison with Apollonius' poem in the text of literary criticism badly preserved in PMich inv. 1316v (II cent. AD)<sup>47</sup>.

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

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

1 – if the poem in our papyrus antedates Apollonius' *Argonautica*, should we really dismiss and minimize – as Wilamowitz did<sup>51</sup> – the judgment of Asclepiades of Myrlea, according to whom Apollonius "took over everything" (τὰ πάντα μετήνεγκεν) from Cleon<sup>52</sup>?

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

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

<sup>49</sup> See d'Alessio 2000, 105-107 and Lehnus 2002, 12.

<sup>50</sup> Sainte-Beuve 1879, 394-395.

<sup>51</sup> Wilamowitz 1924, II, 189 n. 1: "allerdings wird es schwer an Argonautika vor Apollonius zu glauben und Asklepiades mochte sich hierin täuschen lassen". Similarly Weinberger 1921.

<sup>52</sup> Schol. Ap. Rhod. 1.623-26a (*SH* 339): ὅτι δὲ ἐνθάδε Θόας ἐσώθη καὶ Κλέων ὁ Κουριεύς ἱστορεῖ καὶ Ἀσκληπιάδης ὁ Μυρλεανὸς [FGH 697 F 5] δεικνύς ὅτι παρὰ Κλέωνος τὰ πάντα μετήνεγκεν Ἀπολλώνιος: on this scholium, and on its importance for our knowledge of an ancient debate concerning the sources of Apollonius, see d'Alessio 2000, 92-95, who also ascribes on good grounds to Asclepiades the treatise fragmentarily preserved in PMich 1316v. It is unclear whether here τὰ πάντα should be taken as referring only to the episode of Thoas'

2 – was Apollonius really the first to introduce new literary patterns for monologues and dreams? was he the first to portray the character of Medea as the incarnation of a new kind of femininity and love<sup>53</sup>? and how should we gauge the possibility that centuries later Cleon might have represented a source for the plot of Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*?

3 – what should we make of recent theories underscoring the very existence of an ongoing tradition of mythological epic in Hellenistic times<sup>54</sup>?

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rescue (so d'Alessio 2000, 92) or to a wider dependence of Apollonius from Cleon (as Weichert 1821, 150-154 believed).

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

<sup>54</sup> See Cameron 1995, 295-297 with the review by Harder 2002, esp. 603-604 and Green 1997, 20-21.

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