

Flavian Treatment of the Argo Myth [Unit 9]

Primary Reading: Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica* books 5-8 and 2.251-2, 3.51-797, 4.1-78.

Secondary Reading:

- Dinter, M. T. 'Epic from Epigram: The Poetics of Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*', *AJPh* 130, 2009, 533-566. [Moodle]
- Edwards, M. J. 'The Role of Hercules in Valerius Flaccus', *Latomus* 58, 1999, 150-63. [Library]
- Garson, R. W. 'The Hylas Episode in Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*', *CQ* 13, 1963, 260-7. [Moodle]
- Heerink, M. A. J. 'Going a Step Further: Valerius Flaccus' Metapoetical Reading of Propertius' Hylas', *CQ* 57, 2007, 606-20. [Moodle]
- Hershkowitz, D. *Valerius Flaccus' Argonautica: Abbreviated Voyages in Silver Latin Epic*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. [Library]
- Malamud, M. A. and McGuire, D.T. 'Flavian Variant: Myth. Valerius' *Argonautica*', in A. J. Boyle (ed.) *Roman Epic*. New York and London: Routledge, 1990, 192-217. [Moodle]
- Murgatroyd, P. *A Commentary on Book 4 of Valerius Flaccus' Argonautica*. Leiden: Brill, 2009. [Moodle]
- Stover, T. 'Confronting Medea: Genre, Gender and Allusion in the *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus', *CPh* 98, 2003, 123-47. [Moodle]
- Zissos, A. 'Allusion and Narrative Possibility in the *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus', *CPh* 94, 1999, 289-301. [Moodle]
- Zissos, A. 'Valerius Flaccus', in J. M. Foley (ed.) *A Companion to Ancient Epic*. Malden MA and Oxford: Blackwells, 2005, 503-13. [Moodle]

I also recommend browsing [this useful website](#) from the University of Texas.

SECTION A: THE HYLAS EPISODE

Discussion Points

1. How has Valerius Flaccus treated the Hylas myth?
2. What elements can be found in each version and can be considered to be the 'core narrative'?
3. What are the parallels and contrasts with earlier treatments? Which version(s) do you think especially influenced VF?
4. Where and why does VF assume knowledge on the part of the reader of previous treatments of the myth?
5. How do the different versions describe the landscape? Why?
6. Read Ovid's *Met.* 3.340ff. on Narcissus: what similarities/differences between these accounts can you see (look especially at the pool description)? How does this aid our interpretation of the scene?
7. Hercules' dream is modelled on Patroclus-Achilles (*Iliad* 23) and Creusa-Aeneas (*Aeneid* 2). What do these allusions achieve?

SECTION B: FLACCUS' MEDEA

Discussion Points

1. What kind of heroine is Medea? Which aspects of her mythological character does VF emphasise? Why?
2. Which mythological and epic females underlie Medea's presentation here?
3. What parallels / differences can you see between AR's and VF's Medea? Are we supposed to have AR's Medea in mind? How does this affect our interpretation of the epic?
4. To what extent could VF's Medea be considered a witch?
5. Why would Valerius Flaccus have changed the first meeting between Jason and Medea from the traditional version? How has he used the Nausicaa episode for this section? Why?
6. What roles are played by Juno and Venus? How does this compare to a. Apollonius Rhodius and b. Vergil?
7. Compare VF's Circe with that of the *Odyssey* and of AR's *Argonautica*. What similarities / differences are there? How does this aid our interpretation of this epic?