

Medea: Love and the Female in Epic [Unit 3]

SECTION A: HELLENISTIC EPIC

This week we move from Archaic to Hellenistic Epic in the form of Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*. If you have not looked at this unique period of mythmaking before, you should familiarise yourself with it by reading some of the following:

Hopkinson, N. *A Hellenistic Anthology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 1-11. [Library]

Hunter R.L. *Apollonius of Rhodes: 'Argonautica' Book III*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 12-21 and 23-38. [Library]

Hutchinson, G.O. *Hellenistic Poetry*. Oxford: 85-142. [Moodle]

* Nelis, D. P. 'Apollonius of Rhodes', in J. M. Foley (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Epic*. Oxford, 2009, 353-63. [Moodle]

* Shipley, G. *The Greek World after Alexander*. London, 2000, 235-70 [Library]

SECTION B: FOLKTALE AND MYTHICAL INTERTEXTS IN AR.'S MEDEA

This section of the seminar will be used to consider Apollonius' use of the Medea myths and of females in epic.

Part One

Primary Reading

- Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* books 3 and 4 (concentrating on the Medea episodes) and Pindar, *Pythian* 4

Discussion Points

- How does Pindar portray Medea and Jason, and Medea's role in Jason's quest?
- How is AR.'s Medea different and/or similar to this portrayal?
- To what extent do you think AR was influenced by Pindar's myth?

Part Two

The second part of section B will consist of presentations. You should concentrate on Apollonius' use of the previous myths/folktales regarding Medea and Epic females. Analyse how, why and to what effect these myths/epic traditions have been reworked by Apollonius Rhodius.

Choose between:

1. The Homeric Helen and Nausicaa and Apollonius Rhodius' Medea

For this presentation you should read the relevant sections of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (*Iliad* books 3 and 6.312-68; *Odyssey* books 4 and 6). It will also help to read:

Myth in Greek and Roman Epic

Clauss, J. J. 'Conquest of the Mephistophelian Nausicaa: Medea's role in Apollonius' redefinition of the epic hero', in J. J. Clauss and S. I. Johnston (eds.), *Medea: Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy and Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997, 149-77 [Library]
Hunter, R. L. *The Argonautica of Apollonius: Literary Studies*. New York, 2004, 59-68. [Library]

2. Euripides' Medea and Apollonius Rhodius

For this presentation you should read Euripides' *Medea*. It will also help to read:

Dyck, A. R. 'On the Way from Colchis to Corinth: Medea in Book IV of the *Argonautica*', *Hermes* 117, 1989, 455-70. [Moodle]
Papadopoulou, T. 'The Presentation of Inner Self: Euripides' *Medea* 1021-53 and Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* 3.772-801', *Mnemosyne* 50, 1997, 641-64. [Moodle]

SECTION C: MEDEA AND LOVE IN APOLLONIUS RHODIUS

Discussion Points

This section of the seminar will concentrate on AR.'s presentation of Medea and Love itself. The following discussion points should help you focus your reading of books 3 and 4 of the epic:

1. How does the proem to Book 3 prepare us for Medea and Jason's story?
2. Do you see Medea as a naïve ingénue and/or a cunning witch? A hero and/or a helper maiden?
3. How does Medea's involvement and portrayal affect our appreciation of Jason's heroism?
4. Why and how does the portrayal of Medea differ (and cohere) in books 3 and 4?
5. How is Love portrayed in the epic? What is its role here?

Secondary Reading:

Clauss, J. J. 'Conquest of the Mephistophelian Nausicaa: Medea's role in Apollonius' redefinition of the epic hero', in J. J. Clauss and S. I. Johnston (eds.), *Medea: Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy and Art*. Princeton, 1997, 149-77. [Library]
Dyck, A. R. 'On the Way from Colchis to Corinth: Medea in Book IV of the *Argonautica*', *Hermes* 117, 1989, 455-70. [Moodle]
Graf, F. 'Medea, the enchantress from afar: remarks on a well-known myth', in Clauss J.J. and Johnston S.I. (eds.) *Medea: Essays on Medea in Myth. Literature, Philosophy and Art*. Princeton, 1997, 21-43. [Library]
Hunter, R. L. 'Medea's Flight: The Fourth Book of the *Argonautica*', *CQ* 37, 1987, 129-39. [Moodle]
Hunter, R. L. *The Argonautica of Apollonius: Literary Studies*. New York, 2004, 59-68. [Library]
Papadopoulou, T. 'The Presentation of Inner Self: Euripides' *Medea* 1021-53 and Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* 3.772-801', *Mnemosyne* 50, 1997, 641-64. [Moodle]
Plantinga M.G. 'The supplication motif in Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*', in Harder M.A., Regtuit R.F. and Wakker G.C. (eds), *Apollonius Rhodius*. Leuven, 2000, 105-28. [Library]