CHAPTER 2

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How Medea Moves: Versions of a Myth in Apollonius and Elsewhere

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The first part of this essay will focus on the *Argonautica*, the third-century BC epic by Apollonius of Rhodes. My argument concentrates on just one aspect of that work, although it is an aspect which raises questions fundamental to the poem's meaning. After discussing Apollonius, I shall examine some wider issues arising from his text, issues which in one way or another concern movement and magic.

Unlike the *Odyssey*, which, as its first word indicates, is the story of a man, the *Argonautica* is the story of a ship, whose journey is evoked in the first sentence of Book 1 and whose return to home port in Greece is celebrated in the last line of the final book, Book 4. Medea is with us for two books: Book 3, when the arrow of Eros compels her to her fall in love with Jason, whom she then helps to yoke the fire-breathing bulls and to cut down the Sown Men; and Book 4, when, with the Golden Fleece safely captured, she sails at Jason's side back to Greece.

As dozens of scholars and thousands of other readers have noticed, Apollonius' Medea is a juxtaposition of opposites: on the one hand, the woman tormented by personal anguish, torn between her Colchian family and her Greek lover; on the other hand, the manipulator with uncanny powers. However, a more specific polarity has received comparatively little attention, at any rate from scholars; and it is this second, more specific, polarity that I want to explore. What I have in mind is the opposition between the Medea we see for most of the poem — a Medea in constant, restless movement — and the Medea who very occasionally asserts magical control and in so doing becomes calm and composed in her physical movements, while simultaneously exercising power over the movements of others.

Although Athene and Hera have already mentioned Medea near the start of Book 3, in relation to their plan to make her fall for Jason and so aid him in his exploits, the first time that Apollonius brings Medea before us in action and in person is the moment when the Argonauts too first catch sight of her:

> Jason and his companions came across Medea as she was going from room to room looking for her sister. For Hera had kept Medea at home; before she did not use to spend much time in the palace, but rather she would be busy all day at the shrine of Hecate, since she was the goddess's priestess. When Medea saw them approaching, she screamed. Chalkiope heard it clearly; the maidservants

> dropped their wool and spindles in front of their feet and all rushed out together.[1] (3.248–56)[2]

These few lines encapsulate the Apollonian Medea. First, she is looking for her sister Chalkiope: Medea, unmarried, still lives at home and is bound to her siblings, as also to her parents, by strong social and emotional ties. Next, Medea is kept at home on this particular day by Hera: Medea's emotional life is and will be largely at the mercy of the gods. Thirdly, the fact that Medea is priestess of Hecate already hints at her possession of a special kind of power, which we might locate somewhere in the definitional quicksand between religion and magic.[3] Finally, and for us most relevantly, Apollonius has chosen to present Medea to us in the act of moving from one room to another (*ek thalamou thalamonde*): even when at home, she is not — unlike the maidservants with whom Chalkiope is linked here (254–56) — associated with spinning and therefore seated; rather she is in transit.

Medea's restlessness intensifies exponentially when Eros shoots her with his arrow. It expresses itself in her eyes: she glances repeatedly at Jason (as opposed to staring at him unswervingly) (287–88). It expresses itself in her complexion: one moment her cheeks drain of colour, the next she blushes (297–98). It expresses itself in her feet:

> For a long time she remained there in her ante-chamber: shame would not allow her to go further. Then she turned around and went back in again, but then came out again, and then hid away inside again; her feet carried her this way and that, all to no purpose. (648–51)

It expresses itself in her production of speech: 'Words rose to the very tip of her tongue, but then flew back again deep into her chest' (683–84). It expresses itself in her perceptions: Medea sees the world as a place of fluttering, dancing indecision: in what is probably Apollonius' best-known simile, Medea's heart trembles like a sunbeam which darts this way and that within a house when reflected from the rippling surface of water just poured into a cauldron or bucket (756–60). Although, perhaps for us counter-intuitively, Medea's *dreams* are clear and unambiguous (in her sleep she imagines that her parents allow her to choose whether or not to go with Jason, at which point she unhesitatingly decides to leave with him (630–01)), her waking consciousness is, by contrast, in turmoil:

> At one moment she thought that she would give him the drugs as charms against the bulls; then she would not, but would herself face death; then she would not die and would not give the drugs, but with calmness would endure her misery just as she was. (766–69)

Eyes, complexion, feet, speech, perceptions: all oscillate — they move, but they do not progress.

What happens, though, when the narrative brings us closer to Medea the devotee of Hecate — when she does not just speculate about using her uncanny powers but actually goes to fetch the casket which contains her drugs, both beneficent and destructive? To begin with, her habitual condition persists, as she is at first on the point of opening the casket and swallowing drugs which will end her life — but then, remembering the joy of living, pushes the casket away from her. However,

the pattern of her obsessive oscillation is broken by Hera, who causes her to *decide*: 'Through Hera's urging she changed her mind, nor did she have further doubts which took her mind in another direction' (818–19). Now that Medea is set upon helping Jason, her movements become, for the first time in the poem, purposeful and controlled. True, she is not static; in fact she moves quickly (on a mule-drawn cart) to a meeting with Jason at which she can confer on him the power which will make him temporarily invulnerable. However, though not static, she is in control: she puts up her hair, which had previously been loose (829); she holds the reins and whip to control the mules (871–72); and, whereas previously her eyes were perpetually darting here and there, now it is the people of the city who turn their eyes aside to avoid meeting Medea's (886).

Nevertheless, it is a constant in the character of the Apollonian Medea that, whenever she is not focussed strictly on practising magical control, the turmoil generated by the conflicting claims of *eros* and family removes all fixity and condemns her to oscillate. While waiting for Jason, she plays games with her maidservants, games which Apollonius evokes through a broken, anacoluthic syntax which Malcolm Campbell rightly saw as enacting Medea's fidgety state of mind (949–51).[4] However, it is the games played by her eyes to which the narrator gives greater emphasis: 'Nor could she keep her eyes fixed on the crowd of maidservants, but constantly turned her face away and peered into the distance along the paths' (951–53). Just for an instant, when she and Jason meet, the narrative brings Medea to a halt beside him and, through a simile, it seems as if the equivalence between Medea's domestic conflicts and her restless motion is going to be undermined: 'The pair then faced each other, silent, unable to speak, like oaks or tall firs, which at first when there is no wind stand quiet and firmly rooted on the mountains' (967–70). However, even within the vehicle of this simile, the pause is immediately followed by an evocation of continuous oscillation: 'like oaks or tall firs, which at first when there is no wind stand quiet and firmly rooted on the mountains, *but afterwards stir in the wind and rustle together ceaselessly*' [emphases added] (968–71). Sure enough, when the main narrative resumes, Medea begins to move to and fro: under Jason's flattery, she first turns her eyes aside, then looks into his face (1008–10). Even as she hands over to him the drug of invulnerability, the sign she lives under is not that of control but that of mobility, a mood which affects Jason too: 'At one moment they both stared coyly at the ground, at the next they cast glances at each other' (1022–23). After explaining to Jason how he should appease Hecate and then smear himself and his weaponry with a drug which confers invulnerability for a day, Medea is once more a prey to oscillation: she fixes her eyes on the ground, then looks up into Jason's face (1063–68), begging him to tell her about his home.

Jason's successful exploits with the bulls and then with the Sown Men make Medea's departure from home inevitable. Apollonius presents that departure as a mixture of rushing and tearing:

> Like a young girl, recently separated by fate from her homeland, who was torn as a prisoner from a rich house and who has not yet tasted wearying labour, but unused to wretchedness and the work of slaves, she goes in terror into the harsh control of a mistress; this was how the lovely girl rushed from her home. (4.35–40)

Accompanying Jason on board the *Argo* as he goes to seize the Golden Fleece, Medea loses none of her restlessness: 'She rushed back and stretched out her hands towards the land in helpless despair' (4.106–07). However, now comes the second moment for Medea to assume control, a moment for her eyes no longer to be restless; and this time there is no mule-cart, no journey to make. A stillness falls over the narrative. As the serpent which guards the Golden Fleece slithers towards her, Medea fixes it in the eye and invokes Sleep in a lovely song. Then:

> But she, dipping into a potion a freshly-cut sprig of juniper, sprinkled untempered drugs down over the snake's eyes as she sang; and, all around, the overwhelming scent of the drug cast sleep. Just where it was, the snake dropped its jaw to rest on the ground. Far into the distance its countless spirals were stretched out through the dense wood. (4.156–61)

No wonder the poor beast falls asleep: Medea has prepared an irresistible, three-pronged assault: fixing with the eye, invocation in song, potion.

However, the stillness lasts only as long as it takes Jason to seize the Fleece. Thereafter the narrative suddenly accelerates: 'The goddess Hera caused the wind to blow so strongly that Aiaian Medea should reach the Pelasgian land with all speed, to bring disaster upon the house of Pelias' (4.241–43). Medea resumes her characteristic state of anguish and movement — because the competing presences within her of Colchis and Greece have surfaced once again: her brother Apsyrtos has appeared with a force of pursuing Colchians. Will Medea deploy against him the same techniques which lulled the serpent to sleep? In fact, she opts for a different method. Apsyrtos is enticed into an ambush by means of gifts, above all a robe, a robe such as that which Deianeira, in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, sent to Heracles in order, she thought, to reawaken his love (but which turned out to be impregnated with murderous poison). It is the same erotically charged robe which Hypsipyle gave to Jason as his going-away present; originally the Graces had woven it for Dionysus and he and Ariadne had lain on it while they made love; to enhance its effect still further, Medea now sprinkles drugs of enticement into the air. However, what follows this interlude corroborates my main point: whenever her mind is torn between Colchis and Greece, Medea cannot remain still. As Jason leaps from ambush and stabs Apsyrtos, Medea averts her eyes, while her brother's blood spurts over her veil and robe (4.465–67).

This grubby little murder drives Medea-the-controlled-and-controlling sorceress yet further out of narrative view. When the *Argo* puts in to the coast where Medea's aunt Circe dwells, in the hope that she will grant Jason and Medea absolution for the killing of Apsyrtos, the movement of Medea's eyes mirrors the failure of their quest: first she looks downwards in shame, then she raises her eyes, then she covers her eyes with her robe in shame once more (4.697–98; 726; 749–50). Nor does the next port of call, the Phaeacian kingdom of Alcinoos and Arete, bring her rest:

> In her breast her aching spirit whirled like a spindle turned in the night by a toiling woman whose orphaned children cry all around her; her husband is dead, and as she weeps at the awful fate which has seized her, tears drip over her cheeks. (4.1061–65)

There is an all-too-glaring contrast between the rootless, childless, spindle-less Medea and the labouring, widowed mother to whom the simile compares her; but what the two women have in common is not only suffering but also constant, repetitive motion.

In Phaeacia, Medea's relationship with Jason is consummated (which is why Alcinoos agrees not to surrender her to the pursuing Colchians); but this does not elevate her to any new prominence within the action. On the contrary, she recedes into narrative invisibility for almost the whole of the rest of the epic. However, there is one more episode, the third and last such in the poem, when Medea steps forward to display an eerie and unnerving poise. Significantly, this episode is as completely removed as can be from her own domestic conflicts and anguish, a free-standing contest between her and another formidable creature, the bronze giant Talos. Talos's role in life is to run around Crete as its guardian; the only vulnerable spot in his otherwise metallic body is a small vein in his ankle, covered by a penetrable membrane. The *Argo* glides to a halt, held motionless by the crew's gentle oar-strokes. Then:

> Medea held up a fold of her purple robe either side of her two cheeks and moved towards the stern-deck; the son of Aison took her hand and guided her passage between the benches. Then in her soothing incantation she sought to win over the Keres, devourers of the spirit, swift dogs of Hades who prowl through all the sky and are set upon mortal men. Three times did she beseech and call upon them with incantations, and three times with prayers. She set her mind upon evil, and cast a grudging spell upon bronze Talos' eyes with her malevolent glances; against him she ground out bitter fury, and she sent out dark phantoms in the vehemence of her wrath. (4.1661–72)

One can instantly recognize the race of Helios, the narrator had pointed out earlier in Book 4, because their eyes throw out sparkling rays into the far distance (4.727–29). However, Medea turns this inherited quality into something more specific and personal. Staring unflinchingly at Talos, she unsteadies the movements of this normally tireless runner, causing him to graze his ankle on the sharp point of a rock; the membrane covering the vein is pierced and all the life-sustaining *ichor* flows out.[5] The Talos encounter shows us Medea at her furthest remove from her condition of domestically generated anguish and at her most eerily impressive: the unmoved mover. (We shall come back to this phrase). Thereafter, for the hundred or so lines that remain, we hear nothing more of Medea's thoughts, emotions or actions: the returning *Argo*, in this poem about a ship, becomes the centre of attention once again.

Having analysed the specific polarity in Apollonius between restless movement and controlled stillness, I propose now to reflect on some issues which grow out of this discussion. These issues will take us beyond Apollonius, but we shall not stray far from the idea of movement. When he narrates the episodes of Medea's principal uncanny exploits as moments when she is *in control of the movements of others* (notably, the movements of the serpent guarding the Fleece and of Talos), Apollonius is echoing a fundamental aspect of the representation of ancient magical

practice. Numerous surviving papyri contain spells which employ the imagery of binding, spells designed to restrict and hobble the movement of another.[6] Again, archaeologists have unearthed tiny lead figurines whose bodies have been distorted or pierced so as symbolically to hamper their movement; by a perhaps pardonable shorthand they have come to be known as 'voodoo dolls'.[7] Then we have numerous literary references to sorceresses drawing down the moon or other heavenly bodies or using the magic wheel (*iunx*) to 'drag that man to my house'.[8] In the three cases I have mentioned — binding curses, hobbled figurines, the power to draw or drag — the aim of the practitioner is to control the movement of others. However, what is far from clear is the extent to which self-control and stillness *on the part of the practitioner* are perceived to be a necessary part of the procedure, as they are in the case of Apollonius' Medea. In fact, it seems that this stillness may be a distinctively Apollonian emphasis, reflecting in particular the poet's decision to single out the theme of bewitching the eyes as a technique for controlling others. That theme in turn is integrated, first, with a series of other connotations of eyes and looking in the poem (shame or shamelessness in the avoidance or engagement of direct eye-contact with another; concealment of one's intentions from view; the erotic gaze; the inner sight of the blind prophet Phineus and so on);[9] and integrated, second, with other connotations of *oscillation* in the poem, particularly the often-discussed theme of Jason's habitual condition of being *amechanos*, in a state of aporetic indecision.

However, does this actually amount to Apollonian distinctiveness vis-à-vis other tellings of the myth? Let us glance at some of these other versions. The *general* opposition between Medea-the-victimized-woman and Medea-the-sorceress recurs in most ancient narratives about Medea. Of course it permeates Euripides' tragedy, in which we have, on the one hand, Medea the manipulator of men — capable of the calculated use of grim and deadly *pharmaka* to destroy Jason's new bride and her father or of beneficent *pharmaka* to restore Aigeus' fertility — and, on the other hand, Medea the self-tormenting infanticide. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* the same general opposition is, if anything, even more starkly present; Carole Newlands goes so far as to use the metaphors of 'the fractured woman' and even cubism to describe the Ovidian disjunction between Medea the lovesick girl and Medea the witch.[10] However, the specific Apollonian opposition, between the restlessness generated by domestic chaos and the composed stillness of the practising sorceress, is much harder to parallel. It cannot, I believe, be found in Euripides or in Ovid. In Pindar's *Fourth Pythian* we do meet a *victimized* Medea (indeed she is the victim, as opposed to the manipulator, of the *iunx*) but we are given little sense of the manner in which she practises her arts and certainly no sense of any controlled composure on her part.[11] In Seneca, Medea is fuelled by a constant supply of highly enriched, weapons-grade *furor* in her supra-normal practices: for example, the Nurse says: 'Vidi furentem saepe et aggressam deos, / caelum trahentem' ['I have often seen her in fury and assailing the gods, drawing down the sky'] (673–74). The same *furor* is present in her frenzied personal emotions: 'Quonam cruenta maenas / praeceps amore saevo / rapitur? Quod impotenti / facinus parat furore?' ['Whither is this blood-stained maenad carried away headlong by crazed passion? What crime is she preparing with uncontrolled fury?'] (849–52). Seneca, that is, presents us with a *continuity* of Medea's

temperament between furious sorceress and furious and vengeful victim rather than with a juxtaposition between composed sorceress and distraught, oscillating, wronged woman.

However, I believe we do find something similar to Apollonius' specific polarity in iconography. Several images of Medea depict her being driven to violent action because of her domestic turmoil. One example is a Campanian amphora (now in the Louvre, K 300), which represents Medea grasping her son by the hair and stabbing him to death; another is a vase which shows Medea fleeing from Theseus after she has attempted to poison him (Figure 2.1),[12] a scene captured also in another image, this time on an Apulian *krater* (Figure 2.2), where Medea's gestures indicate her agitation as Aigeus recognizes Theseus. However, on another set of images we find the composed Medea, the Medea who is capable of maintaining a state of poised self-control while exercising her uncanny powers. For example, on another Apulian *krater*, this time housed in Naples (Figure 2.3), while Jason struggles to subdue one of the fire-breathing bulls, Medea looks on calmly, holding plants which symbolize one of the means through which she exercises her uncanny power; on yet another fine *krater*, again in Naples (Figure 2.4), the serpent guarding the Golden Fleece licks a potion offered to it by the assured Medea; or else, as on a *hydria* in the British Museum, Medea sprinkles herbs into a cauldron to rejuvenate an old ram (Figure 2.5) — the same cauldron into which Pelias will be induced to step, only to end up as goulash; again, as on the famous Talos vase in Ruvo di Puglia, she is shown launching deathly glances at Talos while holding a container which symbolizes her uncanny power. It looks, then, as if we have found something comparable in iconography to Apollonius' 'specific' polarity. However, one other strand of Medea's iconography complicates the picture, since it effectively combines, within one and the same representation, both Medea in the act of exercising magical superiority and Medea in implied vigorous movement: namely the image of *aerial flight*. (Agreed, flight represents a different order of supra-human capability from that displayed by Medea in her magically agonistic mode but still, even granted that it is the serpents which have wings and not she herself, flight does set Medea uncannily apart from the humans with whom she has been interacting.) One Roman sarcophagus (*c.*180 AD; in the Antikenmuseum Basel) depicts the serpent-borne chariot in which Medea bears the corpse of one of her children slung dramatically over her shoulder: it is an image which, far from separating the Medea of domestic turmoil from the Medea of controlling, superhuman power, emphasizes what amounts to an identity between the two. In very different style is a Lucanian *krater* in Cleveland, probably the best-known of all representations of Medea in flight (Figure 2.6), an image which gives us, first, the controlling sorceress; second, the visible results of the domestic chaos which she has precipitated; and, third, the representation of movement through aerial flight. This image, too, like the sarcophagus, seems *prima facie* to be going against an Apollonius-type disjunction between movement and magic; yet perhaps, at least in this vase-painting, we can also detect a qualified *similarity* with Apollonius: note how Medea the controlling sorceress is hermetically sealed off, by the ring of Helios's rays, from the Corinthian family disaster below. (We might recall Apollonius' description of Medea's departure from the Colchian

Fig. 2.1 (above). *Medea pursued by Theseus*, Attic pelike (*c.*450 BC), VAS 2354; © Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek, Munich, photograph by Renate Kühling

Fig. 2.2 (below). *Medea's attempted poisoning of Theseus fails*, Apulian krater (*c.*380 BC), inv.-no. AV 179; © Hessische Hausstiftung, Museum Schloss Fasanerie, Eichenzell/Fulda (Germany)

Fig. 2.3 (above). *Jason, bull, Medea*, Apulian krater (*c.* 370 BC), inv.-no. 2413, Naples, Museo Nazionale Archeologico

Fig. 2.4 (below). *Medea (left), serpent guarding the Golden Fleece, Jason*, krater from Paestum (*c.* 320–310 BC), inv.-no. T82126, Naples, Museo Nazionale Archeologico

Fig. 2.5 (above). *Medea rejuvenating a ram*, hydria (480–470 BC), inv.-no. E163; © Trustees of the British Museum

Fig. 2.6 (below). *Medea in flight*, attributed to Policoro Painter (Italian), *Lucanian Calyx-Krater* (*c.* 400 BC), h. 50.5 cm, red-figure earthenware with added white, red, yellow, and brown wash. The Cleveland Museum of Art. Leonard C. Hanna Jr., Fund 1991.1

palace on her mule-cart: not static but in control.) Overall, then, iconography can yield a partial parallel for Apollonius' specific polarity but not a complete one.

The idea of Medea's aerial flight will steer us towards the final part of this essay. Medea's flight is a recurring theme in many versions of her story. In Ovid she first flies for nine days and nine nights from Iolkos in search of magic herbs; then, after the daughters of Pelias have put their father into the casserole, she flies to Corinth (looking down, as she does so, on the locations of numerous previous metamorphoses and thus reminding us that flight constitutes for Medea an alternative to the different form of escape represented by metamorphosis); then she takes off yet again on the short flight to Athens.[13] Euripides and Seneca give us finales in which Medea appears above the stage *preparing* to fly off.[14] In Euripides, the fact that she retains her children's corpses in the chariot symbolizes her continuing emotional attachment to them;[15] in Seneca, her gesture of dropping the children's bodies down onto the hapless Jason — with the words 'recipe iam natos, parens' [Receive your children now, you who are their father] — suggests that, whatever else the Senecan Medea may be, she is no longer a mother.[16]

Now a Medea in aerial flight is not the Medea of Apollonius: in Apollonius she translocates by conventional means. Yet translocate she does, in Apollonius and in every other ancient telling of her myth. This brings me to my final point, which concerns what seems to me to be a notable difference between Medea and other ancient sorceresses. It is a difference concerning, once more, movement. Typically, ancient sorceresses use their special powers to manipulate substances in the world in order to produce astonishing effects. They employ the same household items as do ordinary, domesticated women: cups, bowls, cauldrons, clothes, containers such as chests or baskets, normally for storing food or for other everyday commodities. However, sorceresses distort the purpose of these objects. Circe uses a cup not to sustain her guests but to transform them into animals.[17] The bowl used by Theocritus' Simaetha stands as the focus for an act of symbolic dragging of the beloved to the lover.[18] In Sophocles' *Trachiniae* the unwitting sorceress Deianeira keeps a deadly robe smeared with Nessus' poisoned blood concealed in a casket.[19]

Where does the Medea of the ancient tradition stand in relation to these other female possessors of uncanny powers? In many ways she is typical. In her attempt to poison Theseus she uses a jug and a cup; with the daughters of Pelias she sprinkles *pharmaka* into a cauldron; to dispose of Apsyrtos, and later of Jason's Corinthian wife, she uses enticing robes; she habitually keeps her *pharmaka* in a casket; and a box with mysterious contents is her regular attribute in visual imagery. Add to this her use of the bewitching gaze and her invocations of Hecate and we seem to have a sorceress who is the complete article. Yet Medea also has one quality which makes her *un*typical.

Of all ancient sorceresses, Medea moves her base of operations the most often. Circe's home may be located by different myth-tellers in different parts of the world, but at home is where she stays. Theocritus' Simaetha also works from home: she repeatedly invokes the *iunx* to bring that man '*emon poti doma*' [to my house].[20] Deianeira has moved from her father's home to Heracles' but that is the extent of her wanderings. Lucan's ghastly witch Erichtho is Thessalian to the core of her

hideous being.[21] Medea, by contrast, is a compulsive mover: from Colchis to Iolkos to Corinth to Athens, and back to Colchis. As the Senecan Medea puts it to Jason: 'Fugimus, Iason, fugimus; hoc non est novum / mutare sedes' ['We are fleeing Jason, fleeing; changing our home — this is nothing new'].[22] She may use robes as enticements, but she has not woven them on her own loom; she may stir ingredients into a cauldron, but she does so in another woman's kitchen. From the day she leaves Colchis, the principal moments in her career when she is able to impose some measure of control over her continually displaced existence are moments of magical self-composure. At these moments she takes charge of her own destiny and that of others, by bending the world to her will. The irony — and in some narratives it is a tragic irony — is that it is precisely the uncanny deeds which she accomplishes, with total success, during those brief interludes, that drive her headlong to flee, and sometimes to fly, from one stage of her extraordinary career to the next.

Earlier in this essay I described Medea as 'the unmoved mover', a phrase with evidently Aristotelian, and theological, overtones.[23] This expression was designed to act as a hint that movement and stillness might be mapped onto a much more general issue, relating to the representation of power in Greece in terms of two contrasting models. On the one hand, there is the capacity to move effortlessly and instantaneously, a capacity which the gods display on countless occasions, shifting at will their physical location and their physical form. On the other hand, in a less widespread but still influential tradition, we find an association between the highest divine authority and *im*movability.[24] This occurs not just in Aristotle but also in the pre-Socratic philosopher Xenophanes, for whom '[god] always [...] remains in the same place, moving not at all; nor is it fitting for him to go to different places at different times, but without toil he shakes all things by the thought of his mind'.[25] Even more intriguingly, in the Pythagorean table of opposites *rest* appears on the same side of the table as male, right, light and good, whereas *motion* is located in the company of female, left, dark and bad.[26] To all this we may add the numerous images which show a person in a dominant social position *seated*, as opposed to standing or moving.

These issues might be addressed as part of the following framework. There exists in every culture a rich and complex repertory of symbolic/expressive modes upon which members of that culture may draw in order to represent their experience. One of these modes can be visualized as a spectrum ranging from composed stillness to frantic movement. Different artists or writers can exploit this opposition differently. In the specific case which we are discussing, the poles of the spectrum may, for example, be used as Apollonius uses them, to highlight a contrast between two aspects of the same character; here the spectrum intersects with the notion of 'magic', since magical control is associated with stillness. However, the poles may also be used in quite different ways: for instance, in the case of characters such as the mourning, motionless Achilles or Niobe, their stillness represents a kind of 'degree zero' of engagement with the world, symbolizing not so much control as rejection. Again, as we have just noted, the stillness/movement opposition offers contrasting ways of imagining the power of divinities. It would thus be quite wrong to claim for this opposition a univocal meaning even within the limited context of

one culture, let alone more broadly, let alone universally. A more reasonable claim, however, is the one made in this essay, that of attempting to shed some light on the way this opposition is used in certain specific literary and visual contexts.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. Here and subsequently I gratefully draw on the translation by R. Hunter, *Apollonius of Rhodes: Jason and the Golden Fleece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); however, I also make many adaptations to it, often in order to render the Greek more literally.
2. From now on all line references will be to Book 3 unless otherwise specified.
3. This quicksand has brought about the downfall of many victims; for a guide one may consult for example Robert L. Fowler, 'Greek Magic, Greek Religion', in *Oxford Readings in Greek Religion*, ed. by Richard Buxton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 317–43. Fortunately, I believe that the argument of the present essay does not necessitate any addition to the enormous quantity of discussions of the definition of magic.
4. Malcolm Campbell, *Studies in the Third Book of Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1983), p. 66.
5. For a detailed analysis of this episode see Richard Buxton, 'The Myth of Talos', in *Monsters and Monstrosity in Greek and Roman Culture*, ed. by Catherine Atherton (Bari: Levante Editori, 2002), pp. 83–112.
6. See e.g. Daniel Ogden, 'Binding Spells: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls in the Greek and Roman Worlds', in *Athlone History of Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*, by Valerie Flint and others (London: Athlone Press, 1999), pp. 1–90 (pp. 26–29).
7. Cf. David R. Jordan, 'New Archaeological Evidence for the Practice of Magic in Classical Athens', in *Praktika of the 12th International Congress of Classical Archaeology*, 4 vols (Athens: Ypourgeio Politismou kai Epistimon, 1988), vol. IV, 273–77.
8. On the notion of magical 'dragging' or 'drawing down', see e.g. Aristoph. *Clouds* 749–50; Plato *Gorg.* 513a; Hor. *Ep.* 5.45–46; Verg. *Ecl.* 8.69; Sen. *Med.* 674; Luc. 6.499–500. *Iunx*: A. S. F. Gow, 'Ἴυγξ, ῥόμβος, *rhombus, turbo*', in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 54 (1934), 1–13; V. Pirenne-Delforge, 'L'Iynge dans le discours mythique et les procédures magiques', *Kernos*, 6 (1993), 277–89; Sarah Iles Johnston, 'The Song of the *Iynx*: Magic and Rhetoric in *Pythian* 4', *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 125 (1995), 177–206.
9. Eyes: Matthew Dickie, 'Talos Bewitched', in *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar*, ed. by Francis Cairns and Malcolm Heath (Leeds: Cairns, 1990), VI, 267–96; Richard Buxton, 'Les Yeux de Médée', in *La Magie: Actes du colloque international de Montpellier, 25–27 mars 1999*, ed. by Alain Moreau and Jean-Claude Turpin, 4 vols (Montpellier: Université de Montpellier III, 2000), II, 265–75.
10. Carole E. Newlands, 'The Metamorphosis of Ovid's Medea', in *Medea: Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy, and Art*, ed. by James J. Clauss and Sarah Iles Johnston (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 178–208 (p. 207).
11. Pind. *Pyth.* 4.213–19.
12. The scene has been plausibly identified as Theseus-and-Medea by Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, *Theseus as Son and Stepson* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1979), pp. 35–47.
13. Ov. *Met.* 7.234–36, 350–92, 398–99.
14. Eur. *Med.* 1321–22; Sen. *Med.* 1022–27.
15. Eur. *Med.* 1402–04.
16. Sen. *Med.* 1024.
17. See, for example, the illustration of Circe holding a cup and stirring the contents amid a group of already metamorphosed humans (Attic black-figure cup, Boston Museum of Fine Arts 99.518).
18. Theoc. *Id.* 2.2.
19. Soph. *Trach.* 692.
20. Theoc. *Id.* 2.17 etc.
21. E.g. Luc. 6.485–86, 589.
22. Sen. *Med.* 447–48; cf. 1022: 'sic fugere soleo' ['this is how I am accustomed to flee'].

23. Cf. Arist. *Ph.* 258b10ff; Geoffrey E. R. Lloyd, *Aristotle: The Growth and Structure of his Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 140–42; Bernd Manuwald, *Studien zum Unbewegten Beweger in der Naturphilosophie des Aristoteles*, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, 9 (Mainz: F. Steiner, 1989), p. 9.
24. For some excellent preliminary remarks see Werner Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), pp. 44–45.
25. KRS (= Geoffrey S. Kirk, John E. Raven and Malcolm Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983)), fr. 171.
26. KRS, ibid., fr. 438.

Unbinding Medea

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EDITED BY HEIKE BARTEL AND ANNE SIMON

LEGENDA

Modern Humanities Research Association and Maney Publishing
2010

Published by the
Modern Humanities Research Association and Maney Publishing
1 Carlton House Terrace
London SW1Y 5AF
United Kingdom

LEGENDA is an imprint of the
Modern Humanities Research Association and Maney Publishing

Maney Publishing is the trading name of W. S. Maney & Son Ltd,
whose registered office is at Suite 1C, Joseph's Well, Hanover Walk, Leeds LS3 1AB

ISBN 978-1-906540-53-1

First published 2010

Printed in Great Britain

Cover: 875 Design

Copy-Editor: Richard Correll