2018

The Murdering Mother: The Making and Unmaking of Medea in Ancient Greek Image and Text

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Senior Project Submitted to

The Division of Languages and Literature

of Bard College

by

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May 2018

This project is dedicated to my grandmother, Annette Prince, who has been there since the beginning, telling me “go Homer!”

Acknowledgements

There are many people without whom I could not have produced a senior project quite like this.

First and foremost, my advisor, Rob Cioffi, whose patience and guidance were instrumental during this process. Thank you for helping me bring my ideas to the page and your continuous support these last four years.

Thank you to Daniel Mendelsohn and Diana DePardo Minsky, for taking the time to read my project, sit on my board, and provide invaluable support. It has been an honor to have worked with both of you during my Bard career.

I also owe many thanks to Lauren Curtis, who all those many moons ago encouraged me to try a Classics course and has been a source of support and advice ever since.

To the entire Classics department, thank you for welcoming and supporting me throughout my time here.

Thank you to my sister in Senior Project, Adela Foo, for being a constant rock, cheerleading squad, and support system all in one. I could not have done this without you.

To Sigi Nielsen, you have been there since the very beginning; L and T to Senior Project. Thank you wouldn't begin to cover how grateful I am for your company, support, and unfailing ability to make me laugh uncontrollably. Thank you for being my partner in crime on this crazy ride.

To Jules Capuco, for sitting next to me in Olin 102 during my sophomore year and haven't left my side since. Thank you for staying up late to listen to me, your advice and encouragement, and knowing what I needed, before I realized it myself. The phone calls, dinners, and late night drives meant the world.

To all my dear friends who have listened, supported, and cried with me, my eternal thanks for being my second family.

Thank you to my loving and wonderful family, both near and far, who have always given me the strength and encouragement I needed.

Most of all, thank you to my parents, Rosanne and Allan Lauber, you have given me everything and none of this would have been possible without you. Your unconditional love and support have been the backbone of my Bard career. "Thank you" could never express the amount of gratitude I have for you.

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Introduction

"The beginnings of the Medea story seem, in outline, to be very simple. A dashing young prince, oppressed by his wicked uncle…was sent off on a deadly mission: he must sail to the very edge of the world, passing various terrific perils, there to find, and to bring home, a marvelous Golden Fleece." [1]

Yukio Ninagawa's 1984 production of the Euripidean tragedy, *Medea*, encompasses Medea at her worst. It is a bloody, violent, visceral performance, adopting language and costume to better reflect Japanese culture. This production is also evocative of Medea. The small scope of Medea's portrayal in modernity, encompasses the qualities of Medea that have defined her since the first known introduction in c.700 BCE. Ninagawa's tragedy was a collision of East and West; the play itself is a western invention but the East heavily influenced the artistic direction. Medea is exactly that, a combination of East and West, and furthermore, an example of the East looking back to a character who is prominently described as being distinctly other. This production focused on highlighting the vengeful, violent nature of Euripides' version of Medea, as modernity sees her, as a savage, barbarian, and murderous mother. If this is the imagery of Medea's narrative that is left in the collective mind of society, it is very telling of what has remained from antiquity.

That is only one version of the story; Medea's narrative is actually more convoluted than meets the eye. In Pindar Medea speaks like a hero to a boat full of men, although she is a female and does not exist in this space. [2] In Euripides' play, *Medea*, she is a murdering mother. Apollonius constructs a different story in which she plays a helpful sorceress. On sixth and fifth century Attic Greek vases she is depicted in the varying stages of her myth. All of these different

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[1] *Looking at Medea: Essays and a Translation of Euripides' Tragedy,* Griffin (2014) 11

[2] Edith Hall, "The Sociology of Athenian Tragedy.", (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 120-122.

authors and artists construct a character that does not fit into a box. This project proposes that Euripides's *Medea* and Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*, the two-best-known works depicting her story, are in dialogue not only with each other but also with the pre-Euripidean mythological history of Medea. These late narratives rely on the various constructions of her myth to compose a character whose versions of herself are not easily reconcilable. This project will delve into the visual and textual depictions of Medea, spanning antiquity from c. 700 BCE to the third century BCE, looking at uses of reception and a utilization of her history as a means of constructing this enigmatic figure.

In the two latest portrayals of her character, Medea takes a central albeit different role in each. In Euripides' tragedy, she is characterized as a murdering mother whose mental stability is on the verge of utter collapse. In essence, she portrays the archetype of the crazed, emotional woman. The role she plays in the *Argonautica* is quite different. In the epic, she can arguably be seen as a hero of sorts, and she acts as a key figure in completing the epic quest set forth in the text. Two disparate roles, but the same mythological figure in each.

Throughout the textual and visual depictions of Medea, there are certain qualities that persist. These Medean qualities as I call them are as follows: trickery, otherness and foreignness, femininity, violence and murder, a connection with Jason, and sorcery. These traits of Medea have been associated with her in some fashion throughout the various interpretations of her story. I define trickery as her penchant for clever acts and deceiving people, typically with malicious intentions. Her otherness and foreignness are defined by both a tendency in antiquity to "other" anyone who is not from Athens. [3] As she is from Colchis, she is considered distinctly other or foreign. Her femininity is a product of her gender. I associate her with violence and murder as

[3] Edith Hall, "The Sociology of Athenian Tragedy.", 119

she is documented, in both vase painting and in text, as a murderer. Her connection with Jason is a hallmark of her narrative and characterization, and their relationship is one of the earliest Medean qualities documented in Hesiod's *Theogony*, the earliest extant reference to Medea. Finally, Medea is a known sorceress, and this trait can be traced back through her lineage as she is a niece of Circe. While these qualities are not the only ones associated with Medea's character, these are the ones that I deem the most important when constructing her narrative through a lens of reception.

In this project, I build upon previous scholarship and technique. Through the lens of reception, I base my technique off of work done by Ralph Hexter. [4] I use his method of reception in literary history as I embark chronologically through Medea's history. When I refer to her mythological backstory or background, I refer to what has come before the text or vase I am engaging with. This allows me to gain an understanding of what came before and during the production of the vase or text and how they engage with the past material. An important note must be made that I base some arguments on the extant material that I have access to. I work with some fragmentary sources in chapter one, but it is more than entirely possible that there are lost vases and texts that depict even more stories regarding the myth of Medea. I also heavily rely on the work of Donald Mastronarde whose argument has lead me to ask the questions on which this project is based, "Medea had a significant role in a number of famous stories, but in archaic times and in the fifth century each episode was usually treated as relatively self-standing, and there was no compiled life of Medea in which all incidents had to be brought into logical harmony." [5]

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[4] Ralph Hexter, *Classics and the Uses of Reception* (Oxford: Blackwell), 22-31.
[5] Donald Mastronarde, *Medea, Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 45.

Chapter one is a survey of 45 Greek vases that I have cataloged and sorted by my own typology. [6] [7] For my vase research, I consulted the work of John Beazley. The vases within this project were found by the online database run by the University of Oxford which uses his categorization and work. I also consulted the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* for additional research and categorization on these Greek vases. Within this chapter, I will also read the vases in conjunction with the extant texts that predate Euripides' tragedy. This method is based on Michael Squire's philosophy on reading text and image together, as that is how it was most likely understood in antiquity. [8] Using his methods, I look at both text and image together in this chapter as a way of looking at reception and use of history to characterize Medea. Within this chapter, I engage with Hesiod's *Theogony*, Pindar's *Ode 4*, and Sophocles fragmented play *The Colchian Women*. This chapter serves as the foundation for most of the arguments in the rest of my project. It engages with the pre-Euripidean history of Medea, which encompasses all existing texts and vases before the production of Euripides' play. 431 BCE. It acts as a survey to attempt to see what Euripides had prior knowledge of before his production. While the textual evidence pre-Euripides is small, the vases in conjunction in the text will construct an early narrative from which the Medean qualities can be extracted. I aim to lay out the framework from the extant sources to interpret how Medea was portrayed pre-Euripides.

Chapter two concerns itself with the Euripidean tragedy and the vases that are contemporary with its production. Euripides' *Medea* is one of the two best known works

[6] Refer to Appendix 1
[7] I will go into the details of each of the six types in chapter 1.
[8] Michael Squire, *Image and Text in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

depicting Medea.[9] The plot of Euripides's Medea depicts Medea as the jaded wife of Jason, as he has run off with another woman. This version of Medea murders her two children with Jason as a way to mirror his betrayal and to exact revenge on him by killing off his heirs. Within this chapter, I trace the qualities of foreignness, femininity, a penchant for violence and murder, and her connection with Jason within this text. I will also argue that Euripides supposedly innovative play is in reality composed of previously documented material that he uses to craft his own version of Medea.

Chapter three discusses Apollonius of Rhode's *Argonautica,* the second of the two best known portrayals of the Medea myth. [10] The plot of the Hellenistic epic concerns itself with the myth of Jason and the Argonauts and their quest for the Golden Fleece, a myth that has its roots in the Greek canon long before the third century BCE. During this quest, Jason encounters Medea whose sorcery and trickery are crucial in completing this task and in gaining the Golden Fleece. Without her, the quest could not be completed and Jason would not become a king. Later in the epic, ideas of Medea's murderous and trickster qualities come to fruition within the myth of Pelias and the ram. The myth of Pelias is explicitly portrayed in numerous fifth century Athenian vases. After this point in antiquity, when her myth becomes more widespread and recognizable, she will always be known as, "the young witch from the land of Colchis, the princess of the breed of the Sun, who falling in love with the Greek hero, enabled him to win the

[9] For this project, I consulted the translation of *Medea* by Eleanor Wilner and Ines Azar. I felt this translation was the most evocative when it came to the portrayal of Medea. However, I did consult other translations before choosing this one. Please consult my bibliography for the other translations.

[10] For this project, I consulted the translation of the *Argonautica* by Aaron Poochigian. Similarly, to the *Medea* translation I chose, I felt this translation gave an evocative treatment of Medea. I also consulted other translations for the *Argonautica*. Please consult my bibliography for the other translations.

Golden Fleece and sailed away with him as his bride." [11] Corollary to my argument in chapters two and three, I will explore precisely how *Medea* and the *Argonautica* are rooted in the ancient myth of Medea.

I claim that Medea's narrative remains steeped in the history and backstory of her mythological past, regardless of artistic and authorial interference. The Medea of Euripides' *Medea* and the one of Apollonius's *Argonautica* are upon first glance dramatically different. Euripides' version of Medea portrays an exiled princess who is vengeful, violent, and spiteful. A century or so later, Apollonius creates his own Medea, a princess on the verge of exile who is naïve, love-struck, but also powerful in sorcery. These two figures connect some point as they are both facets of the same mythological woman. In my project, I aim to reconcile the two most famous portrayals of Medea by examining how the authors and artists of the Classical world engage with her mythological past and each other's own creations to create a multi-faceted myth of Medea.

[11] R.M. Henry, "Medea and Dido.", (1930) 98.

Chapter One: Survey of Pre-Euripidean Depictions of Medea

This chapter will go through the chronological pre-Euripidean history of the myth of Medea. I will not be separating the textual and visual sources, but rather reading them in conjunction with each other. However, even though I am agnostic in medium, I will be going chronologically. As I mentioned in my introduction, it will also be following the method used by Michael Squire who highlights the importance of reading text and image alongside each other, as this was the most likely the way it was read in antiquity. [12]

"As for Medea, the princess, whose story predates Homer, she continued to inspire both fascination and fear, the leading character in further plays and epic poems, the heroine of operas and films, but always remembered above all as the protagonist of Euripides' tragedy"[13] As David Studdard writes in the introduction to *Looking at Medea*, a comprehensive anthology of essays on this enigmatic mythological figure, Medea's story predates that of Euripides's play. When most people think of Medea, the Euripidean tragedy comes to mind, however that is not where her story starts. Before there was Euripides' Medea, there was a long-storied history of her. Her myth has various facets and reconfigurations. In this chapter I will explore the pre-Euripidean Medea by surveying every extant mention of Medea in both image and text that occurs before 431 BCE, the date of Euripides' play.

The survey will reveal the following notions. First, it will show all of the extant depictions, variations, and interpretations of Medea previous to that of Euripides. This will paint

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[12] Squire, *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*

[13] David Stuttard, *Looking at Medea: Essays and a Translation of Euripides' Tragedy*, (Bloomsbury, 2014), 10.

a narrative picture of Medea previous to 431 BCE.[14] Secondly, it will also reveal what Euripides, and by extension Athenian culture, knew of her story previous to his production. I will work with these two methods to build an exact narrative of Medea I will then use this pre-Euripidean portrait to see how her narrative has been reinterpreted and or what has remained consistent throughout the various depictions of her myth. From this survey, I will establish a foundation for her myth that I will subsequently draw on throughout my project.

Medea's narrative remains steeped in the history and backstory of her mythological past, no matter how her tale had been constructed by artists and authors. The Medea of Euripides' *Medea* and the one of Apollonius' *Argonautica*, are upon first glance, dramatically different. Euripides' depicts Medea as an exiled princess who is vengeful, violent, and spiteful. A century or so later, Apollonius creates his own Medea, a princess on the *verge* of exile who is naive, love-struck, but also powerful in sorcery. These two figures must eventually converge, as they are both facets of the same mythological woman.

The mentions of Medea that exist previous to Euripides's tragedy *Medea* are spread across both text and art. The works of Hesiod, Pindar, and Sophocles mention Medea in various stages of her myth. Hesiod reflects upon both the early start of Medea by listing her familial relationships and her relationship to the myth of Jason, the first traceable depiction of this powerful couple. Pindar also writes about Medea in relation to Jason. However, he places her in a vastly more active, and thus important role, laying the foundation for how she will later act towards the Argonauts in Apollonius's text. Sophocles' references to Medea only survive in fragments, but they hint at the murderous and trickster qualities of Medea. Her presence in his *oeuvre* suggests that there was a steadied and consistent interest in Medea's myth. In addition to

[14] Euripides, *Medea*, trans, Eleanor Wilner and Ines Azar, (University of Penn. Press, 1997), 2.

these textual sources, Sixth, Fifth, and Fourth century Athenian Greek vases also depict Medea at various stages of her myth, chiefly the story of Pelias, the ram, and Medea. In fact, the forty-five vases that I catalog comprise the bulk of the evidence for Medea prior to Euripides' play. Throughout the chapter I argue that the vases and texts are in constant dialogue with one another.

Using both text and image, as a way of reading the various myths of Medea, I claim that there are certain Medean qualities that are deeply attested in her historical backstory. As I shall argue in subsequent chapters, these will continue to follow her long after the 5th century BCE. The qualities are as follows: trickery, otherness, femininity, violence and murder, connection with Jason, sorcery, and the figure of anti-hero.[15] These qualities, along with the authors and artists that engage with Medea, construct a patchwork of a figure with a deeply rich, while simultaneously confusing and contradictory, portrait. As Donald Mastronarde writes, "Medea had a significant role in a number of famous stories, but in archaic times and in the fifth century each episode was usually treated as relatively self-standing, and there was no compiled life of Medea in which all incidents had to be brought into logical harmony." [16] Her story is not linear, and is typically haphazard, and as such we have to piece together the image of Medea prior to Euripides. This framework of source was what Euripides looked to when producing his famous play, as the evidence in this chapter predated the tragedy. Apollonius of Rhodes' epic follows

[15] The naming and importance of these qualities has been decided by me. However, there are other scholars who see other Medean qualities as of equal importance. For example, as Carmel McCallum-Barry writes, " So from the seventh century at least, her divine ancestry, connection with Jason's quest, and expertise with herbs and rejuvenation are part of her mythological portrait." While these qualities are nonetheless important, and I will discuss how these factors play into her mythological construction. They are not, in my view, as important. Carmel McCallum-Barry, "Medea Before and (a little) After Euripides.", (Bloomsbury, 2014), 25.
[16] Mastronarde, *Medea*, *Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics* , 45.

Euripides' depiction of Medea creating an even richer and deeper framework than Euripides play possessed. [17]

The framework provided by these early sources creates a figure eerily similar to the Medea of Euripides and Apollonius of Rhodes.[18] The figure that emerges from this early network of depictions is a mother who is considered to be a sorcerer or witch- and is very crafty with these gifts, with a strong connection to Jason and his shipmates. She is also of noble birth and has documented gods in her lineage.

The vases depicting the mythology of Medea can be sorted into six distinct types. In terms of the vases, there are explicit types in which I sort these vases. The first, and most prolific typology illustrates Medea, Pelias, and the ram. This type has been produced numerous times with some slight variations. Type two shows Theseus and the bull with Medea; this vase typically has the myth of Theseus and the bull alongside or near an image of Medea. The third type pictures Medea and Jason, a visual depiction of a myth that is deeply portrayed in textual sources. The fourth type illustrates a trope invented by Euripides, that of Medea in flight. This vase type will be discussed in a later chapter as those vases were produced alongside the work of Euripides and not before it. The fifth type is a sort of catch-all typology, containing vases in it that depict Medea as oriental, other, or as witch or sorceress. Medea is consistently shown as an outsider by the use of oriental dress. This is a trope pictured in the other types of vases as well and is not confined solely to this type. The sixth and final type of vase creates a relationship between Medea and snakes; an image of her otherness and irrationality, produced by one artist, the Cock group, during the mid 6th century BCE that depicts the head of Medea surrounded by

[17] I will discuss both Euripides and Apollonius's works in Chapters 2 and 3. It is important to mention their existence as they are the most famous works for which Medea is known for, and everything reflects back upon their work.

[18] This is, of course, not a surprise as Medea's rich history easily influenced both works.

snakes. I will discuss the vases in a chronological order, not by typological order as organized in the appendix. [19]

This chapter will chronologically explore through the various textual and visual sources that mention or depict Medea, at various stages of development, weaving together text and art. Text and image engaged directly with each other as narratives gained popularity in depicting the myth of Medea. This methodology is discussed at length by Michael Squire and also by Kathryn Topper who states, "images are analogous to language in the sense that both reveal the conceptual frameworks of the societies in which they operate; second, images, like words, bear a constructed relationship to lived experience." [20] [21] This way of reading will incorporate the development of Medea as her depiction is mirrored in both text and image through this pre-Euripidean time. The two mediums are telling the same story as they both further the development of the myth in the same way. Reading both text and art together provides a vibrant picture of someone who looks like the Medea figure of Euripides and Apollonius' works; a woman named Medea who is a mother, is associated with sorcery, trickery, and murder, with a strong connection to Jason. The two authors expand upon these qualities, but they exist prior to the production of Euripides.

[19] Refer to Appendix 1
[20] Squire, *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*
[21] Kathryn Topper, "Approaches to Reading Attic Vases.", (John Wiley and Sons, 2012), 142.

The Earliest Mentions of Medea: Hesiod's *Theogony*

The myth of Medea has its roots deep in Greek mythology through Hesiod's *Theogony*, one of the earliest written accounts in antiquity, where Medea is mentioned twice, indicating that she indeed may have had an earlier story or background. Her placement in this text asserts that her story carried enough importance to be remembered through Hesiod's encyclopedic epic of gods and mythological figures. [22] As Mastronarde writes in the introduction to his commentary on Euripides' Medea, her narrative is one with no cohesive storyline. [23] There is not one tale that can unanimously be connected to her, but her story has old links as she is mentioned within Hesiod. I argue that this is Medea at her "purest form." What I mean by that is prior to this mention by Hesiod, to our knowledge Medea has not been mentioned in any textual aspect. If this is her first introduction into classical literature and myth, she is at her purest form as there are no extant sources before Hesiod that reference Medea. Thus, Hesiod's work is a compilation of a Medean backstory that we have no knowledge of, and thus our purest form of her myth as it is the first. There will not be another point in Medea's mythological narrative where she is this "pure" as her history will always follow her and dictate her tale in some way. Hesiod's text establishes a foundational glimpse at Medea, informing how authors and artists to come will interpret her character. However, this brief look at Medea raises more questions about her

[22] Hesiod's *Theogony* comprised of a retelling of how the world came to be, discussing the familial lines of the Greek gods, heroes, and extremely important mortals including Medea. It is an extremely far-reaching and large-scale account of the vast variety of Greek characters that appear in the large canon of Greek mythology. Medea's presence in this sort of text highlights her importance in the greater narrative of Greek myth.

[23] Mastronarde, *Medea , Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics*

mythology. What was there of her story before her past plagued her? Did her typical associations and qualities exist right at her conception in literary myth? This is important because it means all stories and references to Medea must look back to this foundational narrative.

Medea is present in two sections of the *Theogony* in two parts. She appears within the discussion of the familial relationships of the important families of mythology. She also appears in a section discussing the important heroes of myth, a reference to her connection with Jason. Hesiod writes

> "For he finished his great work and lives amongst the undying gods, untroubled and unaging all his days. And Perseis, the daughter of Ocean, bore to unwearying Helios Circe and Aeetes the king. And Aeetes, the son of Helios who shows light to men, took to wife fair cheeked Idyia, daughter of Ocean the perfect stream, by the will of the gods: and she was subject to him in love through golden Aphrodite and bore him neat-ankled Medea" [24]

Here Hesiod recounts the linage of Medea and goes through the various marriages and people until the "neat-ankled Medea" is born. This passage describes the familial lines of Medea's ancestors in great detail, concluding with her name. Beyond the name of her parents and the epithet "neat-ankled", however, she is barely described. Her name—Μηδεια in Greek— may be understood as a "speaking name" that means "think or to plan."

Medea's placement in this catalogue is intriguing, ultimately implicating that her name carries enough importance for Hesiod to include her in his text. Above all, it implies that her story was important enough to include in this text. We learn few detail about Medea from the *Theogony*. As this text is primarily concerned with genealogy and familial lineages, Medea

[24] Hesiod, *The Homeric Hymns and Homerica*, trans, Hugh G. Evelyn-White, (Cambridge, USA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 955-962.

becomes a part of the catalog, and not a place to introduce any extreme qualities or personalities. Secondly, this could be attributed to the fact that this is Medea at the purest form and thus she has no identifying attributes or characteristics. Her genealogy as described by Hesiod establishes her status as a mere mortal; at this stage in her mythology she has no connections to Jason to equate her to the status of heroine, or at the very least the wife of a hero. She is simply "neat-ankled"; there are no indications of her skills as a sorceress.

However, she is placed here purposefully, perhaps she is a goddess, or at the very least immortal to be placed within this text. M.L. West observes, "Medea's place in this catalogue means that she is immortal. She is a heroine rather than a true goddess; she lived among men, she had a tomb."[25] West highlights two important ideas. Firstly, by explaining her place in Hesiod's work, he elevates her importance. This was a conscious choice on the part of Hesiod to place Medea in the large family tree that is the *Theogony* establishes her among the revered heroes of the time.

While West calls her a "heroine," [26] I argue that a more accurate title is anti-hero. When I call Medea an anti-hero it has more to do with her actual inability to become a hero rather than a hero who displays little to no heroic qualities. This titling of anti-hero comes from the later tradition of Medea's role in the *Argonautica*, not from Hesiod's passage as it stands in her chronology. For now, it is a fair assumption to call her a hero as we look only at her presence at this point in time. As she is from Colchis, an enemy of Athens, and is a female, she already has two strikes against her when considering what comprises a hero, epic or otherwise. She represents everything that typical heroes, such as her counterpart Jason, are not. This aspect of

[25] M.L. West, *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women: Its Nature, Structure, and Origins,* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1985), 429.
[26] Ibid., 429

Medea's character comes to fruition in the *Argonautica*, but Hesiod's introduction of her name and lineage lays the groundwork for her future depictions.

There are not one, but two references to Medea in this early catalogue. While the first mention is framed as a part of a family tree, the second is a more in-depth characterization of her:

> And the son of Aeson by the will of the gods led away from Aeetes the daughter of Aeetes the heaven-nurtured king, when he had finished the many grievous labours which the great king, overbearing Pelias, that outrageous and presumptuous doer of violence, put upon him. But when the son of Aeson had finished them, he came to Iolcus after long toil bringing the coy-eyed girl with him on his swift ship, and made her his buxom wife. And she was subject to Iason, shepherd of the people, and bore a son Medeus whom Cheiron the son of Philyra brought up in the mountains. And the will of great Zeus was fulfilled.[27]

Although never acknowledged by name, Medea is referred to in this passage as the "buxom wife" who is carried home on Jason's ship after the quest for the Golden Fleece, solidifying her connection with Jason and his quest for the fleece. Although her name is not mentioned, her child, Medeus, is presumably named after her. Jason is named later in this passage, but both he and Medea are both given placeholders in the first lines, as if to place less attention on the figures rather than the act itself, and more attention is on the child who is named later on. Considering the purpose of Hesiod's *Theogony* as a written account of genealogies, Medeus must be acknowledged by name as he is introduced to the mythic cannon detailing the heroics of his parents. Medea is the buxom wife, which calls to her maternal side; Jason is instead called "the

[27] Hesiod, *The Homeric Hymns and Homerica*, 98.

son of Aeson", a patronym which places him above Medea, who is not given a familial line. In this passage, Medea is subordinate to Jason, at one point, she is also referred to simply as the "subject to Iason". This passage, then, already lays bare the connection and association she has with Jason, which will become of the utmost importance in later works. Here, her best-known narrative is established as a defining mythology, forming her prominence in the mythological and heroic cannon. Hesiod lays the foundation for the connection between Jason and Medea, and thus introducing her defining characteristics of a murderous nature and her inclination to be an anti-hero.

Hesiod's depictions of Medea are significant in two ways. First, they establish her genealogy. Secondly, they provide a baseline from which to analyze Medea's character, without indication of her future mythology, allowing a study of her beginnings without any influence of previous myth. After this point, the figure of Medea will always have some sort of backstory. In subsequent translations of her myth, her past will follow her and, indeed, plague her, as she develops across the different media from the eighth to the third centuries BCE.As her story develops, her story grows in prominence in Greek mythology. Indeed, Hesiod will be the last time she is simply "neat-ankled Medea," known for a slim body feature, rather than her sorcery, her connection to Jason, or even her otherness. [28]The importance of Medea's epithet lies not in what a neat-ankle represents, but rather her association with a characteristic she will never again possess. On the other hand, this passage represents the true start of Medea and her defining tropes and qualities that are associated with her, including her connection with Jason, the anti-hero quality, and her femininity.

[28] As referenced in Hesiod's *Theogony*

Earliest Visual Representations of Medea

Along with the work of Hesiod, there are other very early depictions of Medea; these depictions happen on the facades of sixth century Greek vases. While these vases do appear contemporary with Hesiod, they are in between his work and Sophocles' work which comes during the fourth century. The vases that depict Medea fall into six categories that I have organized based on my own categorization and the earlier Medean qualities that I heightened earlier. I have provided a full collection of vases in the Catalog, and I refer to vases throughout the project by their reference in this Catalog. The types are sorted by their various snapshots of Medea in her myth. They move from the Medea, King Pelias, and ram myth to depictions of Medea as "other" based on oriental dress, then again towards depictions of Jason and Medea on vases. There is also a type that depicts Medea surrounded by snakes.

One group of vases, which I call Medea as Murderer Type 1 depicts the myth of Medea, King Pelias, and the ram. [29] Type 1 seems to be the most popular and prevalent just based on the level of production that we have seen in the extant vases. The number of extant vases we have also provides evidence that the notion of Medea as murderer was a popular and pervasive one. A prime example of this vase is Catalog 1, which is also one of the earliest known productions of Type 1, produced c. 550-500 BCE. [30] A black figure hydria, this vase, depicts man with white hair, and a white beard, both of which are all visual indicators of an older person. [31] Next to the

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[29] "Medea was responsible for Pelias' death by persuading his daughters to attempt to rejuvenate him" McCallum-Barry, "Medea Before and (a little) After Euripides.", 24.

[30] Catalog 1 in vase appendix

[31] Which betrays her gender as well due to women being considered indoor creates and pale skin highlights that, see Mary Ann Eaverly, *Tan Men/Pale Women: Color and Gender in Archaic Greece and Egypt, a Comparative Approach,* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013)

old man, who is seated, is a woman, who is also identified by her pale skin which betrays her gender as well due to women being considered indoor creatures and pale skin highlights that. This woman is facing the man behind her but her body and arm are faced the other way. Her left arm is outstretched over a cauldron, which rests on a body of logs and flames, and a horned ram is in the cauldron facing away from the woman with the outstretched arm. Next to the cauldron on the other side is another pale woman, arm raised parallel to the cauldron and head looking down. Behind her is a seated man in all black, tending to the flames. Catalog 1's lack of white-ground is important as it depicts what a typical man would look like on Greek vases.

This vase shows a standard portrayal of Type 1 in terms of form, context, and technique. The seated old man carries a staff, identifying him as Pelias. The woman with the outstretched arm can be identified as Medea through her orchestration of the event holding her arm over the cauldron. The other woman is most likely a daughter of Pelias, not always shown in Type One. [32] Prior knowledge of the myth of Medea, Pelias and the ram, alongside the visual indicators of Type 1, lead me to believe that the figures on the vase are Pelias and Medea. [33] Pelias, the old seated man whose attribute is his staff, is there. This vase is typical as it displays the common working of white-ground on black figure; the old man has his white beard, the women are stark white, and the typical male is black. This follows the typical protocol of working with black-figure, where white is needed to make these distinctions on vases.[34] Catalog 1 is also typical based on the actual depiction of the myth, it follows the standard protocol of women on Greek

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[32] Catalogs 3 4, 7, 9, 13, 18 in Appendix 1
[33] John Beazley has also categorized the figures on the vases to be Pelias and Medea. Please refer to the Beazley online database.
[34] Eaverly, *Tan Men/Pale Women: Color and Gender in Archaic Greece and Egypt, a Comparative Approach.*

vases in terms of form and context. [35] I will argue that while Catalog 1 is typical in terms of its use of black figure painting and the portrayal of women on vases, it is not typical of Type 1 with Medea.

This depiction lays out, as does the rest of Type 1, an artistic representation of the murderous qualities of Medea, one that Hesiod has not touched upon but that Sophocles will demonstrate later, approximately c. middle fifth century BCE, decades later after this vase was produced. There are other extant vases that follow this type as typical as well, such as Catalogs 2,13, 17. In all of these vases, the ram is turned away from Medea. My interpretation of this is that the ram is turned away because while Medea is not in any active manner acting like killing in the ram, her arm is outstretched displaying some level of action, but the ram is turned away from her. This vase type illustrates Medea's trickery and murderous nature, two qualities also depicted in the textual sources preceding of Euripides

There are, of course, some variations to the vases in Type 1. Catalog 3, 4, 7,8,9,10,12, and 18 are all variations of the same myth with the same intention: to depict Medea as a murderer, this notion is of course depicted in the later works of Sophocles. This variation depicts the same placement of the figures on the vase, but here the ram is turned towards Medea, even with an outstretched arm, and towards Pelias. I think this artistic choice is a way to represent Medea as a murderer without the explicit implication that she will harm the ram. Medea's act of murder here is not accomplished with the weapon of a man; rather in most of the vases she is holding some sort of flower or herb, an attribute of hers that indicates sorcery, another Medean quality being portrayed on the façade of these vases. [36] If the ram has no reason to be explicitly afraid of Medea, and she is simply holding a flower, he will not be afraid of her

[35] Topper, "Approaches to Reading Attic Vases."
[36] As per the *Lexicon Iconogrpahicum Mythologiae Classicae*

and will be turned around. This variation in the two "subtypes" of Type 1 is most intriguing because it has to do with the level of fear that Medea produces with her type of magic and murder. I will return to this theme when I discuss Euripides' *Medea* in Chapter 2.

Sophocles Fragments of *The Women of Colchis*

Sophocles' play is in fragments and thus there is not any extant non-fragmentary work that concerns itself until Pindar's *Odes.* Plainly, there are more visual sources than there are of textual ones, as these fragments are all we have left as modern readers. The fragmentary sources, coupled with the mention in Pindar, suggests there could be countless other works that were produced during this time that were either lost or destroyed in antiquity, or have not been discovered yet in modernity. Medea appears in Sophocles' fragmentary play, *The Women of Colchis*, there is not an exact date of production but is assumed to have been produced within Sophocles' life, c. 468 BCE to 406 BCE. An edition of the play appears in two collections of fragments, the *Epicorum Graecorum Fragmen*ta as well as the *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*. This play is the first witness to an aspect of the myth of Medea that will become important later, in which, according to Hugh Lloyd-Jones, Medea "protect[s] the Argonauts from the pursuit of the Colchians by killing her baby brother, Apsyrtus, and scattering his limbs either in the palace itself or at the later Tomis ("the cutting") on the Black Sea coast." [37] Such a narrative can be reconstructed from the fragments. For instance, this fragment appears to be part of a dialogue between Jason and Medea: "Do you swear you will return one favor for another?" [38] Here, Medea is saying this to Jason, but the only other fragments in the play that concern her, have to do with the killing of her brother. For instance, Sophocles writes, "I Sophocles in (his

[37] Sophocles, *Sophocles Fragments*, trans, Hugh Lloyd-Jones, (Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press) 186
[38] Ibid., 187

play) *Colchians* says that at the home of Aeetes her son (sc. Apsyrtos) was slain." [39] This play therefore is the first extant example of Medea murdering someone, in this case her baby brother. It is an important reference that lays the foundation for the murderess she will become when Euripides' conceives of his own version. What is interesting is that most of Type 1 was produced before the work of Sophocles, the first extant textual reference to Medea as a murderer, and perhaps Sophocles is building off the mythological development produced by this Type 1. As Type 1 is a visual depiction of murder, the act that Sophocles connects to Medea in his play.

[39] Generously translated by Robert Cioffi, line 343 of Sophocles fragments

Medea Becomes an Active Player in her own Narrative in Pindar

The most impactful example of the early history of the Medea myth is in Pindar *Phytian 4*, where Medea makes a rousing speech to Jason and the Argonauts:

> Here is Pindar's account of Medea:
>
> "Today, Muse, you must stand beside a man who is a friend, the king of Kyrene with its fine horses, so that while Arkesilas is celebrating you may swell the breeze of hymns owed to Leto's children and to Pytho , where long ago the priestess who sits beside the golden eagles of Zeus prophesized when Apollo was not away that Battos would be the colonizer of fruit-bearing Lybia and that he should at once leave the holy island to found a city of fine chariots on the white breast of a hill, and to fulfill in the seventeenth generation that word spoken on Thera by Medea, which the high-spirited daughter of Aietes and queen of the Kolchians had once breathed forth from her immortal mouth. Such were her words to the demigods who sailed with spear-bearing Jason: "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 with her a root of famous cities at the foundations of Zeus Ammon" [40]

[40] Pindar, *Pindar: Olympian Odes, Pythian Odes,* trans, William H. Race (Edinburgh, Scotland: St. Edmundsbury Press ,1997) , 261-263.

This is the first passage in which Medea explicitly speaks. Centuries after Hesiod in 462 BCE, she has gained greater agency in comparison to that very first mention. Medea's presence in the mythological canon has greatly increased with this inclusion from Pindar, as she has an incredibly active role and speaks freely. A conscious choice on the part of Pindar as this is the first mention.

In this passage by Pindar, she speaks as if she is a general or a captain of a ship, boosting morale and detailing their accomplishments, both current, past and future. She acts a "muse-like, oracular female" as Johnston argues that the passage conveys the "proper relationship that should exist between mortal male and muse-like, oracular female." [41] [42] Indeed, she shares many qualities with a muse: a rousing speech at the beginning of a long journey, a commanding voice that is omnipresent. She speaks directly to the men, calling them "sons of great-hearted men and gods." [43] However, if she were acting as a muse, it makes much more logical sense. While in the larger context of the poem, Medea is not the muse, in this section she acts in a similar fashion. There is the typical muse, called upon at the beginning of recitation of poems, of which Medea is not.

However, in this passage her speech and the conventions of it suggest that she is taking on a similar role to the crew. As I mentioned earlier she speaks as if she is the captain of this ship, leading it to safety, and effectively taking on the role typically reserved for a male, Jason in this specific passage. Johnson writes that she takes on a muse-like role, not the muse herself, and a captain of a ship can be contrived as a muse on the open waters. Muses function as guides, similarly to how a captain would function; they both lead their crew, poets and sailors

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[41] Sarah Lles Johnston, "Song of the Lynx: Magic and Rhetoric in Pythian 4." (1995), 178.
[42] Ibid,. 178.
[43] Pindar, *Pindar: Olympian Odes, Pythian Odes,* 263.

respectively, into safe passages. This is the moment where Medea comes into her role as the anti-hero, a role she will take on even more in the *Argonautica.* As I will demonstrate in Chapter 3, this speech lays the groundwork for heroic speech and rhetoric that she will capitalize upon in the *Argonautica.* Here, she leads men, rallies forces, speaks to the crew as if they were her own. While the view of Medea as a muse is a viable one, I believe she is acting more like a hero in this function. Muses speak to poets, or rather the other way around, but heroes speak to their men and rally them, much like Medea does in this passage. The way she functions in Pindar and later on in Apollonius, is the actions and words of a heroic figure. Due to Jason's lack of heroism, combined with her function, it is safe to say she possesses heroic tendencies. Calling her a hero is too much, because of her gender, but an anti-hero is very fitting alongside the image of the troubled Medea.

Helene Foley's work focuses on the acts of females in Greek tragedy. Her work on Medea specifically focuses on the notion of Medea having a "divided self" in the Euripidean tragedy. While her work is mostly concerned with Greek tragedy, her view of Medea being part heroic women and part hysterical mother can be applied. Foley is discussing Medea's divided self[44] within the confines of the *Medea* play, but the same theory can be applied to the Medea that is experienced in Pindar's odes Foley discusses the idea of Medea's divided self, a female and masculine side. [45] "Medea's female side", Foley writes, "is in this play not taken for granted but carefully defined through the relationship she creates with the chorus. Her heroic, masculine side only emerges explicitly in the speeches where Medea announces her revenge plans, although

[44] Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy.*
[45] This notion will later occur in scholarship on Medea in the *Argonautica*, where scholars argue that books 3 and 4 represent two different sides to Medea

it is implied to a lesser degree in her first and final forthright encounters with Jason." [46] Foley asserts that there are two sides to Medea, one that is feminine and the other masculine, I think that notion is correct as Medea cannot portray the hero, like she does in Pindar, if she is truly and only feminine.

There are no female heroes in Greek myth, that is a fact and is one that is based on the current societal tendencies of Athenian society. While there are certainly female heroic figures in Greek myth, Iphigenia, Andromache, Penelope, and Helen can all be considered female heroes, but females are not considered heroes in the sense of literary text. Females cannot be the lead heroes, they can have heroic actions and deeds but will never fully be considered as such in the text. She needs a masculine side, the correct vessel in which to be a hero, in order to take on that role. In my view, it is unacceptable to call her a hero for two reasons. First, while the division of self is in my view a correct notion to take on, there is nothing in Medea's actions that deploy her masculine side, at least in this passage from Pindar. Talking to the crew could be construed as a more masculine action but it is not something that is exclusively in the male realm, like murder is as Foley suggests. Thus, Medea as male is not a requirement for this to occur. Secondly, Medea cannot be called a hero, she is hero-like and her actions are heroic in nature, but there is no way she will ever be the hero of the story of Jason and the Argonauts. Her role as a female, and the fact she will never be a hero, makes me think she is more fitting for the role as anti-hero, especially when considering the other facets of her myth. Through this lens of the theory as Medea as an anti-hero, Pindar expresses Medea as a vital cog of this operation, a notion that Apollonius of Rhodes will expand on exponentially in his text. Here, with the active participation on the part of Medea, she transcends into a completely different role than was once prescribed;

[46] Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy* , 257-258.

she is now an incredibly active and engaged member of Greek mythology and this will lay the groundwork for that of Apollonius of Rhodes.

There is also another prominent feature in this passage by Pindar, there is no separating her narrative from Jason's, as was evident in Hesiod's in which she is his "subject". This passage from Pindar solidifies the pair not only in name alone but in narrative and speech. Their stories are connected, specifically for Medea, who is best known as the counterpart to Jason and has not been mentioned on her own since Hesiod called her "neat-ankled" Medea.[47]

It is also interesting to consider the naming here in this Pindaric passage. In the beginning she was just Medea, then buxom bride, then the subject of Jason, and here in Pindar's poem she is called two things: Medea and the Queen of the Colchians. This naming ultimately puts her on equal terms with Jason in terms of status and power as she is a royal name by birthright and he married into royalty, thus placing her status above his as she comes from royal blood. This is the first extant reference to her as a Queen. This act of naming adds another layer into the formation of Medea, as she is known in later works as a Queen, here is the first distinct mentioning of that feature.

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[47] Hesiod, *The Homeric Hymns and Homerica* ,962.

Medea's Mythic Depictions on 5th Century Athenian Vases

In the fifth century, Medea was a popular subject for vase painters, and her depiction on Athenian pottery reflect a similar evolution to that in Greek poetry. These vases are typically from 6th and 5th century Athens. I have already discussed the vases that were produced earlier, typically c.550-500 BCE. In Chapter 2, I will turn to some that are produced in the early 4th century, c. 350 BCE. The majority were typically produced during in fifth-century Athens. These vases display a variety of "snapshots" of the Medea myth on their facades, ranging from. All six types, I argue, are consistent with the same figure of Medea but they offer different depictions of her myth at different times which lay out the groundwork for different Medean qualities. In addition to my description and analyzation in this chapter, I have classified all the extant vases depicting Medea in the Catalog Appendix.

I have already discussed Type 1, as most of Type 1's production comes after Hesiod and before Sophocles, rendering a discussion of integration between text and image.

Type 2 is the Theseus and Medea type. This vase type typically depicts a man identified as Theseus and a woman, who is sometimes definitively explicitly labelled Medea, but other times has no label.[48]Some scholars identify this oriental woman as Medea due to the much later myth of Medea trying to poison Theseus, her step-son: "Sourvinou-Inwood had taken these later images to be Theseus seeking vengeance on Medea for the attempts to position him. However,

[48] Refer to the Beazley online database.

there is no literary or inscriptional evidence for such an encounter." [49] [50] While the identification of Medea because it lays out the foundation for two of her attributes, trickery and otherness.

A typical depiction of Type 2 is Catalog 22. [51] Here, Theseus, identified by his club and accompanied by a bull, appears to be in pursuit of some woman, whom I tentatively identify as Medea.[52] His arm is outstretched, his body in an active stance of coming after her. The woman's head is turned towards Theseus but her body is in the action of fleeing. She is wearing extravagant oriental wear and a headdress of sorts. [53] In her hand is a jar, which could also be seen as another possible indicator of Medea whose herbs and flowers are typically kept in a box or jug which represent her sorcery and affinity for magic.[54] However these attributes, are not enough to definitively identify this oriental woman as Medea, even though I consider it likely. Catalog nos. 24, 25, and 27 are all similar productions of Type 2. [55]

Type 3 is the "Jason and Medea" type. This is the first type we have seen that categorizes an actual mythic narrative on a vase, a narrative that connections have already been laid down previous to this types production but also that will later be handled in a much more direct form. There is text to match this visual production, the groundwork for their union has already been laid in textual references and now the visual is supporting the text. In this type 3, Medea is depicted as oriental and in elaborate garb, but there is no question of her identity as the connection with Jason is a solid line to follow. Catalog 32 is a prime example of this Type. In the

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[49] Oliver Taplin, *Pots and Plays: Interactions Between Tragedy and Greek Vase painting of the Fourth Century*, (Getty Publications, 2007), 28-34.
[50] Sourrvinou-Inwood, *Lexicon Iconogrpahicum Mythologiae Classicae*
[51] Refer to Appendix 1
[52] *Lexicon Iconogrpahicum Mythologiae Classicae*,
[53] *Lexicon Iconogrpahicum Mythologiae Classicae* also cites the use of a headdress as an indicator of Medea.
[54] Daniel Ogden, . *Magic, Witchcraft, and Ghosts*, (New York City, New York, USA: Oxford University Press, 2002)
[55] Refer to Appendix 1

center of the vase is a man who is tied up and in distress, due to inscriptions on the vase as well as visual attributes, this is identified to be Jason. On the far-right side is a woman who is dressed in elaborate non-Athenian wear and is holding some sort of jug. She also has a very detailed headdress on as well and her gaze is fixed to Jason in the center. The oriental wear, including the headdress, and the attribute of the jug as a symbol of her sorcery, combined with the definitive identification of Jason is all evidence to consider this oriental woman to be Medea. This is an important innovation as Catalog 32 is reinforcing her mythological development, both in text and image, while also laying the groundwork for future narratives, the connection between Jason and Medea as this is the earliest type of vase we have in this type, and the earliest extant visual depiction of these two fated lovers. The other examples of Type 3 are all iterations of the same visual narrative, in Catalog 33, the identification is less clear as there are no inscriptions but the visual attributes and mythological connection is still present.

I call the fourth type of vase "Medea in Flight". All examples of this type are quite late, c. 400-350 BCE. his vase type I will discuss in subsequent chapters as its production comes after that of Euripides' *Medea*. In Type 5 I have put all vases, where Medea is depicted as oriental, as a sorceress, or distinctly other. These are all incredibly important and heightened attributes of her mythological narrative, and are typically depicted alongside other mythological depictions like in Type 1 or Type 3. I have only put vases in Type 5 where depictions of Medea as other, sorceress, or oriental without any connection to other mythological instances are placed. For example, Catalog 35 depicts an older man, his white hair is displayed prominently, alongside a woman in distinct "other" dress, reaching out to a man in typical Athenian dress. Medea here is characterized by her dress which signifies an oriental or other person. This is one of Medea's central notions to her identity and the

visual depiction of it is incredibly important. It displays Medea as a charachteriture of her identity, as her orientalism is incredibly heightened and put on display as a distinctly oriental figure. This type of depiction, of Medea as oriental will come into full light in Euripides' *Medea*. Catalog 38 and 40 are also variations of Medea in some sort of oriental wear which continuously distinguishes her as other. These vases add to the already established mythological narrative that she is somehow different

The sixth and final type of Medea's depiction on Greek 5th century vases is perhaps the most intriguing as it really does not continue, or establish, any part of Medea's mythological narrative. I call Type 6 is "Medea and Snakes." All four examples are seemingly depicting the same theme, depicted at the same time, and by the same artist. [56] The vases are almost identical. Catalog 42 is indicative of this Type in this vase category. [57] It depicts Medea, in black-figure, wearing some sort of headdress. Only her head is depicted and it is surrounded by snakes on either side of her face. Catalogs 43 and 44 depict the same image but the head is reversed. On all three vases, only her head is shown and on both sides, snakes surround her. Since this theme was reproduced over the same time period, with little variation, it is possible to consider ritual or religious use for this vase and for this image of Medea. Repetition of the same type of vases typically means it was a favorite in religious and ritualistic circles.[58] However, there is no scholarship to suggest anything of that sort happening with Medea. Another interpretation of Type 6 could be that the snakes represent danger and with Medea's head being in the center, it could be a commentary on Medea always being on the verge of destruction, always in danger but never faltering completely. The snakes could represent all the precarious positions she has been

[56] Refer to Appendix 1 for catalogs 42-45
[57] Refer to Appendix 1
[58] J.J. Pollitt, *Art and Experience in Classical Greece,* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 25.

put in over the course of her mythological narrative but they also represent how immune she is to any sort of danger.

These six types of Medea vases all add some sort of mythological layer to her narrative and myth. They contribute to the development of her tale by adding elements that are few and far between in texts up until this point in antiquity. They also supplement and are in dialogue with the texts that came before and during their production, symbolizing Medea's development in the mythological canon. Medea's development on vases is non-linear, just like how her story is characterized by Mastronarde. She moves from being depicted as a murderer on the Medea, Pelias and Ram vases towards a completely different narrative in Medea and Theseus. On Type 1, her affinity for murder is evident while she is categorized by her orientalism in Type 2. The Jason and Medea vase, was the most concrete evidence for reception between image and text. Jason and Medea were already solidified together in the text of Hesiod and Pindar before the Jason and Medea vases were produced. Their myth was already in the canon of Greek mythology, and thus the vases are responding to that already documented mythological past. Types 5 and 6, are both representative of different qualities of Medea.

Chapter Two: Using her Past to Construct her Present in Euripides's *Medea*

Euripides's *Medea* was first produced in c.431 BCE. At this time in antiquity, the myth of Medea was widely known throughout the ancient world. Her myth was depicted in both textual and visual media, and its origins can be traced from c. 700 BCE, when she was first mentioned in Hesiod's *Theogony*, through the performance of the Euripidean tragedy, when she was frequently depicted on attic Greek vases from the fifth century. My argument follows two parts, which are both related to the structure and construction of Euripides' play. In the first half of the play, I argue that the backstory of Medea becomes a part of the play as Euripides uses her past to characterize his new Medea as a figure of suspicion and fear, casting her as guilty in advance. In the second half of Euripides' *Medea*, starting at line 874, Medea concretely states that she will kill her children, a perceived radical and novel element to her myth, showing Euripides' innovation with Medea's character. However, despite the apparently radical ingenuity of Euripides, most of the elements in the play have been previously documented in her past myth and history. Many of the qualities of this "new" Medea of Euripides are present in myth, Euripides twists these elements and uses them to construct his narrative, utilizing her mythological past to construct a "new" version of Medea.

Euripides harnesses the past representations of Medea in his construction of newer characteristics of the Medea myth, like the winged chariot that saves her at the end of his play, or the brutal betrayal of Jason to Medea and the ensuing murders that occur. He also uses her past mythological tradition to create the Medea present in his play. Most of the characterization of Medea occurs because of her past and the knowledge of said past, which would be well known

by both Euripides and the Greek audience, and Euripides's treatment of her past to construct the current Medea. By utilizing Medea's past as a narrative tool, he acts in direct dialogue with past artists and authors who have used their hand to weave another layer into Medea's story. There are also eleven extant vases contemporary, or believed to be contemporary, with Euripides's production of *Medea*, allowing a dialogue between theater and painting. [59]

Catalog 32, a vase contemporary with Euripides' play, discussed at length in chapter one, is a great indication of the type of art produced in conjunction with Euripides. [60] This vase depicts both Medea and Jason. Jason is at the center of the vase, identified by an inscription of his name. On the other side of Jason is an oriental woman, who along with her costume can be identified as Medea purely through her connection with Jason. This vase adds many layers to that of the myth of Medea. It portrays her as oriental, by her dress and her status as a foreigner, and also strengthens the ties between Medea and Jason. The narrative shown on this type of vase, contemporary with the tragedy, is equally highlighted in the text of Euripides. Euripides harnesses the image of Medea as a foreigner to construct the majority of her narrative and its problematic nature. These two different mediums add similar layers to the mythological story of Medea. The ten other vases in discussion with Euripides depict a variety of myths and snapshots of Medea in myth. Catalog 13 shows Medea, Pelias, and the ram typical of Type One. Catalogs 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25 are all variations of the supposed Medea and Theseus connection that nonetheless depict Medea as oriental. Catalogs 36 and 37 of Type Five illustrates Medea as either oriental or as a witch, depending on whether she is dressed in oriental costume or holding an assumed box of magic herbs and potions. Catalog 40 depicts Medea, in oriental dress, holding a helmet of some sort, surrounded by other men. Most vases contemporary with Euripides depict

[59] Approximate dating of the vases from Beazley Archive, see Appendix 1.
[60] Refer to Appendix 1.

Medea as oriental or as other, one of the most integral parts of Euripides's text, through her characterization and furthering of the plot.

Medea's status as a foreigner is heavily documented on Greek vases, particularly in the fifth century, but it comes into full fruition in Euripides's *Medea*. [61] In this Greek tragedy, Euripides crafts a tale that centers around the complexities of Medea's character: her cleverness, connection to Jason, sorcery, murderous tendencies, and her status as a foreigner. Or as the book *Medea: Gods and Heroes of the Ancient World* states, "a woman empowered by her exclusion from society, alive with passion and the suffering of wounded love." [62] These characteristics have all been documented through both text and image before the premiere of Euripides' tragedy. However, Euripides takes these traits and elevates them to new heights in his play. The playwright puts Medea's otherness on full display in his text, granting complexity to this characteristic of Medea; she is not only a foreigner because of her birthplace, but also because she destroyed said home, leaving her untethered to the land of her ancestors. In her last appearance in Euripides' tragedy, Medea captures the scene in mid-flight. Euripides points to her foreign status at the start of the play through the Nurses' voice, "If only the Argo had never spread its sails and flown across the waves to distant Colchis…If only Jason and his men had not been sent by the command of Pelias the king, to seek the serpent-guarded Golden Fleece. For then, Medea, my mistress, would not have taken ship for the high-walled Iolchus, her heart clawed by love for Jason." [63] In the opening passages of the play, Medea is defined by her homeland and the geographical distance that exists between her and Jason. The Argo had to physically leave its shores and go through a tumultuous journey to reach Medea. This act of

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[61] Refer to Appendix 1, specifically Types 2 and 5.
[62] Emma Griffiths, *Medea, Gods and Heroes of the Ancient World*, (Routledge, 2006) foreword.
[63] Euripides, *Medea*, trans, Eleanor Wilner and Ines Azar, 1-10.

departing one's homeland to follow adventure to far-off places furthers the association of Medea as a foreigner. The names of the cities, Colchis and Iolchus, reaffirm the separation between the two kingdoms, emphasizing the otherness of Medea's native Colchis. Jason, through his quest, removes her from her homeland and brings her to a new, inherently Greek land, Iolchus.

The passage continues to reference her birthplace, and thus lack of a current place to call home, "And she would not have tricked the daughters of King Pelias into killing him, would not have made her home with Jason and their children here in Corinth, cut off forever from the country and the cradle of her birth." [64] Here, Euripides states she was "cut off forever from the country and the cradle of her birth", meaning she has travelled far from where she once called home and cannot return. By adding forever, Euripides implies that Medea's betrayal of her homeland was a severe offense, resulting in exile. The playwright places a distinct emphasis on distance, both literal and figurative, as Medea is physically removed from her homeland, cutting her off completely from Colchis, and thus her family and culture. While this passage quickly establishes and reinforces Medea's foreigner status, it also serves another purpose. Narrated by the nurse, this excerpt also re-tells a story that has been previously told and depicted: Medea's well-known and discussed origins. Euripides uses the nurse's perspective as an outsider to the inner workings of Medea's mind and home to provide this rehashing of her story. Here, the nurse acts in a similar role to that of the audience; she is removed from Medea but serves as witness to her story, reflecting the audience's perception of how Medea's mythology informs her action onstage. Both the nurse and audience act as witnesses, becoming passive participants in Medea's story. Thus, the nurse takes on the role of storyteller, as she works outside the home, witnessing the action taking place there, but she is emotionally removed from Medea's activity. This

[64] Euripides, *Medea*, trans, Eleanor Wilner and Ines Azar, 10-14.

monologue provides the audience with a reminder of what drives Medea's story, retelling the events leading up to the present context of the play, and giving the Medea myth a concrete contextualization in the scope of time

This speech is also the first instance of characterizing Medea based on past events, and not current events in the tragedy; a narrative construction that Euripides uses to establish his own version of Medea. Euripides utilizes Medea's backstory and her past to construct the Medea that he is creating in the current events of his tragedy. By telling her backstory, recalling her homeland, and explaining how she came to Corinth, Euripides reminds the audience that this is the Medea of past myth and the ensuing play is centered on that same character. He recalls her past while also contextualizing that past into the present action of the play. Euripides' language also places blame onto Jason, "And she would not have tricked the daughters of King Pelias into killing him, would not have made her home with Jason and their children here in Corinth." [65] Here, Euripides attempts to remove the blame from Medea and place it on Jason, as she would not have committed these acts if he did not sail the Argo on that fateful journey and take her away from her homeland. Thus, the audience serves as a jury to place the blame on Jason for the treacherous acts Medea perpetrates in his name, tricking the daughters of Pelias and then ultimately killing him, as well as turning Medea into a refugee who is homeless without Jason.

In the beginning moments of the play Euripides establishes Medea as a foreigner, similarly to how the vases of his time visually portray her outsider status. Although they use a different means to convey the same message, oriental imagery in vase painting expresses Medea's otherness in much the same way that the poem reinforces the distance between her birthplace and Corinth to depict this same quality in Medea. As both the tragedy and vases

[65] Euripides, *Medea*, trans, Eleanor Wilner and Ines Azar, 12-14.

convey the same attribute of Medea, Euripides could have been easily influenced by the imagery used to show Medea's otherness in vase painting to construct the similar narrative in his tragedy. The vases illustrate a Medea who is identified as distinctly other and different, based on her style of dress, whereas Euripides represents Medea's foreignness by her physical separation from her homeland and lack thereof. Because Medea is "cut off forever" from her birthplace, she becomes a foreigner in a new land without a home to return to. Medea's broken ancestry leaves her completely untethered from her homeland and family, which catalyzes Medea's violence, once again breaking her ties to the family she built with Jason. [66] "At first, though her life here was fortunate—with husband, children, and the sympathy of the Corinthians." [67] Euripides explicitly identifies Medea's family as her husband and children, including the Corinthians as they act as an extension of her "family," serving the land she cautiously inhabits. This is the problematic feature of the play; if this is her family, she will lose them all certainly by the tragic end, but she loses favor with both Jason and the Corinthians midway through the plot. She truly has no family then as her homeland will not accept her back, and her current "family" will reveal their true loyalty once Jason's betrayal comes to light.

Other theatrical moments highlight Medea's foreign character. Regarding Medea's children, the nurse claims, "I have seen her turn a savage look their way, and my heart quailed." [68] Euripides characterizes Medea as a "savage", implicating that because she is a foreigner, she is also a savage, a barbarian, bordering on an inhuman level. This line hints at Medea's foreign, violent nature and foreshadows the actual violence she enacts against her children later in the play. Other references to Medea's outsider status in the text highlight her foreign nature: "Above

[66] Euripides, *Medea*, trans, Eleanor Wilner and Ines Azar, 14.
[67] Ibid,. 15-16.
[68] Ibid,. 91.

all, a foreigner must not resist the general will, but be compliant with the city's wish- though I do not mean to praise or to excuse the citizen who is self-willed and lacks civility." [69] Here, Medea's foreign status once again defines her. The citizens of Corinth are unable to see Medea as anyone other than a barbarian foreigner who wreaks havoc across the foreign soil she inhabits. This quote takes the Corinthian's xenophobia towards Medea a step further, stating that Medea lacks "civility." Medea is not only a foreign entity, but she lacks even the basic manners and human skills to survive in the great society of Corinth. This Corinthian attitude implies that her past, her homeland and her background, was uncivilized, barbaric, and savage in nature: an accumulation of traits depicting how the citizens of Corinth truly see Medea. However, this quote can also be read as a commentary on how the people of Ancient Greece, particularly the audience watching this play, saw the figure of Medea. Her background, past acts, and status as exotic woman are all aspects of her myth that were documented prior to the production of the play; therefore, not only was Euripides aware of this image but the audience was as well. Intriguingly, Medea criticizes herself when she speaks theses lines, delivering an incredibly self-aware account of her story and her status. She is acutely aware of both her perception in the confines of the play and how the audience, Ancient Greek citizens, perceives her at this point in her mythological history. This is an elaborate and effective narrative construction on the part of Euripides, who was undoubtedly aware of the nuances and intricacies of Medea's past and deploys that information into his work, effectively characterizing Medea by utilizing her past history.

Another Euripidean narrative construction is the repeated mention of exile within the text: "I order you to leave this land at once, go into exile, and your children with you"; "For

[69] Euripides, *Medea*, trans, Eleanor Wilner and Ines Azar, 243-247.

myself, I care nothing; exile for me is neither here nor there "; "an exile, driven out, your honor gone with the rest." [70] [71] [72] The repetition of exile within the text furthers the plot of the tragedy as she is on the verge of being exiled from Corinth, but it also reminds the audience of the exile that caused Medea to flee to Corinth with Jason. Medea arguably would not be exiled in the current events of the play if she had not participated in the events that led her to exile in the first place: "This is the report that many bring—well, an ounce of prevention, and so on…better that you should hate me now, then I be soft, and live to repeat it later." [73] This quote is an obvious reference to her past, specifically in regard to Pelias who was murdered at the hands of Medea and her trickery. Pelias had the opportunity to exile Medea when she came upon Iolcus, but he did, ultimately causing and resulting in his murder. Creon refers to this act in Medea's past; "the record shows what you can do" is a sly remark by Euripides through Creon's voice which references an act that happened beyond the confines of the play to construct the reasoning behind her oncoming exile now. Her past dictates her present situation, not only causing history to repeat itself, but allowing Euripides to harness her past as a way to provide logic to the current scene. If Medea had not caused the death of Pelias, she would not be on exile in Corinth, and thus, she would not be on the verge of exile from Corinth. Euripides uses this language to reinforce the audience's knowledge that Medea has been a murderer and a trickster in the past; even though the play has not produced present evidence of this characterization, the past is enough to dictate the events of the present. The Medean qualities of trickery, cleverness, and the master hand she has over the evil arts are not new inventions of Euripides, but notions that have been rooted in her history long before his tragedy.

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[70] Euripides, *Medea*, trans, Eleanor Wilner and Ines Azar, 303-304.
[71] Ibid,. 374.
[72] Ibid,.471- 472.
[73] Ibid,. 309-315.

This use of Medea's history as a way to construct the present action of *Medea* is not solely confined to her characterization as a foreigner or as someone in exile. Euripides uses her background and known history to convey most of the action and portrayal of Medea throughout the text. This use of the past to construct the current drives the narrative until line 874, when Euripides starts to introduce new elements to Medea's mythology. However, even the new inventions are constructed with the assumed knowledge of Medea's history, which Euripides reinforces to his audience up until this point. Euripides harness her past to depict this new "Medea", which is not a new character at all but rather a newer exploration of a previously existing mythological figure. For example, Medea is consistently referred to as someone who possesses great rage with murderous tendencies, establishing that she is someone to fear. Yet, up until line 874, when she references the first concrete idea of killing her children, she does not act or speak in a way that resembles a murderous villain. She is notably hysterical and consistently weeping, but until Euripides introduces the idea of Medea her murdering her own children, there is nothing to truly suggest she would be capable of such acts. However, an overwhelming sense of fear from other characters surrounds Medea, which is a byproduct of the assumed knowledge of her past and the way in which Euripides channels this mythology.

In the opening lines of the play, the nurse references Medea's "wrath", "I fear what dreadful plans she may conceal; the iron weight of wrath is far too great to be endured within." [74] Here, the nurse suspects that Medea is concocting spiteful plans in a flight or rage. The nurse explicitly "fears" what Medea could do; however, no action or potential evidence gives the audience anything to fear. Unless, of course, they were acutely aware of Medea's past, an undoubtedly correct assumption, as without this underlying awareness of her past, the play's

[74] Euripides, *Medea*, trans, Eleanor Wilner and Ines Azar, 39-40.

nuances would not have an impact. Another reference to Medea's history of violence occurs during the nurse's speech: "No one who crosses her can hope to greet the morning light victorious, and crow." [75] Here, not only is implied fear made explicit, but the nurse indicates that she knows about Medea's past as a violent, murderous woman, accidentally foreshadowing the violent events that will turn the play into a tragedy. However, this quote could serve as a reference to the murder of Pelias or Medea's brother, but the death of her children will be an entirely new inclusion to the Medea myth that is rooted in the Medean traits of violence and murder in her past. These early references act as explicit reminders of Medea's true nature, but there are later references that imply Medea's violent character without actively reminding the audience of Medea's past.

Yet, Medea herself prompts the audience's knowledge by referring to the past violent acts that she committed: "O father, o city of my birth, I feel my shame—to help Jason live, I killed my brother." Here, the key word, kill, is in the past tense, once again indicating that these events occurred before the play takes place. This act of violent murder, the brutal death of her own brother, ensued before the play interacts with Medea as a mythological figure. While this event is truly brutal, even more so because it was committed against blood kin, the audience must be told about this incident, as it does not take place in Euripides' tragedy. The killing of her brother acts as a vessel for Medea's fear; her past triggers the current fearful and scared response of the people of Corinth, notably Creon. This same response is arguably what the people of Ancient Greece felt as they watched the play with an assumed base of knowledge shared with Euripides'

[75] Euripides, *Medea*, trans, Eleanor Wilner and Ines Azar,. 45-46.

Corinthians. Their fear is not based on the action currently portrayed onstage but rather on the assumed knowledge or "report" that they have access to. [76]

Other characters in the play repeatedly stress the fear they have of Medea: "Who knows what she will undertake before this rage is spent?"; "we fear her harm to those inside"; "Well, I see no reason at all to hide the fact that I'm afraid for my daughter, of what you might do to her, what deadly harm, as you have all the means- your cleverness, your skill in evil arts, and certainly the record shows what you can do." [77] [78] [79] In this last quote, Creon speaks to Medea as he threatens to exile her from Corinth. He is explicit in his fear of Medea, regarding the likelihood of his daughter, the new bride of Jason, as the next target of Medea's wrath. This passage exemplifies the fear that Creon, and the whole of Corinth, has of Medea based on occurring before the events portrayed in the tragedy; there is no action, vocal or physical, that transpires within the play to suggest anything violent on the part of Medea. References to Medea's violence always recall acts that happened previous to the action of the play. The fear that Creon so rightly feels toward Medea is not based on anything unfolding onstage currently, but rather, this fear is due to her well-known past. Euripides uses Medea's past, her violent and murderous acts specifically, to create the omnipresent fear that circles her in the play. This fear thus characterizes this "current" version of Medea as a violent person, someone to be wary of. Yet, this "current" representation is based on acts and events that happened before the play, meaning this current Medea has not voiced or acted on such tendencies yet. If the past was not referenced and this fear not built on her previous actions, this Medea would not have any reason to be seen as villainous or a woman to be feared. By the same token, without the past and the fear

[76] Euripides, *Medea*, trans, Eleanor Wilner and Ines Azar, 318.
[77] Ibid,. 189-190.
[78] Ibid,.174-175.
[79] Ibid,. 309-315.

it generates, the audience would be unable to recognize this Medea as an iteration of the Medea myth explored by Hesiod, Sophocles, Pindar, and numerous vase painters, as her past is deep rooted in trickery, sorcery, and murderous acts.

In the first half of the play, Euripides uses Medea's past as a way to construct and characterize this "new" Medea who is inherently not new, utilizing Medea's myth against her to construct a new character made up of a patchwork of her past. Until line 874, the declaration of the impending murders against her children, Medea has done nothing explicitly violent, malicious, or given any indication of her magical ability. Yet, there is a fear that penetrates the play regarding Medea; she has done nothing in the play to warrant that fear, but her past is made up of more than enough evidence to hold against her. The playwright uses Medea's mythological history to characterize the type of figure she will become in *Medea*. However, line 874 radically shifts the play: "I shall kill my children: no one and nothing can rescue them. When the fall of the house of Jason is complete, then I shall leave the land, flee from the murder of my own dear sons, the perpetrator of the most unholy deed." [80] Here is the first indication that Medea will behave as everyone feared, repeating her past through murder and violence. This is the first concrete evidence of her intention to kill. The act of murder is familiar to the figure of Medea; she has slain her own kin in the recent, memorable past. She sacrificed her brother in exchange for the Golden Fleece, and thus Jason, as mentioned in Sophocles' play *The Women of Colchis*.[81] Yet, the murder of her own children, a complete perversion of motherhood, is an entirely new invention of Medea's character by Euripides. While earlier in *Medea* she referenced killing Jason and his new wife, this idea was included in a set of rhetorical questions, not intended as a

[80] Euripides, *Medea*, trans, Eleanor Wilner and Ines Azar, 874-877.
[81] The myth of Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece and Medea's fratricide will be reproduced in the later epic, the *Argonautica*. I will discuss this in Chapter Three

declaration of premeditated murder. [82] Line 874 gives the first concrete statement that Medea will act upon her murderous tendencies that have been alluded to throughout the play, succumbing to her brutal fate as the audience expected. This new filicidal depiction of Medea remains rooted in her past, as she is a known killer throughout Euripides' tragedy. By slaying her children, Medea inverts the role of a mother as a nurturing figure and turns motherhood into a vehicle for violence towards her own children. This inversion and perversion of motherhood is a novel feature of the Euripidean Medea myth. This new inclusion, while steeped in her history and mythology, radically changes the audience's expectations of Medea, as this is the first addition to the Medea myth by Euripides. Previously, up until the fated line 874, all aspects of Medea's character were known and documented by vase painters, poets, and playwrights before Euripides. This new feature of her mythology provides the audience with their own unique image of Medea as a murderer; thus, Euripides harnesses the past as a way to construct a new entry to Medea's violent reputation.

Although flashy and striking, Medea's inversion of motherhood does not truly reinvent her character and mythology. If Medea had not been a known murderer throughout her mythological past, Euripides could not have easily convinced his audience that a loving mother could turn against her own flesh and blood. The knowledge of previous portrayals of Medea is not only critical to the construction of the new myth, but to its delivery as well. Medea has yet to commit murder in her motherhood, and her ability to enact this violence on her own children is purely Euripidean. Yet, Medea as a murderer, and even further, a murderer of her own kin, is not a stretch as Sophocles and other artists documented previously. Medea's well-known backstory allows Euripides the freedom to elaborate on her mythology, as he does not need to convince his

[82] Euripides, *Medea*, trans, Eleanor Wilner and Ines Azar, 409-411.

audience that Medea has the qualities of a murderer. Euripides has to harness her history to create a believable and credible version of Medea. By using the already fleshed out past as a way to influence his new take on the mythological figure of Medea, this incredibly "new" and flashy inclusion to her image is not so new at all. Rather, this addition to Medea's mythology is a reworking of the past to construct a more exciting and intriguing character.

The image of a murdering mother both interests and disturbs its audience. A mother who kills her own children exists far outside of normality, inverting the nurturing, caring, child-rearing woman into a monstrous witch who takes her child's life. Motherhood equates to granting life, so when a mother takes that child's life, it completely inverts and perverts the expectations of both mothers and women, turning Medea into a spectacle. This new character alerts the attention of the audience who want to learn and know more about this hysterical mother, just as audiences reacted to this "new retelling" of the Medea myth by Euripides. Euripides injects new blood into the mythological cannon of Medea by constructing a woman whose hysterics drive her to commit unforgivable crimes. While achieving a new level of spectacle, Euripides reforms Medea's past to create a sense of novelty through a horrific mother willing to commit filicide as a way to punish her unfaithful husband. Euripides' addition to Medea's mythology plagues her forever with its spectacle, transforming her from a mother and murderer into a mother willing to kill her own children. Although her tragic "new" identity claims her mythological narrative, her past shaped this new Medea.

Line 874 completely changes the characterization and tone of this new version of Medea. Up until this point, Euripides relies completely on past representations of Medea's myth provided by Hesiod, Sophocles, Pindar, and vase paintings. Euripides uses this myth to simultaneously harness its ability to inject new material into his tragedy, while also utilizing

preconceived notions about Medea to reshape her character. During the plot of Euripides' *Medea*, Medea does not say or do anything that concretely betrays her true identity as a murderer. Yet, Creon appears deathly afraid of her, and for good reason, as he will meet his demise through Medea's handiwork. The nurse is also afraid of her, and she constantly references the treacherous looks Medea gives her children. Although nothing in Medea's past suggests that she will kill her children, Euripides achieves an effect of impending doom for her family beginning at the top of the play. Her previous actions give substantial reason to fear Medea, and that fear permeates the text and characterizes this version of Medea created by Euripides. Yet, this fear is not based in any "current" events unfolding in the chronological timeline provided by the play. The audience's fear echoes the uneasy attitude the characters exhibit due to assumptions steeped in Medea's mythological past. Creon, the Nurse, and Medea herself rehash her history and allude to her past actions. Yet, line 874 establishes Medea as a murderer in the current action of the Euripidean tragedy. All of the other allusions and examples of her murderous and violent nature were either references to her past or were not concrete evidence of this trait, none of which could be attributed to this current version of Medea. Referencing the desire to kill someone is entirely different than declaring to perform the act of murder. [83] Line 874 relays a concrete statement of intention and gives the first evidence of "new" action taking place in this play without reference to some past act or past allusion to her myth; instead, it completely shifts the trajectory of the play. At this turning point in the tragedy, the drama becomes entirely new and uniquely Euripidean as it no longer relies on the past to construct the action revealed onstage, combining both the previous and newer depictions of Medea into the latter half of the play.

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[83] Euripides, *Medea*, trans, Eleanor Wilner and Ines Azar, 409-411.

After the turning point of line 874, the play takes on a new tone and use of Medea's characterization. Her character is not solely steeped in her history, but Euripides continues to construct a new identity for her using new iterations of her myth. One of the biggest new inventions by Euripides to arise after Medea's declaration of her intentions is the winged chariot that escorts her to freedom: "This winged chariot, Helios, my grandfather, gave to keep me safe from hostile hands." [84] This chariot serves as an entirely new construction which has not been discussed or depicted prior to its introduction in this text. An interesting example of reception and dialogue in antiquity appears in Medea's portrayal on Catalog 34, the only Type Four vase in my categorization. [85] This vase illustrates scenes in this text in direct dialogue with Euripides. His description of Medea's rescue by flying chariot is the only extant evidence of this unique deus ex machina. As Euripides is the only author conceiving of this divine intervention at this point in Medea's mythological canon, this vase, from 431 BCE, takes direct inspiration from his text and responds to his novel invention. The vase constructed c. 400 BCE depicts Medea in oriental dress, a common attribute of hers on Attic vases, seated and commanding a decorative chariot drawn by two serpent-like creatures. The chariot flies, seemingly through an ability of the animals or Medea herself, whose arm is outstretched holding a whip-like object. Her other hand holds the reins that control the animals; both hands display her direct action and control over the chariot. The artist depicts Medea in mid-flight in the center of the krater framed by a giant sun. The rest of the vase equally intrigues its viewer. Two winged creatures fly on either side of Medea. On the ground, two slain men lay draped over a table while a white-haired man appears to weep and lament their deaths. Two other figures, a man and a woman, look up towards Medea and her chariot as it flies across the obverse of the vase.

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[84] Euripides, *Medea*, trans, Eleanor Wilner and Ines Azar,1449-1450.
[85] Refer to Appendix 1.

This vase is the only existing vase that depicts Medea mid-flight. This Medea certainly originates in Euripides's tragedy, adding a new layer to her myth in which she literally flies away to escape the consequences of her actions. This new trope appears depicted on vases in direct conversation with Euripides' uniquely constructed narrative. The vase itself adds new dimension to this particular tragedy but also, with its inclusion in vase painting, the Medea myth as a whole. The use of Medea's hands as vessels of action and control, with a whip in one hand and reins in the other, displays agency that is void from the text of *Medea*. In the text, she laments over her compromised position as a current foreigner in the land of Corinth, but she also grieves her future position as an equally hated fugitive sent into exile. Her future lacks certainty, clarity, and agency within the confines of Euripides' drama. However, in this new vase, she has literal control over the chariot, which acts as a vessel of her freedom as she flies, geographically moving away from her problem into a new realm. [86] Yet, this control over her future, through the attributes her chariot represents, can also be applied to the larger theme of the Medea myth, not solely reserved for the Euripidean tragedy. This control is a quality that has largely been missing from any previous depiction, whether visual or textual, of the Medean myth; her fate has usually been left in the hands of other people, especially Jason. [87] Now, Medea's fate is in her own hands both literally and figuratively, as she faces a completely new destiny not entirely plagued by her past, Euripides gives her mythological narrative a new layer that has not been completely defined by her past. However, no matter her actions and attempts at escape, her past follows her and dictates her future in some way, shape, or form.

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[86] Important to note that this quality of constantly moving away from problems and situations is the same action that landed Medea in this compromised position in the first place. She fled Colchis to avoid retribution for the death of her brother and the betrayal that she inflicted upon her family.

[87] This notion is summed up in the nurses speech in the beginning monologue, Euripides, *Medea*, trans, Eleanor Wilner and Ines Azar, 1-14.

The vase, Catalog 34, also presents new interpretations of Medea's character. The two-winged serpent-like creatures to the right and left of Medea float on her same height level. Although on different scales, the creatures pulling the chariot and their driver stand at the same height, increasing Medea's mythic command of the scene, perhaps representing some sort of immortal or godly aspect to Medea. These winged creatures in flight represent a level of supernatural inclusion. They fly using their wings, which are a part of their physical identity, unlike Medea who flies with the help of a vessel, a physical structure, to carry her away. Her flight does not come from directly within herself, but is bolstered by the inclusion of a vehicle separate from her body and physical identity. However, this only strengthens the impression of a semi-godly or immortal Medea. She is not fully immortal or a goddess herself, but she does have god and demigod blood in her genealogy.

The vase also depicts another novel invention on the part of Euripides, the murder of her two children. The vase depicts two slain men, lying over a table, while a white-haired man laments their demise. This could be a depiction of Medea's two boys who she murdered and their father, Jason, mourning their deaths. As the scene appears in Euripides' *Medea*, the vase commits to interacting with the story through its treatment of the two novel Euripidean inventions within the Medea myth. The placement of the children and Jason as opposed to Medea closely follows the text in its portrayal, as the children and Jason fill the bottom register on the ground level and Medea flies in the upper register. This hierarchy of height shows close interaction with the text of Euripides but also uses scale to depict Medea as an all-powerful witch who can literally leave the ground and fly away from trouble while she destroyed family weeps in mourning on the ground.

However, the chariot's caveat lies in Euripides' inventive nature within the Medea myth. Although Medea does not appear in text or image with the chariot before Euripides, his extravagant exit vehicle for Medea had roots in her mythic ancestry. Medea informs the audience, "This winged chariot, Helios, my grandfather, gave to keep me safe from hostile hands." [88] This quote introduces the audience to the image of the winged chariot, but it also reveals that Euripides' inventive deus ex machina is not as novel as it may first appear. Even the flashiest devices Euripides introduces to his play are still rooted in Medea's past. Hesiod establishes Medea's connection to Helios, her grandfather, and Euripides gifts the chariot to Helios' gifted granddaughter. [89] The past continues to influence the new inventions that Euripides introduces into the myth.

After expectations for Medea's behavior shift at line 874, Euripides inserts new inventions into the Medea myth. Medea's mythology follows the narratives set out by Hesiod, Sophocles, Pindar, and vase painters prior to line 874, but Euripides reinvents her history after her transformation into a new, Euripidean Medea who transcends her past to become a potentially godly murderer, Both the death of her children and the deus ex machina provided by her winged chariot are two elements of Medean mythology yet to be documented before Euripides, but they are not entirely new. Both of these narrative inventions originate in Medea's past and could not be effectively accepted into her mythology without relying on knowledge of her mythic history.

[88] Euripides, *Medea*, trans, Eleanor Wilner and Ines Azar, 1449-1450.
[89] Hesiod, *The Homeric Hymns and Homerica*, 955-962.

Chapter Three: Who is this Medea? Apollonius of Rhodes' Depiction

When we leave Medea in Euripides' *Medea*, she is mid-flight, suspended in air, controlling a winged chariot, physically removing herself from the crisis in Corinth. This Medea is a murderer. There is no disputing this as at line 874 in Euripides' drama, Medea concretely declares she will kill her children and this transforms her from a figure solely defined by her past discretions into an active murderer, whose past still follows her around. This is the Medea we leave in the tragedy. Of course, she is also defined by her trickery, cleverness, otherness, status as a foreigner, and her connection with Jason. She also figures as a sort of anti-hero, feminist scholars read her plight, and the rousing speech she delivers to the women of Corinth, as a take on the patriarchy and a commentary on the double standard that contemporary women of Athens were subjected to. [90] This Medea is the last extant portrait we have of her before we encounter her in Book 3 of Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*.

Medea in the *Argonautica* is confined to the actions of Books 3 and 4. Typically, the scholarship on her presence in these two books, talks about the division of her personality as delineated by the structure of the two books. [91] However, I will argue that this division is not so clear, and her personality cannot be divided and reduced to a love-struck teenager, Book 3, and a vengeful witch, Book 4. Rather, it is hard to ignore the mythological backstory and history of a

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[90] Jeffery Zorn, "Rhetorical Feminism in Euripides' Medea.", (2005) 129.
[91] Andrew R. Dyck, "On the Way from Colchis to Corinth: Medea in Book 4 of the 'Argonautica'", (1989). In this article, the notion of Medea being separated in personality, from "ingénue and witch". Dyck's argument is that Apollonius was not integrating these two halves but to further the Euripidean tragedy.

figure like Medea when discussing her role and characterization in the *Argonautica*, and I feel an argument that reduces her to roles that are reductive, eliminates the history of which she is comprised. Furthermore, I agree with Andrew R. Dyck, whose argument tries to push back against this notion of divided Medea, or rather acknowledges this notion but speaks to Apollonius's true intentions, and states that his goal was to further the context of Euripides' *Medea*. I also will argue that *Argonautica's* unique position in terms of reception; it is responding to a text that came a century before it, but whose events are telling the backstory of what led up to the tragedy, sets the text up for an interesting and complex depiction of Medea. While some parts of the epic are set in stone in terms of construction, there are some incredibly conscious choices on the part of Apollonius that have nothing to do with continuity; such as the choice to make Medea an accomplice to murder [92] [93]. By the time the events unfold in the murder of Absyrtus, Medea is already on the run and already being chased by her father and brother, the murder seals her fate no doubt, but it is not necessarily required in the plot construction of getting Medea to Corinth. This can be seen as a direct link of comprising Medea in relation to her history and backstory. Sophocles' fragments tell us of a story where Medea murders her brother, in that fragmentary play Medea's actions are regarded as clearly active. [94] In Euripides' play, Medea's character is considered a murderer first and foremost. That is not the case in this epic poem, but it certainly continues the traditional Medea quality of her being a murderer.

Medea in the *Argonautica* is not characterized by her murderous tendencies, as compared to the text of Euripides. In fact, the only place where she is directly, and concretely, linked to

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[92] Medea must end up in Corinth, as this is where *Medea* takes place and these events immediately precede those of the tragedy.
[93] There is some scholarship and debate over the level of action Medea had in the murder of her brother.
[94] See chapter 1.

murder is towards the very last pages of the epic. "'Listen. I think that I can kill that man all by myself, whoever he might be, yes even if his body is entirely made out of bronze, so long as he is not invulnerable. Come, then, friends, and hold the *Argo* steady here outside his range until he yields and tumbles down before me.'"[95] Here, Medea is talking about Talus, the great bronze statue-man who is the final obstacle of this grand journey. This is the first line where Medea mentions killing anyone in the entire poem. While she was an accomplice in the murder of her brother, Absyrtus, she is not the one to deliver the fatal blow and in fact she does not even touch him or look at him[96], she recoils from his touch as he reaches out for her in the last moments of life. While her presence and role in his death, deception of family and trickery in plot, are more Medean qualities, as she convinced her brother to meet with him under false pretenses, she is not the one to kill him, that role is reserved for Jason. In contrast, the incident with Talus, presents the readers with the first glimpse of Medea as a murderer, a role she fully accepts in Euripides' tragedy.

In the incident with Talus, she is most like her Euripidean counterpart, as she boldly and concretely states her plans to kill him. This type of speech echoes the one given by Medea in Euripides' play, on line 874 when she, equally as bold, declares she will murder her children. Of course, the contexts of the incidents are incredibly different and hold different meaning. In the instance of Medea in the play, she is killing her own kin, her children no less and completely revert the role of motherhood. In the epic, she strikes down Talus, a half man, who is really a bronze sculpture really, who does not talk and is not made up of anything but metal and one vein

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[95] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Argonauts*, trans, Aaron Poochigian, (New York, USA: Penguin) 4.2133-2139.

[96] Ibid,. 4.593-595 "The girl was quick to turn her eyes away and veil them, so that she would not behold the coming deathblow and her brother's blood.", "A hero gasping out his life, he caught, in both his hands, the crimson geyser streaming out of the wound and smeared his sister's mantel and silver veil as she recoiled from him." 4.603-606.

that supplies him his lifeline. However, this declaration of killing is a direct reconciliation of the Medea of Euripides and the one that Apollonius is trying to conceive of. The speech echoes each other and the effect is the same; this type of line transports Medea from a non-murderer to a murderer. This type of transformation is not central to the construction of Apollonius's Medea. First, this transformation comes right at the end of the poem, indicating that this role is not crucial for his construction, but its placement is curious. By transforming Medea into a murderer at the end of the poem, it lays out the perfect plot context for Euripides' *Medea*. Medea ends the poem as a murderer. It is in fact her final action in the entire poem, the final piece that Apollonius leaves us with is Medea as a murderer. What is even more interesting, and bolsters my argument about direct reception and dialogue between the poem and Euripides' play, is that this killing speech by Medea is the last time she speaks in the entire poem. Not only is the action of murder the last thing readers experience of her, but a speech about killing is also the last dialogue we hear from her. This reinforces the image of Medea as a murderer that leads into the perfect path for Euripides to take control of, and harness into the image that he will conceive of.

It is also important to note that in this incident, not only is the object she is trying to kill not a man, which somehow lessens the impact of her crime as it is not a real beating heart she cuts down, but a bronze statue with no real implications of humanity attached to it. Furthermore, the actual act of killing isn't done by use of sword, dagger, or bow and arrow. "Once there, she sang hypnotic lullabies, praising the heart-devouring Fates of Death, Hades' intrepid monster hounds, who range abroad in air to hunt the living down…thrice in incantation, thrice in prayer. Then, putting on a wicked cast of mind, she hypnotized the eyes of brazen Talus and held him helpless in her hostile glare." [97] Here, Medea is using her use of herbs and magic to enchant

[97] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Argonauts*, trans, Aaron Poochigian, 4.2147-2154.

Talus and that is how she kills him. Her enchantments cause him to fall into an awake slumber and he slashes his ankle tendon, his lifeline of blood, which causes him to die. It is not through an actual use of blunt force to kill him, as compared to the act where Medea kills her own children and while the action is not played out on stage, the slain bodies of her children indicate some sort of brutal act of murder whether it be by sword or dagger. This use of incantation to achieve the goal of murder is interesting. On one hand, this furthers her association with sorcery and her use of herbs. However, on the other hand, I believe this type of murder removes some of the physical implications of the act from her hands. In this scene of murder, she never touches Talus with her own two hands, does not penetrate his body with sword or dagger. He did not bleed. Instead, she sang lullabies, spoke prayers and incantations and from her far-flung perch, watched as her magic worked its ways and Talus crumpled down, from not a fatal wound but from the words of Medea. Apollonius himself comments on it, "to think that death can come not only through disease and injury, but people can undo us from afar." [98] He recognizes the paradox of murder through the actions of Medea; she inflicts this pain without touching the statue with her own two hands. However, I think the action of Medea not murdering a human being, alongside the notion that she does not follow the conventional acts of murder, somehow lessens the harshness of this act. This is not the same as the actions presented in the *Medea* tragedy, but rather the acts of a hesitant murderer. Her speech is anything but hesitant, it is clear, bold, and concrete but aside from that her actions do not paint her as a murderous woman. This is a clear distinction between Apollonius and Euripides. Euripides makes every effort to paint her as a true murderous mother, using her past to characterize her as such, while adding in the slightly

[98] Ibid,. 4.2158-2161. This could also be a direct reference to the events that unfold in *Medea*, as Medea inflicts intense emotional pain against Jason without actually being with him- both in physical space and in terms of marriage.

innovative element of her murdering her own children. Apollonius does not follow this same trend set forth by Euripides. This act of downplaying the murderous tendencies of Medea subverts the tradition that came before him. The use of sorcery as Medea's weapon of choice follows along the path that has been laid down for her, and is not a deviance from her characterization, but on the other side it reverts the murderous tilt of her. Interestingly enough, the act of murder is the last impression we get of her in both speech and action, and that seems to pave the way, at least thematically, for Euripides' *Medea*. However closer inspection renders that this act of murder cannot be compared to that of the murder in Euripides' text.

There is a pervasive notion that in the *Argonautica,* Medea is presented as a sorceress, known for her cleverness and distinguished use of magical herbs. While this is certainly true, and her deployment of such herbs is the reason why Jason gets the fleece, she is not presented as such in the beginning stages of the poem. [99] For most of Book 3 she is presented as a love-struck maiden. In fact, she is mostly referred to as maiden throughout Book 3. [100] The same phenomenon occurs in Book 4, perhaps this is even more striking as most classical scholarship has referenced the divided soul of Medea as being split between a lovesick teenager and a commanding sorceress. [101] Yet she is called maiden throughout the poem, which stresses some sort of continuity throughout the books, and larger narrative of the poem, which pushes back against the notion that she is divided between the two texts. The importance of being called a maiden is evidence to suggest that she is not divided by the two texts that she is present in. Since she is referred to by the same epithet, typically maiden but there are some variations like Aeetes

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[99] In the *Argonautica*, the use of herbs is directly linked to both the initial task of sowing the fields with the magical cattle, as well as putting the giant serpent who guards the fleece to sleep. Both of these tasks were crucial in achieving the feat of acquiring the golden fleece.
[100] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Argonauts,* trans, Aaron Poochigian, 3.330, 3.589, 3.701, 3.1260.
[101] Ibid,. 4.2, 4.497, 4.883, 4.1288, 4.1442.

daughter, this stresses the continuation of a narrative and self, not a divided one. [102] I also think that the use of maiden as opposed to barbarian witch or murderer as in Euripides' text is a powerful tool. [103] In Apollonius's text, at least by the end of it, we see Medea as a sorceress, and a murderer, yet throughout the text she is only referred to as maiden or by her name, even after such magical events occur at the end of Book 3. [104] I think the naming is an important difference to mention, as it provides context as to how Apollonius wanted to construct her.

Aside from the naming aspect, Medea is depicted as just that, a maiden for the majority of the text. There are quite a few classical scholars who argue that she is presented as a talented sorceress in the *Argonautica*. While her affinity for herbs is well documented, she is actually portrayed as a regular princess, who is in constant turmoil over whether or not to follow her heart[105] and ultimately betray her family. For someone who later on in the text will be instrumental in procuring the golden fleece she is presented as a rather ordinary woman. This is not a trope that is constrained by Book 3 but happens across both of the books. She is characterized as a "marriageable maidens with thoughts of love". [106]The rare time she is not characterized as just an ordinary princess is in the very beginning, "drug-adept Medea", however this is placed in the same line where Hera and Athena are plotting to inject her with absolute love for Jason. [107] For most of the text, when she is mentioned it's on an oscillating scale in between this ordinary love-struck teenager, a fabricated love, and a crucial element of the plot. However, even when she is crucial to the main quest, by enchanting the giant guardian serpent, or

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[102] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Argonauts*, trans, Aaron Poochigian, 4.933.
[103] Euripides, *Medea*, trans, Eleanor Wilner and Ines Azar, 1518.
[104] While she is a murderer in name, I don't think it is fair to construct her identity around murder in this text. See above paragraph.
[105] That has been infected by cupid's love-tainted bow.
[106] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Argonauts*, trans, Aaron Poochigian, 3.5-6.
[107] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Argonauts*, trans, Aaron Poochigian, 3.33.

providing the necessary herbs and incantations for Jason to complete the initial test, she is not characterized by her typical Medean qualities, save for the sorcery and the connection with Jason.

Even those two concrete Medean qualities, the sorcery and the love of Jason, are complex and not as straightforward as one might think. The sorceress aspects of Medea are present in the text, there is no doubt about that, however the sorcery is presented in convoluted ways. The first appearance of it happens when Medea and Jason meet under the guise of night and she walks him through the quest and how to survive it; not only does she give him step-by-step instructions to come out alive at the end, but she also gives him a magic drug, the first evidence of her powers. [108] Previous to this point, there were mentions of how "drug adept" she is and Apollonius refers to her as "priestess at the shrine of Hecate", a well-known goddess of sorcery. [109] [110] However, the procurement of the herbs to Jason is the first concrete scene where her powers are shown. After this scene in Book 3, most of the sorcery is reserved for the events of Book 4 where there are numerous instances of her sorcery. [111] These acts are crucial in terms of plot for the quest that Jason is on, without them the fleece would not be captured and their journey homeward not secure. However, at no point in these acts is she considered to be malicious in her witchcraft. Both of her major acts of sorcery in Book 4, the charming of the serpent and the murder of Talus, are the products of a love controlled by gods and from a desperate need of survival. Neither of the acts were done out of a deep desire to harm, or

[108] Ibid,. 3.1347.
[109] Ibid., 3.329.
[110] Ibid,. 3.33.
[111] Ibid,. 4.177-196, Medea charms the serpent guarding the fleece to sleep, and uses incantations and herbs to aid her in this event. Apollonius *Argonautica* 4.2147-2157, Medea uses spells and herbs, to once again take down the bronze statue of Talus.

malicious intent to hurt just for the sake of hurting. This distinction is important as it separates Euripides' version of Medea with the version that Apollonius is striving to create.

The love of Jason is also not as straightforward as it seems. From the very beginning it is a fabricated love, started by the scheming's of two goddesses. The entirety of the Book 3 is framed in the light of Erato, the god of love. [112] Since the love between the two of them is so crucial to the plot, or rather the need for Hera to achieve revenge against Pelias, , it needs the help of the love god and muse, rather than say the god of warfare, the muse of poetry. [113] Love is the crucial element to the second half of the poem, without the love between Jason and Medea, she cannot arrive in his homeland to wreak havoc upon Pelias. An important question is raised by framing the second half of the poem within the light of Erato, if it was true love would it need to have a guiding light by Erato, wouldn't it just flourish as true love does? The reason I bring up this question is because of the implications of the union of these two characters, and what it would mean if it their love is not heartfelt. This union is also one of the fundamental building blocks of both the pre-Euripidean Medea myth and the story set forth by Euripides himself. As I have previously stated, the connection between Medea and Jason, is one of only two qualities that prevails in Apollonius's depiction of Medea. This connection, as shown by the text of Apollonius, is not as natural as one might expect from two lovers. This simultaneously undermines, or delegitimizes, the myth of Medea while paving the correct path to Euripides'

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[112] The purpose of this paper is not to dive into the love between Jason and Medea, rather just the association and connection, however their love was concocted between gods and love-potion dipped arrows, and was never given a chance to develop on its own. Medea was struck by the arrow before setting eyes upon Jason. This means simultaneously she had no chance but to fall in love, or to give a chance for natural love to blossom. We have no way to discern if their affection is stepped in anything but divine intervention.

[113] Apollonius *Argonautica* 3.83-85, it is quite interesting that the fabricated love between them is construed as a way for Hera to achieve revenge, the only means of doing that is to get Medea to Iolcus, rather than the fleece itself.

work. Apollonius does this by portraying the love of Medea and Jason as doomed from the start; an unnatural union that occurred due to the wills of the gods. This type of union can conceivably end up like it does in Euripides' text, in murder, betrayal, and hurt. By depicting the initial meeting, and eventual "falling in love", of these characters as somewhat contrived, it makes the events of Euripides' play more plausible in terms of degradation of a marriage.

Besides sorcery and the connection between Jason and Medea, the other integral parts of Medea's narrative are sorely lacking from this text. Trickery, specifically in the case of Pelias, is referenced only slightly," Now shall I suffer Pelias to shirk a well-earned death and live to laugh at me. Rash fool! To fail to pay my shrines their due!" [114] Later on, there is an even direct mention of how Medea needs to make it to Greece to achieve this, "But Pelias will not be forced to pay for his atrocities unless you, dear, contrive safe passage for the son of Aeson." [115] Here, there is a subtle reference to Pelias, and the later trickery that Medea pulls on him. However, the present action of the text displays no signs of Medea's trickery. One possible counter-argument to this would be the instance of Medea betraying her family, running off in the night to confer with Jason, and pulling the sheet over her families' eyes. However, this is not a distinct act of trickery but is rather complicated by the love, or supposed love, of Jason. My definition of trickery when speaking of Medea, is reserved for actual acts of deception through use of cleverness. In the situation of the *Argonautica*, it is not a situation of actual use of cleverness, but rather stems from a situation in which she had no choice; either from the divine intervention of the love arrow which causes her to be inexplicitly linked to Jason, outside of her will, her bounds. The other situation, when she "tricks" her brother into meeting her under the guise of a treaty came out of a dire need to protect herself, as there was no way that she could go back

[114] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Argonauts,* trans, Aaron Poochigian, 3.83-85.
[115] Ibid,. 3.98-100.

home after her original act of "deception" in stealing the fleece, and deserting her homeland. If she had not gone along with Jason's plan, a union that was out of her hands from the conception of it, she would have suffered a worse fate at the hands of her father. A deception out of necessity, and even one in which she was not completely willing, is not enough to file under the trickery categorization of Medea. [116]

The other hallmarks of the Medea myth, her femininity, her penchant for violence and murder, and her otherness are all convoluted within the text of Apollonius. The portrayal of Medea that he puts forth is a consistent paradox; one that tries to provide a prequel for Euripides, and achieves that, but also undermines Euripides' portrayal and the tradition that came before him. [117] In every portrayal of herself, her femininity is present. To what extent, or rather to how much it is used to characterize herself and her words and deeds is another aspect entirely. In the *Argonautica*, her femininity is used, mainly in Book 3, as a fact to utilize against her. Her femininity is used as a tool for this entire quest to happen. She is described as "that girl was simply made for guile." [118] I think that here; her femininity is part of what makes her susceptible to such guile. Or at least from the perspective of Apollonius that is. Later, she is portrayed as a maiden who is love-struck[119], but the effect of Apollonius's descriptions doesn't convey that of a girl whose love is out of her control, but rather a teenager who fell hopelessly in love. The distinction between being "struck" by a god-driven plan versus falling in love naturally is not made here. For example, Medea is depicted as "she fired scintillating glances over and over at

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[116] See previous paragraphs for how Medea recoiled at the sight of her slain brother, and took no pleasure or satisfaction from the act.
[117] Refer to chapter 2 to see my argument about how Euripides engages and responds to earlier tradition on Medea.
[118] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Argonauts*, trans, Aaron Poochigian, 3.118.
[119] The actuality is that she was in fact struck with love, "you shoot Medea full of love for Jason." Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Argonauts*, trans, Aaron Poochigian, 3.187.

the son of Aeson…and she could think of nothing but him, as sweet affliction drained her soul." "Her tender cheeks kept turning pale, then crimson, pale, then crimson, in her mind's confusion." [120] [121] These are just two examples of how Medea is depicted as this maiden who is dealing with a new-found love. The portray of Medea is a conscious one on the part of Apollonius, who later uses this depiction as the basis for Jason's easy access into her heart.

Later on, in Book 3 when Jason is trying to devise a plan to get into the castle and steal the fleece, Medea is referred to as a "fainthearted maiden" who he is told to "approach the girl and win her over with persuasion." [122] [123] The reference to her as a maiden is not of much importance here but how to "win over" Medea is. [124] Reading Medea through the lens of Apollonius, and then by extension seeing how Jason sees her, highlights Medea's femininity. Just as Apollonius refers to her as this type of women, Jason is also highly aware of Medea and she has been characterized to him in the poem, just as us readers are seeing her; a girl torn up over love who just needs a little persuading to achieve the tasks. Thus, Jason uses this to his advantage and uses her femininity to persuade her to give him the tools necessary to win the fleece. "In our wedding chamber, you shall enjoy the marriage bed with me, and nothing shall divide us from our love until our predetermined end enshrouds us.", this is the speech and rhetoric that Jason uses to convince Medea that he is a rightful recipient of this crucial

[120] Ibid,. 3.377-380.
[121] Ibid,. 3. 391-392.
[122] Ibid,. 3.747.
[123] Ibid,. 3.725-726.
[124] Refer to earlier paragraphs in which I discuss how the name of "maiden" is an interesting choice as it downplays the paranormal sorceress which scholars attribute her to in this text, when compared with Euripides' work.

information. [125] By highlighting their marriage, the true love that they could share he is appealing to the "fainthearted maiden" that he knows her to be. [126] In this way, Medea is plagued by the feminine aspects of herself as it was partly to blame for her ultimate demise. The promises of an adoring husband, sweet nothings, pillow talk are all contributions to the ultimate "betrayal" that Medea commits upon her family.[127]

Another quality of Medea that has followed her around through the various interpretations of her myth is her proclivity for violence, and specifically the act of murder. Within this epic poem, her penchant for murder is conflated with her other talent of sorcery.[128] It is quite hard to separate the two as her only actual act of concrete violence is wrapped up in sorcery; she kills Talus through incantations and not through an act where she walks away with blood on her hands, like in Euripides' play. However, there are instances throughout the poem where violence is connected to Medea, even if she does not walk away with the title of murderer. One example of this is the incident where Jason and Medea convince her brother to meet Medea under the guise of a treaty.[129] While I have discussed how Medea's involvement within the murder itself is murky at best, the reaction from both herself and others is very telling as to how they view her role. [130] Circe is one of those characters, "Thus she knew, straight off, their lot was

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[125] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Argonauts,* trans, Aaron Poochigian, 3.1455-1458 Here, Apollonius is also referring to the events in Euripides work as well, laying the foundation for his text.
[126] Ibid,. 3.747.
[127] A necessary caveat to this argument is that even without Jason appealing to her feminine side, she would have given him what he needed as the gods demanded it. However, it is important to see how Jason views Medea as well as providing evidence to the argument that her history, and the Medean qualities, plague her throughout her mythic tradition.
[128] Refer to earlier paragraphs where I explain the connection between sorcery and murder.
[129] Refer to earlier paragraphs in which I go more in depth on Medea's role in this incident.
[130] See above footnote.

exile and their crime kin-murder." [131] Here she is grouping Medea and Jason together for shouldering the burden of the crime. "Their lot…their crime", automatically this places Medea and Jason on the same level of responsibility for the act. There is a layer to their crime where there can be some aspect of shared responsibility, Medea was an accomplice in the act, however if she did not participate in it, she would have either been subject to being at the mercy of her father or would have been granted no protection from Jason.[132]

However, while the act of physical responsibility can be "shared", the crime and the actions associated with it cannot. As I have discussed in earlier paragraphs, the actual murder was committed by Jason and not Medea, in fact she recoils at the sight of her slain brother, physically removing herself from even touching her brother while Jason hacks away at him. [133] Circe's view of shared responsibility is intriguing as it categorizes herself as a murderer without actually murdering anyone or anything. She was not the one to yield the sword, she did not whisper incantations to make him stumble and die. The only reason she was there at all was for fear of her own safety and future. However, in Circe's mind she sees Medea as being held equally as responsible. The evidence to link Medea with acts of violence and murder is hard to do, considering the evidence, in this poem, to prove that she is the violent murderer that we see in Euripides is sorely lacking.

What is interesting about connecting Medea and acts of murder, is that the Absyrtus incident is a direct act of reception on the part of Apollonius. Sophocles produced a play in the mid-fifth century titled *The Women of Colchis*. [134] In this play, Sophocles depicts Medea as

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[131] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Argonauts,* trans, Aaron Poochigian, 3.894-895.
[132] Of course, this is what ends up happening in *Medea*, even though she is granted the protection from Jason in this epic poem.
[133] Whether this is out of fear, disgust, or sympathy, the text does not make it clear.
[134] His lifetime was from c. 468-406 BCE

being the one who murders her brother Absyrtus and scatters his limbs onto the ocean. While only fragments of this play exist, an extant fragment calling Medea a murderer exist. Apollonius produces a completely different version of this incident, centuries later in the *Argonautica*. Medea goes from being an active murderer, who takes the bones of her younger brother and throws them out to the open sea as if they mean nothing. [135] This Medea is as far as one can get from the Medea portrayed in Apollonius's poem. Not only is Medea not the actual murderer in the poem, but she seems to have deep sympathy and regret over her actions, both in the immediate aftermath and later on when her decisions put her in dire situations. However, these two disparate portrayals tell us two things.

First, it shows that Apollonius was in direct engagement with the previous mythological history of Medea, and is undermining it. Secondly, his portrayal shows that depicting Medea as decidedly less violent, malicious, and murderous was a conscious choice, as it goes against the previous tradition. [136] The question that comes out of that is why? To address the former claim, Apollonius is directly going against the mythological narrative that has come before him. The Sophocles play is the first extant reference to Medea as a murderer, this same history is capitalized by Euripides and catapults Medea into the murdering mother, an image that will plague her into modernity. However, Apollonius conceives of an entirely different Medea, one who does not murder her kin. He undermines the previous history of Medea and does not make her an active participant in the murder of her brother, and even goes so far as to be sympathetic. This is a direct reversal of the previous mythic tradition that had been set forth. The question

[135] Apsyrtus is older then Medea in the *Argonautica* but is distinctly referred to as Medea's baby brother in the Sophocles play.
[136] Refer to earlier paragraphs on Medea and sorcery and how this impacts Apollonius's portrayal of her

now becomes why did Apollonius make the very pointed choice to undermine tradition and construct a version of Medea in which she is not a murderer.

As I have previously demonstrated Medea was not an active participant in the murder of her brother, a direct contradiction to the Sophocles tragedy. The only act that could be construed as "murder" is Talus, but I argue that his non-human status and the fact that no blood was left on Medea's hands, in my view make it inadmissible as an act of murder. Besides Talus, there is no mention of killing, murder, or any blood directly on her person, Apollonius makes the conscious choice to completely revert the previous narrative set forth by Euripides and Sophocles. I think that Apollonius is laying some sympathy to the character of Medea that she has not be given before. The choice to portray her as anything but a murderer, given that the history is already there to do that, is sympathetic. I think that this type of characterization, coupled with the fact that Jason can hardly be considered a leader, lends me to think Apollonius is creating a type of anti-hero out of her. [137]

When I speak of Medea as an anti-hero I do not mean in the traditional sense, as a heroic figure who does not display the typical features or qualities of a hero, such as bravery, leadership, charisma. I believe that Medea is a different type of anti-hero; as she is a female, she would never be considered a hero in antiquity. Her status as a female immediately eliminates her from ever being a hero, but she certainly has displayed heroic qualities both in the *Argonautica* and in her mythic past. When I refer to her as an anti-hero, I am speaking to her fundamental inability to be considered a hero in title or name, but is effectively the hero in the way she conducts herself and her actions. In her mythological narrative, there have been instances and hints towards her heroic tendencies. As I discuss in chapter 1, her speech to the crew of the Argo

[137] Jason as a non-hero is well documented in classical scholarship.

is very indicative of heroic rhetoric. In Pindar's *Ode 4* she speaks directly to the shipmates in an effort to bolster their morale and encourage them onward. This type of speech, in which someone speaks directly to their troops and crew, alongside the type of rhetoric is equivalent to that of Achilles rousing his troops for battle against the Trojans. [138]

Similarly, to Pindar, she acts like the anti-hero in the *Argonautica*. Firstly, Apollonius's characterization of her, casting her in a sympathetic light and urging readers to do the same by changing her narrative from murdering mother to the girl with no options, creates an interesting dichotomy between Jason and her. Jason, through Apollonius's characterization is not depicted as a leader. On the other hand, Medea displays continuous leadership qualities. She is the one who provides Jason with the necessary tools, herbs, and information to get through the initial hurdles of King Aeetes's trials. Furthermore, she is the crucial cog of the whole golden fleece expedition; without her the serpent who guards it could never have been enchanted and put to sleep, which was the critical step in securing the golden fleece for Jason and his crew. This alone is enough to suggest she is the real leader of the Argonauts and the hero of the text. Without her the quest, simply could not have been completed. Apollonius knows that Medea could never truly be considered the true hero of the epic, due to her gender, but to cast such a sympathetic light on her, especially when considering how Euripides constructs her narrative in 431 BCE, lends itself to think that he wants us to consider her to be the hero of the poem.

If we regard her figure in conjunction with Jason, as both her mythic history and Apollonius implores us to do, then we are even more inclined to consider her to be heroic. I read Jason's lack of heroism, primarily coming from the fact that without Medea the quest could not

[138] Hero of the *Iliad* by Homer, is considered to be an archetype for heroism in antiquity.

be complete, as a measuring stick for Medea's heroism. [139] His inability to complete the mission, both during the capture of the fleece and after on their journey to Iolcus, when compared with the amount of help that Medea provides surely puts her in the more heroic spotlight. Further, there are points in the text which mimic the heroic speech she gives in Pindar's *Ode 4*, supporting my argument that there is a dialogue occurring between the past of Medea and the current production of her.

In the *Argonautica* when Medea is about to rendezvous with Jason to give him the herbs to succeed in Aeetes' test, she speaks to her attendants in the same fashion that she speaks to the Argonauts in Pindar,

> Goodness, my friends, what a mistake I made! I never stopped to think it wasn't safe with all those strangers roaming through our kingdom. The whole city is wild with turmoil, so none of the women who attend the temple have come today. Since we are here, however, and no one else is coming, lets delight out hearts with choral song. Once we have picked these gorgeous flowers from the tender grass, we shall return at our accustomed hour. And you will go home rich in gifts today if you agree to do me one small favor: Argus, you see, will not stop being me to—Chalciope as well—oh, but be sure to keep the words I tell you to yourselves so that they never reach my father's ears—well, it's about the stranger who agreed to undertake the trial of the oxen—you see, they asked me to accept his gifts and keep him safe in that atrocious contest. Well, once the terms were set, I bade the stranger come here alone, apart from his companions, to meet me face-to-face, so that we girls might share among ourselves whatever gifts he brings

[139] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Argonauts*, trans, Aaron Poochigian, 3.34-35 The gods within the text highlight this point as well as Hera states, "I am quite certain that, with her assistance, Jason will bring the fleece back home to Greece."

> us. We shall give him, in exchange, a very potent herbal tincture. Please, though, stand at a distance when the man arrives.'" So, she requested, and her subtle words persuaded all the maids.[140]

Addressing attendants versus the heroes of the great Argo are vastly different in terms of audience, and have different connotations. However, the rhetoric and effect remain the same in both cases. The speech mimics the type of style and language that Pindar uses in his poem, centuries earlier. In this speech to her maids, Medea uses her cleverness to persuade the maids to keep her secret. [141] She appeals to their piety by addressing the lack of people at the temple and to their want of treasures by dangling the promise of gifts if they do her this one small kindness. She also appeals to their sense of familial loyalty as she names Chalciope, her sister, as the reasoning for her going behind her father's back. By appealing to all the facets of her attendants' souls she ultimately persuades them and they keep mum. This type of language of persuasion, the rhetoric of talking to underlings and making them feel higher than they actually are, knowing exactly the right things to say to get what she wanted out of them are all hallmarks of heroic speech. Furthermore, they are hallmarks of Medea's equally heroic speech in Pindar's *Ode 4*, in which she too knows all the right things to say to the Argonauts as they are low on morale and need to be supported. This type of speech not only supports my claim of Medea as an anti-hero, but it also furthers the claim of Apollonius interacting with Medea's past to help construct his vision of her.

Of the Medean qualities that exist in the mythological canon of Medea, Apollonius handles her otherness and foreigner status the most interestingly. What makes this quality so

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[140] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Argonauts*, trans, Aaron Poochigian, 3.1156-1183.
[141] Ibid,. 3.178-1739 "Jason obeyed the mandates of the maiden, the clever one.

complex in this text, is that for most of the text she is not a foreigner or at least incredibly welcomed by the lands she sets foot on, but on her home soil. I say most of the text because I will argue that in the times when the Argo is out at sea and the heroes, Medea is not mentioned at all throughout those liminal passages and thus becomes sort of a foreigner in which she has no actual agency or pull on those sea-faring journeys. [142] Besides this trend of effectively removing Medea from the journeys onboard the Argo, Apollonius also interacts with the dynamic of a figure who is known for being extremely "other" but who does not occupy that role within his text. This becomes especially interesting when discussing how this relates to the relationship with Jason.

First, I will address how Medea is not a foreigner for most of the poem, but becomes one when the Argo is on the open waters. From the very first time we encounter Medea, it is immediately clear that she is in a spot that is out of the ordinary, she is at home. She is not on the verge of exile, not a foreigner, not on soil that isn't hers. One of Medea's most recognizable traits is her foreignness and status as an other, but in the *Argonautica*, she is the complete opposite. In fact, she even refers to Jason as the foreigner. [143] The roles switch as Medea is at home at Colchis and Jason is the one invading foreign lands, he is the one who has no agency on this land. Perhaps this reflects the reasoning behind why he cannot complete any of the tasks that he faced as they were all on Colchian soil. This role reversal, in which she is the person at home and he as a foreigner, is an interesting development in both this text and the overall mythical canon of Medea.

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[142] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Argonauts*, trans, Aaron Poochigian, 4.1232 "until its sail picked up the wind and pulled the heroes onward.", throughout the pIoem Jason and the Argonauts are specifically referred to as heroes.

[143] Ibid,. 3.1042-1046 "The entire town will pass around the story of my fall, and all the Colchian girls will bear me on their lips everywhere, harshly savaging my name: *she loved that foreigner so much it killed her*."

In the *Argonautica*, the inverse of the typical Jason and Medea relationship is reflected in the innermost thoughts of Medea and in their interactions. Medea speaks to his foreign status when lamenting about her feelings for him, " ' Oh, how these baneful dreams have frightened me. I fear the coming of these heroes means catastrophe. My thoughts keep fluttering around that stranger. Let him go and woo a Greek girl far away among his people. Maidenhood and the palace of my parents should be my lone concerns.'" [144] Here, Medea refers to his status as a foreigner and the dynamic between them shifts; it has always been Medea as the one in the precarious position because of her foreign status, here it shifts. Her view of him as a foreigner changes their dynamic from one where Medea was continuously seeking protection in the form of Jason, but because of the change in status it shifts the other way. Jason himself is also aware of this dynamic, " ' Maiden, why are you scared to be alone with me? I'm not like other men, a no-good boaster, not nor or back when I was in my homeland.'" [145] In this quote, Jason is somehow using his status as a foreigner to plead to Medea. Referencing his homeland makes him seen vulnerable as he is out of place on this soil, but it also enchants Medea somewhat as it reminds her of him whisking her back to his land. This type of inverse is interesting for the implications of Medea's history, she has never been in this position before and it creates an interesting dichotomy for Apollonius where he is both furthering the story of Medea but also undermining the past tradition of her.

On one hand, Apollonius is furthering her narrative by providing a prequel for Euripides. By establishing that she has a homeland, it creates the perfect prequel for Euripides' text. It establishes the concept of Medea as a foreigner in the tragedy by producing a narrative in which

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[144] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Argonauts,* trans, Aaron Poochigian, 3.841-847 This is also an example of Apollonius referring to the events that will actually occur in the Euripides tragedy.
[145] Ibid,. 3.1260-1263.

she came from somewhere. However, on the other side this development completely undermines the narrative tradition of her tale. Medea is consistently characterized as a foreigner on both vases and in texts. This is a central touchstone of her identity, but Apollonius completely inverts that status. Some of this is due to the nature of the plot. She is at home in Colchis and there is no way to paint her as anything but the Colchian princess that she is. However, Apollonius goes one step further and completely inverts the dynamic of Jason and Medea because of this change in status. For example, when Jason and Medea have their initial meeting, the reversal of roles changes their dynamic completely, " ' Remember the name Medea if, by chance, you live to come back home. When you are far away I shall remember yours as well. Please, though, kindly inform me where your home might be. Where will you go when you go sailing off across the sea?'" [146] Jason and Medea's dynamic is based on the nature that Jason provides Medea with protection and security, she is indebted to him and this is the true foundation of their relationship. This type of relationship is reflected in the vases of fifth century Athens.[147] However by portraying Jason as the foreigner it immediately changes their relationship into one where Medea is helping him.

Now that I have established the role reversal that is occurring in this text, and Medea's status as a non-foreigner, I will now argue that there is one type of circumstance in which Medea acts as a foreigner, by which I mean someone who is in a liminal space and has no agency because of their foreign status. In Book 4 of the *Argonautica*, Jason and the Argonauts are trying desperately to get home to Iolcus. Most of this journey takes place on the sea as they sail homewards, stopping only when they are seeking refuge from King Aeetes and his wrath. During these long stretches on which the heroes are at sea, Medea is never mentioned either by name or

[146] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Argonauts*, trans, Aaron Poochigian, 3.1380-1386.
[147] Refer to Type 3 in my appendix for vases depicting Medea and Jason.

her common epithet of "maiden" as she is referred to as soon as they land on Circe's island.[148] For their first long sea journey, which starts at line 669 in Book 4 and ends at line 886, where Medea is called "maiden", Medea is not mentioned or referred to in any way. This same occurrence happens when they take another long journey on the seas, this journey starts at line 1133 and ends at line 1269 when they land on Alcinoos' island. Again, Medea is not referred to until they land on the island. Furthermore, the Argonauts are collectively referred to as "heroes" throughout the journey. [149] As I have established earlier in my argument, Medea is seemingly not included in that as there is no possible way for her to be a hero. Thus, she is effectively excluded from the journeys abroad the ship.

It is as if she cannot exist in this liminal space of being abroad a boat. When the boat is not tethered to the islands and kingdoms of Aeetes, Circe, or Alcinoos, Medea does not exist. She is not referenced to by name, there is no mention of where she is or what she is doing while the Argonauts steer the ship, and while the people on board the Argo are referred to as heroes, she is eliminated from that based purely on gender. What is it about this liminal space that makes her disappear for long stretches at a time? I argue that it has something to do with the Medean quality of being a foreigner.

A ship is a liminal space in which when it is not anchored and tethered to land, it is out on the open sea with no soil to cling to. Since Medea has always been defined by her status as a foreigner, which inherently means she needs to be connected to a land to be called that, when she is in a space that clings to no soil she cannot be defined or have a function. In her past, she has been defined by her status as in permeant exile which means she had to leave her homeland to

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[148] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Argonauts,* trans, Aaron Poochigian, 4.883.
[149] Ibid,. 4.1267 This occurs throughout both journeys on the seas as this is just one example of it.

come to a land to which she has no connection to. In the *Argonautica,* the reverse happens and she is defined by her homeland. However, the similarities between both narratives is land. She must be either defined by her own home soil or her lack of it. She cannot exist in a realm where there is no loyalty, nationality, or allegiance. This is why I believe she does not have a presence when on the Argo. Since she cannot be defined as either a foreigner or on home ground, a definition that is so integral to her personality both within the *Argonautica* and in her past, she cannot function in any role.

I argue that through this portrayal of Medea, Apollonius is successful at achieving two notions. The first is that he creates the perfect prequel for Euripides's *Medea*. He consistently paves the way for his version of Medea to seamlessly transition into Euripides's version. He does this by making it plausible for Medea to end up an eventual foreigner on Corinth and for the eventual disintegration of Jason and Medea's marriage. Medea's last scene is the incident with Talus which is the perfect end scene for her eventual transformation into the murdering mother. If the last scene we get of Medea is her "murdering" a bronze statue, it is easy to see how she could go on to murder her own children. If she has murdered before, even without the ambiguity surrounding the murder, it makes it a more plausible transition into a kin murderer. The poem itself does not end with Medea, but it does leave readers with a sense of transition. "so, I have now arrived at your adventure's glorious conclusion. After gladly passing the land of Cecrops, Aulis in Euboea, and the Opuntian cities of the Locrians, you landed on the beach of Pagasae." [150] Here, the action does not end with Medea but it ends in flight. The heroes are referenced here, but Medea is not. The last time we encounter her is at the very end of the incident with

[150] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Argonauts,* trans, Aaron Poochigian, 4.2298-2302.

Talus. "of that ingenious conjurer, Medea." [151] So, when the poem ends with these heroes in transition, they are flittering from location to location, always moving, it adds a sense of transition for the story of Jason and Medea. Interestingly enough Hera's need for revenge against Pelias never occurs within the confines of the poem, but that revenge is depicted on fifth century Attic Greek vases in great detail. [152]

Apollonius's portrayal of the union between Jason and Medea also lends plausibility to the eventual demise of their love. As I have discussed earlier, the fabricated nature of their love is heavily depicted in the poem. Perhaps none more so than their hasty marriage in Book 4, "Alcinoos' realm was not the place where Jason son of Aeson had desired to consummate the marriage, no, he rather had hoped to do it in his father's palace once he returned. The girl had hoped so, too. Necessity, however, had compelled them to make love then and there." [153] This passage can be read as a commentary on their marriage or as on their union. The marriage itself is coming from a place of need, they cannot be saved by Alcinoos unless Medea is a virgin. She cannot lose her virginity without marriage and thus a wedding is the only solution. However, their love itself was created out of necessity. Not their own needs, but that of the gods. If Hera and Athena did not wish to exact revenge against Pelias, then there would have been no need to infect Medea with an enchanted arrow of love. Apollonius makes a conscious choice to frame their union in terms of fabrication and need instead of a natural desire to love one another. I argue that his reasoning behind this is to create a version of their love that was never on steady ground. If he paints their union as if it were doomed from the start, he achieves two things. First,

[151] Ibid,. 4.2164.
[152] Refer to Appendix 1, specifically type 1.
[153] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Jason and the Argonauts,* trans, Aaron Poochigian, 4.1485-1491.

he is saving the image of Medea. Secondly, he is providing a plausible reason for the eventual demise of their union.

First, I will discuss how Apollonius is saving Medea in this way. In between the sympathetic portrayal of her and allowing their marriage to be a doomed union, he is saving her image. Apollonius could have easily painted Medea as a horrible, vengeful, spiteful woman who fell in love with Jason and murdered her brother. Her mythic history certainly leaves the blueprint for that characterization to happen. Alas, he does not and his portrayal of her becomes an incredibly conscious choice. By depicting their union as fabricated and coming out of a need for it and not a genuine want, he absolves Medea of her portrayal in Euripides' *Medea*. Instead of Medea being the one to destroy a marriage, the marriage becomes fundamentally faulty to begin with. In conjunction with this notion, Apollonius is also providing a plausible reasoning behind their demise.

While Apollonius uses his epic poem as a way to respond to Euripides' portrayal by providing a prequel for the events of that play, he is simultaneously undermining him and the rest of Medea's mythic tradition. Euripides's play is steeped in the mythic tradition of Medea, and furthermore he harnesses her past to construct the innovative elements of his play. This type of narrative construction means her past plagues her in the tragedy, and by doing so Euripides condemns Medea. However, Apollonius's portrayal is sympathetic and goes so far as to make plausible excuses for her behavior in Euripides' work, saving her image in the process. Thus, Apollonius is not only responding to Euripides in terms of narrative continuity but also undermines the image and narrative that he put forth.

Conclusion

I framed the beginning of my project with a modern retelling of Euripides' *Medea*. From the perspective of Yukio Ninagawa's production, she is looking backwards to antiquity. As I conclude my project, it is fitting to end with the ultimate act of both of reception and a reversal of Ninagawa's production; the figure of Dido. The ultimate act of reception actually comes from within antiquity itself. Dido in Virgil's *Aeneid* is the ultimate act of using Medea's mythological past and interacting with the past artists and authors who contributed to the framework of Medea's narrative. Dido is a foreign queen, in love with a hero, and is prone to hysterics.[154] Practically a carbon copy of Medea, right down to falling in love with who will ultimately desert her. Dido is evidence that antiquity is looking backwards within its own time period to construct a figure that is based off the continuous Medean tradition.

Looking through the lens of both literary history and reception, I was able to discern that Dido was truly the ultimate act of reception for Medea from within antiquity itself. If what is left from Yukio Ninagawa's production is the violent, hateful, spiteful Medea from Euripides' *Medea*, then what does Dido leave behind? This is not a question I aim to answer; however, it does lend oneself to think of just how much that spunky Colchian princess left behind for us readers, both within antiquity itself and in modernity.

Chapter 1 is a survey of every documented reference to Medea prior to c.431 BCE. It is a collection of both vase paintings and text and I take the approach of reading them simultaneously. This approach allowed me to look at both mediums chronologically and see how

[154] While I do not consider the use of hysterics to be one of my Medean qualities. It is definitely a quality that Medea has, specifically in Euripides' *Medea*.

the different artistic interpretations interacted with each other. I believe this approach gave me a comprehensive understanding of what the Medea tradition was before Euripides' production. The work done in this chapter gave me a foundation from which my arguments came out of. Within this chapter, I was able to identify and define the Medean qualities I thought were hallmarks of her narrative and characterization. After close reading Hesiod's' *Theogony*, Sophocles' *The Colchian Women*, and Pindar's *Ode 4*, I was able to identify those qualities within the text. This project came out of a want to reconcile a mythological figure whose narrative was anything but linear. Interacting with both the texts and the 45 Greek vase paintings allowed me to gain a better understanding of what her myth was like before Euripides' play, and to see that her narrative was not as disparate as I originally thought. Rather, her narrative was steeped in the continuous Medea tradition that multiple authors and artists interacted with, as well as having dialogues with each other.

Chapter 2 is a close reading analysis of Euripides' *Medea*. Coming into the project, I felt that both this tragedy and Apollonius's *Argonautica* were the two well-known works depicting Medea, so these were the two texts I spent the most time with. In chapter 2, I apply my knowledge of Medea's mythological history and my application of the Medean qualities to construct an argument regarding Euripides's use of Medea's' past to construct this supposedly innovative work. Classical scholarship continuously highlights the innovative nature of Euripides' *Medea*. However, upon closer inspection, it seems that up until line 874, where Medea boldly and concretely claims she will kill her children, the play rests on Medea's past to characterize her. Euripides's harnesses Medea's past indiscretions, like the murder of Pelias, to construct fear within his Greek play. Up until line 874, Medea displays no concrete violent or murderous tendencies, and yet from the opening lines, people fear her. This is because Euripides

is using her mythological narrative to create this supposedly new version of Medea. At line 874, when there is a hint of novelty, "innovations" appear in the play. At line 874, Medea transforms into something that the Ancient world never saw, a murdering mother. Yet, even with this novel inclusion, it is still stepped in her past. As Medea was documented as murdering her baby brother, the idea of her murdering her children is not as novel as one might think. The other novelties in the play, Medea's chariot namely, are also constructed from an understanding of her past. Everything that is seemingly flashy and new, is really a reinterpretation of Medea's past narrative.

This all comes to fruition in the Hellenistic epic poem, the *Argonautica*. I delve into this text in Chapter 3. Apollonius's epic concerns itself with the events that predate the Euripidean tragedy, but is actually produced more than a century later than Euripides. This means that Apollonius had knowledge of not only the pre-Euripidean history, but also of the Euripides text itself. Within that chapter I argue that the unique narrative position of Apollonius' work allows him to accomplish two things. First, he continues some of the traditions set forth by Euripides and in the process, creates a plausible prequel for his tragedy. Paradoxically, he also undermines Euripides' work. As Euripides' tragedy is very much based in the history of Medea, Apollonius is simultaneously undermining the mythological past and tradition of Medea. While Apollonius utilizes the past of Medea to both make and unmake her, he achieves something that no one has done before, paint a sympathetic portrait of Medea. Euripides condemns Medea while Apollonius ultimately ends up saving her.

Appendix 1

Catalog of Sixth, Fifth, and Fourth[th] Century Greek Vases that Depict Medea in Various Stages of her Myth

Cataloged by Type and by Date

Athenian Vases Unless Otherwise Noted

Type 1 Medea as Murderer

<u>Catalog 1:</u>

Side A

Medea detail. Images courtesy of British Museum

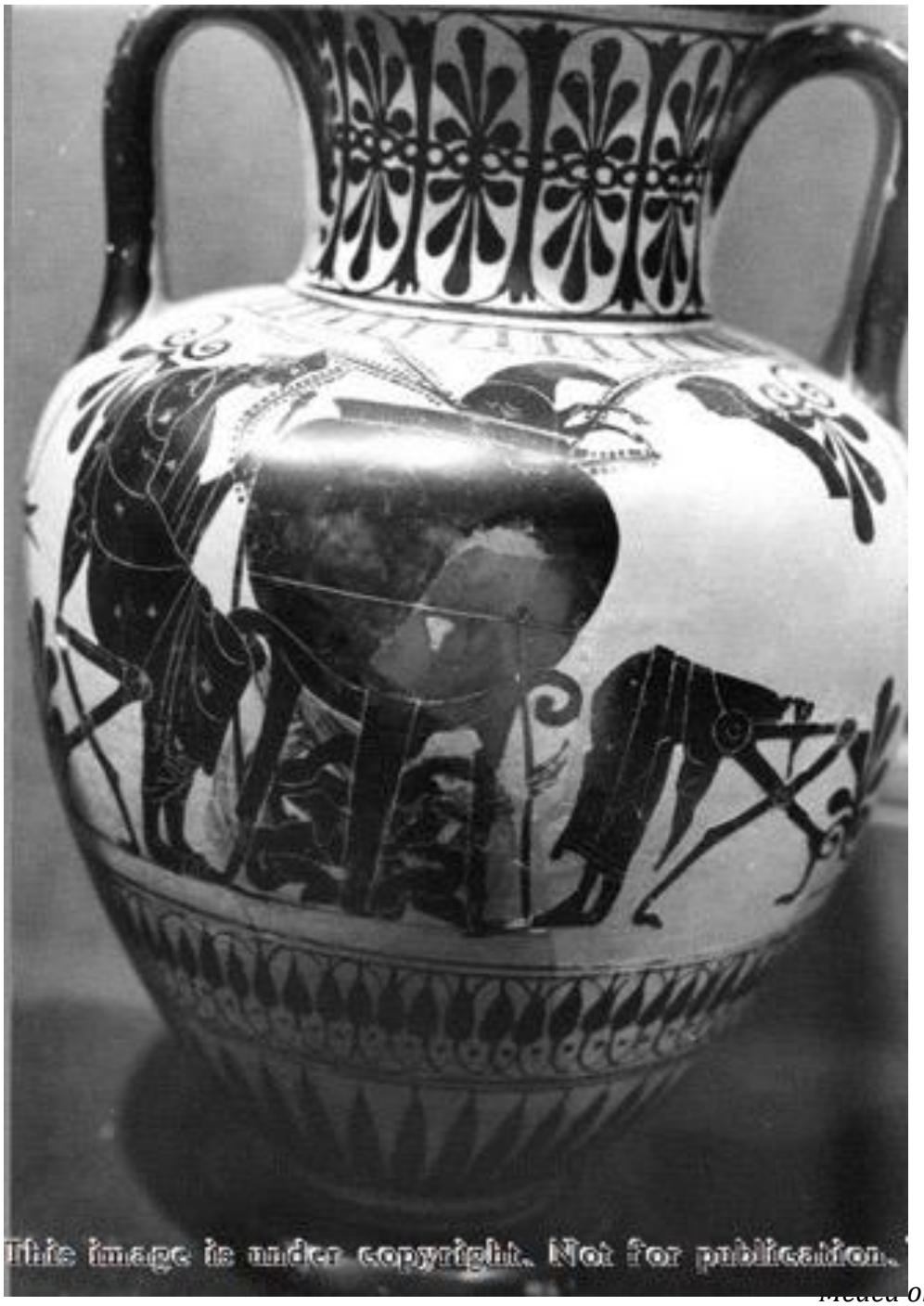
Black figure hydria, from British Museum, London, 1843,1103.59. Provenance: Etruria, Italy. Attributed to Leagros group by Beazley, c. 550-500 BCE. BAD no. 30203

Catalog 2:

Medea, second from left
Images courtesy of Beazley Archive

Black figure amphora with elongated neck, from British Museum, London, 1837,0609.62. Provenance: Etruria, Italy. Attributed to Medea group by Smith, c. 550-500 BCE. BAD no. 301685

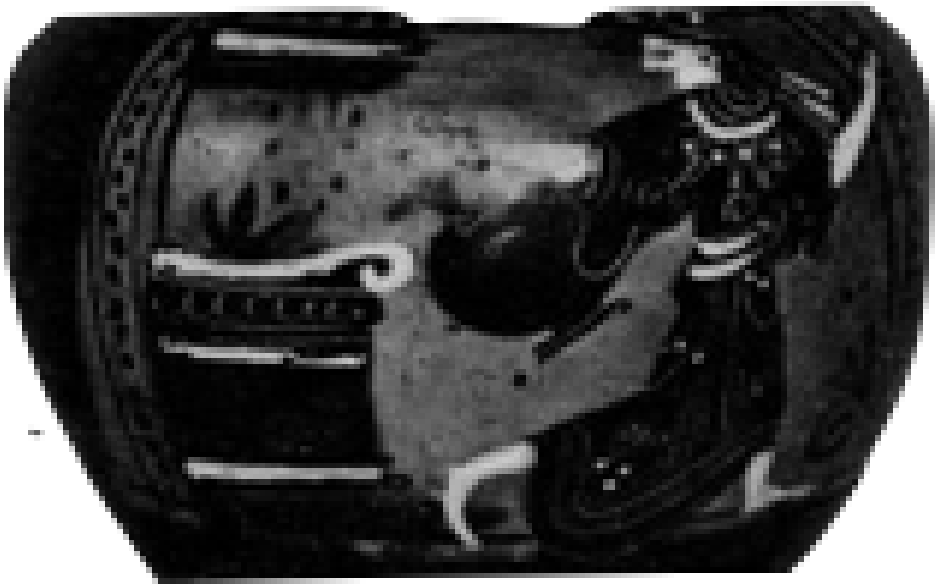
Catalog 3:



Medea on right
Image courtesy of Beazley Archive

Black figure amphora with elongated neck, from Sotheby's Collection, London, 8.12.1980. c. 550-500 BCE. BAD no. 5602

Catalog 4:



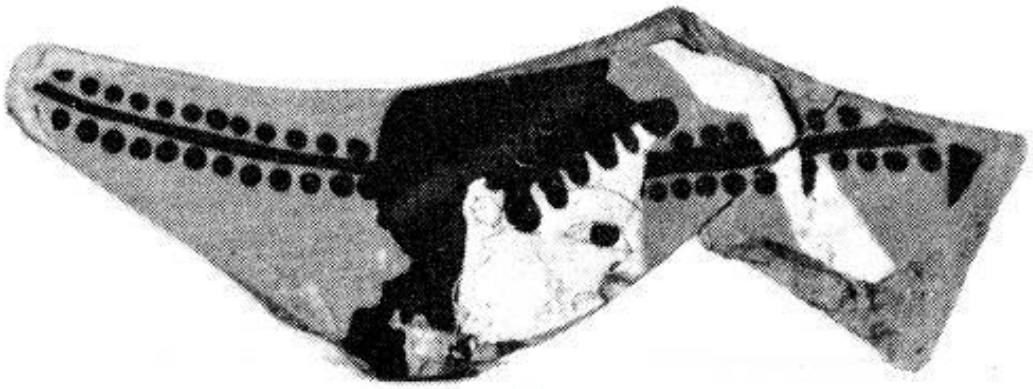
Medea detail

Pelias detail

Images courtesy of Beazley Archive and Corups Vasorum Antiquoru

Black figure oinochoe, from Cabinet des Medailles, Paris, 268. Provenance: Camiros, Rhodes. Attributed to Athena P by Beazley, c. 525-475 BCE. BAD no. 330832

Catalog 5:



Female Face, Medea detail

Female legs; Medea legs
Images courtesy of Beazley Archive

Black figure amphora fragments, from Antikensammulungen, Munich, 9243. Attributed to Leagros group by Kunze-Gotte, c. 525-475 BCE. BAD no. 7571

Catalog 6:

Red figure cup fragments, from J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, California, 79.AE.19. Attributed to Euphronios by signature, c. 525-475 BCE. BAD no. 7507. Sides A/B: Amazonomachy, inside: Medea and the ram.
Description provided courtesy of Beazley Archive; no image available.

Catalog 7:

Side A *Side B*
Images courtesy of Arthur M. Slacker Museum

Black figure amphora, from Arthur M. Slacker museum, Harvard University, 1960.315. Provenance: Etruria, Italy. Attributed to the Leagros Group by Robinson, c. 520 BCE. BAD no. 4798

Catalog 8:

Side B

Side A

Images courtesy of Beazley Archive

Red figure stamnos, from Antikensammlung, Berlin, F2188. Provenance: Etruria, Italy. Attributed to Hephaisteion by Talcott, c. 500-450 BCE. BAD no. 2030

Catalog 9:

Medea far left.
Image courtesy of the British Museum

Red figure hydria, from British Museum, London, 1843.1103.76. Provenance: Etruria, Italy. Attributed to Copenhagen by Beazley, c. 500-450 BCE. BAD no. 202944

Catalog 10:

Image courtesy of Beazley Archive

Red figure stamnos, from Antikensammulungen, Munich, J343. Provenance: Etruria, Italy. Attributed to Copenhagen by Beazley, c. 500-450 BCE. BAD no. 202926

Catalog 11:

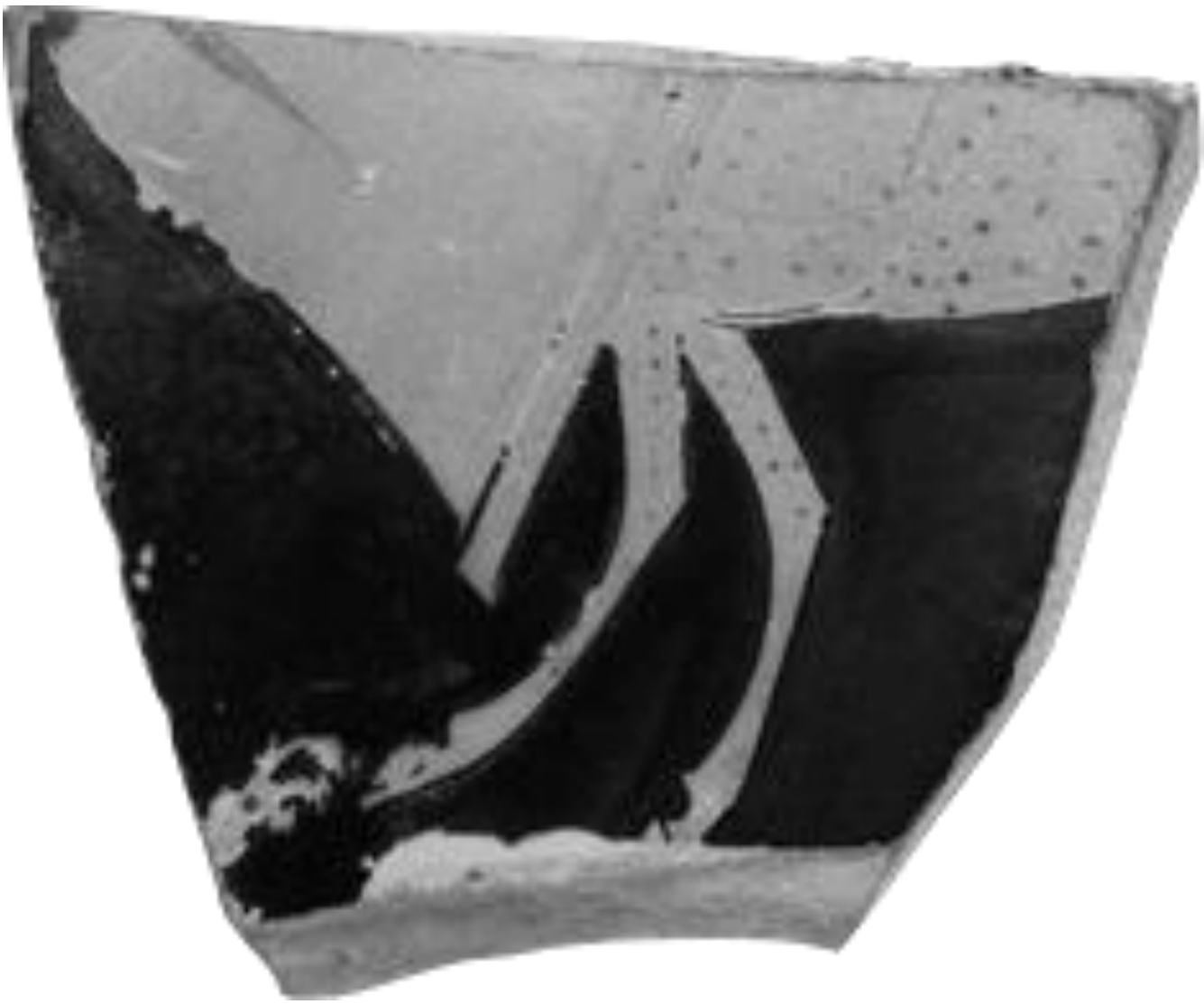


Image courtesy of Beazley Archive

Red figure calyx krater fragment, from J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, California, 80.AE.58. Provenance: Agrigento, Sicily. c. 480-470 BCE. BAD no. 7506

Catalog 12:

Side A

Side B

Images courtesy of Museum of Fine Arts Boston

Red figure column krater, from Museum Fine Arts Boston, Boston, 1970.567. Attributed to Aegisthus by Vermule, c. 470 BCE. BAD no. 9978

Catalog 13:

Image courtesy of Beazley Archive

Red figure calyx krater, from the James Logie Memorial Collection, University of Canterbury, 178.94. Attributed to Kleophon, c. 450-400 BCE. BAD no. 5046

Catalog 14:

Image courtesy of Beazley Archive

Red figure bell krater, from the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Ancona, 3198. BAD no. 7241

Catalog 15:

Red figure cup B, from Antikenmuseum und Sammlung Ludwig, Basel, LOANXXXX4435. Attributed to Euaion P by Cahn. BAD no. 4435. Side A: daughters of Pelias, cauldron, inside: Alkandra and Pelias, cauldron,
Description provided courtesy of Beazley Archive; no image available

Catalog 16:

Pelias and Medea, center

Inside of cup, Pelias and Medea
Images courtesy of Beazley Archive

Red figure cup, from the Museo Gregoriano Etrusco Vaticano, Vatican City, II86. BAD no. 5361

Catalog 17:

Side A

Side B, Medea far left

Images Courtesy of Beazley Archive

Black figure amphora with elongated neck, from Bonhams auction house, London, 28.10.2009. BAD no. 9029262

Catalog 18:

Side A

Side B, Medea left
Images courtesy of Beazley Archive

Black figure amphora, with elongated neck, from Summa Galleries, Beverly Hills, California, 2129. BAD no. 9030813

Type 2 Theseus and Medea

Catalog 19:

Black figure krater, from Musee du Louvre, Paris, CP12284, c. 525-475 BCE. BAD no. 41091. Side A: Theseus and the bull, Hermes, woman (Medea?), tree with cloth.
Description provided courtesy of Beazley Archive; no image available

Catalog 20:

Red figure amphora with elongated neck, from Antikenmuseum und Sammlung Ludwig, Basel, LU54. c. 475-425 BCE. BAD no. 276089. Side A: Theseus, with club, and the bull, women with oinochoe and phiale (Medea?). Side B: draped youths, one with strigil.
Description provided courtesy of Beazley Archive; no image available

Catalog 21:

Red figure pelike, from National Museum, Athens, 13026. Attributed to Louvre Centauromachy by Beazley. c. 475-425 BCE. BAD no. 216032. Side A: Theseus and the bull, woman (Medea), phiale, draped man leaning on staff
Description provided courtesy of Beazley Archive; no image available

Catalog 22:

Side A, Medea far right

Side B

Medea detail

Images courtesy of Beazley Archive

Red figure column krater, from Musee Ceramique, 3. Attributed to Hephaistos by Beazley, c. 475-425 BCE. BAD no. 214742

Catalog 23:

Red figure skyphos fragments, from Museo Archelogico Etrusco, Florence, P80. Provenance: Populonia, Italy. c. 450-400 BCE. BAD no. 15220. Side A: Theseus and the bull, Side B: Woman (Medea?) holding box, seated draped figure holding staff.
Description provided courtesy of Beazley Archive; no image available

Catalog 24**:**

Side A

Inset of Medea, far left.
Images courtesy of Beazley Archive

Red figure calyx krater, from Antikensammlung, Kiel, B557. c. 450-400 BCE. BAD no. 28009

Catalog 25:

Medea, in oriental dress, far right

Image courtesy of Beazley Archive

Red figure bell krater, from Museo Arqueologico Nacional, Madrid, 217. Attributed to Munich 2335 by Beazley. c. 450-400 BCE. BAD no. 215394

Catalog 26:

Side A

Side B,
Medea second from top left.

Images courtesy of Beazley Archive

Red figure calyx krater, from Schloss Fasanerie, Germany, 78. Provenance: Sicily. Attributed to Kekrops by Beazley, c. 425-375. BAD no. 217590

Catalog 27:

Side A, Medea on second row, second from right
Image courtsey of Beazley Archive

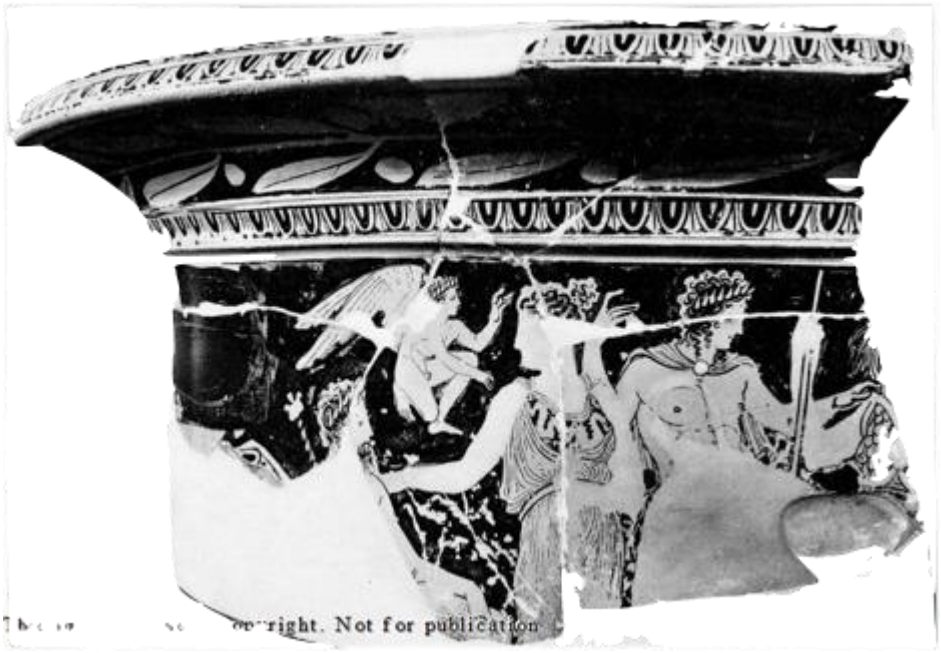
Red figure calyx krater, from Museo Archeologico Regionale, Palerno. Provenance: Argigento, Sicily. Attributed to Lugano by Beazley. c. 425-375 BCE. BAD no. 217595
Catalog 28:

Red figure pelike, from State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, ST2012. c. 400-300 BCE. BAD no. 44064. Side A: Theseus and the bull, Athena, youth, woman in oriental costume with phiale (Medea?), tree.
Description provided courtesy of Beazley Archive; no image available

Catalog 29**:**

Red figure bell krater, from Museo nazionale di Spina, 13266. Provenance: Spina, Italy. c. 400-300 BCE. BAD no. 44. Side A: Theseus and the bull, Nike, Medea (?), Side B: youths.
Description provided courtesy of Beazley Archive; no image available

Catalog 30:



Medea detail, far right
Image courtesy of Beazley Archive

Red figure bell krater fragment, from Akademisches, Kunstmuseum, Bonn, 540. Provenance: Athens, Greece. Attributed to Meleager by Beazley c. 400-300 BCE. BAD no. 217946

Catalog 31:

Red figure calyx krater, from Museo Nazionale de Montesarchio, M1006. Provenance: Montesarchio, Italy. Attributed to Dinos by D'Henry. BAD no. 9022312. Side A: Theseus, seated with club, and the bull, Peirithoos seated, Aigeus, Medea in oriental dress, Athena
Description provided courtesy of Beazley Archive; no image available
Type 3 Jason and Medea

Catalog 32:

Side A, Medea far right

Medea detailing

Images courtesy of Beazley Archive

Red figure volute krater, from Museo Jatta, Ruvo, Italy. Provenance: Ruvo, Italy. Attributed to Talos by Beazley, c. 425-375. BAD no. 217518

Catalog 33:

Black figure skyphos, from private collection in Frankfurt- Escherheim, Germany. c. 400-300 BCE. BAD no. 3772. Side A: Nike, playing trumpet, Herakles. Side B: Menelaos and Helen (?) or Jason and Medea (?): warrior pursuing woman with torch.
Description provided courtesy of Beazley Archive; no image available

Type 4 Medea in Flight

Catalog 34:

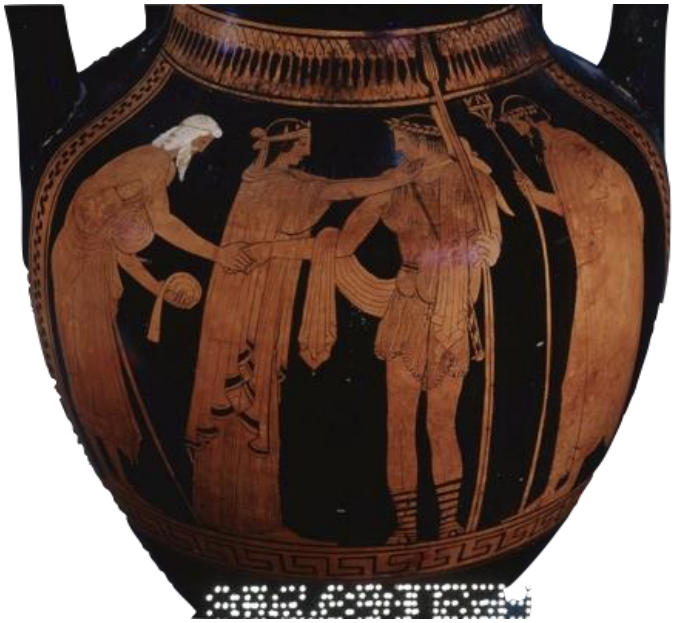
Images courtesy of Cleveland Museum of Art

Red figure krater, from Cleveland Museum of Art. Lucanian vase. C. 400 BCE
Type 5 Medea as Oriental, Sorceress, or broadly characterized as "Other"

Catalog 35:

Side A

Side B



Medea detail

Red figure amphora, from British Museum, London, 1843,1103.42. Provenance: Etruria, Italy. Attributed to Oinanthe by Beazley, c. 480-460 BCE. BAD no. 206694

Catalog 36:

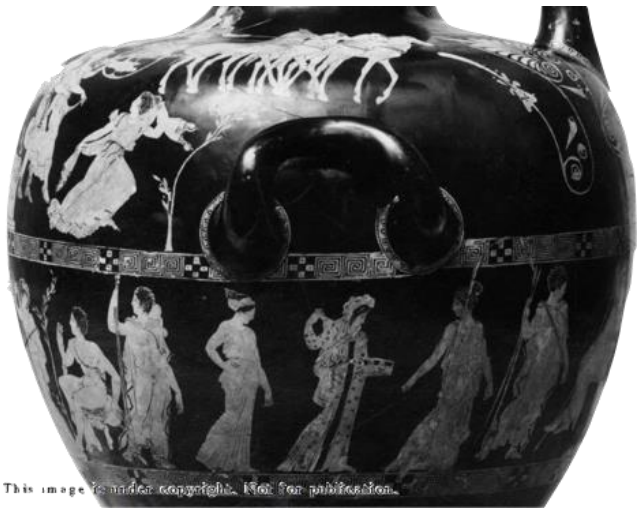
Red figure bell krater, from Museo Archeologico, Gela. Provenance: Gela, Sicily. Attributed to Dinos by Trendall, c. 450-400 BCE. BAD no. 9016250. Side A: Theseus, with spears, and the minotaur, ship, woman, youth, Athena, old man seated with staff (Minos?), Medea with oriental cap. Side B: Draped youths, one with strigil, one leaning on staff, halters and aryballos suspended.
Description provided courtesy of Beazley Archive; no image available

Catalog 37:

Red figure krater, from Museo del Sannio, Benevento. Provenance: Benevento, Italy. c 450-400 BCE. BAD no. 5362. Side A: Death of Talos, youths, one kneeling, women with box (Medea), Thanatos (small winged figure) Side B: draped youths, some with staffs
Description courtesy of Beazley Archive; no image available

Catalog 38:

Side A



Side B, Medea center *Medea detail, center*

Images courtesy of Beazley Archive and the British Museum

Red figure hydria, from British Museum, London, E224. Attributed to Meidias by Beazley, c. 420-400 BCE. BAD no. 220497

Catalog 39:

Red figure lebes fragments, from Museo Civico di Termini Imerese, Palermo, H65.742. Provenance: Himera, Sicily. Attributed to Medias by Joly. BAD no. 20172

Description provided courtesy of Beazley Archive; no image available

Catalog 40:

Detail of Medea, third from left, holding helmet

Medea center, cup underneath
Images courtesy of Beazley Archive

Medea, holding helmet

Red figure cup B, from Museo Civico Archeologico, Bologna, G595. Provenance: Etruria, Italy. Attributed to Codrus by Graef. c. 450-400 BCE. BAD no. 217210

Catalog 41:

Red figure skyphos fragment, from Museo Archeologico, Syracuse, 51114. Provenance: Syracuse, Sicily. BAD no. 9022293. Side A: draped man with staff, youth, woman (Medea ?)
Description provided courtesy of Beazley Archive; no image available

Type 6 Medea and Snakes

Catalog 42:

Medea center
Image courtesy of Beazley Archive

Black figure lekythos, from British Museum, London, 1926.4-17.1. Attributed to Cock group by Haspels, c. 550-500 BCE. BAD no. 330526

Catalog 43:

Medea, center
Images courtesy of Beazley Archive

Black figure lekythos, from Universitat, Martin von. Wagner, Wurzburg, 359. Attributed to cock group by Haspels, c. 550-500 BCE. BAD no. 330527

Catalog 44:

Medea, center
Image courtesy of Beazley Archive

Black figure lekythos, from Archaeological Museum, Thebes, R.31.166. Provenance: Boeotia, Rhitsona, Greece. Attributed to cock group by Haspels, c. 550-500 BCE. BAD no. 330528

Catalog 45:
Black figure lekythos, from Archaeological Museum, Thebes, R.31.166A. Provenance: Boeotia, Rhitsona, Greece. Attributed to cock group by Haspels, c. 550-500 BCE. BAD no. 330529. Side A: head of woman (Medea ?) between snakes.
Description provided courtesy of Beazley Archive; no image available

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