**Roman Witches and Orpheus**

Britta Ager

[britta.ager@gmail.com](mailto:britta.ager@gmail.com)

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**1. Ovid, *Amores* 1.8.5-14**

illa magas artes Aeaeaque carmina novit          
inque caput liquidas arte recurvat aquas;  
scit bene, quid gramen, quid torto concita rhombo  
licia, quid valeat virus amantis equae.  
cum voluit, toto glomerantur nubila caelo;  
cum voluit, puro fulget in orbe dies.            
sanguine, siqua fides, stillantia sidera vidi;  
purpureus Lunae sanguine vultus erat.  
hanc ego nocturnas versam volitare per umbras  
suspicor et pluma corpus anile tegi.

**2. Antipater of Sidon (*Anthologia Graeca* 7.8)**

Οὐκέτι θελγομένας, Ὀρφεῦ, δρύας, οὐκέτι πέτρας

ἄξεις, οὐ θηρῶν αὐτονόμους ἀγέλας·

οὐκέτι κοιμάσεις ἀνέμων βρόμον, οὐχὶ χάλαζαν,

οὐ νιφετῶν συρμούς, οὐ παταγεῦσαν ἅλα.

**3. Apollonius, *Argonautica* 1.23-31**

πρῶτά νυν Ὀρφῆος μνησώμεθα, τόν ῥά ποτ᾽ αὐτὴ

Καλλιόπη Θρήικι φατίζεται εὐνηθεῖσα

Οἰάγρῳ σκοπιῆς Πιμπληίδος ἄγχι τεκέσθαι

αὐτὰρ τόνγ᾽ ἐνέπουσιν ἀτειρέας οὔρεσι πέτρας

θέλξαι ἀοιδάων ἐνοπῇ ποταμῶν τε ῥέεθρα.

φηγοὶ δ᾽ ἀγριάδες, κείνης ἔτι σήματα μολπῆς,

ἀκτῆς Θρηικίης Ζώνης ἔπι τηλεθόωσαι

ἑξείης στιχόωσιν ἐπήτριμοι, ἃς ὅγ᾽ ἐπιπρὸ

θελγομένας φόρμιγγι κατήγαγε Πιερίηθεν.

**4. Apollonius, *Argonautica* 4.156-59**

ἡ δέ μιν ἀρκεύθοιο νέον τετμηότι θαλλῷ,

βάπτουσ’ ἐκ κυκεῶνος, ἀκήρατα φάρμακ’ ἀοιδαῖς

ῥαῖνε κατ’ ὀφθαλμῶν, περί τ’ ἀμφί τε νήριτος ὀδμή

φαρμάκου ὕπνον ἔβαλλε·

[Dipsas] knows the arts of magic and Aeaean songs, and can turn back flowing waters to their source; she is well-versed in what herb, what threads shaken by the whirling rhombus, what discharge of a mare in heat has power. When she wishes, clouds cover the whole sky; when she wishes, daylight shines in a clear sky. I have seen, if you can believe it, the stars dripping with blood; the face of the moon was flushed with it. I believe she flies, transformed, through the shades of night and covers her old body with feathers.

No longer, Orpheus, will you lead enchanted oaks and rocks, no longer will you shepherd the untamed wild beasts; no longer will you lull the roar of the winds, nor the hail, nor the drifting of the snows, nor the crashing sea.

First let us name Orpheus, whom famous Calliope bore after bedding Thracian Oiagros, near Pimpleia’s rocky heights: Orpheus, who is said to have charmed unmovable mountain rocks and the flow of rivers with sound of his music. Wild oaks still immortalize that singing, at Zone on the Thracian shore, standing in closely-packed ranks, as Orpheus charmed them with his lyre and led them down from Pieria.

But she, dipping a freshly cut branch of juniper in her potion and chanting spells, sprinkled her potent drugs in its [the serpent’s] eyes, and the overpowering smell of the drugs enveloped it in sleep.

**5. Tibullus 1.2.45-54**

Hanc ego de caelo ducentem sidera vidi,                 
Fluminis haec rapidi carmine vertit iter,  
Haec cantu finditque solum Manesque sepulcris  
Elicit et tepido devocat ossa rogo;  
Iam tenet infernas magico stridore catervas,  
Iam iubet adspersas lacte referre pedem.                
Cum libet, haec tristi depellit nubila caelo,  
Cum libet, aestivo convocat orbe nives.  
Sola tenere malas Medeae dicitur herbas,  
Sola feros Hecates perdomuisse canes.

**6. Vergil, Aeneid 4.483-91**

hinc mihi Massylae gentis monstrata sacerdos,  
Hesperidum templi custos, epulasque draconi  
quae dabat et sacros servabat in arbore ramos,    
spargens umida mella soporiferumque papaver.  
haec se carminibus promittit solvere mentes  
quas velit, ast aliis duras immittere curas,  
sistere aquam fluviis et vertere sidera retro,  
nocturnosque movet Manis: mugire videbis  
sub pedibus terram et descendere montibus ornos.

**7. A selection of other Orphic witches**

Propertius 4.5

Ovid, *Heroides* 6.83-94

Ovid, *Remedia Amoris* 249-90

Ovid, *Amores* 3.7.27-58

Ovid, Metamorphoses 7.1-403

Ovid, Metamorphoses 14.346-415

Lucan, *Pharsalia* 6.413-830

Seneca, *Hercules Oeteaus* 452-64

*Orphic Argonautica*

I’ve seen her pulling the stars from the sky. She turns the course of the swift river with her incantation; she splits the ground with her song and evokes ghosts from tombs and she summons bones from the still-warm pyre. Sometimes she holds the ghostly crowd with magic hissing, sometimes, sprinkling milk, tells them to retreat. When she wants, she dispels clouds from the gloomy sky; when she wants, she summons up snow in summer. They say that only she has Medea’s terrible herbs; she alone has tamed the hounds of Hecate.

I have been told of a priestess of the Massylian people, guardian of the temple of the Hesperides, who brought the serpent its meals and guarded the sacred branches of the tree, sprinkling honey and sleep-bringing poppies. She promises that she can free whatever minds she wants with her songs, but she can inflict harsh pain on others, to halt rivers and to make the stars turn backwards, and rouse nocturnal ghosts: you will see the earth gape under your feet and ash trees come down from the mountains.