Sophia Warnement

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*“tu quoque nil, mater, prodes mihi; fortior ante sola fui:”*

Medea’s Maternal Relationships in Valerius’ *Argonautica*

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| #1  fas mihi non habiles, fas et tibi linquere Colchos.  et nunc Ausonii coniunx ego regia Pici,  nec mihi flammiferis horrent ibi pascua tauris,  meque vides Tusci dominam maris. at tibi quinam  Sauromatae, miseranda, proci? cui vadis Hibero  (ei mihi!) vel saevo coniunx non una Gelono?  (Valerius, *Argonautica* 7.231-6)[[1]](#footnote-1) | It was right for me, and it is right for you too,  to forsake the inconvenient Colchians.  Now, I am the queenly wife of Ausonian Picus,  and there my pasture lands do not shudder with fire-breathing bulls,  and you see that I am the mistress of the Tuscan sea. But for you,  unfortunate girl, what sort of suitors are the Sauromatae?  To which Hiberian will you go, (alas!)  or—[and] not as [his] only wife—to which savage Gelonian? |
| #2  i, precor, atque illum pro me dimitte timorem. sed magis his miseram, quando potes, eripe curis, unde metus aestusque mihi, quaeque aspera, **mater**, perpetior dubiae iamdudum incendia mentis. nulla quies animo, nullus sopor, arida lingua. quaere malis nostris requiem mentemque reponens...  (Valerius, *Argonautica* 7.240-5) | Go, I beg [you,] and send away that fear [about my marriage prospects] for me.  But rather, because you can, snatch these worries away from miserable me,  [the worries] from which my fear and passion [arise], **mother**,  and the bitter fires of my irresolute mind, [which] I have long endured.  There is no rest for my mind, no sleep, [my] tongue is dry.  Seek out a rest for my ills, restoring my mind… |
| #3  tu quoque nil, **mater**, prodes mihi; fortior ante  **sola fui**  (Valerius, *Argonautica* 7.248-9) | and you too offer me no [help], **mother**; I was stronger before,  **alone** |
| #4  siste fugam, medio refer huc ex aequore puppem;  **nata**, potes. quo” clamat “abis? Hic turba tuorum  omnis et iratus nondum pater; haec tua tellus  sceptraque. Quid terris solam te credis Achaeis?  quis locus Inachias inter tibi, barbara, natas?  istane vota domus expectatique hymenaei?  hunc petii grandaeva diem?  (Valerius, *Argonautica* 8.144-50) | “Stop [your] flight, bring [your] ship back here from the middle of the sea; You are able to [do this], **daughter**,” she shouts, “where are you going? Here [is] a crowd of all your people, and your father [has] not yet [become] angry; This is your land, and your kingdom, why do you entrust yourself, alone, to the Achaean lands? What place [is there] for you, as a barbarian, among the daughters of Inachus?  Is that [where your] wished-for home [is], and your anticipated marriage? Is this the day I sought for my old age? |
| #5  hoc erat, infelix, (redeunt nam singula menti) ex quo Thessalici subierunt litora remi, quod nullae te, **nata**, dapes, non ulla iuvabant  tempora. non ullus tibi tum color, aegraque verba  errantesque genae atque alieno gaudia vultu  semper erant.  (Valerius, *Argonautica* 8.160-166) | This was why, unlucky one, (for each thing returns to my mind) since the Thessalian oars landed on our shores, nothing has made you happy, **daughter**, not feasts, not weather. You had no color then, and your words [were] sickly, and your eyes wander[ed] and your face was always the opposite of joyful. |

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1. All text from the *Argonautica* is from Ehlers 1980; all English translation are my own. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)