Kathleen Hull, following earlier scholars,\(^1\) has examined Valerius Flaccus’ depiction of the character of Jason in the light of the Roman author’s deviation from his model, Apollonius’ hero. Critics of Apollonius regard Jason as, at best, on a par with the other heroes,\(^2\) while in Valerius he is an outstanding figure, the other Argonauts being mere ‘ciphers’.\(^3\) Hull asserts that ‘Valerius’s Jason has none of the faults and flaws of his counterpart in Apollonius’,\(^4\) but is instead ‘an outstanding success. He is heroic in the full measure demanded by an epic sage . . . and has a colourful and attractive personality’;\(^5\) ‘the one occasion when he falls from grace is the dalliance at Lemnos’.\(^6\) An image of the almost-perfect Jason would accord with the trend in Valerian scholarship which sees the story of the *Argonautica* as a paradigm of morality and politics.\(^7\)

On the whole I do not dispute these opinions although they are essentially subjective. The purpose of this article is to examine the similes which have been virtually overlooked\(^8\) as a means of depicting character. My contention is that many similes contradict the image created by the narrative, though one would expect them to corroborate the reader’s impression.

There must be many reasons why Valerius included similes, apart from a desire for variety. Investigations into Apollonius have shown that his similes are more than mere epic adornments.\(^9\) One would expect his imitator to surpass him in this respect. Fitch has shown that Valerius’ similes are functional.\(^10\) My research has revealed that with a fair amount of consistency the similes impart cohesiveness to single episodes through their subject-matter and the patterns in which they are arranged, while they also connect episodes with one another.\(^11\) Already as early as Homer similes are used in depicting character,\(^12\) even with sophistication.\(^13\)

From the recent analyses illustrating Valerius’ complex procedure in reshaping Apollonius’ poem,\(^14\) it is *a priori* unlikely that the narrative alone would provide all the data needed to form an opinion of Jason’s nature. The critic is thus justified in assuming that the similes were made to play a part in portraying character, or in conveying the poet’s attitude to the dramatis personae.

Some reliance must be placed on statistics of the similes to point out general tendencies. The numbers of similes vary according to one’s definition of a simile,\(^15\) but present purposes do not demand exact figures.\(^16\) There are 126 similes in Valerius’ poem, while his Greek exemplar has 96.\(^17\) The Roman poet devotes twenty to Jason, eleven to the Argonauts as a group, and seven to
Hercules. By comparison Apollonius makes Jason the tenor of his similes nineteen times, while he attributes twenty-one to the Argonauts collectively and individually, with only one of these being allotted to Heracles. The inference is that Jason is *primus inter pares*, for his fellow-Argonauts frequently act and speak as individuals. This is not the case in Valerius, who seldom singles out particular heroes, except in the battle scenes in the war against Perses (5.618–6.760).

If the allocation of similes is taken as a criterion for the importance of a character, the difference between the two Medeas is instructive: although she enters the story half way through both poems, Apollonius assigns her ten similes, Valerius nineteen, only one less than his Jason. The distribution of the similes is also informative. Since their number is artificially inflated in the *aristeia* of Jason in the Greek Book 3 and the Latin Book 7, statistics referring to him in this episode are indicated separately in brackets. In Apollonius Jason is the tenor of similes three times in Book 1, never in Book 2, six (plus seven) times in Book 3, and three times in Book 4. In Valerius the tally is: once each in Books 1 and 2, twice in Book 3, never in Book 4, three times each in Books 5 and 6, twice (plus five times) in Book 7, and three times in the incomplete Book 8. One concludes that the focus on Jason's character remains roughly the same throughout the Greek *Argonautica*, whereas in Valerius it increases as the tale proceeds.

The store which Valerius sets by his similes is indicated where he recasts narrative passages from Apollonius in simile form. In the Greek version, the Argonauts are given an omen when a dove, pursued by a hawk, is dropped into Jason's lap. Mopsus explains that it presages the approach of Medea (3.541–2, 546–8); Valerius' Medea throws herself at Jason like a dove frightened of a hawk (8.32–5). Apollonius' Moon sees the lovelorn Medea and gloats because the sorceress has often thwarted her plans to meet Endymion in the Latmian cave (4.57–64); Valerius' Jason, waiting in a grove for Medea, is said to be as handsome as Endymion waiting for the Moon (8.26–31). Apollonius narrates baldly that the Argonauts' helmets gleamed and their red crests tossed (2.1069–71); Valerius uses this as a cue to two similes: the helmets of the Argonauts' crests are shaken and their colourful armour sparkles like stars (5.563–6), Jason outshines the other Argonauts as Bootes and Jupiter pale in the light of Sirius (5.366–72). These instances show how Valerius employed similes to focus attention on Jason.

The vehicles of the Jason similes are summarised below. Those which have topics in common are listed together. The relatively few themes suggest that Valerius intended the reader to pay attention to the objects of comparison because they conveyed information about the hero's character. The vehicles most frequently used are gods and heroes. In the battle against the Cyzicans Jason is like Mars' chariot (3.83–6); after overcoming Aeetes' bulls in the grove of Mars he is like Mars bathing after war, or the blackened Cyclops (7.644–8); on his wedding-day Jason is like Mars triumphant or Hercules visiting the heavenly banquet (8.226–31). Jason himself likens his journey to the Labours of Hercules (5.486–8); he is no match for the soldiers emerging from the soil in their thousands, as was Hercules unable to cope with the Hydra (7.622–4); draping
the golden fleece about him he resembles Hercules in the Nemean lion’s skin (8. 125–6). Before he meets Aeetes Jason flits from one impulse to another like Jupiter sending lightning or starting a war (5. 304–10). When he yokes Aeetes’ bulls he is like Lapithes bridling a horse (7. 604–6). As he waits for Medea he is like Endymion waiting for the Moon (8. 26–31). Four similes have vehicles connected with weather, earth and sky: while fighting the Cyzicans Jason hurries *Marsis potens* like a storm on the sea (3. 150–3); after their arrival in Colchis Jason is superior to some other Argonauts as the Dogstar outshines Bootes and Jupiter (5. 366–72); in the war against Perses his plume gleams like the Dogstar or comets sent by Jupiter against unjust kingdoms (6. 606–8); his appearance is divinely enhanced so that he is as huge as Caucasus soaring the Bears (6. 610–2). Animal vehicles are used four times: at the end of the Argonauts’ sojourn on Lemnos Jason is affected by Hercules’ admonition like a war-horse hearing a trumpet (2. 384–9); he decimates Perses’ army like a lion (6. 613–7); when he goes to meet Medea he is like a herd or herdsman afraid of night (7. 400–4); he is left alone in the Circean field like a bird cut off by sand, snow or wind (7. 559–63). Four times Jason is likened to men in their daily occupations: setting sail stealthily as soon as Acastus has come aboard he is said to resemble a hunter stealing a tigress’s cubs in the absence of their mother (1. 489–93); hearing Aeetes’ command to plough the Circean field he is shocked like a captain drifting to an unexpected shore (7. 83–6); he sows the field with the dragon’s teeth like a farmer in Libya or by the Nile (7. 607–9); he is as frightened as a herdsman at night (7. 400–4) — see above. Jason features in a simile at 1. 682–5 where the Argonauts are like rustics whose priest prays after the anger of the gods and Sirius have destroyed their crops.

The material mentioned in this résumé tends at first sight to bear our earlier pronouncements. But a more detailed analysis of the implications of the similes is needed. Where Jason similes have vehicles similar or complementary to those used of other characters, a comparison of the similes will focus on the differences or resemblances between Jason and the rest. Significant divergences from Apollonius will be pointed out.

The analogue for Mars would seem to stress Jason’s bravery and prowess in battle. This implies that Valerius was relying on a stock response. But the far-reaching alterations to the structure of Apollonius’ epic and the assumption of the inclusion of themes of philosophical and political import not intrinsically connected with the story make this interpretation too facile to be convincing. Valerius’ sketch of Mars reveals his anger (*ad fremitum*: 1. 528; *isdem furiis* . . . *acris corde tumet*: 6.1–2) and indecision (6.6) as he drives his chariot. That Jason has already been compared to Mars’ chariot (3. 83–6) is not likely to be a coincidence. Mars even encroaches on the sphere of Jupiter as weather-god while *ingentemque trahens arcoa per aequora nubem* (5. 619). In short, the equation of Jason with Mars is unflattering.

The vehicle of Jupiter does not imply mere regal stature since the god is shown in an angry mood, sending lightning or starting a war (5. 304–10). When he sends
comets against unjust cities (6. 606–8),

he is a god of vengeance. The first Dogstar simile (1. 682–5) stressed the destructive nature of this heavenly body:

Jason featured there as a benign intercessor; but when he reaches Colchis he is not only not on the side of his fellow-Argonauts, but he outdoes the most outstanding of them like Sirius whose brilliance dims Jupiter and Bootes while the earth suffers from the power it emits (5. 366–72). The idea is repeated when Jason's plume is compared to the blaze of the Dogstar or Jupiter's comets (6. 606–8). The Cyclops to whom Jason is likened (7. 644–8) has been preparing bolts, presumably for Jupiter's use as instruments of punishment. Jason equals or even surpasses Jupiter in vengeance. Apollonius illustrated Jason's beautiful but menacing nature in a Dogstar simile as he set out to meet Medea (3. 957–61).

Valerius transferred the image to Jason's plume which is observed by Medea (6. 606–8) long before their meeting (7. 396 ff.). The Roman poet avoids too explicit an indication of Jason's dangerous potential for Medea here, but leaves the reader to recall the image of Jason he has already created. Perhaps he intended to convey the inner reality by means of a symbol.

Apollonius described Jason setting out for his meeting with Medea as a stealthy thief (3. 1197); already in Book 1. 489–93 Valerius had conveyed an impression of Jason's dishonesty. In place of the thief simile which would be too obvious for the Latin poet's subtle method of characterisation, Valerius likens the hero to a herdsman afraid of night. This echoes the Argonaut simile at 2. 43–7 where the sailors were as frightened of the darkness at sea as a traveller on land overtaken by darkness. The location of the herdsman simile (7. 400–1) on the theme of fear some three hundred lines after another nautical simile (Jason is as amazed as a pilot drifting to an unexpected shore : 7. 83–6) creates the impression of cowardice. Valerius has eliminated the άμηχανία of Apollonius' hero, but he has surreptitiously replaced it with faint-heartedness which is all the more damning because thus far he has consistently faced physical danger bravely.

Two obscure analogues for Jason are Lapithes (7. 604–6) and Endymion (8. 27–30). While Lapithes' accomplishment admirably fits Jason's control over the bull, Lapithes may have suffered in retrospect from the notorious behaviour of his descendants. The point of the comparison is Endymion's beauty; M.L. Ricci sees the Endymion comparison from the point of view of its literary antecedents as stressing Jason's beauty and his worthiness, though a mortal, of a goddess's love. Yet Medea is no goddess but a sorceress, and her love for Jason is divinely engineered. The reader will also remember that Endymion was an usurper, having deposed the king of Olympia. The word venator here was also used at 1. 490 in the simile of the theiving hunter. Pelias had called him praedo (1. 723); Aeetes made the same accusation (7. 50), as Medea's mother would soon do (8. 151), followed by Absyrtus (8. 267). As Medea had already been betrothed (6. 44), Jason would acquiesce in stealing another's bride. Not only does this simile have far-reaching ramifications which stress Jason's dishonesty, but it follows a description siderea clarus procul ora iuventa (8. 26) whose first word harps on the theme of the dangerous Dogstar. The simile is thus a comment on
Jason's moral state and his unworthiness to approach Medea while it illustrates Valerius' ironic mode.

Jason's superiority over his fellow-Argonauts is suggested by similes involving heavenly bodies. Their crests shine like beautiful stars (5. 563–6), but Jason's plume is like fierce Sirius or comets sent by angry Jupiter (6. 606–8). In beauty and strength Jason surpasses some Argonauts like Sirius, whose light dims Bootes and Jupiter, burning fields and streams (5. 366–72). The theme is Jason's baneful nature. No similes are devoted to the Argonauts as a company after 5. 566. This mirrors the shift of attention away from the Argonauts.

The bond between individual Argonauts and their separation (with the exception of Hercules) from Jason who stands aloof is reflected by the use of similar vehicles or other points of contact. At 2. 43–7 the Argonauts in their new role as sailors are afraid of the dark; Hercules fears for Hylas' safety like sailors or farmers when threatening darkness occurs (3. 577–80). The Argonauts are twice compared to rustics (the phrase *agrestum manus* occurs in both similes) whose crops are destroyed (1.682–5) and who watch a bull devouring a lion (2. 458–61). Erginus assumes his duty as helmsman like a bull becoming the new leader of a herd (5. 67–9). After passing through the Symplegades the Argonauts relax like Hercules and Theseus returned from the Underworld (4. 699–702).

Later they are unaware that it is Hercules who is causing snow to be flung from Caucasus while he rescues Prometheus (5. 171–4). Given new strength by Juno, Jason is compared to snow-covered Caucasus (6. 610–2). This is immediately followed by another simile which describes Jason decimating his enemies like an angry lion (6. 613–7). Hercules ranging over the Mysian hills was likened to a bold lion (3. 587–91). There is not much to connect Jason and Hercules as the temper of the lions is different. Moreover lion similes are too much of a cliché to have great impact. More significant is the theme of vulnerable female animals which creates an antithesis between the simile of Jason stealing the tigress's cubs (1. 489–93) and the pair of Hercules similes: he searches for Hylas like a lioness groaning for her lost cub (3. 737–40) and resembles a halcyon deprived of her nest (4. 44–50).

After the Argonauts simile at 4. 699–702, Hercules is made the vehicle of four similes, all of them describing Jason. He himself equates his labours with those of Hercules (5. 486–8). When Jason is unequal to the emerging earthborn soldiers, just as Hercules could not cope with the Hydra (7. 622–4), the poet stresses the necessity for divine aid to both mortals faced with impossible tasks. Left alone in the Circean field Jason is like a bird cut off by sand or by snow and the north wind as it struggles toward the Rhipaean heights (7. 559–63). Hercules, the reader recalls, had been likened to the north wind shifting clouds over Rhipaean peaks (2. 515–7). Jason does not measure up to Hercules, one concludes. Valerius equates Jason draped in the golden fleece with Hercules in the pelt of the Nemean lion (8.125–6). The symbolism is obvious — that Jason has appropriated Hercules' mantle, but he has not fully deserved it, for Hercules had overcome the Nemean lion by his own strength and ingenuity while Jason had...
merely to climb a tree to obtain the fleece after Medea had rendered the dragon harmless. In the last Jason simile his radiance is compared to Mars triumphant or Hercules visiting a banquet of the gods (8. 226–31). Again the compliment of the resemblance to Hercules is undercut by the reference to Mars. The final impression is that Jason’s achievements have not fully entitled him to the divine recognition which was accorded to Hercules.

Medea is the only female figure to be depicted in detail. A survey of Valerius’ technique of characterisation through similes shows how the protagonists are contrasted. Both Jason and Medea share similes in their two meetings in the grove (7. 400–6 and 8. 32–5). Each meeting is embellished by two similes, and each time Medea is compared to a bird (7. 375–81; 8. 32–5). The vehicles of the Medea similes are gods and mythological characters (nine times), animals (six times) and plants affected by wind and other weather conditions (four times).30

I have already commented on Jason’s fear (at 7. 400–1) as unbecoming; it is to be expected in the case of Medea, and repeats the idea which three previous similes have conveyed.31 The vehicle of *cyperis* (405) is ominous. Jason initiates the dialogue at 7. 413, giving the impression that, like *Auster*, he will set in motion the *abietibus tacitis aut immotis cyperis*, and so be responsible for Medea’s suffering. Valerius has already used four similes featuring wind and air to show Medea’s vulnerability: led to the city-walls by Chalciope, Medea is like short-lived lilies whose life is threatened by the south wind (6. 492–4); she is driven mad by strengthening passion as the south wind at first plays with the tree-tops, but later causes havoc to the hapless ships (6. 664–6); she is refreshed by the dawn as sailors by a breeze (7. 23–5), and what potential the breeze has, was spelled out in the previous simile; on her way to meet Jason she is compared to a nestling afraid of the air (7. 375–81). Jason therefore represents the culmination of threats to Medea.

In the narrative of Jason and Medea’s second meeting the Endymion simile is immediately followed by another describing Medea as a dove terrified by a hawk, which is pursuing her, taking refuge with a man (8. 32–5). The cumulative effect of these similes is to stress Medea’s dangerous plight. Valerius’ point is the irony in Medea’s entrusting herself to Jason.32 An earlier bird simile in which the disguised Juno and Medea, hearing the din of battle, are likened to dismayed birds clinging to branches (6. 504–6) is a precursor of more fighting.33 Valerius makes a bird the vehicle of one Jason simile: alone in the Circean field he is like a bird cut off by snow, wind and sand (7. 559–63). The connotation is Jason’s isolation, not danger, for the reader well knows that Medea’s magic has made him invincible. Medea as a sick lap-dog whimpering before it flees (7. 124–6) depicts the pathos of her incipient madness; lamenting alone at night Medea is compared to howling wolves, hungry lions and cows bereft of their young (8. 454–7). With the herd simile (7. 400–1) these complete the bird and animal vehicles Valerius uses for Medea. The bereft cows hark back first by way of contrast to Jason in the tigress simile (1. 489–93) and then to the two Hercules similes of lioness and halcyon (3. 737–40 and 4. 44–50).

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The different effects which Valerius achieves from his animal vehicles show the poet's versatility. In Hercules they indicate genuine attachment and the pain of bereavement. In Medea's case they illustrate her weakness and vulnerability, and enlist the reader's sympathy for her plight. For Jason the animal vehicles create a different impression: the frightened herd shows his cowardice (7. 400–1), the lion slaughtering his enemies depicts his anger (6. 613–7), the warhorse hearing a trumpet (2. 384–9) reacts by instinct, and Jason the hunter (1. 489–93) is no better than the tigress whose cubs he steals. They show the baser side of his character, and all fit the description of G.N. Leech:

'. . . dehumanizing metaphors which ascribe animal or inanimate properties to a human being, frequently have a ring of contempt.'

Shortly before the text of Book 8 breaks off Valerius mentions that Medea has lost the radiance she once had when she bore the shining fleece (8. 460–1). There is a textual difficulty here, as no description of Medea wearing or carrying the fleece occurs in the text as we have it. More important is the contrast with Jason who is described wearing the fleece in terms of Hercules in the pelt of the Nemean lion (8. 125–6). Jason no doubt behaves like Hercules after the latter has left the Argo, but he does not strike the same chord of sympathy as Hercules or Medea.

The gods as vehicles do not elevate Jason, for Mars and Jupiter are in angry mood; Jason is a poor imitation of Hercules, and as Endymion and the hunter he is no more than a common thief. The animal vehicles illustrate his basest instincts, and the herdsman shows his cowardice. Even the Dogstar, a potentially ennobling vehicle, symbolises his capacity for destruction.

The question naturally arises of the reason why a poem which sings of the hero's nobility has an undertone signalling the poet's disapproval of Jason. Yet there is less of a contradiction between the main theme and the message of the similes than appears at first sight. Hull herself concedes some blemishes in Jason's disposition such as his 'brusque' approach to Medea, and his assent to surrender her which leaves his honour 'a little tarnished'.

Accepting that the Argonautica is politically-orientated literature, I find that the Aeneid and Argonautica concur in covert disapproval of the hero and, through him, of the contemporary regime, for, according to the plausible argument of S. Farran, Vergil reproached Augustus in his epic. So too Valerius muted his criticism of the accepted hero figure by confining it to the obscure area of the similes where it would escape detection except by the astute reader. It was for the same reason, I think, that Valerius wrote a proem which was deliberately politically ambiguous and which appeared to show that the poet toed the party line. There is uncertainty about the identity of the dedicatee, each candidate having a plausible claim.

It is to be hoped that this article which has shown the aura beyond the silhouette of Jason's character, will lead to a reappraisal of the proem which will reveal its hidden truth.

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NOTES

* I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my colleague, Prof. C.J. Botha, and to Prof. P. Murgatroyd of the University of Natal, who criticised an earlier draft of this paper.


2. G. Lawall, 'Apollonius' Argonautica: Jason as Anti-Hero', YCS 19 (1966) 121–69, shows that Jason, by contrast with the other Argonauts, is the least admirable. J. Carpecken, 'Apollonius Rhodius and the Homeric Epic', YCS 13 (1952) 110, sees the whole group of Argonauts as a collective hero.

3. Hull, art. cit. 393.


8. There are scattered references to the aptness of some Jason similes, e.g. Garson, art. cit., CQ 14 (1964) 275; id., 'Some Critical Observations on Valerius Flaccus II', CQ 15 (1965) 115; Hull, art. cit. 387, 398–9, 402.

9. K.W. Blumberg, Untersuchung zur epischen Technik des Apollonios von Rhodos, Diss. Leipzig 1913, 26, regards the similes as apposite; I. Kalessa, Zur Bildersprache des Apollonios von Rhodos, Diss. Breslau 1938, 31 f., concurs; A. Klausing, Kritik und Exegese der homerischen Gleichnisse, Diss. Freiburg 1913, 54 f., maintains that superfluous decoration is a rarity in Apollonius' similes. (These references are cited by D.N. Levin, Apollonius' Argonautica Re-examined I, Leyden 1971.)

10. J.G. Fitch, 'Aspects of Valerius Flaccus' Use of Similes', TAPhA 106 (1976) 113 ff., illustrates that the 'atmosphere of high seriousness in Valerius is reflected in the subject-matter of his similes' (115) and that he 'had a conscious predilection for a concentration of similes in one section of a Book' (120).


12. C. Moulton, Similes in the Homeric Poems, Götingen 1977, 88–116. The chapter concludes with the remark that 'Homer does not employ similes with the subtle ethical significance that is typical of comparisons in the Aeneid', (116) and refers to the study by R. Hornsby, Patterns of Action in the Aeneid, Iowa 1970.

13. W.C. Scott, The Oral Nature of the Homeric Simile, Leyden 1974, 120: 'The disparity between the heroic as exemplified by true warriors and the gruesome semblance of it practised by Achilles... is reinforced by the similes and physical setting...'


15. Fitch, art. cit. 113–4 touches on the scholarly controversy, while a detailed study is presented in M.H. McCall, Ancient Rhetorical Theories of Similes and Comparison, Cambridge, Mass. 1969. I have followed W.J. O'Neal's definition of a simile quoted by Fitch from The Form of the Simile in the Aeneid, Diss. Missouri 1970, 9–10, as 'a figurative comparison between two objects which are essentially or accidentally different... The comparison... must not be literally true'. Likewise I exclude examples of comparison, 'the basis of which is factual rather than figurative'.

16. The application of mathematical standards to a work of art is of questionable validity since qualitative considerations are often more important than quantitative. The numbers of similes should therefore be regarded as a guide to areas of special interest.

17. These are my own figures. R.W. Garson, 'Homeric Echoes in Valerius Flaccus' Argonautica', CQ 19 (1969) 364, counts the same number for Valerius. O. Bussen, De Valerii Flacci in adhibendis comparationibus usu, Lübeck 1872, 2, has a total of 111 for Valerius and 77 for
Apollonius; W.C. Summers, op. cit. 59, finds 117; F. Streich, De exemplis comparationibusque quae extant apud Senecam, Lucrum. Valerium Flaccum, Statium, Silium, Bratislaviae 1913, 2, sees only 79, while Fitch, art. cit. 115, counts 134 for Valerius and 139 for Apollonius.


Bussen, art. cit. 6, makes this point. He counts 22 Jason similes and 17 for Medea, but his figures are unreliable.

The theme is traceable to II. 21.493 ff. Apollonius' version may have been due to his interest in this subject.


Cf. Scott's remark on the Iliad: 'Probably because of the extensive war narrative Ares is the god most often paired with men', op. cit. 69. Hull, art. cit. 398, observes that Valerius compared Jason to Mars rather than to Apollo (as in Apollonius) who is indirectly hostile to the Argonauts. She accepts the heroism of the symbol Mars at face value.

Hull, art. cit. 387, believes the equation of Jason with Jupiter 'shows that he is not despairing nor at a loss'. The reader notices not only decisiveness, but malevolence too.

The inspiration of this simile is II. 16. 364–93. Garson does not cite this as a parallel (art. cit., CQ 19 (1969) 352 ff.).

Cf. II. 23. 25–9.


Valerius varies the theme at 3. 465–8: their spirits return to the depressed Argonauts as when Jupiter removes a cloud.

Even here he describes their appearance, not their feelings (5. 563–6).

Valerius' interest in the pathetic image of animals deprived of their young reappears in the catalogue of the enemy's hosts (6. 146–9): Exomatas venatus alta, nec clarce ullis Arctos equis; abeunt Hypanin fragilemque per undam tigridis aut saevae profugi cum prole leaenae, maestaque suspectae mater stupet aggere ripae.

Similes which do not fit these categories are: Medea deceived by Venus as one in a dream (7. 213–4) and Medea having lost the radiance which she had when she bore the gleaming fleece (8. 458–61).

These are: Medea frightened in her sleep, like Orestes imagining he has slain the Furies (7. 145–52); Medea deserted by 'Circe' afraid and unwilling to leave the palace, like Pentheus left by Baucis (7. 300–6); Medea, faint-hearted while passing through the city, like a nestling afraid of the air (7. 375–81).

I cannot agree with Hull, art. cit. 402, who thinks the simile shows Jason's 'gentle concern'. In my view Valerius' words at the end of the simile at ille!excepit blandoque prior sic ore locutus (8. 35–6) imply no more than Jason's glib tongue.

The simile of Medea's mother who would gladly attack Jason's ship like a bird of prey (8. 150–3) harmonises with the pattern.

The theme of pursuit and/or persecution occurs in the following vehicles: Proserpina (5. 343–9) Io (7. 111–4), Pentheus (7. 300–6) and Io (8. 20–3). Ricci, art. cit. 147, explains: ... l'impiego della mitologia, nell'ambito di similitudini, è probabilmente legato al carattere di patìos...
35. Hull, *art. cit.* 396–7, interprets the war horse as a symbol of Jason’s courage, and maintains that his inactivity is ‘accidental and neither natural nor basically desired’.

36. Even the hunter’s horse shows unquestioning concern for his owner — *domino timentem* (1. 490).


38. Scott, *op. cit.* 67, interprets as follows: ‘...a star is a distant fire which does not destroy but rather shines night after night in its cold beauty’.


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