

Maria-Luiza Dumitru Oancea¹

Apollonius of Rhodes' *The Argonautica* as Frivolous Ludic Falsetto

Abstract: *Though Argonautika can be read as a classical epic poem with competing heroes, the poetical grill leaves room for doubt: Does the heroes truly follow the rules of conduct demanded by his status? We propose a new reading grill that underlines certain negative traits of the characters and their actions. Indeed, the epic poem is a poetical banter through which Apollonius mocks the epic and tragic models of the age. The mise en scène of the Apollonian expedition is ludic and has a minimalist character. As a worthy disciple of the School of Alexandria, he condemns the Classical epic poem for being tributary to long and tiring heroic cycles or phantasmagorical digressions. The conclusion of our research is that the author of the Argonautika had the intention, from the very start, to minimize the heroic status, the personal merit and the social institutions of hospitality, purification, sacrifice, and marriage. Moreover, the constant 'values' in Apollonius's poems are non-values: lying, illusion, ruse, chiaroscuro and derision. Odysseus' polymetis "many counsels" praised by Homer thus turn into perverse farce-like acts. The tragic couple of Jason and Medea is reduced to infants oblivious of the significance of their acts, always confuse and keen to playing tricks, sneaking away from under their parents' nose, ever anxious for new adventures. The epic poem springs from the hypothetical game that is the landmark of childhood: the game of "I could play Mother and you could play Father".*

Key words: *Apollonius Rhodius, couple Jason - Medea, hypothetical game, ruse, chiaroscuro, derision*

¹ University of Bucharest, Romania