

Narrating and Translating Medea in Medieval Romances

Narrative Strategies in Greek, Medieval Latin, and Middle High German Translations of the Roman de Troie

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Then I saw you: then I began to know what you could be: that was the first ruin of my feelings. I saw, I perished! Not with known fires I burnt, but like a pine torch burns before the great gods. And you were beautiful, and my fate dragged me away: the light of your eyes stole mine.¹

THE SUFFERING IN Medea's love story begins in the very instance she sets her eyes on Jason, as shown by the quote from Ovid's *Heroides*. Depending on its most prominent versions by Euripides, Apollonius of Rhodes, and Ovid, Medea kills her own brother and

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¹ Ovid *Heroides* 12.33–8: “Tunc ego te vidi, tunc coepi scire quid esses; / illa fuit mentis prima ruina meae. / et vidi et perii! nec notis ignibus arsi, / ardet ut ad magnos pinea taeda deos. / et formosus eras et me mea fata trahebant: / abstulerant oculi lumina nostra tui”. The edition is by Häuptli 2011. If not indicated otherwise, the translations are my own in order to remain as close as possible to the source text to enhance comparability. My thanks go to Micaela Brembilla for helping me with Ovid and especially Guido's Latin.

various other characters out of love for Jason.² After his adultery, she turns against him by murdering his new wife, her father and her and Jason's two sons. Her revenge is accompanied by a passionate monologue in each of the abovementioned writer's texts, except for Apollonius' whose story ends before Jason's return home.

3.1 TRANSLATING MEDEA FOR A CHRISTIAN EUROPE

When the matter of Medea is reintroduced between 1155–1160 by Benoît de Sainte-Maure in the *Roman de Troie*, it is translated for a vastly different medieval Christian society. Written for the court of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine, it provides not only a genealogy that links the house of Anjou-Plantagenet to the heroes of Troy but inspires a genre of its own, the *roman antique*. By fusing the matter of Medea with the matter of Troy, Benoît creates an epic tale that reinterprets various ancient texts and fuses them into a new narrative, suitable to a new audience of Christian nobles.³

To turn Medea into a narrative acceptable equally for a clerical and public audience,⁴ Benoît's text seems to reinterpret the passage quoted above as the actual turning point of Medea's life, instead of the moment before the murders of Creusa and her children, which is the instance when Ovid's letter is written. Benoît applies here what I would like to call a *Kunstgriff*: an artist's advanced technique that produces a surprising result due to their skill and knowledge. In the case of Benoît's text, the *Kunstgriff* consists of removing Medea's monologue, in which she suffers from lovesickness because of her unfaithful husband and plots her terrible revenge, from its traditional position right before the murders. It is instead placed right before Medea's and Jason's first night and focuses on lovesickness because of her still unfulfilled love and the torture of having to wait for a lover who might or might not come.

² Morse 1996, 3–7, 26–34.

³ Jones 1972, 44; Bedel 2013, 2–4; Goldwyn 2018, 155.

⁴ Burgess & Kelly 2017, 6; Nolan 1992, 44–7. In his introduction, the accessibility and usefulness of the *Roman de Troie* for clerics and laymen is emphasised. It states furthermore that “Benoît de Sainte-Maure [...] invented, composed and related it, writing it down [...] and shaping, polishing, arranging and disposing it so that neither more nor less of it is required” (Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1–144).

Furthermore, this *Kunstgriff* enables the narrator to only vaguely summarize the remaining plot that contains Jason's unfaithfulness and the murders, since the probably most intriguing part, the monologue, has been moved. This summary also provides narrative space for a moral judgement on Medea's and Jason's actions, which differs in each translation of Benoît's text, turning the narrator's comment into a translator's comment.

My first hypothesis is two things are accomplished by the *Kunstgriff* of relocating Medea's monologue from right before the murder to the moment when Medea ponders whether or not she should give into her love to Jason. The first is that Medea's lovesickness can be depicted in terms of courtly love, a tightrope-walk between erotic desire, spiritual attainment, and social norms.⁵ These portrayals would have appeared more familiar to a medieval audience and created a climax by Medea's decision of either giving in or abstaining eternally. The second achievement is the chance to skim over Medea's 'bad ending' and only vaguely foreshadow the murders, since the climax and center point of the story, the monologue, has already taken place.⁶ No other monologue could be as impactful as the one at the very instance Medea realizes 'what Jason could be', when her wisdom and foresight warn her of the terrible fate she is bound to fall for.

In what follows, I will not only analyse Benoît's monologue and compare it to its Ovidian source material but also to the same passages in four medieval translations into Byzantine Greek, Medieval Latin, and Middle High German.⁷ The recognition of Benoît's *Kunstgriff* can then be proven by the attention each translation pays to the monologue despite their differences in social backgrounds, target cultures and languages. Although the German translations especially are sometimes far removed from their French source text, I will still consider them translations since Benoît's *Roman de Troie* is their starting point and remains at their core despite various additions and subtractions to its content.⁸

Furthermore, it is not uncommon in medieval translations to explicitly intervene with their source texts for various, but often moral, reasons. These

⁵ Boase 1986, 667–8.

⁶ Jones 1972, 44; De Santis 2016, 14.

⁷ For other translations of Benoît's text: Goldwyn 2018, 155–88.

⁸ Morse 1996, 90–3.

cases often can only be identified through a comparative reading, which makes them all the more interesting since they point out the different translation approaches. In the analysed passage, each translator's understanding of Medea's fate will appear in the guise of a narrator's comment despite expressing the translator's reading. The translator's voices in these passages are, like the narrator's voice, not to be considered historical voices correlating to a historical person. Instead, they should be understood as a special type of narrating voice that can overlap, disagree, and even change the original narrator's voice.

The Byzantine Greek Ὁ Πόλεμος τῆς Τρωάδος (*O Polemos tis Troados* – “War of Troy”) has been identified by Elizabeth Jeffreys as a translation issued in Morea before 1281.⁹ Morea was at that time a French crusader state in which French and Greek speaking populations coexisted. The translation can be seen as an attempt to influence the Greek speaking cultural elite favourably towards their French rulers, as Benoît's texts establishes a blood relation between ancient Greek heroes and the house of Anjou-Plantagenet. Whether or not this attempt was successful, it remains as a fact that the text had great influence on the Byzantine novel tradition. For the matter of Medea, it will be seen that the rather close translation accepts the repositioning of the monologue as well as the removal of the murders while commenting on Jason's infidelity as a sin rightfully punished by divine intervention.

The highly influential Medieval Latin *Historia destructionis Troiae* (“History of the destruction of Troy”) is a prose translation by Guido delle Colonne completed in 1287.¹⁰ Latin being the lingua franca of the West European Middle Ages, his translation was later translated into a number of European languages. Guido's translation possesses a noticeable Christian-moralistic tendency. Especially Medea is used to point out suitable behaviour for Christian noble women and to create an opposition between heathen knowledge and beliefs from antiquity and contemporary Christian perspectives. While the translation follows and even emphasizes the repositioning of the monologue, it goes into more detail about the events after Jason gains the fleece. Although it never mentions what happens between

⁹ Jeffreys 2013, 224, 229–32; Agapitos 2012, 257.

¹⁰ Melgar 2021, 84–85.

Jason and Medea besides unspecified crimes and murder, the translator's voice nevertheless judges both Medea and Jason harshly for their behaviour.

The oldest High Middle German translation composed 1190–1200 by Herbolt von Fritzlar, the *Liet von Troje* ("Song of Troy"), was, according to its introduction, issued by count Hermann von Thüringen, who had previously sponsored Heinrich von Veldeke's translation of the French *Roman d'Énéas*, one of the *roman antique* that Benoît had inspired. Interestingly, Herbolt's text omits not only the monologue but also erases any mention of possible bad endings in a translator/narrator's comment: Jason and Medea live happily ever after. This, however, still can support that Medea's monologue was understood as the catastrophe's starting point and therefore had to be removed as well, a decision that might be due to Herbolt's strong Christianising tendencies as a cleric.

The second and more influential Middle High German translation was composed by Konrad von Würzburg in the thirteenth century as *Trojaner-rieg* ("War of the Trojans"), which, though it overtook Herbolt's translation in popularity, remained unfinished. Not much is known about the circumstances of its creation, but it is likely to have been a commissioned work as well. It clearly demonstrates a scholarly translation approach: the translator-poet is also a redactor who adds their own knowledge to the text and improves the translation with additional sources – a process the text often reflects on.¹¹ It is therefore not surprising that Medea's monologue is prolonged, and the omitted bad ending is more explicit. The translator's moral evaluation of Jason's infidelity becomes consequently more nuanced but still employs the same strategy of omission by skipping Medea's fate after the murder of Jason and his new bride. Equally, the monologue remains in the same place and no other monologue is added before Medea's revenge, displaying the recognition of Benoît's *Kunstgriff* even by a translator well versed in the Latin sources.

Comparative analysis will prove the importance of Benoît's *Kunstgriff* for the medieval approach to the matter of Medea. A close reading will show how each culture places their own emphasis on relevant socio-political as-

¹¹ Another example of the use of translation theory on medieval corpus texts can be found in chapter 4 of this volume.

pects even within the same language and how the translator's choices affect the narrative and the depiction of the characters.

3.2 BENOÎT'S *ROMAN DE TROIE* AND OVID'S *LETTER FROM MEDEA TO JASON*

Probably the most recognizable feature in the medieval translations of Medea's relationship with Jason is the fact that Medea plays the active part.¹² Unlike in the *Heroides*,¹³ Benoît's Medea has already set her sights on Jason even before their meeting because of the stories about him.¹⁴ This renders her love courtier as it is not superficially based on erotic desire for Jason's good looks but inspired by spiritual longing for his qualities as a hero.¹⁵

After Medea is given a short description, it is her female gaze that focuses on Jason and awakens her longing like it does in the *Heroides*. In her desire to marry him, she convinces him of the necessity of her help and demands his hand in marriage in exchange. It should also be noted that, in Benoît, the vow she receives in return is the vow of a vassal to his lord.¹⁶ Since this places them on unequal standing, their courtly love attains its third ingredient, as it is socially unacceptable for a person of higher standing to marry below their position.¹⁷ Their inequality is emphasized when Jason is not only unable to attain the golden fleece without Medea but also cannot find the way to her chambers and needs to be fetched by Medea's servant. The text points out Jason's extreme passivity in the narrator's comment that they successfully spent the night together unless Jason experienced (even more) impotence,¹⁸ leaving the success of their first night open to the reader's interpretation of Jason's questionable abilities.¹⁹

The introduction of the *Roman de Troie* also explains that the story will contain "clever additions" ("bon dits")²⁰ to the source material with the aim

¹² Jones 1972, 44.

¹³ Jones 1972, 43. Another important source is Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VII. For other sources used: De Santis 2016, 10–11; Morse 1996, 81–6.

¹⁴ Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1257–63.

¹⁵ Lienert 1996, 217, 292.

¹⁶ Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1388–1400. Morse 1996, 86.

¹⁷ Morse 1996, 87.

¹⁸ Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1585–90.

¹⁹ Lienert 1996, 216.

²⁰ Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 142.

to improve the text.²¹ One of these could be the depiction of Jason as Medea's vassal that also fits the contemporary medieval perception of Antiquity having a similar society.²² Medea's first word in their first conversation is "vassal" ("Vassaus") when addressing Jason.²³ Next, she emphasizes that her talking to him should not be seen as improper although they are not of equal standing.²⁴ Jason's reply shows his gratefulness for being addressed by her and stresses his lower standing that made it impossible for him to approach her.²⁵ Despite their assertions of doing something appropriate, this provides the first confirmation that Medea's intentions are utterly unacceptable. As heiress of Colchis, she is not supposed to have an interest in a vassal. Jason's "cleverly added" status turns into a marker for their bad ending: According to the rules of courtly love, a love that is socially condemned is doomed to fail.²⁶

Since Jason appears to have very little power of his own, it seems less surprising that Medea is not only taking the lead but is also the one to suffer from the emotional consequences.²⁷ The emotional torture of her love is depicted through the slow passing of narrated time, similar in each translation except Herbort's: While the sun is not setting fast enough and nightfall is coming too slow,²⁸ Medea starts to fear the moonrise as soon as it turns dark, as this indicates the passing of the night.²⁹ She then laments having to wait for a lover who may or may not come. In this, the text uses the most notable motifs of Ovid's twelfth letter in the *Heroides*: A celebration for Jason is taking place, but without Medea being able to join.³⁰ She can only sit there,

²¹ Bruckner 2015, 366, 368.

²² Burgess & Kelly 2017, 5–6.

²³ Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1313.

²⁴ Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1313–20.

²⁵ Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1321–32.

²⁶ Boase 1986, 667–8.

²⁷ De Santis 2016, 15–17.

²⁸ Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1464–74.

²⁹ Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1475–85.

³⁰ Ovid, *Heroides* 12.137–43.

deprived of her sleep,³¹ knowing that he will not come,³² leading to regretting her foolishness³³ and the crime of trusting an untrustworthy man.³⁴

“What is this?” she exclaimed. “When will these people turn in? Have they sworn to stay up and never go to bed? Whoever saw people be up so late and not grow weary of staying awake? Wretched people, utter fools! It is already past midnight. There is little time left before daybreak. I have indeed been foolish. What have I got myself into? I could be blamed more plausibly than a person caught in the act of stealing. One could deem me foolish and suspicious, standing here for no good reason. Do I need to fear that Jason will fail to come to me whenever I send for him? Of course, he will come, quite willingly, I believe. What am I waiting for? I have already gone so far that I now regret what I have done.”³⁵

Although Ovid also provides a monologue for Medea in the *Metamorphoses* that takes place before her and Jason’s first night, its content does not seem related to Benoît’s waiting Medea.³⁶ Instead, as shown above, several motifs (discussed below) seem to stem from Ovid’s letter that is written from the perspective of an already betrayed Medea. By using these motifs, the intertextual references give the passage in the *Roman de Troie* a proleptic quality since she appears to predict her future lament about her unfaithful husband. Despite not having done anything yet, Medea is already regretting her decision. This turns her staying awake and waiting into a crime that would be

³¹ Ovid, *Heroides* 12.169–71.

³² Ovid, *Heroides* 12.173–4.

³³ Ovid, *Heroides* 12.3–6.

³⁴ Ovid, *Heroides* 12.19–20. For another comparison: De Santis 2016, 18–19.

³⁵ Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1487–508: “Iço,” fait ele, “que sera? / Ceste gent quant se couchera? / Ont il juré qu’il veilleront / Eque mais ne se coucheront? / Qui vit mais gent que tant veillast, / Que de veillier ne se lassast? / Mauvaise gent, fole provee, / Ja est la mie nuit passee, / Mout a mais poi descì qu’al jor. / Certes mout a en mei folor: / De quei me sui jo entremise? / Mieuz en devreie estre reprise / Que cil qui es trovez emblant. / Fol corage e mauvais semblant / Porreit l’om o trover en mei, / Que ci m’estois ne sai por quei. / Estuet me il estre en esfrei / Que volentiers ne vienge a mei / Jason, quel hore qu’i envei? / O il, mout volentiers, ço crei. / Que faz jo ci ne cui atent? / Tent en ai fait qu’or m’en repent.” Translation by Burgess & Kelly 2017, 63.

³⁶ In this aspect, I agree with De Santis (2016), who thinks of the letter as the main source and not the monologue in the *Metamorphoses* like Lienert (1996) does.

more condemned by the implied social norms than stealing³⁷ – instead of the other, omitted crimes.³⁸ She convinces herself that Jason would most likely never ignore her calling as he had already promised himself to her. This, of course, can be seen as a foreshadowing of a time when he will have abandoned her. Her question of whether he will fail to come is going to be answered with “yes”, although not now.

With this, her other question “What am I waiting for?”³⁹ bears similarity to Medea’s decision making and self-encouragement before murdering Creusa, Creon and her children. It can also be argued that Benoît’s monologue possesses proleptic qualities due to Medea’s foresight. Through the demonstrated parallels to Ovid’s *Heroides*, the heroine is represented as similarly torn. This is reinforced by rhetorical questions (“Do I need to fear that Jason will fail to come to me whenever I send for him?”).⁴⁰ These questions will be asked again in the future, but in a vastly different context and resulting in a vastly different answer.

This future, however, is depicted only in a short summary at the end of her story, before the narration returns to the story of the Trojan War proper. Instead of a second monologue, an explicit comment is integrated to provide a central moral message. Medea is accused of “great folly” (“Grant folie”)⁴¹ for abandoning her parents and her people for her love of a vassal.⁴² Western medieval customs and values find their way into the matter of Medea. Jason’s powerlessness mentioned above is related to his status as Medea’s vassal. As a person of lower standing, he has less ability to act and is supposed to obey the orders of his superior. Therefore, the correct order of things would be for him to follow Medea, but by her following him instead and abandoning her rightful position and duties as his lord, they are both bound for misery.

Since Jason and Medea fail to maintain their socially acceptable relationship of lord and vassal, Medea’s example of unfaithfulness is copied by her vassal, who in turn abandons her. Since Medea already voiced her regrets in

³⁷ Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1496–502.

³⁸ De Santis 2016, 23.

³⁹ Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1507.

⁴⁰ Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 1503–5.

⁴¹ Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 2029.

⁴² Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 2030–32.

her monologue or maybe because the unfaithfulness of a vassal is deemed even more shameful⁴³ than her deeds, the narrator strongly emphasizes Jason's crimes and punishment.

That was an act of great folly on Medea's part. She loved the vassal passionately and left her kin for him, as well as her father, her mother and her people. Afterwards, things turned out very badly for her because, as my author says, he later abandoned her, thus committing a very shameful act. She had saved him from death, so he ought not to have forsaken her after that. He shamefully deceived her, which distresses me because he was false to his word in a disgraceful way. All the gods were angry with him, and their vengeance on him was terrible. I shall say no more on this matter, nor do I wish to do so, for I have a very long tale to tell.⁴⁴

For his breach of loyalty, Jason is punished by the gods and shamed by the narrator.⁴⁵ Interestingly, the narrator refuses to detail the punishment of his crimes and does not mention Medea's part in it. Instead, they refer to their source ("si com li Autors recont"),⁴⁶ probably Ovid or Dares, and excuse themselves with their task of having to tell the whole matter of Troy.⁴⁷ I argue that skipping the most gruesome parts of Medea's story without losing

⁴³ Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 2036.

⁴⁴ Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 2030–44: "Grant folie fist Medea : / Trop ot le vassal aamè, / Por lui laissa son parentè, / Son père e sa mere e sa gent. / Assez l'en prist puis malement ; / Quar, si com li Autors recont, / Puis la laissa, si fist grant honte. / El l'aveit guardé de morir : / Ja puis ne la deüst guerpir. / Trop l'engeigna, ço peise mei ; / Laidement li menti sa fei. / Trestuit li deu s'en corrocierent, / Qui mout asprement l'en vengierent. / N'en direi plus, ne nel vueil faire, / Quar mout ai grant uevre a re-taire." Translation by Burgess & Kelly 2017, 69.

⁴⁵ Bruckner 2015, 377.

⁴⁶ Benoît, *Roman de Troie* 2034.

⁴⁷ Morse 1996, 88. Ovid's recounting of the story is short and condemns Medea for the murders. There is no moral judgment on Jason's second marriage: "After the new bride burned in Colchian poison and both seas saw the blazing house of the king, and the sword was impiously bathed in the blood of the children, being avenged terribly, the mother fled Jason's weapons" ("sed postquam Colchis arsit nova nupta venenis / flagrantemque domum regis mare vidit utrumque, / sanguine natorum perfunditur inpius ensis, / ultaque se male mater Iasonis effugit arma": Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 7.394–7).

the intriguing dramatic moment of a tragic love tale is only possible by relocating Medea's monologue to the beginning of their love. This way, Medea's magic provides her also with a certain foresight about Jason's unfaithfulness and her estrangement in a Greek society, where she is but a barbarian.

The strong emphasis on Medea's failure in her duties as a king's heiress probably reflects the text's circumstances.⁴⁸ Written to provide a heroic ancestry for the royal family Anjou-Plantagenet, Medea's example serves as a warning for the tragic end of those abandoning their status for a mere vassal.⁴⁹ This, in my opinion, also explains why the matter of Medea was integrated into the matter of Troy: Her fate serves as a warning and negative example in comparison to the supposedly successful lineage of the royal house of Anjou-Plantagenet, the alleged heirs of Troy.

3.3 THE GREEK *WAR OF TROY*

By looking at the corresponding parts of the anonymous Greek *War of Troy*, it can now be shown whether Benoît's *Kunstgriff* has been recognized by this Greek translation, which alterations have been made, and to what outcome.⁵⁰ The Greek text shortens its source by half, from 30,000 French verses to around 14,400 in Greek.⁵¹ It should, however, be mentioned that the political verse of the Greek version contains an average of 15 syllables – considerably more than the French octosyllable. Counted as a whole, then, the Greek text should not be much shorter than its French source. When comparing the monologues, the 10 Greek verses and the 21 French ones result in only a slight shortening. Still, the questions remain: what has changed about it, and how does it affect the overall depiction of the scene?

⁴⁸ Bruckner 2015, 377.

⁴⁹ Bruckner 2015, 366; Jeffreys 2019, 167.

⁵⁰ For reconstructions of the text's age and possible author: Jeffreys 2013, 232–3. Since by the time of the Byzantine translation, Benoît's text existed in prose and verse, Jeffreys offers some insight on the possible sources: Jeffreys 2013, 230–2; Jeffreys 2019, 168. It would also be interesting to compare the existing manuscripts with Benoît's text to see how they differ in the analyzed passages.

⁵¹ Jeffreys 2013, 229. Goldwyn 2018, 155.

What is so weird with these people? Did they swear not to fall asleep until day-break? Cursed humans, why are they staying awake for so long? Never in the world have I seen it that they stay awake that long. Now the middle of the night has passed, and they have not slept yet; see the great crime. Again, for me, that is very great injudiciousness; It happens indeed that I am in love because Jason will come at the time I want. What am I waiting for? What am I doing here at the door? I have done so much, I have been so idle, I changed my mind a lot.⁵²

Again, Medea is lamenting that the others seem unwilling to sleep, and the night is passing, which is covering more than half of her lines.⁵³ The latter half of the monologue contains her reasoning why she should not worry, but also the nervousness that keeps her wandering around. Missing in comparison to the source material is Medea's explanation of why her actions can be judged foolish and her fear of being caught in the act and blamed. The outside perspective on her crimes is replaced by Medea reassuring herself and her reflections of her feelings. Furthermore, the unlawful act (*ἀνομία* – *anomia*)⁵⁴ is committed by the company of celebrating men who rob her of time together with Jason.

I argue that these alterations were made deliberately and for textual reasons that depend on a different reading of Medea's character. The text emphasizes Medea's feelings more and takes away her perception of committing a crime. She is concerned about neither laws nor morals, but only about the wrong she is suffering.⁵⁵ Her status as descendant of the gods or, in this case, as sole heir of the kingdom of Colchis elevates her above common judgement and even a long celebration can turn into a crime against her.

⁵² *War of Troy* 438–48: Πι ἐνι τὸ ξενοχάραγον εἰς τὸν λαὸν ἐτοῦτον; / ὦμοσαν νὰ μὴ κοιμηθοῦν μέχρι καὶ τὴν ἡμέραν; / Καταραμένοι ἄνθρωποι, διατὶ τόσα ἀγρυπνοῦσι; / Ποτὲ εἰς τὸν κόσμον οὐκ εἶδα το, τόσα νὰ ἀγρυπνοῦσιν. / Ἀπεδὰ τὸ μεσονύκτιον ἐπέραςε τῆς νύκτας / καὶ αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἐκοιμήθησαν· ἔδε ἀνομία μεγάλη. / Πάλιν πολλὰ ἐνι εἰς ἐμὲν μεγάλη ἀφροσύνη· / καλὰ τυχαίνει τὸ ἀληθὲς καταπιασμένη νὰ εἶμαι / <ὅτι> ὅταν θελήσω ὁ Ἰασοὺς ὥρα <οὐ> καταλαμβάνει. / Πι ἐνι τὸ ἐκδέχομαι; τί κάμνω ἐδῶ εἰς τὴν πόρταν; / Τόσα ἔποισα, τόσα ἄργησα, πολλὰ μοῦ μεταγνώθει.

⁵³ *War of Troy* 438–44.

⁵⁴ *War of Troy* 443.

⁵⁵ *War of Troy* 443.

Another reason for the change in the Greek version might be that her crime would be to have spent a night with a man without being married to him. Omitting Medea's guilty feelings as portrayed in Benoît's version could maybe also be considered some sort of censorship of a scene that might have been considered morally dubious due to its sexual content. What strengthens this theory is that the description of the night spent together is shortened to a mere two verses: "What more can I tell you? This whole night they were lying completely naked, loving each other very sweetly".⁵⁶ There is no mention of virginity or impotence, maybe because the information was seen as too explicit by the translator or as an unfitting depiction of Jason. This is especially remarkable since I showed above that the Greek text hardly changes the French source but does shorten the sex scene of an unmarried couple, probably with the aim to make the scene less problematic.

To sum up, the modifications in the Byzantine version might be due to a variation in the proleptic focus, concentrating on lamentations about the crimes Medea is suffering and by preferring less ambiguous main characters.

Like its French source, the Byzantine version uses the *Kunstgriff* of relocating Medea's monologue and ending the narrative before the murders to conclude the story before the details become too extreme, although a Greek audience might have been more familiar with the complete matter of Medea.

In comparison to the fifteen French verses, the eight Greek verses provide a slightly larger amount of text.

The pleasant one did badly in trusting him; she left her father and went away with that man. He did not show good faith nor kept the oath with her, but after a short while, he denied her completely. The brutish act he did distressed me. She, as you heard, had saved his life, and he denied her – behold the great sin. All the gods were angry with him and quickly avenged her. How it happened and what I need not tell.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *War of Troy* 523–4: Τι νὰ σὰς λέγω τὰ πολλά; Ὀλην αὐτὴν τὴν νύκταν/δλόγυμνοι ἐκοιμούντησαν, γλυκύτατα φιλοῦνται.

⁵⁷ *War of Troy* 716–24: κακὸν ἐποίηκε ἡ ἔμνοσθη ὅταν ἐνεμπιστεύθῃ. / ἀφῆκε τὸν πατέρα της, ἐδιέβη μετ' ἐκεῖνον. / Πιστότηταν οὐκ ἔδειξεν οὐδὲ ὅρκους εἰς ἐκείνην, / ἀλλὰ μετ' ὀλίγον καιρὸν ἀρνήθηκέ την ὥλως. / Χωριάτικον τὸ ἐποίκειν, ἐβάρυνεν ἐμένα. / Ἐκείνη, ὥς

Although the amount of text is similar, the Greek version lacks the French notion of a source text and instead emphasizes the narrator's feelings of distress (ἐβάρυνεν ἐμένα – *evarinen emena*). In this passage, the comparison to Benoît's text shows a change in the narrator's voice that contains the opinion of the translator as a different voice:⁵⁸ As they were not writing a story by combining different sources, but mainly translating a French text into Greek, mentioning an unnamed source they neither had nor knew might have appeared false to the Greek translator.⁵⁹ Instead, they present an interesting mixture of a reader and narrator's comment by showing the emotion that the narrator, as well as the translator as a reader, can experience upon reading Medea's story. Whereas narrator and translator often share the same voice, instances like this make it possible to perceive the translator as a separate voice when read in comparison to the source text.⁶⁰ This appearance of the translator's voice happens particularly often when the text decides on behalf of the reader whether a passage is suitable, understandable or has to be changed in some way.⁶¹ Accordingly, the voice of the translator is the one that mediates the unfamiliar foreign norms with the norms of the target culture, therefore adjusting and interfering with the authors' voice.⁶²

The use of the narrator/translator's voice displayed in the Greek translation is similar to the German translations, where the existence of an interpreting translator is often emphasized through similar comments.⁶³ A closer analysis of these comments in the Greek version might cast a new light on the self-perception of the translator(s) and their poetics.

ἀκούσατε, τοῦ ἔσωσε τὴν ζωὴν του, / καὶ ἐκεῖνος τὴν ἀρνήθηκεν—ἔδε ἁμαρτία μεγάλη.
/ "Ὅλοι οἱ θεοὶ τοῦ ὠργίσθησαν, γοργὸν τὴν ἐκδικήσαν. / Τὸ πῶς δὲ καὶ τί γέγονεν, οὐκ
ἔχω χρεῖαν λέγειν.

⁵⁸ According to Goldwyn (2018, 173), this is the only instance where the Greek narrator/translator comments on the story.

⁵⁹ Jeffreys 2019, 181–2.

⁶⁰ "In translated texts, therefore, a discursive presence is to be found, the presence of the (implied) translator. It can manifest itself in a voice which is not that of the narrator of the source text. We could say that two voices are present in the narrative discourse of the translated text: the voice of the narrator of the source text and the voice of the translator" (O'Sullivan 2003, 202).

⁶¹ O'Sullivan 2003, 198.

⁶² Coillie & McMartin 2020, 20.

⁶³ Herberich 2010, 142; Lienert 1996, 25.

Another missing part compared to Benoît's text is feudal duty. A vassal's behaviour is something specific to Western kingdoms and foreign to a Byzantine readership. Although the concept should be known in Frankish Morea, where the translation was created, it becomes mainly a part of Jason's oath.⁶⁴ Therefore, it could be a figure of speech since the narrator does not refer to him as a vassal.⁶⁵ Instead, Jason's unfaithfulness is turned into an act of sin (ἁμαρτία - *armatia*) that is pointed out by the word "See!" (ἔδε - *ede*). By adjusting Jason's behaviour to the norms of a Christian society, vassalage is translated into an understandable concept.⁶⁶

The fact that Jason is punished, however, remains the same. Both a breach of fealty and committing a sin is punished by the gods. The Greek emphasizes that the god's punishment avenges Medea, which casts a particular light on the moral perception of an unfaithful husband. Medea appears less motivated by passion and love but follows Jason in good faith.

When the narrator finally refuses to give the details about Medea's fate, they merely state that there is no need to do so, instead of giving an excuse as happened in the French text. This might either be due to the expected familiarity with the matter of Medea or maybe because the explanation seemed unnecessary.

Summarizing the comparison, it gives the impression of a faithfully translated text that takes liberties in making minor adjustments for its target culture. The *Kunstgriff* of relocating Medea's monologue is readily accepted to avoid morally dubious content that is probably already known to the reader.

3.4 THE MEDIEVAL LATIN *HISTORY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF TROY*

Guido delle Colonne's *History of the Destruction of Troy*, composed in 1287, is remarkable in the sense that it offers a prose rather than a verse translation. The text is a novelistic commentary with strong moral tendencies and many instances in which the translator's voice is present. The translator's voice uses the *Roman de Troie* as a screen to project and reflect on contemporary ideas

⁶⁴ Jeffreys 2019, 171–6.

⁶⁵ Jeffreys 2019, 177–9.

⁶⁶ The more moralizing tendencies can also be found in other translations: Goldwyn 2018, 174, 176.

and concepts about matters such as adequate behaviour, female wiles, faith, morality, feudal society, and science.⁶⁷

Interestingly, the *History of the Destruction of Troy* blames Medea's father for everything. For placing a beautiful virgin right next to a handsome young man and encouraging her to talk to him, the translator accuses him of being a mindless and honourless noble and holds him responsible for the subsequent events.⁶⁸ Overall, the translator's perspective on Medea is consciously misogynistic, portraying her as a new Eve.⁶⁹ Being a woman, she is secretive and lust-driven in her actions because "we know that the soul of a woman always strives for a man, like matter always strives for form"⁷⁰ and "since it is always the custom of all women that when they desire some man with a dishonest desire, to seek their excuses under the veil of some honesty".⁷¹ Her knowledge about magic, necromancy, and science is refuted based on Christian faith after which the translator explains that Medea is probably only a legendary person and not real.⁷² As the most powerful female character,⁷³ Medea is the only character whose fictitiousness the text emphasizes, showing the translator's discomfort with a powerful, knowledgeable female character who steers the male characters' fate.⁷⁴

Yet, even with an apparent distaste for the character, the *History of the Destruction of Troy* still recognises and applies the *Kunstgriff* of moving Medea's monologue to the night when she has to wait for Jason. The monologue, however, is turned into a description of Medea's impatience while waiting for everyone to fall asleep, without directly voicing her feelings:

⁶⁷ Similar observations have been made: Simpson 1998, 420–422.

⁶⁸ Guido, *History* 18. On female stereotypical beauty in Guido's translation: Bedel 2013, 6–19.

⁶⁹ Bedel 2013, 5, 29.

⁷⁰ Guido, *History* 19: "Scimus enim mulieris animum semper virum appetere, sicut appetit materia semper formam."

⁷¹ Guido, *History* 19: "Omnium enim mulierum semper est moris vt cum inhonesto desiderio virum aliquem appetunt, sub alicuius honestatis uelamine suas excusationes intendunt."

⁷² Guido, *History* 16–17. About the discomfort with Medea's powers: Bedel 2013, 40.

⁷³ Bedel 2013, 26.

⁷⁴ Goldwyn discusses similar dynamics in chapter 5 of this volume.

O, how for a longing heart nothing hastens enough! For with how many anxious torments Medea is then tortured when she feels that her father's servants in the palace keep the long waking hours to avoid the night, and the musical noises of the ones awake do not in any way encourage sleep! Therefore, as if waiting impatiently for a long time, she is now restlessly carried hither and thither through the chamber; now she turns herself to her guests to investigate if by chance the ones awake enter into the realm of sleep, now she opens the shutters of the windows to inspect through them how much time of that night has passed. But for so long she is tormented by such straits and made sick from every side, until the crowing of the rooster, the prayer of sleep, warns the ones awake and they long for the immediate rest of sleep.⁷⁵

Although the passage is narrated differently, it is easy to detect the similarities to the same scene in the *Roman de Troie*. The celebrations and the people refusing to sleep make Medea upset like in the source text. Although no words are spoken by Medea, the first exclamation ("Oh, how for a longing heart nothing hastens enough!") in the passage and her subsequent restlessness convey her inner turmoil through her outward behaviour. Furthermore, this change of focalisation that leaves Medea's inner world hidden and open to imagination emphasizes the role of the translator/narrator for the story. Although the narrated matter is highly questionable for a Christian reader, it can be told under the guidance of such a translator/narrator who will constantly put the story into perspective for the contemporary medieval Christian.

Similarly, the sex scene first emphasizes on Medea's unquenchable desire, portraying her once again as an example of condemnable female lust. Having shown maybe too many scandalous details, the translator escapes into

⁷⁵ Guido, *History* 23: "Set O quam desideranti animo nichil satis festinatur! Quantis enim torquetur cruciatibus anxiis tunc Medea cum sentit patris famulos in palatio longa uigilia noctem eludere et inuigilantibus signa cadentia sompnos nullatenus suadere! Longe igitur expectationis uelut impatiens nunc huc nunc illuc fertur per cameram inquieta; nunc ad eius se dirigit [h]ostium exploratura si forte uigilantes ineant de dormitione tractatum, nunc conuersas ualuas aperit fenestrarum inspectura per illas quantus effluxerit de nocte ea decursus. Sed tamdiu talibus uexatur angustiis donec gallorum cantus, dormitionis preco, undique inualescit, ad quorum monitus uigilantes instantem quietem appetunt dormiendi."

scholarly comment about the temptation and dangers of intercourse.⁷⁶ In this sense, the translator/narrator becomes much more visible as they continue to engage with the text and its characters in a one-sided conversation. Although their comments do not interfere with the narrated plot in the sense that the main events and their order remain and the characters do not react to them, they still influence the perspective on the story.

While Guido's translation recognizes and applies the *Kunstgriff*, the ending still contains more detailed information than the *Roman de Troie*. Unlike the French source text, the narrator does not argue that they have to leave Medea's tale behind for the sake of the main story. Instead, the narrator explains that Medea will be told a short summary about her fate before venturing once more into a one-sided, moralistic criticism with the character:⁷⁷

But, o Medea, you will be told that much that, wishing for a wind from the fortunate winds, you will abandon your country and flee from your father's scepter, you will cross the sea fearlessly, to love him without showing your crimes. Surely you will be told that you will arrive in Thessalia, where you will read that in Thessalia, after being found by Thessalian citizens, Jason will end his life after many detestable crimes through secret murder. But although Jason had been exposed to martyrdom by the vengeance of the gods for a long time before he himself died and his end, as if he had been condemned by the gods, had been concluded by a blameworthy death, tell me, what did you profit from the enormous expenses Jason incurred, tell me, what did you profit from the great revenge and vengeance of the gods afterwards followed for Jason? Of course, it is commonly said that when an animal is dead, it is useless to apply medicinal herbs to the nostrils. Unless perhaps it pleases the gods to not order reparation for injustice, but that mortals may know that the gods do not allow grievous offenses even in the face of the living to pass almost without retribution.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Guido, *History* 25.

⁷⁷ Bedel 2013, 30.

⁷⁸ Guido, *History* 32: "Set, O Medea, uentorum secundorum auram multum diceris peroptasse ut tuam desereres patriam et paterna sepra diffugeres, mare transires intrepida, amare luis tua discrimina non aduertens. Sane diceris peruenisse in Thesaliam, ubi per Thesalum Iasonem, ciuibus inueneranda Thesalicis, occulta nece post multa detestanda discrimina uitam legeris finiuisse. Sed quamuis ultione deorum

In this part of the text, some difficulties appear due to the ambiguous nature of the Latin translation. The main question lies in how to translate “Iasonem” in the following sentence, which is the second sentence in the passage quoted above. This subsequently yields to two very different results. Since I consider the room for ambiguity an important part of the passage, I will discuss both options and their effect on the translation.⁷⁹

Sane diceris peruenisse in Thesaliam, ubi per Thesalum Iasonem, ciuibus inueneranda Thesalicis, occulta nece post multa detestanda discrimina uitam legeris finiuisse.

Surely you will be told that you will arrive in Thessalia, where you will read that in Thessalia, after being found by Thessalian citizens, Jason will end your life after many detestable crimes through secret murder.

Surely you will be told that you will arrive in Thessalia, where you will read that in Thessalia, after being found by Thessalian citizens, Jason will end his life after many detestable crimes through secret murder.

If “Iasonem” is considered to be a genuine accusative depending on the preposition “per” (by), the sentence results in Medea being murdered by Jason (per Iasonem). As in the quoted passage, he would then be reproached for his murder by the heathen gods and suffer horribly before his death. However, this is of no consequence to the dead Medea who cannot enjoy her vengeance. Therefore, there is no meaning in the heathen gods’ revenge except if they want to prove that they already punish humans during their lifetimes. Interpreting the analogy of the dead animal that has no use for medicine, Medea would then be the animal and Jason’s punishment the useless med-

Iason martirio multo fuisset expositus antequam et ipse decederet et eius decessus, tamquam dampnatus a diis, fuisset dampnabili morte conclusus, dic, tibi quid profuit Iasonem enormia incurrisse dispendia, dic, tibi quid profuit in Iasonem grauis ultio et uindicta deorum postea subsequuta? Sane uulgariter dici solet, animali mortuo inutiliter proficit medicinalium herbarum naribus adhibere medelas. Nisi forte diis placeat non imperasse recompensationem iniurie sed ut a mortalibus cognoscatur deos nolle graues culpas etiam in facie uiuentium absque pene talione transire.”

⁷⁹ The ambiguity of this passage might be solved by creating a new critical edition of Guido’s text that refers to a wider range of manuscripts: Melgar 2021, 85–87.

icine. Although killing Medea is a vastly different outcome from what one would expect, it is nevertheless plausible, considering the translator's obvious dislike for the character and the continuous misogynistic remarks.

However, if "Iasonem" is considered to be a part of an *accusativus cum infinitivo* construction consisting of "legeris Iasonem vitam finuisse" ("you will read that Jason will end his life"), the outcome is more familiar. Yet, the murderer in this case is unnamed and his death is attributed to the heathen gods who punish him for his sins. In this case, Medea is still unable to benefit from Jason's death since a dead criminal is unable to repent or offer compensation for their victim. The analogy would then mean that Jason is the dead animal since he cannot learn from his punishment because he died. This turns the gods' interference useless for both him and Medea. Since Medea surviving is what would usually be expected from the story, understanding the Latin like that would be plausible as well. Considering that the *Roman de Troie* avoids further comments on her fate, the translator would have needed to refer to extratextual knowledge or their own imagination.

Looking at both possible readings, it is impossible to decide on a correct reading. Furthermore, the unhappy ending of Medea and Jason does not have an impact on the subsequent plot, which makes it difficult to pick a version based on the text alone. Although it would be possible to look at numerous translations of Guido's Latin version, it would only show how the text was understood and not help to clarify the ambiguity of the passage.⁸⁰ However, this reflects, in my opinion, the creative potential of Medea's story in combination with the *Kunstgriff*. By not telling what happens but foreshadowing Jason's unfaithfulness in the monologue, it is up to the audience to imagine their story, promptly encouraging some translators to spin their own versions, as Guido and the two subsequent German translators do.

3.5 THE MIDDLE HIGH GERMAN *SONG OF TROY* AND *WAR OF THE TROJANS*

The first translation to be mentioned in the German tradition should be Herbolt von Fritzlar's *Liet von Troie*. This oldest German text about the matter of Troy, written between 1190 and 1200, shortens the *Roman de Troie*

⁸⁰ For the unaccounted translations in Catalan and the difficulties of recreating Guido's original translation: Melgar 2021, 88–90, 105–106.

to around 18,500 verses.⁸¹ Interestingly, it completely omits the monologue as well as any foreshadowing of Medea's tragic fate. Instead, Jason and Medea successfully consummate their marriage secretly.⁸² When Medea is abducted, the kingdom is furious but helpless, and the narrator concludes with the notion that nothing is known about their later fate.⁸³

This is probably not only due to the ideal of *brevitas* pursued in this translation.⁸⁴ Medea and Jason's sexual intercourse is substituted with a passage that explains that the contents of the night are unsuitable to be told to those who cannot logically conclude what is happening.⁸⁵ Although not written in the text, I suppose the same reasoning for the deletion of the monologue and later infidelity, as they were considered even more unsuitable for Christian readers. The moral ambiguity of Jason and Medea's love story is therefore reduced by dwelling less on their indecent behaviour and omitting the later infidelity. These, arguably, morally inspired changes could suggest that Herbot von Fritzlar recognised the connection of monologue and infidelity as well, which resulted in their removal. Much like Guido, Herbot's translation also is the result of moral and religious discomfort with the matter.

Werner Schröder has proposed an additional explanation for the lack of tragedy in this narration. Although developed for the *Trojanerkrieg*, I consider it more fitting for the *Liet von Troye*. According to Schröder, Christian writers avoid depicting tragedies because they question God and the possibility of salvation.⁸⁶ Schröder's argument seems very befitting of the *Liet von Troye* that actively avoids the tragic passages, at least for the matter of Medea. Here it would emphasize the Christian moralizing tendencies of the text that also considers dogmatic deliberations of the translator. This would add further proof to the assumption that the changes in the translation were due to moral considerations.

This theory, however, does not work with the next Medea passage of my analysis, the *Trojanerkrieg*, despite being the text Schröder developed

⁸¹ Herberich 2010, 15, 19

⁸² Herbot, *Liet von Troye* 945–74.

⁸³ Herbot, *Liet von Troye* 1143–79.

⁸⁴ Herberich 2010, 143–53.

⁸⁵ Herbot, *Liet von Troye* 975–82.

⁸⁶ Schröder 1992, 11.

his argument for. Against this, I find three arguments. First, that there exist more than enough tragic fates in the *Trojanerkrieg* and other Medieval epics and romances;⁸⁷ second, that the *Trojanerkrieg* indulges in the tragic fate of Medea by telling the details of Jason's infidelity, unlike Benoît; and third, that more recent studies have shown that although the church fathers condemned tragedy, the concept was heavily used by Medieval writers to describe and explain their time and situation.⁸⁸

The translation strategies in Konrad's von Würzburg *Trojanerkrieg* can be seen as basically opposed to the Byzantine objective of a relatively close, slightly culturally adapted narrative. It also shows a completely different aim in comparison to Herbot von Fritzlar's morally less dubious story. This is evident in the monologue that is divided into two parts and prolonged to 199 verses in total, 29 verses for the first and 170 for the second part. While being significantly expanded, the main points of Medea's lamentations still remain, again set within the boundaries of courtly love.⁸⁹

The first part also focuses mainly on her anger about the noisy celebrations, as she questions her father's decision not to bid everyone to go to bed.⁹⁰ However, she also starts talking about her suffering from love and anxious waiting in contrast to the festivities.⁹¹ Her situation is then summed up by the narrator before Medea continues her lament.⁹² The second part of the monologue begins with her unsuccessful struggle to free herself from her love for Jason,⁹³ followed by a reflection of its consequences for everyone.⁹⁴ She then realizes her powerlessness in the face of love, and, torn between honor and longing, she is forced to choose poorly against her better understanding.⁹⁵ As she is afraid that Jason might forsake her later, she plans

⁸⁷ Lienert 1996, 310–14; Hasebrink 2002, 209–10.

⁸⁸ Symes 2010, 365–7.

⁸⁹ Hasebrink 2002, 211, 216–17, 219–21.

⁹⁰ Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8567–84.

⁹¹ Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8585–94.

⁹² Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8586–617.

⁹³ Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8618–29.

⁹⁴ Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8630–49. Medea's love is depicted equally courtly and derived from splendid rumours about Jason (Schnell 1985, 282).

⁹⁵ Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8650–727.

to bind him with vows.⁹⁶ First, she believes in Jason's trustworthiness but is soon swayed again and deliberates about staying with her father,⁹⁷ at which point the monologue ends while the narrator explains that she continues the same train of thoughts for a long time.⁹⁸

It is evident that this translation also follows the structure developed in Benoît's text: Complaints, awareness of the dangerous implications of her love, the fear of being forsaken by Jason and self-encouragement mixed with self-doubt. In this respect, the first part of Medea's monologue resembles Benoît's text in structure and content. However, it is significantly extended with new details in the second part of the monologue.⁹⁹ Accordingly, the parts containing new material will be of special interest, namely the ones concerning the power of love and the proleptic fear.¹⁰⁰

Love is introduced as an all-powerful fire that cannot be extinguished by cold reason. Although Medea already perceives the likely danger of being forsaken in the future by a man she hardly knows ("a guest I have hardly ever seen"),¹⁰¹ she is unable to go against what love dictates to her:¹⁰²

But what am I, a great fool, talking
That I consider extinguishing
The sparks of hot love
And the embers of her strong fire!
If I could do it, it would be fortunate;
Sadly it won't be happening.

⁹⁶ Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8728–59.

⁹⁷ Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8760–93.

⁹⁸ Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8794–867. Krämer 2019, 85–6.

⁹⁹ This is not an unusual feature of Middle High German translations of French source material as also the Arthurian romances share the same fate. For example, Chrétien de Troye's *Erec et Enide* and *Yvain*, the first two adapted Arthurian romances, are extended by about 20% compared to their source material. Sieburg 2010, 126.

¹⁰⁰ For a more detailed analysis of Medea's monologue and its use of Ovid: Lienert 1996, 59–65.

¹⁰¹ Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8642: "Ein gast, den ich selten ie gesach".

¹⁰² Hasebrink (2002, 222) argues that Medea's fear of being forsaken is unmotivated by the plot. However, considering that Medea is a sorceress with great wisdom, I would instead perceive the foreshadowing of Jason's betrayal as a traditional motif that emphasizes her desire for him.

I have seen the fair game
 And the unfair one at the same time
 What is fortunate for me or what will harm me
 This I have learned both
 But it still will not save me
 From harmful suffering
 The good is loathsome to me
 And I very much prefer the bad.¹⁰³

Although this passage is but a small part of a long lament, it illustrates the perception of love rendering Medea, despite all her knowledge, unable to escape her fate. She knows that she will choose poorly and is already suffering for it. Later on, the accuracy of her prediction and her inability to escape love becomes even more apparent when she fears being abandoned for another woman (“therefore I am very much afraid that he might cast me aside and marry another wife”).¹⁰⁴

These explicit depictions of the force tormenting Medea and her truthful foresight demonstrate that the monologue is perceived as a proleptic lament about her fate. The more shocking details can later on be omitted, as Medea already pities herself in this very moment. Even the Middle High German translation, which includes the murder of Peleus, Creusa, Creon and Jason, has no other monologue than this one. There is, however, a short speech in which Medea declares that she will murder both Jason and Creusa.¹⁰⁵ The declaration contains not a lament but a warning and an announcement of justified revenge.¹⁰⁶ In my opinion, this demonstrates the *Kunstgriff* of relo-

¹⁰³ Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8660–73: “wie rede ab ich vil tumbiu sô, / daz ich erleschen waene / der heizen minne spaene / und ir starkes fiures gluot? / möht ichz getuon, ez waere guot; / nû mac sîn leider niht geschehen. / ich hân daz waeger spil erschen / und daz unwaeger ouch dâ bî. / waz mir guot, oder schade sî, / daz hân ich beidez wol erfarn / und mac mich doch niht hie bewarn / vor schedelicher swaere. / daz guote ist mir unmaere / und daz arge lieber vil.”

¹⁰⁴ Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 8744–6: “Wan daz ich vürhte vaste, / daz er dâ kebse mînen lîp / und er dâ neme ein ander wîp.” For similar observations: Krämer 2019, 82; Schröder 1992, 14–18.

¹⁰⁵ Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 11270–89.

¹⁰⁶ Lienert 1996, 75–6, 217, 293.

cating Medea's lament is found in the *Trojanerkrieg* as well since Medea does not grief Jason's infidelity when she is actually experiencing it.

The possible reasons for the Middle High German strategy of including more details can be found within the text. A likely reason could be to stress the love-fire allegory already found in Ovid. Love as an all-consuming fire does not only burn Medea but Jason as well: Breaking the vows of their love deserves a fitting punishment – for Jason, the destruction by fire that would have killed him already without Medea's help.¹⁰⁷

In addition, it could be argued that a particular writer's pride is to be found in the prologue. Here, Konrad von Würzburg declares wanting to compose a tale ("maere") that is the lord of every other epic ("I want to compose a story that is the lord of all the other stories").¹⁰⁸ As Elisabeth Lienert explains, this includes not only a superior story but also a story that contains various other stories – like the matter of Medea.¹⁰⁹ Accordingly, the introduction mentions not only Benoît as a source but also Dares and other Latin sources, possibly Ovid, which probably cumulates into the desire to prove additional knowledge at appropriate parts.¹¹⁰ This emphasizes that the Middle High German translation has also recognized the *Kunstgriff* of relocating Medea's monologue.

Considering the end of the German translation, a large amount of content has been added in more than 1100 verses. In the beginning, the translator-narrator tells us that they will tell us Medea's fate and Jason's infidelity.

This was a bad story
How the very virtuous one
Was abandoned by him.
How the hero became
Unfaithful to her;

¹⁰⁷ Lienert 1996, 217, 293.

¹⁰⁸ Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 234–5: "Ich wil ein maere tihten, / daz allen maeren ist ein her."

¹⁰⁹ Lienert 1996, 20–1, 193–201; Schröder 1992, 7.

¹¹⁰ Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 266–307. Lienert 1996, 22–8.

This you will be told by me
Before this speech comes to an end.¹¹¹

Again, the translation presents an instance where the translator's voice becomes visible. The "me" ("mir") is the translator's voice who wishes to add new content that their source is missing. In a way, this demonstrates the overall agenda of creating the lord of all other stories by not sticking to the *Roman de Troie* as the only source. Where the Greek translation even removes the mentioning of other sources, the Middle High German translation emphasizes the addition of new material through the translator's voice.

The interesting questions are at this point, what is added and what happened to the *Kunstgriff*. Concerning the content, the text tells of their wedding supported by Medea's father. By turning Medea's and Jason's secret love affair into an official wedding, Medea is not blamed for abandoning her kin but turned into a victim. The text also recounts Medea's magic and her help with killing Jason's enemies before it continues with Jason's unfaithfulness, resulting in Medea killing Creusa, her father, and Jason. Children are not mentioned and do not seem to exist.

The perspective on Jason's infidelity is again different compared to the other versions in German, Greek and French. Instead of Christian values or fealty, it turns now into a matter of love. Although the same system existed in the Holy Roman Empire, Jason is not depicted as a vassal yet still remains passive and dependent on Medea.¹¹² Having an official wedding with his beloved, they are presented as of equal standing. According to the standards of courtly love, a marriage between a queen and a hero who has proven himself worthy through ordeals is by no means condemnable. This change furthermore suggests that the German translation was not interested in providing a noble lineage for an existing noble house but focused on the trials of courtly love.

Love, however, turns into a force similar to fate and cannot be overcome. Already Medea's monologue emphasized the foolishness of fighting against

¹¹¹ Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 10209–13: "daz was ein übel maere, / wan diu vil tugentbaere / wart sît von im verlâzen. / der helt begunde mâzen / triuwen sich engegen ir; / daz wirt iu noch geseit von mir, / ê disiu rede ein ende neme."

¹¹² Lienert 1996, 216; Krämer 2019, 84–5, 90, 95–6.

love (“minne”). Like Medea, Jason is but love’s plaything.¹¹³ His heart is created fickle and makes him abandon his lawful wife and forget all the things he received from her:

Jason’s heart was made that way
That through it¹¹⁴ he became unfaithful
And forgot his lawful wife.
[...]
To his benefit, many things
He had received from her:
This was overlooked by the youth
And unfaithful man,
Thus he gained much harm
And was led to sorrow.
This was created by love’s disloyalty,
Who teaches how to falter
And who turns herself
Into never ending pain.
For many hearts she becomes
A treacherous guiding star.¹¹⁵

As this passage shows, Jason’s behavior is not only judged but also explained. Creusa, or love in the shape of Creusa, has an effect on Jason’s heart that

¹¹³ Krämer 2019, 94.

¹¹⁴ “Si” (“it”) interestingly refers to Creusa’s friendship (“vriuntschaft”), a word that signifies the multitude of possible close relationships, including lovers, family and partner: Gebert 2013, 324–8. Again, this places Jason in a passive role where he is forced by Creusa as he was by Medea. However, since Creusa is just as worthy as Medea (Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 11207), the hero torn between two equal women must find a violent end like Siegfried in the *Nibelungenlied*.

¹¹⁵ Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 11210–12, 11222–33: “Jāsōnes herze alsō behaft, / daz er dur si wart triuwelōs / und er sīn êlich wīp verkōs. / [...] / im was von ir ze guote / geschehen maniger hande dinc: / daz übersach der jungelinc / und der ungetriuwe man, / dā von er schaden vil gewan / und in kumber wart geleit. / daz schuof der minne unstaetekeit, / die gnuoge wenken lêret / und si dar under kêret / in endelōsen smerzen, / si wirt vil manigem herzen / Ein falscher leitesterne.”

controls his actions.¹¹⁶ His unwillingness or inability to stay faithful despite his feelings result in his death. Insofar, Jason is not actively guilty for his unfaithfulness but rather has no more choice than Medea had when falling in love with him. Therefore, the translator-narrator is able to lament his death, as his conduct otherwise has been flawless and that of a worthy hero.¹¹⁷

Since Benoît uses the *Kunstgriff* to avoid the depiction of infidelity and murders, their explicit description by Konrad could lead to the conclusion that his Middle High German translation refuses the *Kunstgriff*. It would be possible to insert another revenge monologue, like in the ancient sources, and finish the matter of Medea without the narrator's voiced decision to return to the matter of Troy. However, looking at the final verses of the matter of Medea, they end in a similar manner as the Greek and French versions.

I am at fault for having and wanting to
not take up the task of telling
how the noble born warrior
was mourned at that time.
and what happened to Medea
I will also stay silent about.
I will not pick up the lament of the hero
that was made for him then;
since I have enough other things
to tell and to say,
it does not suit me to lament
Jason's cruel death.¹¹⁸

This translation also omits parts of the story, but the accents are slightly different. They refuse to tell about Medea's fate and to lament Jason's death.

¹¹⁶ Hasebrink 2002, 228.

¹¹⁷ For similar arguments: Schröder 1992, 8–9; Lienert 1996, 76.

¹¹⁸ Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 11350–61: “von schulden muoz ich unde will / hie lân beliben
under wegen, / wie der vil hōchgeborne degen / beweinet würde bî der zît. / und war
Mêdêâ kaeme sît, / daz wirt ouch von mir hie verswigen. / des heldes clage lâz ich li-
gen, / die man dur in des mâles truoc; / wan ich hân anders wol sô gnuoc / ze künden
und ze sagene, / daz mir niht touc ze clagene / Jâsônes grimmeclicher tôt.”

The depiction of Medea as a murderess, on the other hand, seems acceptable, maybe also because of the story's ancient setting. While fratricide and infanticide are not relevant in this version in which Medea has neither brother nor children, her revenge on Jason appears justified by his behaviour. Stories in which a lover is punished cruelly for their mistakes are not uncommon in German chivalric romances: Enite in *Erec*, Jeschute in *Parzival* and Iwein in *Iwein* are punished by their husband or wife for actual or assumed misdemeanour in marriage by being threatened with death, exiled, shunned, and beaten.

Yet, since Jason otherwise displayed heroic conduct, it is still possible to mourn the hero while condemning the deed. On this note, the narrator-translator accepts the blame that was in earlier versions placed on Medea and Jason: "I am at fault for having and wanting to/not take up the task of telling".¹¹⁹ This again shows another understanding of guilt as neither Medea nor Jason can be blamed as 'persons', probably since they have been toyed with by love: Jason's fate is equally just and cruel.¹²⁰ Accordingly, the motif of blame can only shift to the translator who finishes the story without a lament for the hero or a conclusion for Medea.

The Middle High German version shows that its translator understood the *Kunstgriff* and kept it despite adding more content to the story: The monologue remains in the same position as in the French version, although the translator was most likely aware of its original position in the storyline of Ovid's letter. However, the monologue's new place at the beginning of Medea's and Jason's love story stresses the pain of unrequited love. If it had remained in the same position as the Latin sources, it would have described a formerly mutual love turning into hatred. My analysis suggests that Konrad von Würzburg not only preferred the focus on unfulfilled love that Benoît's *Kunstgriff* created but even elaborated on it with additional material. The strength of this love is emphasized by Medea being unable to resist it despite her strong powers and knowledge, as well as by the use of Ovidian motifs found in the *Heroides*.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 11350–1: "Von schulden muoz ich unde will/hie lân beliben under wegen."

¹²⁰ Konrad, *Trojanerkrieg* 11225–7, 11361.

¹²¹ Lienert 1996, 59–65, 298–300.

3.6 CAUSE AND EFFECT OF MEDEA'S MONOLOGUE

The observations made in these texts show that Medea is deemed unable to escape suffering without heavy changes to the story like in the *Liet von Troje*. They also share the tendency to omit parts less suitable for a Christian audience. Nevertheless, even within the same culture, translators make vastly different choices when deciding what and how to translate their sources, sometimes even reflecting on their reading of the text in explicit comments.

The French and Byzantine texts both leave only slight hints at Medea's further story, which contains the gruesome murders. The Greek translator shifts the blame from Medea to Jason in their comment. Instead of calling Medea foolish, like the French narrator, the Greek translator emphasizes their distress over Jason's infidelity. The Middle High German and Latin translations appear as polar opposites to French and Greek. With a strong moralistic stance and misogynist ideology,¹²² the Latin translation harshly criticizes every act of Medea, showing that everything bad happening is due to the lustful nature of womankind and failing to restrain them. Although a murder happens, the sentence structure leaves it unclear whether Jason or Medea are killed. The older German text, the *Liet von Troje*, erases nearly all traces of problematic behaviour, especially the monologue and the ending, dramatically shortening its sources and probably writing the only medieval 'happy end' for Medea. Here, the end is not commented by the narrator/translator, and instead, a translator's comment is found at the description of Jason's and Medea's first night, judging it as not fit for narration. The younger one, the *Trojanerkrieg*, includes Medea's murders and depicts them as justified revenge but without focusing on the betrayed Medea's feelings. Due to the additional details of this version, the translator's comment is more specific in its condemnation of Jason's infidelity, yet also mourns his death.

However, the four translations containing Medea's lament seem to agree with Benoît that its relocation to an earlier part of the story renders the events after her marriage to Jason less important. This also leaves space in the conclusions for each of the narrators and translators to pass their differing judgments on each of the characters and their deeds. The *Kunstgriff* is used to avoid certain details, but maybe also to suit the conventions of medieval

¹²² See also chapters 6 (Goldwyn) and 7 (Hoogenboom) in this volume.

romances and poems, in which the difficult feelings involved with courting are of more interest than the life of a married couple.¹²³

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¹²³ De Santis 2016, 20.

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