



INVESTIGATION NOTEBOOK

MEDEA, BETRAYED WOMAN?

EVIDENCE : COR_0003_EN

Title	Act I, Scene 2
Subtitle	Jason's infidelity
Author	Corneille
Date / Historical era	Classical
Theme(s)	Betrayal & Infidelity
Character(s)	Jason
Language	EN

Excerpt / reproduction

'My heart, torn between two affections, / Is torn apart by a thousand passions.'



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EVIDENCE : COR_0005_EN

Title	Act I, Scene 3
Subtitle	Polluxes criticism
Author	Corneille
Date / Historical era	Classical
Theme(s)	Betrayal & Infidelity
Character(s)	Pollux, Jason
Language	EN

Excerpt / Reproduction

“It shows a little ingratitude towards Medea, / What she has done for you is poorly rewarded.”



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EVIDENCE : COR_0006_EN

Title	Act I, Scene 1
Subtitle	Jason's confession
Author	Corneille
Date / Historical era	Classical
Theme(s)	Betrayal & Infidelity
Character(s)	Jason, Pollux
Language	EN

Excerpt / reproduction

'A more beautiful object drives her out of my bed.'

Jason speaks to Pollux about Medea.

Creusa is the 'more beautiful object' that drives Medea from Jason's bed.



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EVIDENCE: EUR_0001_EN

Title	Prologue
Subtitle	The Nurse explains the reason for Medea's pain
Author	Euripides
Date / Historical era	Classical
Theme(s)	Revenge & Justice
Character(s)	The Nurse

Excerpt / reproduction

'How I wish that the ship named Argo had never sailed towards Colchis! Medea would never have sailed towards the towers of Iolcus, madly in love with Jason!

Now everything has turned to hostility, and things are going badly, because Jason has betrayed his children and my mistress, choosing to take a princess as his bride, while Medea, his poor wife, stripped of her honour, appeals to the oaths made and recalls the strong promise of fidelity and loyalty she made to Jason, giving him her right hand.

She lies fasting, abandoning her body to pain, consumed by tears since she learned that she had been treated without honour by her husband, never raising her eyes or her face from the ground.

Now that she hates her children and feels no joy in seeing them, I fear she is planning something unheard of; for her spirit is violent, and she will not tolerate the outrage: I know her, and I fear her.

She is a fearsome woman; whoever her enemy may be, he will not easily prevail over her.'



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EVIDENCE: EUR_0008_EN

Title	Fifth stasimon
Subtitle	The messenger informs Medea that Creusa and Creon are dead.
Author	Euripides
Date / Historical era	Classical
Theme(s)	Hubris & Excessive Passion
Character(s)	The Messenger

Excerpt / reproduction

Oh you, who have committed a terrible act contrary to every law,

Medea, flee, fleeing, leaving behind

neither a sea vessel nor a chariot that treads the ground.

What has happened to me that I deserve this flight?

The royal princess and Creon, who begot her, have just died, because of your poisons.

(...)

Think straight and do not go mad, woman,

you who, after destroying your masters' hearth,

rejoice at hearing such horrors and are not afraid?



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EVIDENCE : LAW_0001_EN

Title	'On the murder of Eratosthenes' (speech by Lysias)
Subtitle	Athenian Law
Author	Unknown
Date / Historical era	Antiquity
Theme(s)	Revenge & Justice, Gender Roles & Patriarchy
Character(s)	None
Language	EN

Excerpt / reproduction

LAW ON ADULTERY. 'When a husband catches his wife in the act of adultery, he shall no longer be permitted to cohabit with her. If he does so, he shall be punished with *atimia**. Similarly, a woman caught in the act of adultery is forbidden from attending national religious ceremonies. If she does so, she may be subjected to any kind of treatment, *up to – but not including – death*** , with impunity.'

* *atimia* : comes from the ancient Greek *ἀτιμία* and literally means 'deprivation of honour' or 'loss of civil rights'.

** *The law prohibits killing an adulterous woman — even though it permits violence, humiliation, expulsion, and religious and social sanctions.*



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Evidence : SEN_0002_EN

Title	Act 3, scene 2, lines 431-446
Subtitle	Jason comes to meet Medea
Author	Seneca, translated by Ella Isabel Harris (1899)
Date / Historical era	Antiquity
Theme(s)	Fate, paternity, perjury
Character(s)	Jason
Language	EN

Excerpt / reproduction

'The lot is ever hard; bitter is fate, Equally bitter if it slay or spare; God gives us remedies worse than our ills.

Would I keep faith with her I deem my wife I must expect to die; would I shun death I must forswear myself. Not fear of death Has conquered honor, love has cast out fear In that the father's death involves the sons.

O holy Justice, if thou dwell in heaven, I call on thee to witness that the sons Vanquish their father! Say the mother's love Is fierce and spurns the yoke, she still will deem Her children of more worth than marriage joys.

My mind is fixed, I go to her with prayers. She starts at sight of me, her look grows wild, Hatred she shows and grief.'



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EVIDENCE : SEN_0003_EN

Title	Act 3, scene 2, lines 447-489
Subtitle	Medea responds to Jason
Author	Seneca, translated by Ella Isabel Harris (1899)
Date / Historical era	Antiquity
Theme(s)	Betrayal, exile, justice, sacrifice
Character(s)	Medea
Language	EN

Excerpt / reproduction

'Jason, I flee! I flee, it is not new to change my home, The cause of banishment alone is new;

I have been exiled hitherto for thee. I go, as thou compellst me, from thy home, But whither shall I go? Shall I, perhaps, Seek Phasis, Colchis, and my father's realm Whose soil is watered by a brother's blood?

What land dost thou command me seek? what sea? The Euxine's jaws through which I led that band Of noble princes when I followed thee, Adulterer, through the Symplegades? Little Iolchos? Tempe? Thessaly?

Whatever way I opened up for thee I closed against myself. Where shall I go? Thou drivest into exile, but hast given No place of banishment. I will go hence. The king, Creusa's father, bids me go,

And I will do his bidding. Heap on me Most dreadful punishment, it is my due. With cruel penalties let royal wrath Pursue thy mistress, load my hands with chains, And in a dungeon of eternal night



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EVIDENCE : FEU_0001_EN

Title	Medea, 1873
Subtitle	
Author	Anselm Feuerbach
Date / Historical era	Modern
Theme(s)	Betrayal & Infidelity
Character(s)	Medea
Language	EN

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EVIDENCE : MOR_0001_EN

Title	Jason and Medea
Subtitle	1865
Author	Gustave Moreau
Date / Historical era	Modern
Theme(s)	Marriage & Divorce
Character(s)	Medea, Jason
Language	EN

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EVIDENCE : MUC_0001_EN

Title	Medea
Subtitle	Lithography, poster, 1868
Author	Alphonse Mucha
Date / Historical era	Modern
Theme(s)	Motherhood & Filicide
Character(s)	Medea, The children
Language	EN

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