

HECATE: GODDESS OF LIMINALITY AND MAGIC

Siobhan Banwari (University of Kwazulu-Natal)

Hecate is a complex and enigmatic goddess in ancient Greek religion, associated with boundaries, transformation, and magic. Her depiction evolves from a cosmic power in Hesiod's *Theogony* to a chthonic, liminal figure in later texts such as the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*, and Lycophron's *Alexandra*. She is linked to necromancy, nocturnal rituals, and the supernatural. Hecate is also invoked in curse tablets and Greek magical papyri. This article explores how a range of literary texts, supplemented by ritual and magical evidence where appropriate, establishes Hecate as a powerful mediator between realms, shaping ancient Greek understandings of transition, the divine, and magical practice. By tracing how boundary language (spatial, generational, nocturnal, and ritual) structures these texts, the article argues that Hecate's liminality is not a later accretion but a coherent literary logic visible across genres.

Keywords: Hecate; liminality; ancient Greek religion; myth; magic.

Introduction

Hecate, one of the most enigmatic and polyvalent figures of ancient Greek religion, has long challenged conventional classifications in both mythological and cultic frameworks. Her character defies simple definition; modern scholarship repeatedly describes her as intrinsically ambivalent and polymorphous, a figure who straddles conventional boundaries and resists stable classification (see Henrichs 2012:649). This study contends that Hecate's ambiguous and multifaceted character is best understood through the theoretical lens of liminality, a concept that emerged from anthropology and has since been fruitfully applied in literary and religious studies. Liminality, derived from the Latin *limen* (threshold), refers to a transitional state or space between fixed categories such as life and death, mortal and divine, or order and chaos. Van Gennep already at the start of the twentieth century proposed a three-part schema of rites of passage with liminality as the middle phase marked by ambiguity, suspension, and transformation (cf. van Gennep [1909] 2019). Victor Turner then expanded the phase into a symbolic and cultural model of anti-structure, highlighting how liminal zones disrupt normative identities and social roles (Turner [1969] 2019), with Aguirre *et al.* (2000) applying it to textual analysis, with liminal characters and settings as narrative devices signalling change, instability, or transgression. This study applies liminality primarily to

literary representations of Hecate (especially epic and hymnic), while also drawing, where relevant, on cultic and magical traditions (including curse tablets and magical texts), to demonstrate how her power derives from her consistent positioning on or across boundaries. The liminality at stake in this study is not confined to spatial marginality alone. Rather, Hecate embodies multiple forms of liminality: spatial (crossroads, caves, doorways), temporal (nightfall, transitional phases), ritual (moments of invocation and sacrifice), and psychological (states of fear, possession, or transformation).

By tracing these overlapping dimensions, the article argues that Hecate's identity coheres around boundary-management rather than around any single domain such as magic or the underworld. Its contribution is twofold. First, it presents a diachronic literary map of Hecate's boundary work from archaic epic and hymns to Hellenistic poetry and later ritual handbooks, showing how 'threshold' imagery (caves, crossroads, torchlight) steadily intensifies rather than appearing abruptly. Second, it distinguishes levels of evidence – poetic representation, cultic practice, and technical magic – to argue that later magical texts do not 'explain' earlier poetry but amplify and ritualise motifs already legible in archaic and Hellenistic literature. This layered method clarifies why Hecate remains across the tradition simultaneously beneficent, protective, and fearsome.

Building on this methodological framework, the discussion proceeds diachronically from archaic epic to Hellenistic poetry and later ritual texts. While earlier scholars such as Kerényi sought to explain Hecate's position in the Greek pantheon through comparative mythology or Indo-European typologies, they did not always foreground the ritual and narrative implications of her intermediary status.¹ This may be due to persistent models of Greek religion as rational and coherent, which in consequence marginalised deities associated with nocturnal, ecstatic, or chthonic practices. This view was rectified in the mid-twentieth century, when Dodds famously argued that, rather than an aberration, experiences of madness, possession, and divine intervention formed an integral part of Greek religious life. Within this framework, figures such as Hecate – closely associated with nocturnal visions, liminal rites, and states of altered consciousness – become central to understanding the complexity of Greek religious experience (cf. Dodds 1973:77–79).

¹ Kerényi ([1942] 1986:91-92) sets her as a feminine counterpart to Hermes but did not develop the ritual implications of her liminality. More recent scholarship approaches Hecate through cultic, iconographic, and spatial perspectives. See Sarian 1992:985-1018 on her iconographic development; Werth 2006:15-32 on her triple-formed manifestations; Zographou 2010:19-36 on transitional landscapes and crossroads; and Mackin Roberts 2020 on underworld deities and reciprocity. None consistently foregrounds liminality as a unifying interpretive framework.

The current focus is on literary constructions rather than on formal cult practice; in doing so, the article highlights how different modes of divine interaction in Greek religion – cultic, literary, and magical – intersect without collapsing into one another. An illuminating starting point is the extended passage on Hecate in *Theog.* 404–452, which remains foundational for understanding her early role as a goddess of the in-between.²

Hecate in Hesiod's Theogony

In the *Theogony* (c. 700 BCE), Hecate emerges at a narrative and cosmological threshold situated between the fading order of the Titans and the new reign of the Olympians, making her from the outset an archetype of liminal power, as she crosses the boundaries between multiple realms of existence, including earth, sea, and sky (Hes. *Theog.* 412–415). West (1966:276) refers to the passage as a ‘hymn to Hekate’ in the sense that it is an extended encomiastic digression within the *Theogony* devoted to a single deity other than Zeus. She is a goddess who surpasses traditional bounds, supervising transitions and embodying the very essence of liminality, and her dominion positions her as transcending all limitations. As a result, she is able to exercise power in several areas, highlighting her role as a mediator between different realms of reality. As Carboni notes (2015:50), the expansive nature of Hecate’s early dominion over sea, sky, and earth positions her uniquely as a deity inherently suited to crossing and overseeing boundaries. This image is deeply rooted in Hesiod’s *Theogony*, where her depiction emphasises autonomy and multipotency, setting the stage for later associations with marginal and chthonic domains.

In the *Theogony*, Hecate is the last-born among the Titan-generation offspring described before the Olympian ascendancy, thus holding a significant role in the history of the divine lineage. Although the majority of her Titan relatives are consigned to Tartarus following Zeus’ victory, Hecate is singled out and rewarded by Zeus, who preserves and amplifies her honours in the new cosmic order. He grants her authority in matters of leadership, warfare, athletic victory, and the prosperity of fishers and herders (Hes. *Theog.* 429–444). This extensive authority highlights her function as a mediator between the worlds of gods and humans, reinforcing her position as operating at the intersections of nature, politics, and the supernatural.

Hecate’s autonomy is emphasised throughout the account. Although Zeus consolidates his power following the Titanomachy, he explicitly preserves and enlarges Hecate’s honours (Hes. *Theog.* 411–413, 423–452), granting her authority across land and sea (412–415) and allowing her extensive influence (430–444). Her

² Recent scholarship affirms the integrity of the passage; cf. Henrichs 2012:649-651.

participation in domains also governed by Olympian deities does not imply subordination; rather, Hesiod presents her as a figure whose prerogatives remain intact in the new cosmic hierarchy. In this sense she appears ‘polymorphous’ – capable of operating across multiple realms and assuming roles suited to transitional states. This autonomy is crucial to understanding her position within the divine order. Hecate moves fluidly between domains conventionally gendered as masculine or feminine: she is invoked in contexts of warfare and political authority, yet she also embodies protection, nurture, and guidance. Such fluidity illustrates her power to traverse social and cosmic thresholds, confirming her status as a goddess defined by boundary crossing.

In the *Theogony*, the unpredictability of Hecate’s power is one of its distinguishing characteristics. She bestows her favours selectively, offering favour to ‘whomever she wishes’ and removing them just as readily (Hes. *Theog.* 429–443). She is closely associated with the fluidity and uncertainty characteristic of liminal regions. Her dynamic, far-reaching influence makes her a force that regulates the unexpected and transitory parts of both human and divine experience. This contrasts with other deities remaining limited to certain realms.

Although Hecate receives exceptional praise in Hesiod’s *Theogony*, her role in the poem has long been debated. West (1966:277) argues that Hesiod’s emphasis on Hecate may reflect the poet’s personal beliefs or local cult affiliations, which explains her abrupt disappearance from the rest of the poem. Marquardt (1981:247) suggests that the unpredictable nature of Hecate’s favour in the *Theogony* mirrors the poem’s transitional tensions and marks the shift from the Titans to the Olympians, while Johnston (1990:3–10) proposes that his portrayal preserves elements of older, possibly Anatolian religious traditions which were adapted to the Olympian framework.

Hecate’s portrayal in the *Theogony* hints at themes that later Greek literature would develop more fully, especially her association with darkness, thresholds, and ambiguous forms of power. Although Hesiod makes no explicit connection between Hecate and magic, the underworld, or malevolent forces, he emphasises her capacity to operate across different realms of influence. This mobility – social and cosmic – allows her to function as a liminal figure even within the poem’s otherwise orderly divine hierarchy. She remains a broadly benevolent and honoured deity, yet one whose unpredictable bestowal of favour already suggests the complexity that later authors would amplify.

Another indication of Hecate’s liminal status is that she has a heavenly lineage. She is said to be the daughter of the Titans Perses and Asteria, the latter related to the stars. Asteria, also known as the ‘Starry One’, maintains a connection between Hecate and the night sky as well as the phases that occur between day and night:

Φοίβη δ' αὖ Κοίου πολήρατον ἦλθεν ἐς εὐνήν·
 κυσαμένη δὴ ἔπειτα θεὰ θεοῦ ἐν φιλότῃ
 Λητώ κυανόπεπλον ἐγείνατο, μείλιχον αἰεῖ,
 ἦπιον ἀνθρώποισι καὶ ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν,
 μείλιχον ἐξ ἀρχῆς, ἀγανώτατον ἐντὸς Ὀλύμπου.
 γείνατο δ' Ἀστερίην εὐώνυμον, ἣν ποτε Πέρσης
 ἠγάγετ' ἐς μέγα δῶμα φίλην κεκλήσθαι ἄκοιτιν.
 ἣ δ' ὑποκυσαμένη Ἐκάτην τέκε, τὴν περὶ πάντων
 Ζεὺς Κρονίδης τίμησε: πόρην δέ οἱ ἀγλαὰ δῶρα,
 μοῖραν ἔχειν γαίης τε καὶ ἀτρυγέτιοι θαλάσσης.

Phoebe came to Koios' bed of delight, and conceiving then, goddess with god united in intimacy, she bore sable-robed Leto, ever gentle, mild towards men and immortal gods, gentle from the beginning, most kindly in Olympus. She bore also Asteria, whom it is good to speak of; whom Perses later brought home to this great house to be known as his dear wife. There she conceived and bore Hecate, whom Zeus son of Kronos honoured above all others, granting her magnificent privileges: a share both of the earth and of the undraining sea (Hes. *Theog.* 404–412; transl. West 1966: 270-273).

In mediating between light and darkness, Hecate's relationship to the heavens is of particular importance. Her associations with the night sky and the stars suggest a dominion over cosmic boundaries, positioning her as a figure who moves between illuminated and obscured realms – an aspect that would later facilitate her assimilation to lunar imagery in Hellenistic and magical traditions.³

Her association with night by itself reflects the liminal interval between day and darkness. Although torches are not mentioned in the *Theogony*, they become an early and enduring feature of her iconography: in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, she approaches Demeter bearing torches (*Hymn Dem.* 52–61), emphasising her capacity to provide guidance through periods of obscurity and uncertainty, and marking her as a divine mediator at moments when the boundaries of perception are diminished. Both torches and crossroads are central symbols of liminality, and both feature prominently in her later literary and visual representations.⁴ Liminality is characterised by moments of illumination within

³ Zybert (2012:388-389) interprets Hecate's birth from Asteria as anchoring her in celestial and divine transition, and notes that Apollonius later continues this thematic thread in the *Argonautica* through Hecate's ambiguous involvement in magic and metamorphosis.

⁴ While Hecate's iconographic representations are rich and varied, the present discussion prioritises her literary, ritual, and magical attestations to foreground her conceptual role as

darkness and by points of decision at places where different pathways diverge, and Hecate's imagery encapsulates both dimensions.

Unlike other Titans, she retains her privileges under Zeus' rule, suggesting her exceptional status and potential for mediation between divine generations. She is also linked to cosmic functions, fertility, and possibly to nocturnal realms. Scholars have debated the implications of this portrayal. Johnston (1999:189) emphasises that Hecate's ability to oversee transitional phases makes her a vital guide through periods of uncertainty. Her dual positioning, celestial in origin yet active in liminal spaces, renders her particularly suited to managing the boundaries between life and death, mortal and divine. As such, Hecate becomes a goddess of thresholds, capable of navigating the voids that separate and connect different planes of existence. Rodríguez Valdés (2020:166) states that, in this regard, her epithet τριοδίτις ('of the three ways'), 'clearly alludes to the apotropaic function that corresponds to her as a chthonic goddess in charge of the *limina* and the elements of transition between the world of the living and the world of the dead.' This association with crossroads further illustrates her control over liminal spaces, both literal and symbolic, where decisions and transformations occur. The presence of ἑκατάια at crossroads, attested in later sources such as Plutarch (*Mor.* 417), confirms her identification with three-way junctions, as embedded in ritual as well as in literary tradition (Page *et al.* 1927:417).

Hesiod's Hecate is a strong figure of transition and liminality, with the ability to exert influence over both the heavenly and earthly realms, and to traverse borders, whether they be between the earth, the sea, and the sky, or between day and night. The depiction laid the groundwork for her eventual development into the intricate, multidimensional goddess of subsequent literature.

Hecate in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter

The *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, dated to ca. 650–550 BCE, includes a brief yet significant appearance by Hecate. As Carboni (2015:50) observes, her presence at the cave scene anticipates her later literary development into a guide and mediator across boundaries. The *Hymn* offers a markedly different presentation from that of Hesiod. Whereas Hesiod grants Hecate extensive cosmic privileges and a wide-ranging sphere of influence, the *Hymn* presents a more focused, chthonic role connected specifically to Persephone's disappearance and return. Rather than directly adapting the Hesiodic figure, the *Hymn* seems to draw on a parallel or alternative strand of tradition – one in which Hecate's rituals and nocturnal associations were more pronounced. The shift from cosmic benefactor to liminal,

a liminal figure, referring to visual material only where it clarifies or reinforces textual developments.

underworld-oriented figure may reflect the coexistence of multiple early conceptions of the goddess, with the *Hymn* preserving a version that would later prove more influential.

Hecate's few but symbolically dense appearances in the *Hymn to Demeter* mark a decisive transformation from a cosmic deity to a psychopompic guide, operating at the boundaries of life, death, and (feminine) suffering. The reader is first introduced to her character when she is the only one who hears the ruckus of Hades kidnapping Persephone: ἀταλά φρονέουσα, | ἄϊεν ἐξ ἄντρου Ἐκάτη λιπαροκρήδεμνος ('Tender of heart, she heard it from her cave, Hecate of the delicate veil'; *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 24–25; see Foley 1994 :67-69). The cave is commonly interpreted as a doorway between the realm of the living and the world of the dead but also connects her to chthonic worlds. Her appearance, with torches in her hands as she approaches Demeter (52–61), establishes her function as a mediator aiding but not controlling or affecting the events taking place around her. She tells Demeter that she heard Persephone's cries but did not witness the abduction (57). Despite this limited knowledge, she approaches Demeter with reverence and solidarity, addressing her as πότνια Δημήτηρ, ὠρηφόρε, ἀγλαόδωρε ('Divine Demeter, giver of seasons and glorious gifts'; *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 54). Her empathetic stance aligns her with themes of feminine support and maternal care.

This emphasis does not necessarily represent a theological 'shift' from Hesiod's depiction, where Hecate holds authority in realms associated with male activity. Rather, the difference reflects the distinct purposes and narrative frames of the two texts: the *Theogony's* cosmic genealogy and the *Hymn* being centred on the suffering of a mother and daughter, foregrounding female relationships. She is not redefined but is mobilised in a way that suits the hymn's focus on women's experiences and the dynamics of loss, transition, and restoration.

At the end of the hymn, when Hecate emerges after Persephone's reunion with Demeter, the transformation of Hecate to a chthonic deity is most readily apparent. The scene is filled with affection and tenderness (Hecate repeatedly hugs Persephone; 438–440), and from that point on she becomes the primary attendant and companion of Persephone, the queen of the dead. Now, for the first time, she is explicitly linked to the underworld. Narratively focalised as Persephone's torch-bearing guide and caretaker in the underworld, this depiction of her marks an important stage in her increasingly chthonic presentation in literature.

The cave association, on the other hand, reinforces her connection with liminal spaces. In Greek myth, caves frequently function as transitional zones linked to both beginnings and endings – sites where figures undergo symbolic movement between childhood, adulthood, and death. Examples include the cave in which Thetis hides Achilles on Skyros (Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.13.8), the Idaean cave where Zeus is nurtured (Hes. *Theog.* 477–484), and the cave of Polyphemus, which

becomes a deadly threshold for Odysseus' companions (Hom. *Od.* 9.182–566). Gimbutas (1989:151) interprets mythological caves more broadly as symbolic womb-spaces connected to prehistoric mother-goddess traditions, though such readings are better understood as modern theoretical projections than as reflections of archaic Greek belief. Within the context of the *Hymn*, however, Hecate's cave is more plausibly read as signalling her growing association with the underworld. Rather than evoking fertility or origins, it marks her as a figure who stands at the boundary between the living and the dead. Hecate's portrayal in the *Homeric Hymn* indicates a shift in emphasis from her expansive role in the *Theogony*. Although still benevolent and supportive, her association with the cave and her involvement in Persephone's disappearance align her more closely with chthonic spaces and nocturnal boundaries.

It is important to note the differences in how 'transformation' operates in the poem. Persephone's metamorphosis from maiden to Queen of the Underworld is explicitly narrated and forms the core of its plot. Hecate's 'transformation', by contrast, is not a narrative event but an interpretive observation: the *Hymn* preserves an early stage in a broader literary and cultic development. Modern scholarship has noted that such developments also coincide with the increasingly gendered framing of magical power in antiquity, where female figures become primary mediators of dangerous or transgressive ritual knowledge (cf. Rocca and Treu 2022:8). Thus, the poem reflects – not enacts – the gradual evolution of her role within Greek religious imagination. The role of Hecate in the *Homeric Hymn* is highly symbolic, not just for her character, but also for the shifting nature of female goddesses in Greek mythology. This symbolic significance extends beyond the character of Hecate. Her gradual metamorphosis from goddess of the skies, earth, and sea to guide for Persephone in the underworld reflects her transition from a goddess who interacts with both men and women to one who is exclusively concerned with the domain of the female. The later picture of Hecate in ancient Greek religion, in which she is connected with witchcraft, magic, and the darker elements of the divine, is foreshadowed by this progression.

The *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* represents an important moment in the literary history of Hecate, not because the poem itself initiates her transformation into a chthonic goddess, but because it preserves an early stage of a broader evolution. Her new role as Persephone's companion in the underworld reflects, rather than causes, an increasing association between Hecate and the nocturnal or chthonic spheres in early Greek religious thought. Although retaining some of the empathy and supportive authority evident in the *Theogony*, the *Hymn's* Hecate foregrounds female experience, loss, and restoration. This shift should not be understood as a direct consequence of the Demeter–Persephone narrative alone; rather, it illustrates the dynamic relationship between cult practice, evolving ritual

conceptions, and poetic representation. The *Hymn* thus participates in – and helps to crystallise – the emerging literary tendency to portray Hecate as a goddess linked to transitions, darkness, and the supernatural.

Hecate in the Argonautica of Apollonius of Rhodes

Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*, composed in the third century BCE in Hellenistic Alexandria, stands at a considerable chronological and cultural distance from the previously discussed works. Unlike these, which reflect archaic cosmology and cultic memory, Apollonius writes within a literary milieu shaped by scholarly mythography, Alexandrian poetics, and an intensified fascination with magic, marginality, and psychological interiority. His treatment of Hecate, therefore, does not simply continue earlier traditions but reinterprets them within a new framework. In particular, he elaborates on the darker, more explicitly chthonic aspects of the goddess that were only latent or emergent in earlier texts.

Apollonius' terrifying Hecate is not a 'new' goddess: the poet merely intensifies some of her already existing features. By the Classical period, Hecate was well associated with night, crossroads, apotropaic practice, and the dangerous margins of ritual experience. Tragic and later prose texts repeatedly treat her as a power invoked at thresholds, and the language of fear and propitiation was firmly attached to her cult. In the poet's Hellenistic context, Hecate's liminal associations deepen into a dangerous mode. Now fully embedded in chthonic and magical spheres, she functions as a threshold guardian between mortal ritual and divine potency, a position that resonates with Turner's understanding of liminality as a site of dangerous potentiality. Her transformation in the *Argonautica* thus marks another shift: from the multifaceted Hesiodic goddess and the empathetic companion of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, to a far darker, more terrifying deity firmly anchored in the underworld.

Hecate's fearsome transformation

Apollonius' innovation lies less in creating a chthonic Hecate than in staging her epiphany with Alexandrian virtuosity, by incorporating ritual approach, correct procedure, and the spectacle of dread into the narrative depiction. This development is seen clearest in her connection with Medea, the daughter of Aeetes and Hecate's priestess, who dominates Book 3 of the poem. Medea's witchcraft – her command of φάρμακα (potions; *Argon.* 3.1014), her nocturnal rites, and her manipulation of natural forces – derives directly from Hecate's power, making her the narrative conduit through which the goddess's chthonic force becomes visible. As Aguirre *et al.* (2000:3–8) argue, liminal figures frequently function as catalysts for narrative rupture, and Medea's position as a foreign, gendered Other intensifies

this disruptive potential. Her ritual actions are not simply literary devices but enactments of Hecate's threshold authority. Only once this narrative role is established does Apollonius reveal the full extent of Hecate's terrifying power. Book 3, centred on Jason's attempt to win the Golden Fleece, repeatedly emphasises Medea's peril as she invokes the goddess (Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 3.1026–1062; 3.1194–1224). Through Medea's magic, Hecate emerges as a fearsome, nocturnal, and chthonic presence whose aid comes at significant personal risk. The poem thus presents Hecate not merely as a mediator between realms but as a deity who fully embodies the danger, mystery, and transformative power of the liminal.

Apollonius' depiction of Hecate presents not simply a deity who has been transformed, but rather a transformed representation of the goddess within an evolving literary tradition. Although she still retains elements of the authority and autonomy visible in earlier texts, the *Argonautica* introduces a markedly darker and more terrifying version of Hecate, evident both in her appearance and in the ritual procedures through which characters seek to engage with her power. Crucially, the poem foregrounds the act of summoning Hecate – an element largely absent from Hesiod and the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* – suggesting a novel emphasis on cultic ritual, magical invocation, and controlled access to a chthonic deity. This is especially visible in the following passage, where Apollonius employs vivid, fear-laden imagery that stands in stark contrast to the benevolent, compassionate figure of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*:

καί ῥ' ὁ μὲν ἀγκαλέσας πάλιν ἔστιχεν· ἡ δ' αἰούσα
 κευθμῶν ἐξ ὑπάτων δεινὴ θεὸς ἀντεβόλησεν
 ἱροῖς Αἰσονίδαο· πέριξ δέ μιν ἔστεφάνωντο
 σμερδαλέοι δρυῖνοισι μετὰ πτόρθοισι δράκοντες.
 στράπτε δ' ἀπειρέσιον δαΐδων σέλας· ἀμφὶ δὲ τήγγε
 ὄξειή ὑλακῆ χθόνιοι κύνες ἐφθέγγοντο.
 πίσεια δ' ἔτρεμε πάντα κατὰ στίβον· αἱ δ' ὀλόλυξαν
 νύμφαι ἐλειονόμοι ποταμηίδες, αἱ περὶ κείνην
 Φάσιδος εἰαμενὴν Ἀμαραντίου εἰλίσσονται.

And when he had called on her, he drew back; and she heard him, the dread goddess, from the uttermost depths, and came to the sacrifice of Aeson's son; and round her horrible serpents twined themselves among the oak boughs; and there was a gleam of countless torches; and sharply howled around her the hounds of hell. All the meadows trembled at her step; and the nymphs that haunt the marsh and the river shrieked, all who dance round that mead of Amarantian Phasis (Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 3.1211–1220; transl. Green 1997).

It is a strong indication of Hecate's chthonic connection that she rises from the depths of the ground. In front of her the ground quakes, and her appearance is linked with serpents – creatures frequently associated with chthonic power, regeneration, and the underworld in Greek mythic symbolism (Floky 2018:135–156). The portrayal of Hecate in Hesiod's *Theogony*, in which she was worshipped as a goddess of earth, sea, and sky, stands in sharp contrast to this picture. Hecate is shown here as a figure who should be feared rather than revered, since she is entirely associated with the underworld.

Hecate's growing association with death and the threshold between the mortal world and the underworld is further reinforced through the imagery of serpents and hounds – animals frequently linked with chthonic spaces and the guardianship of liminal boundaries. In Apollonius' *Argonautica*, the goddess is accompanied by 'chthonic hounds' (χθόνιοι κύες) whose barking heralds her epiphany as she rises from below.⁵ Such animal imagery reflects the multicultural environment of Ptolemaic Egypt in which Greek, Egyptian, and Near Eastern conceptions of the underworld intermingled, as well as broader developments in Hellenistic representations of Hades and its guardians (Johnston 1990). By the time of Apollonius, Hecate's dogs function as explicit markers of her chthonic authority, signalling a darker, more perilous dimension of her liminal power than earlier texts had portrayed.

Hecate and Medea: The liminal goddess and the foreign sorceress

There is a link between Hecate's association with Medea, a foreign sorceress whose abilities symbolise the hazardous and liminal elements of magic, and her own transition into a figure with a darker, more chthonic aspect. Medea in the Greek literary imagination is a foreign and potentially destabilising figure due to the fact that she is a barbarian woman from Colchis, and her relationship with Hecate only serves to further increase her marginalisation. Medea's mastery of witchcraft – including her capacity to render Jason immune to fire and to manipulate natural forces (Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 3.1026–1062; 3.528–533) – aligns her with a goddess who is both powerful and deadly.

Their close association invites comparison. Medea's character development within the *Argonautica* itself is limited to her change from a sheltered, anxious maiden into a resourceful agent whose magical expertise enables Jason's success. Yet her broader mythic reception – most powerfully shaped by Euripides' *Medea*

⁵ Later Roman prose still preserves the convergence of Hecatean witchcraft, nocturnal ritual, and chthonic imagery: Apuleius (*Metam.* 1.10) explicitly invokes Hecate in a magical context, demonstrating the persistence of her association with nocturnal ritual and chthonic power in the Roman imperial imagination; cf. Kenney 2004:14–15.

(cf. Eur. *Med.* 1019–1080; 1236–1292) – casts her as an increasingly transgressive figure capable of infanticide, betrayal, and supernatural vengeance (cf. Kovacs 1994:90–93). Later Roman tradition continues this development: in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Medea explicitly invokes triple-formed Hecate as the source of her magical authority (Ov. *Met.* 7.94–99, 7.179–219). Hecate’s own evolution is again not a narrative arc within Apollonius’ poem but rather reflects a significant moment in her diachronic development across Greek literary and ritual traditions (cf. Raeburn 2004:191–195). When viewed together, Medea and Hecate form a mirrored pair of liminal figures, each occupying the edges of civic, social, and divine order, and each embodying the mixture of awe and terror attached to women who wield extraordinary power. Their association in the *Argonautica* thus draws on both Apollonius’ literary innovation and the wider mythopoetic evolution of these two figures.

Hecate’s liminal authority also intersects with altered mental states. In both poetic and magical traditions, encounters with chthonic deities frequently produce fear, trembling, or states of divine disturbance. Medea’s psychological agitation in Apollonius – her sleeplessness, anxiety, and obsessive fixation – mirrors the destabilising force associated with liminal ritual experience. In this sense, Hecate’s presence is not merely spatially liminal but psychologically disruptive. Such states represent transitional moments in identity and perception, further reinforcing Hecate’s function as presiding over thresholds of consciousness as well as of space.

In the *Argonautica*, Hecate is no longer merely a mediator between realms but a fully realised embodiment of liminal danger. Apollonius consolidates earlier strands of her character – cosmic authority, nocturnal presence, and ritual mediation – into a distinctly chthonic figure whose epiphany signals instability and risk. Her power is neither uniformly benevolent nor wholly destructive; it operates conditionally, activated through correct ritual knowledge and fraught with peril for those who invoke it. Through her association with Medea, Hecate has become entwined with narratives of foreignness, female agency, and disruptive magic, marking a decisive stage in her literary transformation from transitional goddess to mistress of dangerous thresholds.

The *Argonautica* presents Hecate as a deity who must be approached with reverent caution. Her rites demand precision, her power is immense, and her epiphany is terrifying. Although she remains a goddess of thresholds, the poem emphasises that the thresholds she governs now tend to open onto darkness, danger, and the world of the dead. Her liminal status no longer implies a neutral space between realms, but rather a position at the very edge of the human world, facing outward towards the uncanny. In this guise, she cannot easily be contained within the ordered hierarchy of the Olympian pantheon. Instead, she occupies the margins

of the cosmos, a goddess simultaneously sought after and feared by those bold enough to invoke her aid.

Three-formed Hecate in Lycophron's Alexandra

Lycophron's *Alexandra*, a notoriously obscure Hellenistic poem probably written at the start of the second century BCE, provides a strikingly different yet complementary perspective on Hecate's liminal character. Written within the intellectually dense and allusive environment of Ptolemaic Alexandria, the *Alexandra* frequently reworks mythological material in deliberately enigmatic ways, and its portrayal of Hecate reflects this stylistic complexity. Here, Hecate appears as Βριμῷ Τρίμορφος ('the terrifying three-formed'), a title that provides valuable insight into her increasingly multifaceted and chthonic identity. Unlike Apollonius, whose depiction focuses on ritual performance and epiphany, the *Alexandra* emphasises Hecate's fearful, shape-shifting presence and her capacity to operate simultaneously across different realms. The epithet thus encapsulates the goddess's expanded Hellenistic role: a powerful, polymorphic deity whose authority extends across boundaries of life and death, darkness and light, and mortal and divine spheres.

ὦ μητηρ, ὦ δύσμητηρ, οὐδὲ σὸν κλέος
 ἄπυστον ἔσται, Περσέως δὲ παρθένος
 Βριμῷ Τρίμορφος θήσεται σ' ἐπωπίδα
 κλαγγαῖσι ταρμύσσουσαν ἐννύχοις βροτούς,
 ὅσοι μεδούσης Στρυμόνος Ζηρυνθίας
 δείκηλα μὴ σέβουσι λαμπαδουχίαις,
 θύσθλοις Φεραίαν ἐξακεύμενοι θεάν.
 ψευδήριον δὲ νησιωτικὸς στόνυξ
 Πάχυνος ἔξει σεμνὸν ἐξ ὄνειράτων
 ταῖς δεσποτείαις ὠλέναις ὠγκωμένον
 ρείθρων Ἐλώρου πρόσθεν ἐκτερισμένης
 ὃς δὴ παρ' ἀκταῖς τλήμονος ῥανεῖ χοάς,
 τριαύχενος μήνιμα δειμαίνων θεᾶς,
 λευστήρα πρῶτον οὔνεκεν ῥίψας πέτρον
 Ἄϊδη κελαινῶν θυμάτων ἀπάρξεται.

O mother, wretched mother! Your fame, too
 will not be unknown. The daughter of Perses,
 Brimo, the Three-formed, will make you her follower,
 so that you will terrify mortals with your nightly howls,

all those who do not pay torch-bearing reverence to the statues
of the queen of Strymon, the Zerynthian,
placating the Pheraian goddess with sacrifices.
Pachynos, the peninsular promontory,
will hold your majestic cenotaph,
built by your master's hands as a result of dreams,
after paying funerary rites to you by the streams of Heloros.
He will sprinkle libations by its banks to you, the miserable one;
he will be fearful of the anger of the three-headed goddess.
Because he threw the first stone at you,
he will begin the black sacrifice to Hades.
(Lycoph. *Alex.* 1174–1188; transl. Hornblower 2015).

The term τριμορφος, rendered 'three-formed', is a direct reference to the tripartite character of Hecate. A significant emblem of her all-encompassing and diverse features, which include her sovereignty over the sky, earth, and the underworld, this triplicity represents her very essence. It is important to note that each facet of Hecate correlates to a distinct realm and phase, which further emphasises her function as a goddess who guides and monitors a variety of transitory situations. Johnston (1991:218) proposes that this tripartite form emphasises Hecate's capacity to work concurrently across various realms, giving a complete protection and direction unrivalled among deities. The literary emphasis is reinforced by the visual record: as Sarian's *LIMC* survey (1992:985-1018) demonstrates, triple-bodied and triple-headed representations of Hecate become increasingly standard in Classical and Hellenistic iconography, visually encoding her unique capabilities. This complex image is not just a reflection of her strength but also reflects her ability to mediate and control transitions between cosmic realms.

The epithet Βριμώ conveys the terrifying and awe-inspiring dimension of Hecate, a quality linked to her function as a guardian and enforcer of boundaries. In Greek religious thought, frightening imagery frequently served an apotropaic purpose: protection was achieved not through gentleness but through the deliberate projection of terror capable of repelling hostile forces (Burkert 1985:171-173). Just as gorgoneia, grotesque masks, and guardian figures operated by instilling fear in those who approached sacred or vulnerable spaces, so too does Hecate's fearful aspect mark her as a deity whose power safeguards thresholds by making them dangerous to transgress. Within her tripartite form, this menacing dimension becomes especially significant, for it suggests that each manifestation of the goddess contains both protective and potentially punitive forces. This duality lies at the heart of her liminal identity. It is therefore unsurprising that Hecate is closely

associated with crossroads – sites that epitomise uncertainty, decision, and exposure – where her capacity to defend, punish, or guide is rendered most visible.

Hecate's role as the goddess of crossroads reflects her profound connection with liminal spaces and transitional states. In ancient Greek thought, crossroads were perceived as dangerous, liminal zones signifying uncertainty and risk. Hecate's association with these locations, expressed by means of statues (ἑκατάια) set up at such junctions, positioned her as both a guardian and the embodiment of the threats that travellers faced at these intersections. As noted by Serafini (2015:111–131), 'Hecate is not just a protector from spirits but is herself a danger from which one must protect oneself'. Rituals such as the δεῖπνα Ἐκάτης, offerings left at crossroads, reflect this duality of Hecate's nature, in that she was both invoked for protection and appeased to avert her wrath. The offerings reinforced Hecate's dominion over transitions. Her representation at these junctions underscores her function as a mediator of choices, guiding individuals through the physical and metaphorical crossroads in life. As Serafini (2015:111–131) further notes, 'Hecate represents in herself... a threat to be guarded against with prophylactic rituals, and at the same time she is also a protector', a duality encapsulating her complex and ambivalent nature as both a guide and a force of potential peril.

Lycophron describes Hecate's participation in night-time rites, particularly torchlight processions and sacrifices (Lycoph. *Alex.* 1174–1188). The processions illuminated by torches reflect the guidance and illumination Hecate provides at the threshold between light and darkness. Through her role in these rites, Hecate assures safe passage and protection during periods of change, whether these occur in the natural world or in human experience. Such rituals therefore mark not only nocturnal worship but the significance of the boundary itself.

Lycophron makes clear that those who fail to honour Hecate or perform the required sacrifices risk her punishment (Lycoph. *Alex.* 1174–1188), a warning that underscores her function as an enforcer of sacred rites and guardian of boundaries. This enforcing role is essential to understanding her liminality, because it demonstrates her control over the thresholds and transitions she governs. Such attributes are crucial: to preserve the equilibrium and order that exist between different realms, Hecate ensures that rituals are carried out correctly. This prevents disorder and guarantees that transitions occur without mishap or disruption.

The image of Hecate bearing torches is rich in symbolic meaning. Torches, as sources of light, are traditionally associated with guidance and protection (see Burkert 1985:190). During night, which often represents uncertainty, fear, and the unknown, a torch becomes an essential tool for navigating the unknown. Thus, describing Hecate as torch-bearing emphasises her role as a divine guide, capable of providing clarity and direction during times of darkness and uncertainty. The

significance of light and darkness in the imagery of deities linked with transitions and limits has been acknowledged by scholars for a long time.⁶ It has been observed that Hecate's function as a torch-bearer places her in the same category as other deities that perform the role of psychopomps, directing souls through the transitional space between life and death. Not only do the torches represent lighting in the literal sense, but they also represent the enlightenment and wisdom that are necessary to successfully traverse these transformations.

In addition, torches in ancient Greek ritual frequently signal divine presence and the assurance of safe passage through uncertain spaces, as seen in Demeter's torch-lit search for Persephone and in the nocturnal processions of the Eleusinian Mysteries (Hom. *Hymn Dem.* 47–61). In this context, the torches carried by Hecate may be understood as symbols of both revelation and protection. They mark her as a deity who renders dangerous thresholds navigable, safeguarding those who invoke her from the perils that dwell in darkness.

It is possible to draw parallels between the position of Hecate as a torch-bearing guide and related roles played by characters in other mythical traditions. For example, the Roman goddess Diana, sometimes found to be synonymous with the Greek goddess Artemis, who in turn is often associated with Hecate, is commonly represented holding torches. Diana's torches symbolise her position as a guardian of women and children as well as a guide through the wilderness.

Whether understood literally or symbolically, Hecate's depiction as torch-bearing underscores her role as a guide through darkness. Her epithet φωσφόρος ('bringer of light') reinforces this aspect of her identity, linking illumination with divine agency at moments of uncertainty. This symbolism is central to understanding her function in Greek mythology as a mediator of change and protector against the unknown. Through her torches, Hecate renders traversable the liminal passages between life and death and between visible and unseen realms. Her association with Nyx situates her firmly within nocturnal and transitional spaces, a connection further emphasised in the *Orphic Hymn to Hecate*, where she is invoked as both chthonic and cosmic in scope (Orph. *Hymn.* 1; see Athanassakis and Wolkow 2013:3-5). Yet it is the presence of her torches – light introduced into darkness – that most clearly defines her boundary work. Rather than embodying light or darkness exclusively, Hecate operates at the point of their convergence, guiding movement across the threshold between opposites.

⁶ See Burkert 1985:190; Johnston 1990:19-23; Aguirre *et al.* 2000:2-3 for discussions of light symbolism, liminality, and ritual transition.

Hecate in the Greek Magical Papyri (PMG)

The *Greek Magical Papyri (PGM)*, a corpus of Greco-Egyptian magical texts dating from the Hellenistic and Roman periods, provides crucial insights into Hecate's enduring role as a liminal goddess deeply embedded in magical traditions (Betz 1985:xlili-xlv). Among the most significant texts invoking her are *PGM IV.1390–1495* and *PGM IV.2785–2890*, which are commonly known as the *Prayer to Selene*. This invocation, however, reveals a syncretic blending of Hecate and Selene, reflecting her association with the moon and nocturnal magic, while simultaneously reinforcing her chthonic and underworld aspects.⁷ Such amalgamation is characteristic of the fluid and composite divine identities in the magical papyri, where lunar, chthonic, and erotic deities often converge. As Pachoumi (2017:136) states: '...the assimilation between Selene, Hecate and Artemis, which initially occurs within the Greek religious system and literature is, therefore, reflected more systematically in the *Greek Magical Papyri*'. In the *PGM*, Hecate is invoked as a goddess of crossroads, the dead, and spectral forces, often under epithets such as τριμορφος ('triple-formed') and δαδούχος ('torch-bearing') (*PGM IV. 2708–2784*). These descriptors align with her liminal function, situating her at the intersection of life and death, celestial and infernal realms, and mortal and divine spheres.

The invocation in *PGM IV.1390–1495* emphasises Hecate's power over ghosts, daemons, and the restless dead, revealing a new role: that of a necromantic deity. This role reflects and builds upon Orphic portrayals of Hecate as a chthonic guardian and key-bearing mistress of the underworld (Orph. *Hymn.* 1.3–5). While the literary texts discussed earlier gesture toward her nocturnal and chthonic aspects, they do not explicitly foreground necromancy; the *PGM* therefore represents both a development and an amplification of tendencies present, though only faintly, in earlier sources. Practitioners sought her aid in divination, κατάδεσμοι (curse tablets), and protective spells, frequently invoking her at night and at crossroads – privileged liminal spaces within Greek ritual thought (Johnston 1990:19–23; Ogden 2001:22–28). As Ogden (2001:25–26) has shown in his survey of necromantic traditions, invocations of chthonic deities such as Hecate frequently frame the underworld not as a distant realm but as ritually accessible through controlled liminal procedures. The recurring apotropaic elements – torchlight and animal sacrifice, particularly black dogs and sheep – echo earlier cult traditions in which Hecate received nocturnal offerings at *trivia*, three-way intersections associated with transitional danger (Burkert 1985:171–173; Johnston 1990:19–23).

⁷ Pachoumi (2017:136) notes the frequent assimilation of Selene, Hecate, and Artemis in Greek religion and in literature. Selene is an Indo-European nature deity, Artemis a goddess from Asia Minor, and Hecate an Anatolian from Caria.

Rather than signalling simple continuity or rupture, the magical texts reveal how Hecate's liminal authority was expanded and ritualised in later contexts.

Because the Greek magical papyri are mainly dated to the Roman imperial period (second to fourth century CE), although often preserving earlier material, it is more accurate to view this development not as strictly Hellenistic but as part of a long process in which Hecate's chthonic associations became increasingly central in personal, ritual, and esoteric practices. The texts contained in the *PGM* thereby consolidate her as a deity uniquely situated between worlds, whose liminality afforded her immense power in guiding, guarding, and governing transitions across cosmic, spiritual, and human realms.

Conclusion

This study has examined the figure of Hecate through literary sources, supported by evidence from cultic and magical contexts, to demonstrate that her core identity is most coherently understood by means of the notion of liminality. Drawing on the anthropological insights of Van Gennep, Turner, and Aguirre, Quance and Sutton, we have seen that Hecate consistently operates at the boundaries between mortal and divine, life and death, light and darkness. Comparison with Hermes, who likewise functions as a psychopomp, boundary marker, and mediator between worlds, underscores the structural importance of thresholds within Greek religious thought. Although both deities are associated with crossroads, transition, and the safe passage of souls, Hermes embodies mobility, negotiation, and communicative fluidity, whereas Hecate is marked by nocturnal intensity, apotropaic force, and ritualised danger. The multiple deities associated with the maintenance of boundaries – cosmic, civic, and existential – show the importance of liminality to ancient Greek cultic practices and the conceptualisation of order itself. Hecate's epithets, cult titles, and mythic functions, ranging from Hesiod and the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* to Apollonius, Lycophron, and the Greek magical texts, thus reveal not a peripheral or aberrant goddess, but one whose identity crystallises the anxieties and necessities of transition embedded in the Greek religious imagination. Liminality emerges as a valuable theoretical logic to connect Hecate's apparently shifting roles. Differences between Hesiod, the *Hymn*, and Hellenistic poetry reflect genre and narrative agendas, not a collapse of coherence.

By applying the notion of liminality to Hecate, this article challenges interpretations that cast her as a foreign chthonic import or as a mystical feminine counterpart of Hermes. Instead, her intermediary status expresses a central concern of Greek religiosity with transition, danger, and transformation. Literary depictions reflect ritual structures that positioned her at thresholds, in nocturnal offerings, and in apotropaic contexts; even her associations with madness fit coherently into this

framework, as episodes of divine disturbance or boundary crossing highlight psychological and social states of transition. Liminal forces were recognised as necessary to maintaining cosmic and social equilibrium.

The reassessment of the Hesiodic ‘hymn to Hecate’, once dismissed as an interpolation, emphasises her early and elevated position in the pantheon and shows that her ambivalence and polymorphism were intrinsic rather than later accretions. Hesiod presents her as a cosmic power with influence over land, sea, and sky, an early signal of her ability to traverse and regulate boundaries. This foundational depiction resonates through the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, where she guides Persephone through the space of death and return, and reaches its most potent form in the *Argonautica* and the magical papyri, where she emerges as a terrifying figure of necromancy, witchcraft, and transformation.

Ultimately, Hecate’s evolution from luminous Titan to chthonic mediator to triple-formed patron of magic reflects not a contradiction, but continuity. Her cult, imagery, and textual appearances reveal an enduring concern in Greek religion with navigating uncertainty and invoking divine aid at moments of change and their perceived danger. As this study has shown, Hecate is central to the Greek sacred imagination: a goddess of crossroads, of guidance, and of the untamed powers that dwell between. She remains, in Turner’s terms, the guardian of the ‘betwixt and between,’ a force who renders the invisible visible and the unknown knowable – if only briefly, and always at a cost.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aguirre, M., Quance, R. and Sutton, P. (eds.) 2000. *Margins and thresholds: An enquiry into the concept of liminality in text studies*. Madrid: The Gateway Press.
- Athanassakis, A.N. and Wolkow, B.M. (eds.) 2013. *The Orphic hymns*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Betz, H.D. (transl.) 1996. *The Greek Magical Papyri in translation, including the demotic spells*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Burkert, W. (transl. J. Raffan) 1985. *Greek religion: Archaic and Classical*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Carboni, R. 2015. *Dea in limine: Culto, immagine e sincretismi di Ecate nel mondo greco e microasiatico*. Rahden, Westfalia: Marie Leidorf.
- Dodds, E.R. 1973. *The Greeks and the irrational*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Floky, A.R.J. 2018. *The significance of chthonic motifs in ancient Greek and Roman mythical narratives*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Western Australia.

- Foley, H.P. (ed.) 1994. *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter: Translation, commentary, and interpretive essays*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gimbutas, M. 1989. *The language of the goddess*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Green, P. 1997. *The Argonautika of Apollonios Rhodios*. Berkeley: The University of California Press.
- Henrichs, A. 2012. Hecate. In Hornblower, S., Spawforth, A. and Eidinow, E. (eds.), *The Oxford Classical dictionary*, 649–651. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hornblower, S. (ed.) 2015. *Lykophron: Alexandra. Greek text, translation, commentary, and introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Johnston, S.I. 1990. *Hekate Soteira: A study of Hekate's roles in the Chaldean Oracles and related literature*. Atlanta: Scholars Press.
- Johnston, S.I. 1991. Crossroads. *ZPE* 88:217–224.
- Johnston, S.I. 1999. *Restless dead: Encounters between the living and the dead in ancient Greece*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kenney, E.J. (ed.) [1998] 2004. *Apuleius: The Golden Ass or Metamorphoses*. London: Penguin Books.
- Kerényi, K. (transl. Stein, M.) 1986. *Hermes, guide of souls: The mythologem of the masculine source of life*. Dallas: Spring Publications.
- Kovacs, D. (ed.) 1994. *Euripides Medea*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Mackin Roberts, E. 2020. *Underworld gods in ancient Greek religion: Death and reciprocity*. London: Routledge.
- Marquardt, P.A. 1981. A portrait of Hecate. *AJPh* 102(3):243–260.
- Ogden, D. 2001. *Greek and Roman necromancy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Pachoumi, E. 2017. *The concepts of the divine in the Greek Magical Papyri*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Page, T.E., Capps, E. and Rouse, W.H.D. (eds.) 1927. *Plutarch's Moralia*. Vol. 4. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Raeburn, D. (transl.) *Ovid Metamorphoses*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics.
- Rocca, C. and Treu, G. (eds.) 2022. *Witch, sorceress, enchantress: Magic and women from the ancient world to the present*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Rodríguez Valdés, P. 2020. Revisión de la figura de la diosa Hécate a través de sus asimilaciones. *Myrtia* 35:161–175.
- Sarian, H. 1992. Hecate. *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae Classicae*, VI.1, 985–1018; VI.2, 654–673 (plates).
- Serafini, N. 2015. La dea Ecate e i luoghi di passaggio. *Kernos* 28:111–131.
- Turner, V.W. 2019. *The ritual process: Structure and anti-structure*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

- Van Gennepe, A. (transl. Vizedom, M.B. and Caffee, G.L.) [1960] 2019. *The rites of passage*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Werth, N. 2006. *Hekate: Untersuchungen zur dreigestaltigen Göttin*. Hamburg: Dr. Kovač.
- West, M.L. (ed.) 1966. *Hesiod Theogony*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zographou, A. 2010. *Chemins d'Hécate: Portes, routes, carrefours et autres figures de l'entre-deux*. Liège: Presses Universitaires de Liège.
- Zybert, E. 2012. Two marginal goddesses: Rhea and Hekate in Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*. In Harder, M.A., Regtuit, R.F. and Wakker, G.C. (eds.), *Gods and religion in Hellenistic poetry*, 373–392. Leuven: Peeters.