

Shedding Light on Valerius Flaccus's Complex Temple Complex

The Temple of the Sun in Book 5 of Valerius Flaccus's *Argonautica* is a well-recognized nexus of intertextual allusion (e.g., Wedeniwski, Carderi, Keith). Belonging to the *topos* of epic architectural *ekphrasis*, it is most closely indebted to the Palace of Alkinoos in *Odyssey* 7 and the Palace of the Sun in *Metamorphoses* 2, while standing in lieu of the Palace of Aietes in Apollonios's *Argonautika*. In this paper, I explore several unexplored aspects of the temple: the curious verbal parallel between its gleam and the beauty of Hylas just before his abduction (*tale iubar*, 3.560/5.410); the temple's connections with a brief mention of Aeetes' palace in an earlier dream sequence (5.241–3); and a narrow slice of the resulting web of non-architectural intertexts (ranging from the *Iliad* to the *Heroides*). From these, I propose several new readings of both temple and dream-palace and their significance for the epic, and I reveal an unrecognized interplay between the *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses*.

The temple, the dream-palace, and Hylas triangulate. Aeetes, warned in his dream that loss of the Golden Fleece will mean the loss of his kingdom, sees a *fulgor* shine from the Fleece that reflects off the *summi ... laquearia tecti* (5.243) of his palace; this quotes a simile of light dancing off water from the *Aeneid* (8.22–5), which in turn is combinatorially adapted from a simile in Apollonios's *Argonautika* (3.756–9) and from Alkinoos's palace in the *Odyssey* (one ancestor of Valerius's temple). Various other intertexts also come into play; I demonstrate that among them is an echo of Lucretius's description of a luxurious palace that is unnecessary for pleasure (*DRN* 2.24–8), a description well-recognized as likewise alluding to Alkinoos's palace (Bailey, Gale, Fowler). In addition, Valerius has employed the reflected-light simile itself elsewhere in his epic: specifically, of the *iubar* radiating from Hylas, which matches the *iubar* radiating from the Temple of the Sun.

Iubar originally means either 'dawn-star' or 'first ray of sunlight' (cf. Varr. *DLL* 6.6); beyond that, its allowable looseness varies by author, and Valerius uses it very strictly in just these two senses, with these two occurrences the seeming exceptions. However, my analysis of further intertexts standing behind the description of Hylas reveals that his *iubar* is meant to allude specifically to the dawn-star and its erotic (but dangerous) evening equivalent, Hesperus (cf. Nyberg, Lovatt); by contrast, the *iubar* of the Temple of the Sun alludes, appropriately, to the sun's first ray. I show that one specific intertext for the Sun's temple is the Capitoline Temple of Jupiter at the beginning of Ovid's *Fasti*, which serves as a good model for the modern gilded opulence of temples subsequently lambasted by Janus (Green)—again, we catch a Lucretian echo. It also finds a parallel in Ovid's description of the Palace of the Sun in the *Metamorphoses*, which Seneca quotes as part of a long moralizing screed against the idea that wealth and power can bring happiness (*Ep.* 115).

Among the other readings that devolve from this study, I demonstrate that we find a clear measure of Aeetes' character—not only is he terrified of losing his wealth and power, but he makes a prayer to the Sun upon waking from his dream that flies directly in the face of Lucretius's teachings, again from the opening of *DRN* 2, that the sun and the light of day *cannot* dispel terror. Given the repeated intertextual emphasis on the false pleasures offered by power and riches and on the futility of trying to gain happiness and dispel anxieties by cultivating wealth—in sum, *precisely* what Aeetes is troubled by—I propose, aided by the adjective *falso* describing the dream-Golden Fleece (5.242), that his attitude towards the Fleece may give us insight into the epic's moral underpinnings.

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