DISTANCE LEARNING: COMPETING PHILOSOPHIES AT SEA IN BOOK 2 OF VALERIUS FLACCUS' *ARGONAUTICA*

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At the beginning of Book 2 of Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*, the poet returns our attention to the recently launched Argonauts with an almost cinematic cross-cut.[1] We had last seen them 150 lines prior: there, in the wake of a cosmic storm of epic proportions,[2] Jason was struck by the fearful awareness that he had left his family to the tender mercies of his uncle Pelias, having further aggravated the possibility of their suffering by manipulating his young cousin Acastus into joining the Argonauts' venture (Val. Fl. 1.693–699). As this realization dawned on him, the narrative shifted to Pelias' furious reaction upon realizing that Acastus was gone, and Jason's nascent concerns—already acknowledged by the poet as *nec vana* ("not pointless," 1.699)—were fully justified as, over the final hundred lines of Book 1, a combination of suicide and soldiers caused the demise of his father, mother, and baby brother.

Book 2's immediate return to the Argonautic voyage and to the moment of our earlier departure from the Argonautic narrative (*interea*, Val. Fl. 2.1)[3] thus marks an end to this extended digression, and it simultaneously concludes a major divagation from Apollonius Rhodius' version, where there was no storm, no spotlight on Pelias, and no deaths of Jason's kin.[4] This shift is paralleled on a narratological level, where a divine agent interposes itself to restore the inherited narrative, as Juno brings a sudden end to Jason's fears and ensures that he will not deviate from the approved epic agenda (2.1–5).[5] The subsequent return to the apparent dominance of the Apollonian source text is underscored by Valerius' close and careful adherence to Apollonius' epic in his construction of the ensuing short *periplous*.

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[1] See Zissos 2008: xxxii–xxxiii and 369, *ad* 1.700–708 on the tripartite temporal congruity of the events at sea and the events back at Iolcus (specifically Val. Fl. 1.484–497, 1.700–708, and 2.6–9).

[2] On the storm's debt to the *Aeneid*, see Shelton 1974; Burck 1978: 9–14; see also Zissos 2006.

[3] This is the Virgilian use of *interea* ("meanwhile") to indicate a "'flash-back' to . . . another theatre of action," identified by Reinmuth (1933: 333); see above, n. 1. Cf. Poortvliet 1991: 25.

[4] Valerius had rendered Ap. Rhod. 1.544–545 (στράπτε δ' ὑπ' ἠελίῳ φλογὶ εἴκελα νηὸς ἰούσης / τεύχεα, "and their weaponry flashed under the sun like flame as the ship went along") extremely faithfully (*claraque vela oculis percussaque sole secuntur / scuta virum*, "they follow with their eyes the bright sails and the shields of the men, struck by the sun," Val. Fl. 1.495–496) prior to shifting away, thus emphasizing the break.

[5] For the text of these lines, see below, 244.

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In Valerius' account, the Argonauts' earliest itinerary (Val. Fl. 2.6–16) is, in fact, an almost exact abbreviated recollection of the equivalent itinerary in Apollonius' epic (Ap. Rhod. 1.566–598), where the named landmarks and ports of call, in order, were the Tisaean headland (1.568), Pelion's crags (1.581–582), the Sepian headland (1.582), Skiathos (1.583), Peiresiai (1.583–584), Magnesia and the tomb of Dolops (1.584–591), Meliboea (1.592–593), Homole (1.594–595), the river Amyros (1.596), Eurymenai (1.597), and Ossa and Olympos (1.597–598). Valerius' Argonauts encounter nearly all of the same landmarks, in nearly the same order (Val. Fl. 2.6–16):[6]

iamque fretis summas aequatum Pelion ornos
templaque Tisaeae mergunt obliqua Dianae,
iam Sciathos subsedit aquis, iam longa recessit
Sepias, attollit tondentes pabula Magnes
campus equos. vidisse putant Dolopeia busta
intrantemque Amyron curvas quaesita per oras
aequora, flumineo cuius redeuntia vento
vela legunt: remis insurgitur; inde salutant
Eurymenas. recipit velumque fretumque reversus
auster et in nubem Minyis repetentibus altum
Ossa redit.

And now the ashes atop Pelion are level with the straits, and the temple precinct of Tisaean Diana sinks at the edge of their vision; now Sciathos subsides below the waters, now Sepias has faded into the distance. The Magnesian plain raises before them its horses, cropping the pastures; they think they see the Dolopeian tomb and the Amyros, as it enters the waters sought through its curving banks; they take in their sails as they're blown back by its riverine breeze. They haul on their oars, then they greet Eurymenae. A new-risen South Wind takes hold of both their sail and the strait, and as the Minyae seek the deep once more, Ossa vanishes back into a cloud.

The focus of scholarship, in confronting this early stage of the Argonauts' journey, has largely been on Valerius' simultaneous adherence to and compression of the itinerary of Apollonius' *periplous*, along with his greatly expanded description of the battlefield from the Gigantomachy at Pallene in the following lines (Val. Fl. 2.16–33; cf. Ap. Rhod. 1.598–600). The general conclusion of such considerations (all of them brief) has been that Valerius' adherence acknowledges his literary debt, his compression omits purportedly irrelevant topics, such as aetiology,[7] and his expansion reveals where his true interests lie,

[6] For analysis of the similarities and differences on a structural level, see Shreeves 1978: 8–30; on a chronological problem introduced by Valerius' approach, see Peters 1890: 18–19. All translations are my own; for the text of Valerius, I use Liberman 1997–2002, except as noted.

[7] For Valerius' supposed indifference to aetiology, see, for example, Adamietz 1976: 30; Poortvliet 1991: 31; Zissos 2008: xlii–xliii. However, cf. Krasne 2014b.

namely the replacement of the old world order with the new Jovian regime.[8] I have previously argued, however, that Valerius' markedly explicit avoidance of the Argonauts' two-day stop at Dolops' tomb (Ap. Rhod. 1.585–591; cf. Val. Fl. 2.10–13), one of the starkest divagations from the Apollonian blueprint, is a programmatic gesture of poetic independence, rather than being indicative of a wholesale avoidance of aetiology,[9] and that the same tendency can be found elsewhere in his work.

In this article, I first explore the possibility of a somewhat similar gesture in the immediately preceding lines (Val. Fl. 2.9–10) in the light of intertexts with Lucretius and Virgil, before pursuing some implications for the broader context of the passage and for our reading of the specific events that follow. As will become clear, both these lines and the next sixty, prior to Lemnos appearing on the horizon, are richly limned with a dense network of didactic and philosophical intertexts that guide our early reception of the Argonauts' interactions with the world that surrounds them and shape our expectations of what lies ahead.[10]

FROM A DISTANCE

As soon as the immediate environs of Iolcus are out of sight, the Argonauts round the eastern peninsula of Thessaly and head north: *iam Sciathos subsedit aquis, iam longa recessit / Sepias. attollit tondentes pabula Magnes / campus equos* (Val. Fl. 2.8–10).[11] Poortvliet (1991: 31, *ad loc.*) notes, without further comment, two parallel passages for Val. Fl. 2.9–10, one Lucretian and one Virgilian: "cf. Lucr. 2.317f. *tondentes pabula laeta . . . pecudes*, Verg. *Aen.* 3.537f. *equos . . . tondentis campum late*." The parallel in Lucretius comes from his first illustrative analogy for why, despite the constant motion of atoms, the world around us largely appears to be stationary (Lucr. 2.317–322):

nam saepe in colli tondentes pabula laeta
lanigerae reptant pecudes quo quamque vocantes
invitant herbae gemmantes rore recenti,
et satiati agni ludunt blandeque coruscant;
omnia quae nobis longe confusa videntur
et velut in viridi candor consistere colli.

[8] For example, Mehmel 1934: 5–8; Lüthje 1971: 61–63; Adamietz 1976: 30–31; Shreeves 1978: 12–14, 26–33; Otte 1992: 64–65; Manuwald 2014: 468–469. I am including in this category only studies that address the narrative block as a whole, not studies that, for instance, examine the Gigantomachy as a discrete scene.

[9] Krasne 2014b: 549–551; *contra*, for example, Poortvliet 1991: 31.

[10] Previous work on Valerius' engagement with philosophy has been largely limited to his engagement with Stoicism, whether as a true adherent or as a manipulator of its principles; see, for example, Monaghan 2002; Zissos 2014; Ferenczi 2014; Antoniadis 2016a and 2016b.

[11] Where quotations have been recently translated in the text, I have not resupplied translations.

For often, on a hill, cropping the flourishing pastures, wool-bearing sheep inch along, each one going wherever the grasses, bejeweled with fresh dew, beckon her invitingly, and contented lambs gambol and frisk delightfully; all of which seems to us a distant blur, one that stands motionless as vivid white on the green hill.

This passage and the subsequent analogy, of a battlefield clash appearing only as a distant brightness (Lucr. 2.323–332), seem to stand united behind the other parallel for Valerius' lines, namely Virgil's description of four white horses grazing on a hillside that are visible as the Trojans first approach Italy.[12] Anchises reads these horses as an omen of war, but also of peace (Verg. *Aen*. 3.537–543):[13]

quattuor hic, primum omen, equos in gramine vidi
tondentis campum late, candore nivali.
et pater Anchises "bellum, o terra hospita, portas:
bello armantur equi, bellum haec armenta minantur.
sed tamen idem olim curru succedere sueti
quadrupedes et frena iugo concordia ferre:
spes et pacis" ait.

Here I saw a first omen, four horses (of snowy whiteness) on the grass, cropping the plain spaced far apart. And father Anchises said, "You bring war, o land that is our host: horses are armed for war, these herds threaten war. But nevertheless, the same quadrupeds are at times accustomed to be harnessed to the chariot and to carry peaceful reins with their yoke: there is also hope of peace."

As is implicit in Poortvliet's note, the first one or two lines of each passage supply discrete pieces of Valerius' image: Lucretius the pastures and placement of *tondentes*, and Virgil the horses and the plain. But the double allusion is substantially more than just a matter of shared words and imagery.

Let us begin with the reasons why Valerius might choose to allude to the Virgilian passage at all, before considering the Lucretian parallel. First, the Trojans' departure from Buthrotum in *Aeneid* 3 closely resembles the Argonauts' departure from Iolkos in Apollonius, from the sad farewells of family members and the departure from their own "homeland" (*Aen.* 3.482–505)[14] to the short section of *periplous* that follows not long after (3.551–554).[15] Their first Italian stop at Castrum Minervae, therefore, where they burn sacrifices to Juno before setting sail once more (*Iunoni Argivae iussos adolemus honores*, "we set alight sacrifices as bidden, honor for Argive Juno," 3.547), is equivalent to the Argonauts' first stop in Apollonius, at the tomb of Dolops on the Magnesian headland, where they

[12] However, cf. Fowler 2002: 391.

[13] On the importance of war for the Lucretian model, see De Lacy 2007; on the innate parallelism of the two Lucretian images, representing peace and war, see Gale 2000: 234–235.

[14] See Bettini 1997 on the mirroring effects of Buthrotum as *parva Troia* and on Virgil's plays with the authenticity and inadequacy of the reconstructed doublet space.

[15] Cf. Nelis 2001: 30, n. 54 and 461; Bonfanti 1988. This is not to dismiss the scene's other parallels with the *Argonautica*, such as the Phineus episode; see Nelis 2001: 38–44.

burn sacrifices in the hero's honor (καί μιν κυδαίνοντες ὑπὸ κνέφας ἔντομα μήλων / κεῖαν, "and granting him honor, around twilight they set alight the sacrifices of sheep," Ap. Rhod. 1.587–588). This should already justify the moment's intertextual importance for Valerius, who so exaggeratedly avoids the tomb of Dolops; and, in addition, the Trojans' brief stop comes shortly before they first see Aetna and witness its eruptions (*Aen.* 3.554–587), creating a further parallel with Valerius' own subsequent excursus on the Gigantomachy and Aetna (Val. Fl. 2.16–33).

On one level, therefore, we can see Valerius indulging in the same sort of overt departure from the Virgilian model as from the Apollonian model: his Argonauts do see Virgilian horses in place of Lucretian sheep, acknowledging the parallelism,[16] but rather than drawing nearer, as do Virgil's Trojans and Apollonius' Argonauts, they move still further away, barely glimpsing (*vidisse putant*, 2.10) the various features of the shoreline. Accordingly, Valerius' Argonauts, as they sail past the headland, are precisely the sort of distant observers of the white sheep and green fields that Lucretius has in mind, much more so than Virgil's Trojan crew, who sail directly into the harbor and can even count the precise number of horses. Moreover, Valerius' phrasing is not just generally reminiscent of Lucretius' wording, but is instead a detailed adaptation of his line:[17]

nam saepe in colli tondentes pabula laeta (Lucr. 2.317)

Sepias. attollit tondentes pabula Magnes (Val. Fl. 2.9)

The rejection of both Apollonius and Virgil as narrative precedents for this textually layered locus is therefore a metaphorical distancing that, as we shall see, inherently privileges the Lucretian layer of the allusion. But to understand what Valerius might intend to signify by emphasizing the original Lucretian model for the distantly glimpsed grazers, we must have some understanding of Lucretius' own internal context.

A classic reading of the Lucretian passage, by Phillip De Lacy (2007), argues convincingly for it as one manifestation of the second book's program of "distant viewing," which oscillates between—and thus analogizes—the physical and the ethical, starting from the pleasures of watching far-off storms and battles, in the book's opening lines. As De Lacy (2007: 149) observes, the perspective afforded by distance enables both mental and physical safety, on an atomic as well as a macroscopic level: "Removal from the warring atoms . . . is as essential to our well-being as removal from the storm at sea, the battlefield, and the destructive

[16] Horses are also appropriate for Magnesia, as is commonly noted by commentators, usually with reference to the Argonautic gesture at Luc. 6.385 (*Magnetes equis, Minyae gens cognita remis*, "Magnesians, a race known for horses; Minyans, known for their oars").

[17] The desire for this arrangement would explain what Shreeves (1978: 29) notes as a rare deviation from Apollonius' (and reality's) geographic ordering.

conflicts engendered by human ignorance and folly." What brings us peril in cosmological terms is, likewise, to imagine that the universe is not "something remote and indifferent," but rather "involv[es] us in a way that makes us the helpless victims . . . of cosmic powers whose ways we cannot understand." The irony for Valerius' placement of his adaptation of the Lucretian sheep, then, is that his own Book 2 had opened, just a few lines earlier, with a description of what we can read in retrospect as a sham *ataraxia* imposed by Juno, her paradoxical interference making Jason into nothing other than the "helpless victim" of a "cosmic power" even as she steers him away from concerns over precisely the sort of "destructive conflicts" to which De Lacy is referring.[18] Furthermore, as is consonant with a world in which gods do meddle in human affairs,[19] she does so by depriving him of knowledge rather than by philosophically educating him (Val. Fl. 2.1–5):[20]

interea scelerum luctusque ignarus Iason
alta secat; neque enim patrios cognoscere casus
Iuno sinit, mediis ardens ne flectat ab undis
ac temere in Pelian et adhuc obstantia regis
fata ruat placitosque deis ne deserat actus.

Meanwhile, unaware of the crimes and grief, Jason cleaves the deep. For Juno does not allow him to learn of his parents' misfortunes, that he not, enflamed, turn back from the midst of the waves and rashly rush against Pelias and the king's still-stable fortunes, and that he not abandon actions pleasing to the gods.

This divinely imposed, untroubled quietude forms a marked contrast to Jason's brief spate of terror just moments before, when he realizes the possibility that

[18] The Epicurean term for emotional quietude, *ataraxia* ("lack of turmoil"), is to be contrasted with the literal image of a storm (cf. Epicurus *Ep. Men.* 128, πᾶς ὁ τῆς ψυχῆς χειμών, "all the tempest of the soul"), as is its meteorological synonym γαλήνη ("calm"; Smith 1966: 265). It is therefore worth noting that Jason's initial mental turmoil descended upon him immediately following the meterological calm that was restored in the wake of the storm, while Lucretius' first example of distant viewing, an observer on the shore watching a storm at sea, is the diametric opposite of the Argonauts' recent harrowing experience in Book 1. The sequence established here by Juno's interference, moving Jason from mental turmoil to mental tranquility, thus precisely parallels the earlier meteorological transition from storm to calm. Nelis (2015: 156, 159–160) draws connections between this metaphorical Epicurean space and the storm of *Aeneid* 1 that stands behind Valerius' storm, and the same overlapping implications are undoubtedly active here. On the Lucretian background for the storm in *Aeneid* 1, see Hardie 2009: 160–162 and Nelis 2015: 155–160.

[19] See Zissos 2004: 21–22.

[20] The paradoxical oddity of a goddess's invisible hand hovering behind Jason's enforced Epicurean detachment may encourage us to see *[non] cognoscere casus* (Val. Fl. 2.2) as leveraging several pertinent intertexts (that utilize *causa* ["cause"] rather than *casus* ["misfortunes"]), including Lucr. 5.1185, Verg. *G.* 2.490, and Luc. 9.553. For some implications of the *cognoscere causas* formula and its connection to *ataraxia*, cf. Freudenburg 1987: 61. Additionally, Lucr. 6.54 connects *ignorantia causarum* not just to the propensity for religious thinking but to the creation of gods as *dominos acris* ("harsh masters," Lucr. 6.63); cf. Shearin 2015: 161–162.

he has set in motion something like the exact events which are at that very moment transpiring (Val. Fl. 1.693–699):

at subitus curaque ducem metus acrior omni
mensque mali praesaga quatit, quod regis adortus
695 *progeniem rapto<que> dolis crudelis Acasto*
cetera nuda neci medioque in crimine patrem
liquerit ac nullis inopem vallaverit armis,
ipse procul nunc tuta tenens — ruat omnis in illos
quippe furor — nec vana pavet trepidatque futuris.

But suddenly, both a fear keener than any concern and a mind foreboding of evil shake the leader: that having accosted the king's offspring (and with Acastus snatched away by his deceits), he cruelly has left his other kin open to death; and as for his father, that he has left him, helpless, in the midst of an accusation and has palisaded him with no weapons, even while he himself now keeps safe, far away; that indeed, all the king's fury is set to rush against those others. Nor does he pointlessly grow pale and tremble at future happenings.

Whereas Jason is physically distant from but mentally present in Iolcus in Book 1, at the temporally contiguous transition to Book 2 he abruptly becomes both physically and mentally distant, thanks to Juno's intervention.[21] Naturally, it is already anti-Lucretian for a goddess to be involved at all; thus Jason's divinely inspired *avocatio*[22] can potentially be read as a Virgilesque remythologization of Lucretius, this time restoring a Homeric epic milieu in which human motivation is directly governed—or paralleled—by distant divine action.[23] Here, we might read Jason's human motivation as a simple dismissal of his initial concern, although as Marco Scaffai (1986: 248, note 21) observes, Jason has in fact already been told in no uncertain terms that his father will die while he is gone.[24] Regardless of interpretation, however, in Valerius this distant and unmediated divine influence is a unique occurrence.[25]

The connection between Jason's *avocatio* and the atomic sheep (as mediated by Virgil) is therefore not an idle one. Virgil's own engagement with Lucretius' sheep appears to be a suggestive reminder of the difference between the cosmic operations of his world and Lucretius', akin to his standard procedure of remythologization: where Lucretius' sheep have no meaning of their own, but

[21] Cf. Zissos 2008: 367. For the temporal contiguity, see above, 239, n. 1.

[22] For the Epicurean technique or therapy of *avocatio*, an abstraction or distraction from troubling thoughts, see Schroeder 2004 and Kaufman 2014: 127–131. Jason's *curaque . . . metus* (Val. Fl. 1.693) may be an allusion to Lucretius' *metus hominum curaeque sequaces* ("the fears and concerns that dog mankind," Lucr. 2.48) that only *ratio* can chase away.

[23] Ferenczi (2014: 147–148) notes the unnecessary (and un-Virgilian) involvement of the goddess here. On divine causation of human motivation in Homer, see Lesky 1961 (with updated bibliography in Porter 2017); on Virgil's somewhat different use, see, for example, Duckworth 1956: 358–359 and 363, n. 10; Hardie 1998: 97–101.

[24] Val. Fl. 3.301–303. Jason conveniently forgets this fact elsewhere, as well (Val. Fl. 7.493–494).

[25] For the more typical types of divine influence on the action, see Manuwald 2013.

stand merely as an analogy for the mindless, meaningless, and invisible movement of an infinite number of atoms, Virgil's horses are both numerically finite and discrete, have a distinct meaning of their own *as* horses, and are placed in precise and meaningful accordance with a divine plan.[26] The Trojans' view of them zooms in on Lucretius' distant tableau,[27] so close that it allows us to see not just the atomic particles, but a steady divine hand behind their seeming randomness.[28] From this perspective, it could be argued that Valerius and his Argonauts are charting a course that tacks between the Lucretian and the Virgilian. We can, for instance, read the combinatorial allusion and its context as suggesting that the cosmos is peopled with interfering divine beings who control the workings of science[29] as well as of omens, but that they do so chaotically and unpredictably and at a level beyond our notice.[30] Valerius' gods may, in fact, be tantamount to atoms themselves, and this is a potential similarity that we should keep in mind. But De Lacy (2007: 148) also suggests that the distant Lucretian viewer in both the proem and the analogy of the sheep is the educated Epicurean viewer, who can look on all things, great or small, troubling or pleasant, from a position of detached equanimity. And so, although Jason and the Argonauts are hardly Epicurean in their approach to the world, it may be that an equally crucial aspect of the privileged Lucretian intertext is simply the Argonauts' return to distant rather than close-up viewing following their personal encounter with the storm (paralleling Jason's opening mental abstraction),[31] for in the space of just the next forty lines, the Argonauts will twice more fill the role of a Lucretian distant observer.

[26] For further (anti-)Lucretian context surrounding the Trojans' visit to and departure from Buthrotum, see Hardie 2009: 163, n. 37 and Gale 2003: 340, n. 48.

[27] Although Hardie (2009: 153–179) and Smith (2005: 19–20) discuss Virgil's adaptations of the Lucretian gaze, they do not address his engagement with the Lucretian distantly viewed sheep.

[28] On the truly microscopic level, it is unlikely to be coincidence that the anagrammatic *armantur . . . armenta minantur* (*Aen*. 3.540), itself suggestive of a Lucretian jumble of atomic letters, also incorporates the *Aeneid*'s own opening word, *arma*. On the intratextual metabolization, reprocessing, and destabilization of the opening of the *Aeneid*, see Oliensis 2004, and on Lucretius' analogies between atoms and letters, see, among others, Friedländer 1941; Snyder 1980; Schiesaro 1994; Armstrong 1995; Fowler 1995; Volk 2002: 100–105; Marković 2008: 121–122.

[29] For instance, the "double causation" in the realm of nature at Val. Fl. 2.616–618, where both the *Neptunia cuspis* ("spearpoint of Neptune") and the *longus labor aevi* ("prolonged effort of an eon") are responsible for the rift between Europe and Asia; however, an extensive swath of Homeric allegory combined with repeated allusions to Lucretian science at Val. Fl. 2.82–100 provides another way in which Valerius fuses the divine and the scientific (I address this fusion in the larger project from which the present article is drawn [Krasne forthcoming], but see below, 259, and see Krasne 2019 for a different illustration of Valerius' combination of the divine and the scientific).

[30] A similar view is expressed, although from a very different angle, by Manuwald (2009: 587), who notes that the gods' communications to humans are singularly unhelpful. This is in contrast to the *Aeneid*, where all participants are equally and repeatedly assured of the same teleological throughline (which may, nevertheless, involve divinities in some contradictions, facile generalizations, and blatant inattention; cf. Lyne 1987: 71–99; O'Hara 1990; Hardie 1998: 95–96).

[31] See above, 244, n. 18.

Lucretius' own second example of distant viewing in the opening priamel of Book 2 is the delight one can take in watching a battle safely from afar: *suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri / per campos instructa tua sine parte pericli* ("sweet, too, to regard the great contests of war drawn up across the plains, without your own share of danger," Lucr. 2.5–6). In the context of Lucretian distant viewing already established at the beginning of *Argonautica* 2, the Argonauts' observation of the frozen divine battlefield at Pallene as they coast past on their ship might well call this Lucretian *sententia* to mind (Val. Fl. 2.16–23):[32]

metus ecce deum damnataque bello
Pallene circumque vident inmania monstra
terrigenum caelo quondam adversata Gigantum,
quos scopulis trabibusque parens miserata iugisque
induit et versos exstruxit in aethera montes.
quisque suas in rupe minas pugnamque metusque
servat adhuc, quatit ipse hiemes et torquet ab alto
fulmina crebra pater.

Behold! They see around them the gods' fears and Pallene, cursed by war, and the massive monstrosities of the earth-born Giants, once opposed to the sky, whom their pitying mother clothed in cliffs and trunks and ridges and heaped up into the air, turned into mountains. Each still keeps, in stone, their threatening poses and their battle-stance and their cowering in fright; the father himself brandishes wintry storms and from on high hurls frequent lightning.

However, there is also a further confirmatory bridge between the two. Although Marco Fucecchi (2013: 109, note 4) has suggested that Sallust's description of the battlefield at Pistoia (*Cat.* 61.1–4) may stand behind Valerius' depiction of the stationary giants frozen mid-battle, the petrified figures also recall—much more closely, to my mind—the semblance of battle and its aftermath with which the *Aetna*-poet describes the behavior of falling *lapides molares* ("lava stones") during the volcano's eruption (*Aet.* 469–474):

illinc incertae facies hominumque figurae:
pars lapidum domita est, stanti pars robore pugnat
nec recipit flammas: hic indefensus anhelat
atque aperit se hosti, decrescit spiritus illi,
haud aliter quam cum laeto devicta tropaeo
prona iacet campis acies et castra sub ipsa.

Thereupon, indistinct features and shapes of men: one part of the stones is defeated, one part fights with its strength intact and does not feel the flames; this one, unguarded, pants and exposes itself to the enemy, that one's spirit flags—not at all otherwise than when a

[32] Again, however, they seem not to possess the requisite equanimity in beholding this awesome sight; Shelton (1971: 57–58) notes that the Argonauts' terror is implicit in Valerius' comment that the subsequent arrival of night increases their fears (*auxerat . . . metus*, 2.38).

battle-line, conquered in a joyous victory, lies flat on the plains, even right alongside the camp.

Not only is this a clear demythologized rendition of the Gigantomachy,[33] the same scene that confronts the Argonauts,[34] but the *Aetna*-poet is here in the process of describing an eruption of Aetna seen from a distance—spectacular and educational but safe, just like Lucretius' distant views of storms and wars (*Aet.* 461–465):[35]

nam simul atque mouet uires turbamque minatur,
diffugit extemploque solum trahit undique rimas
et graue sub terra murmur denuntiat ignes.
tum pauidum fugere et sacris concedere rebus
par erit: e tuto speculaberis omnia collis.

For as soon as it marshals its strength and threatens disturbance, suddenly the ground dips away and is shot through with cracks everywhere, and a deep rumbling under the earth heralds fires. Then it will be reasonable to flee in dread and to yield to awesome phenomena: you will observe everything from the safety of a hill.

Thus the Argonauts, observing the remnants of the volcanic Gigantomachy, become the distant observers imagined by both Lucretius and the *Aetna*-poet, appropriate for the exact place in the epic which, on the aforementioned pattern of correspondence with the post-Buthrotum sequence of *Aeneid* 3, corresponds to the Trojans' safe (if needlessly frightened) observation of Aetna's eruption from a distance (*Aen.* 3.570–584)—a correspondence which is only further clinched by Valerius' subsequent digression on Aetna (Val. Fl. 2.23–33).

The Argonauts' final Lucretian viewing experience in this section comes shortly thereafter, when, as night falls, they enact the role of Lucretius' imaginary first observers of the celestial canvas, who are awed by its splendor (Lucr. 2.1030–36), and who are, by implied analogy with those who hear his scintillating Epicurean doctrine for the first time, *novitate exterritus ipsa* ("terrified by the very novelty," Lucr. 2.1040) (Val. Fl. 2.38–47):[36]

auxerat hora metus, iam se vertentis Olympi
ut faciem raptosque simul montesque locosque
ex oculis circumque graves videre tenebras:

[33] Cf. especially Garani 2009; also see Goodyear 1984: 361–362 on the military image of the *Aetna* passage and Wolff 2004: 82 on the "human" characterization of the *lapis molaris*.

[34] Likewise, Jupiter's continued attack on the harmless stones (Val. Fl. 2.22–23) may recall his renewed fear, in the *Aetna*, of a second attack from the Giants due to Aetna's continued eruptions (*Aet.* 203–207); cf. too the final battle of the Gigantomachy itself at *Aet.* 63–64.

[35] De Lacy (1943) argues for the underlying Epicureanism of the *Aetna*, although Goodyear (1984: 355–356) rejects the need to look for any particular philosophical approach underlying the poem; see also Pingoud 2008.

[36] See Conte 1994: 22–25, 30–34, on the initial terror inflicted on Lucretius' "sublime reader"; see also Segal 1994: xii.

ipsa quies rerum mundique silentia terrent
astraque et effusis stellatus crinibus aether.
ac velut ignota captus regione viarum
noctivagum qui carpit iter non aure quiescit,
non oculis, noctisque metus niger auget utrimque
campus et occurrens umbris maioribus arbor,
haud aliter trepidare viri.

The hour had increased their fears, as they now saw the features of revolving Olympus, and the mountains and terrain snatched from their eyes all of a sudden, and the heavy shadows around them. The very stillness of things and the silence of the cosmos terrify them, and the stars and the aether, starred with streaming filaments; and as one caught in an unknown region of the roads, who is hurrying on a night-roving journey, rests not with his ear, not with his eyes, and the black plain on either side increases the night's fears, as does a tree looming with larger shadows—not at all otherwise do the men tremble.

But the Argonauts' dismal terror at the vast sublimity of the night sky[37] is not just a response to its newness and immensity; it is also strongly suggestive of early mankind's fear and general incomprehension of nature, the precise attitude to which Lucretius attributes the misguided development of religion (Lucr. 5.1183–93):

praeterea caeli rationes ordine certo
et varia annorum cernebant tempora verti
nec poterant quibus id fieret cognoscere causis.
ergo perfugium sibi habebant omnia divis
tradere et illorum nutu facere omnia flecti.
in caeloque deum sedis et templa locarunt,
per caelum volvi quia nox et luna videtur,
luna dies et nox et noctis signa severa
noctivagaeque faces caeli flammaeque volantes,
nubila sol imbres nix venti fulmina grando
et rapidi fremitus et murmura magna minarum.

Moreover, they were perceiving that the systems of the sky and the varying seasons of the years turned in a fixed sequence, and they were not able to know for what reasons this occurred. Therefore, they concocted as an escape-route for themselves to entrust all things to the gods, and to make all things be guided by their nod. They located the gods' abodes and precincts in the sky, because night and the moon seem to be rotated through the sky—the moon, the day, and the night, and night's stern constellations, and the sky's night-roving torches and flying flames, the clouds, sun, rains, snow, winds, thunderbolts, hail, and the rapid roars and mighty rumbles of its menaces.

[37] See Hardie 2013: 132, briefly, on the sublimity of this passage; he also connects it with the first-time viewer at Lucr. 2.1023–47.

That Valerius has this passage explicitly in mind can be confirmed by his use of the compound *noctivagum* (Val. Fl. 2.44), echoing Lucretius' *noctivagaeque faces* (5.1191). While there is a more intricate set of texts behind *noctivagus*,[38] the immediate context of this Lucretian use, painting an image of the stars and comets that stream through the heavens, precisely matches the broader Valerian context of two lines before (*astraque et effusis stellatus crinibus aether*, Val. Fl. 2.42). Accordingly, although Valerius transfers his *noctivagum* into the simile which illustrates the manner of the Argonauts' terror (a unique use of the adjective to describe the mundane realm rather than the celestial or divine), the direct cause of their terror closely corresponds with the Lucretian intertext. Furthermore, the image of a night-time journey for the Argonauts' anti-Epicurean, unillumined terror may also hint at the closing image of Lucretius' first book, where he compares the gradual acquisition of Epicurean wisdom to torches illuminating a journey through the darkness.[39]

Given this pointed allusion, however, we should be especially wary when, immediately following the Argonauts' fearful night on the open sea, Valerius explains the recent slaughter on Lemnos as directly attributable to divine anger—in particular, anger at the omission of sacrifice (Val. Fl. 2.98–102):[40]

contra Veneris stat frigida semper
ara loco, meritas postquam dea coniugis iras
horruit et tacitae Martem tenuere catenae.
quocirca struit illa nefas Lemnoque merenti
exitium furiale movet.

Conversely, the altar of Venus there stands ever cold, after the goddess shuddered at her spouse's righteous wrath and the silent chains held Mars. Wherefore she has heaped up unspeakable crime and sets furious destruction in motion for deserving Lemnos.

This directly contradicts Lucretius' warning in his own following lines against a belief that failure to engage in religious activity can provoke divine wrath (Lucr. 5.1194–210, 1218–21):

[38] The context at Lucr. 4.580–589, where *noctivago strepitu* ("night-roving uproar," Lucr. 4.582) is used of the woodland gods' boisterousness, is a similar sneer at mankind's propensity to create gods in order to explain what it does not understand; other pre-Valerian uses of *noctivagus*, always applied to a celestial body (stars or moon), occur at Egnatius, *DRN* fr. 2.1 (Blänsd.); Verg. *Aen.* 10.216 (in turn an imitation of Egnatius); and Sen. *Oed.* 254.

[39] Lucr. 1.1115–17. The possibility of such an allusion may be further supported by Manilius' apparent adaptation of Lucretius' image to describe the stars that pick out the shapes of constellations (*Astr.* 1.463–468), thus strengthening the astral connection.

[40] Cf. Virgil's repeated use of Lucretius' sacrifice of Iphigenia to structure his episodes revolving around human sacrifice in *Aen.* 2, with both Lucretian and anti-Lucretian stylings; on this, see Hardie 1984: 412: "It would appear that the Trojans are destroyed *both* by their own ability to think correctly (the Lucretian point of view), *and* by the fact that the gods really are against them" (italics original).

o genus infelix humanum, talia divis
cum tribuit facta atque iras adiunxit acerbas!
quantos tum gemitus ipsi sibi, quantaque nobis
vulnera, quas lacrimas peperere minoribu' nostris!
nec pietas ullast velatum saepe videri
vertier ad lapidem atque omnis accedere ad aras
nec procumbere humi prostratum et pandere palmas
ante deum delubra nec aras sanguine multo
spargere quadrupedum nec votis nectere vota,
sed mage pacata posse omnia mente tueri.
nam cum suspicimus magni caelestia mundi
templa super stellisque micantibus aethera fixum,
et venit in mentem solis lunaeque viarum,
tunc aliis oppressa malis in pectora cura
illa quoque expergefactum caput erigere infit,
nequae forte deum nobis inmensa potestas
sit, vario motu quae candida sidera verset.
. . .
praeterea cui non animus formidine divum
contrahitur, cui non correpunt membra pavore,
fulminis horribili cum plaga torrida tellus
contremit et magnum percurrunt murmura caelum?

O unhappy human race, when it has attributed such deeds to the gods and added harsh angers, besides! How many groans, then, have they indeed birthed for themselves, and how many wounds for us, what tears for our children! Neither is there any piety in often being seen to turn oneself, veiled, toward a stone, and in approaching every altar, nor in falling on the ground prostrate and spreading one's palms before the shrines of the gods, nor in sprinkling altars with much blood of quadrupeds, nor in binding prayers to prayers, but rather in being able to observe all things with a calm mind. For when we look up at the heavenly quarters of the great cosmos, at the aether that is above us and studded with glittering stars, and there comes into the mind a thought of the paths of the sun and moon, then that concern, too, begins to lift its woken head into breasts oppressed by other evils—lest there perhaps be, to our detriment, some immeasurable power of the gods, which turns the bright stars with their varied motion . . . . Moreover, whose soul is not beset by dread of the gods, whose limbs do not seize up with fear, when the scorched earth trembles at an awesome bolt of lightning, and rumblings race across the great sky?

Of course, we have already seen several ways in which Valerius renegotiates Lucretius' vehemently atheistic construction and illustration of his cosmos, including the very real possibility that Valerius' gods behave almost like atoms themselves. Just as was the case with the juxtaposition between Jason's divinely imposed *avocatio* (and his resulting *ataraxia*) at the beginning of the book and the Argonauts' distant viewing of the intertextually atomic horses, here we have Lucretian *ratio* closely linked with anti-Lucretian divine causation. Again, it

cannot be that Valerius means for us to ignore the resultant friction. It is precisely the pronounced and lengthy dissonance between Valerius and his Lucretian model that is so noteworthy here, as if Valerius has drawn this passage of Lucretius before our eyes strictly in order to deflate Lucretius' own deflation of divine agency. We will soon see somewhat similar processes at work in the following lines.

APPLIED REASONING

We have so far looked primarily at the Lucretian elements of the book's opening because, as we have seen, the philosophical and intertextual texture of Val. Fl. 2.1–47 is heavily engaged with Lucretius. However, in an effort to assuage the Argonauts' un-Epicurean nocturnal terror, the helmsman Tiphys marshals a very different assortment of didactic and philosophical approaches in the lines that follow (Val. Fl. 2.47–65):

sed pectora firmans
Hagniades "non hanc" inquit "sine numine pinum
derigimus, nec me tantum Tritonia cursus
erudiit: saepe ipsa manu dignata carinam est.
an non experti, subitus cum luce fugata
horruit imbre dies? quantis, pro Iuppiter, austris
restitimus, quanta quotiens et Pallados arte
incassum decimae cecidit tumor arduus undae!
quin agite, o socii: micat immutabile caelum
puraque nec gravido surrexit Cynthia cornu
— nullus in ore rubor — certusque ad talia Titan
integer in fluctus et nullo decidit Euro.
adde quod in noctem venti veloque marique
incumbunt magis et tacitis ratis ocior horis.
adque adeo non illa sequi mihi sidera monstrat
quae delapsa polo reficit mare — tantus Orion
iam cadit, irato iam stridet in aequore Perseus —
sed mihi dux, vetitis qui numquam conditus undis
axe nitet, Serpens, septenosque implicat ignes."

58 nullo *Weichert*] in uno γ c^2 *Lib.* in imo c^1 *cetera ceteri*

But Hagnias' son, stilling his heart,[41] said, "Not without a god do we guide this pine ship, nor has Tritonia educated me only as to our course. She herself has often graced our keel with her hand. Or did we not feel her presence, when suddenly, with the light put to flight, the day bristled with rain? After how many South Winds have we stayed afloat, by Jupiter? How often, and by how much of Pallas' art, has the steep swell of the tenth wave subsided harmlessly! Nay, come, friends; the sky glitters unchangeably, and Cynthia has risen pure, with unswollen horn (there is no blush in her face), and Titan,

[41] Spaltenstein (2002: 321, *ad loc.*) acknowledges the possibility of inferring *sua* or *eorum*.

reliable in such things, has sunk unspotted into the waves, and with no East Wind. Add that, at night, winds lie more heavily on sail and sea, and the ship is swifter in the silent hours. And furthermore, she shows me not to follow those stars which, having slid down from the sky, the sea refreshes—great Orion is now setting, now Perseus is hissing in the riled water—but my leader, which (never ensconced in the forbidden waters) shines at the zenith, is the Serpent, and it entwines the sevenfold fires."

Tiphys begins in general terms, putting heavy emphasis on the gods' presence and involvement and detailing how his own navigational skill, learned through direct contact with the divine, has already helped them; and soon he moves to the issue of divinely mandated and meaningful—and thus comfortingly predictable—cosmic regularity. Given that Tiphys' repeated emphasis on his own divine mentor (*non . . . sine numine pinum / derigimus*, 2.48–49; *Tritonia cursus / erudiit*, 2.49–50; *ipsa manu*, 2.50; *Pallados arte*, 2.53; *monstrat*,[42] 2.61), his avowal *pro Iuppiter* (2.52), and his personification of the various heavenly and meteorological entities (*Cynthia*, 2.56; *Titan*, 2.57; *vultus Olympi*, 2.66)[43] are all strongly anti-Lucretian framings of the workings of the cosmos (albeit still seemingly grounded in observable phenomena), we are undoubtedly (given the dominant Lucretian undercurrent of all that precedes) meant at least to consider the Lucretian perspective that Tiphys is only more knowledgeable than the other Argonauts within a limited scope.[44]

However, it is not only a naive Tiphys who personifies the natural world that surrounds them: there has, in fact, been a heavy narratorial emphasis on personification and cosmic (re)mythologization since the opening of the book, from the mountainous giants who are petrified and clothed in trees by their pitying earth-mother (*parens miserata*, 2.19), to the lightning-wielding sky-father (*pater*, 2.23), to the anthropomorphized volcanic entity responsible for Aetna's eruptions and Sicily's earthquakes (*Typhoeus*, 2.24; *revomentem pectore flammas*, "belching forth sacred flames from his breast," 2.25; *pectore molem / commovet experiens gemituque reponit inani*, "he moves the mass with his wearied breast, testing it, and sets it back with a frustrated groan," 2.32–33), to the chariot of the sun and the god who rides in it (*Hyperionius . . . currus*, "Hyperion's chariot," 2.34–35; *Titan*, 2.37), and to the ancient and anthropomorphic matron of the sea (*palmas Tethys grandaeva sinusque / sustulit*, "granddame Tethys lifted up her palms and breast," 2.36–37).[45] Lucretius, it seems, not Tiphys, is steadily being

[42] The MSS read *monstrant*, which would not refer to Minerva.

[43] We may also include the agency suggestively attributed to the constellations (*Orion . . . cadit, . . . stridet . . . Perseus*, "Orion falls, Perseus hisses," 2.62–63; *Serpens . . . implicat*, "the Serpent entwines," 2.65).

[44] Cf. Lucr. 5.1183–93, quoted above, 249.

[45] A pendant to *Hyperionius . . . currus*, here used of the setting sun, occurs at Val. Fl. 2.75, where *primus equis . . . anhelis* ("first with his panting horses," describing the Sun's horses charging upward at dawn) quotes a line of the *Georgics* (1.250) drawn from a context that specifically emphasizes the existence of a divinely regulated (and divinely populated) cosmos. If we retain *Euro* at Val. Fl. 2.58,

proven to be misguided in his failure to believe that the gods have a hand in the cosmos, and indeed in his failure to believe that reality itself is composed of the divine. Taken together, in fact, Valerius' and Tiphys' personifications cover between them all the heavenly bodies to which Lucretius denies divinity at Lucr. 5.115, except for the stars themselves.[46] This does not, however, automatically mean that Tiphys' view of the world is accurate or complete, for all that it overlaps with the authorial voice, and we have already seen a potential method of reconciling the Lucretian atomic with the anti-Lucretian divine within Valerius' cosmos. Indeed, the fact that personification is also Empedoclean—or what we might call proto-Lucretian—may substantiate the intersection between Valerian gods and Lucretian atoms.[47]

To return to Tiphys' didactic approach, the transition from his personal educational encounters with the divine to the benefits derived from this knowledge is provided by his discussion of the dangerous but predictable extra-large tenth wave (Val. Fl. 2.54).[48] Not only has Tiphys' goddess-taught craft enabled him to successfully steer his ship through such a wave, but because she has also taught him that the sea follows a fixed pattern, he knows that it is specifically the tenth wave that will be large. Minerva has also taught Tiphys to interpret the sky; indeed, he is the world's first celestial navigator (as well as the world's first navigator, full stop).[49] His application of this divinely disseminated knowledge to comfort the Argonauts is where what we might call his "consolatory" didacticism begins, a term to which I shall return. In an applied use of Aratus and Virgil, he details first the ephemeral meteorological features which enable him to say with certainty that there will not be another storm[50] and then explains

this may be included as a personification; and the pervasive personification continues after Tiphys ends his piece, as well, with *Cereris . . . munere* and *parco . . . Baccho* (Val. Fl. 2.69–70), in a directly anti-Lucretian manoeuver (cf. his specific objections to the allegorical use of Neptune, Ceres, and Bacchus at Lucr. 2.655–657).

[46] Or even including the stars, if we count the agency of the constellations at 2.62–65; see above, 253, n. 43.

[47] For Empedoclean personification, cf. especially Rowett 2016: 83–84; for Lucretius and Empedocles, see Clay 1969; Furley 1970; Gale 1994; Sedley 1998: 1–34; Garani 2007. Alternatively or additionally, Williams (2012: 118–124, 171–212, 242–245) argues that, although Stoics typically personified the governed and governing cosmos itself but not its constituent parts, the more or less subtle personification of natural elements is nevertheless a part of Seneca's rhetorical strategy in the *Natural Questions*, a text that I argue below (257–259) to be pertinent to Valerius' approach here.

[48] For collections and some discussion of ancient citations of this supposed phenomenon, see Tarrant 1976: 270–271, *ad* Sen. *Ag.* 502; Luck 1977: 30, *ad* Ov. *Tr.* 1.2.49f; Bömer 1980: 379, *ad* Ov. *Met.* 11.529–530; Matthews 2008: 250–251, *ad* Luc. 5.672. See also Sedley 2005.

[49] Val. Fl. 1.481–483. Given that his catalogue entry affords him a far more active role in his engagement with the heavens than his portrayal here supports (cf. *dedit*, Val. Fl. 1.483), the depiction of Tiphys as a blinkered intermediary seems to be locally motivated, not a pervasive characterization.

[50] Cf. Aratus, *Phaen.* 758–891, selectively condensed at Verg. *G.* 1.424–460. Valerius borrows several specific words and phrases from both Virgil's description of the moon's weather-signs and Lucan's practical adaptation of the passage: *pura* (*G.* 1.433/Val. Fl. 2.56), *ore rubor(em)* (*G.* 1.430/Val.

the regular and fixed meteorological and astronomical features that reliably guide their ship's course; both of these lessons, presented from a Stoic perspective of divine providence and celestial perspicuity, are intended to give solace to the Argonauts in their terror.

The indirect recollection of further astronomical and seasonal markers that follows enhances our picture of Tiphys' didactic approach: *certi memorat qui vultus Olympi, / Pleiones Hyadumque locos, quo sidere vibret / Ensis, et Actaeus niteat qua luce Bootes* ("he recounts what the appearance of reliable Olympus is, the locations of Pleione and the Hyades, from what constellation the Sword twinkles, and with what light Attic Bootes shines," Val. Fl. 2.66–68). A crucial word here is *memorat*. Although Jean Soubiran (1997: 127) suggests that Valerius uses this verb (rather than *monstrat*) because the Pleiades and Hyades are no longer visible by the time Tiphys is discussing their place in the sky, I propose instead that *memorat* recognizably functions as a key term of allusive intertextuality[51] and casts Tiphys in the role of one giving a poetic recitation of a lesson learned from his own teacher.[52] Certainly it is possible, as Soubiran thinks, that Tiphys simply recalls for the Argonauts what they would have seen moments before, if only they had known where to look. However, the particular constellations that he mentions are the classic set of reference points for any generic didactic image of the night sky,[53] as well as some of the most important constellations for delineating seasonal activity.[54] These concluding lines are therefore better read as a generalized astronomy lesson, forming a didactic coda to the applied knowledge Tiphys has just been demonstrating with his Aratean prognostications and navigation. Again, as we saw previously, Tiphys continually emphasizes the divinely mandated regularity of sea and sky, in explicit response to the Argonauts'

Fl. 2.57, although Valerius' full phrase, *nullus in ore rubor*, is also found at *Ciris* 180); *gravido . . . Cynthia cornu* (Luc. 1.218/Val. Fl. 2.56).

[51] See, for example, Hinds 1998: 14–16 on Mars' *memoro* at *Met.* 14.813; Nethercut (2018) demonstrates that *memorant* is a favorite Lucretian marker of the Alexandrian footnote, especially for philosophical texts.

[52] While poetic models abound, only a very small handful of surviving verses, all of them related to one another and relevant to the present context, open with a double reference to the Pleiades and Hyades: Hom. *Il.* 18.486–487; Hes. *Op.* 615; Eur. *El.* 468–469; Verg. *G.* 1.138; and Ov. *Met.* 13.293–294 (an exception is Man. *Astr.* 1.371–372, if it is not an interpolation: see Liuzzi 1991: 150; Flores 1993: 17, n. 25). These passages all describe either the Shield of Achilles, the optimal time for plowing and sowing, or the first sailor's first naming of constellations; the opening words of 2.67, then, are strongly suggestive of a literary *topos* that implicitly refers to the entirety of the heavens, their motion, and their function, through the select mention of a few key constellations.

[53] In the *Onomasticon* of Julius Pollux (4.159), these four and the ever-present Bears, mentioned at Val. Fl. 2.65 (the last line of Tiphys' direct speech), preface a list of constellations whose names are important to know from the discipline of astronomy. As Spaltenstein (2002: 325) notes, there is no need for the three lines of *oratio obliqua* following Tiphys' direct discourse to describe the contemporaneous features of the sky (or the weather).

[54] Cf., for example, Hes. *Op.* 383–384 and 564–629, esp. 609–621.

fear and in implicit response to the Lucretian intertexts with which the book opened.

What I am calling the "consolatory" element of Tiphys' address to the Argonauts is, I would argue, deeply significant for accurately reading his speech within its surrounding context. Once again, we should recognize that it is distinctly not Epicurean in any way—Epicurus, in fact, after denying any divine intelligence behind celestial motion, explicitly rebutted the consolatory effect of even the scientific contemplation of the heavens' seasonal activity (Epicurus *Ep. Hdt.* 79):[55]

τὸ δ' ἐν τῇ ἱστορίᾳ πεπτωκὸς τῆς δύσεως καὶ ἀνατολῆς καὶ τροπῆς καὶ ἐκλείψεως καὶ ὅσα συγγενῆ τούτοις μηθὲν ἔτι πρὸς τὸ μακάριον τῆς γνώσεως συντείνειν ἀλλ' ὁμοίως τοὺς φόβους ἔχειν τοὺς ταῦτα κατειδότας, τίνες δ' αἱ φύσεις ἀγνοοῦντας καὶ τίνες αἱ κυριώταται αἰτίαι, καὶ εἰ μὴ προσήδεσαν ταῦτα· τάχα δὲ καὶ πλείους, ὅταν τὸ θάμβος ἐκ τῆς τούτων προσκατανοήσεως μὴ δύνηται τὴν λύσιν λαμβάνειν κατὰ τὴν περὶ τῶν κυριωτάτων οἰκονομίαν.

But that which comes under the reasoned investigation of setting and rising and phase-shift and eclipse, and so many things as are related to these, in no way still contributes to the blessedness conferred by knowledge, but instead, those who know these things, if they are unaware as to what their natures are and what their most dominant causes are, have fears just as much as if they didn't also know these things—and they quickly become even more afraid whenever amazement derived from observing these things isn't able to obtain a solution concerning the regulation of these most dominant causes.

Tiphys' overt didacticism is nevertheless nuanced by its obvious adherence to several other poetic models and philosophical schools of thought; we have already seen Aratus and Virgil, two of Tiphys' most straightforward didactic poetic antecedents, in play. But a passage of Lucan is also clearly visible behind Tiphys' closing words (Val. Fl. 2.61–65, quoted above, 252), which identify the constellation of Draco as his guiding light (Luc. 8.172–176):[56]

ignifero quaecumque fluunt labentia caelo,
numquam stante polo miseros fallentia nautas,
sidera non sequimur, sed, qui non mergitur undis
axis inocciduus gemina clarissimus Arcto,
ille regit puppes.

Whatever [stars] course gliding through the constellation-bearing sky, deceiving unhappy sailors while the heaven never stands still, those stars we don't follow; but the axle which,

[55] Cf. Lucr. 5.1183–85, discussed above (248–250) as a model for the Argonauts' attitude here. According to Epicurus, even inquiring into the causes of these celestial movements is likely not sufficient to remove fear, especially as certainty is nearly impossible (Epicurus *Ep. Hdt.* 79–80).

[56] Tiphys' unusual reliance on Draco rather than either of the Bears may point ahead to the syncretism of the Colchian serpent with the constellation Draco (for which see Castelletti 2012). This is, however, a subject that needs further investigation.

unsetting, is not submerged in the waves, most brilliantly renowned with its twin Bear, that [axle] governs our ships.

The overall shape of the two passages is identical, and several specific verbal echoes can be heard;[57] but I would argue that the key point of this allusion is to draw in another instance of consolatory didacticism, albeit one gone awry. As Jonathan Tracy (2010: 636) has demonstrated, the account of celestial navigation and reliability that Pompey's helmsman delivers in Luc. 8 is partially indebted for its approach to Senecan *consolationes* for death and exile. The main message in such texts is that the sky's regularity is comfortingly indicative of divine providence, while its widespread visibility knits together the far-flung world as a shared object of contemplation, thus allowing a human observer of the heavens both to lift himself away from his earthly and personal anxieties and concerns and to feel himself part of a community that is universal despite being geographically disparate.[58]

Thanks especially to its straightforward allusion to this passage of Lucan, Tiphys' discourse on cosmic regularity, its helpful predictability, and its divine causation—emphasizing the reassurance inherent in the sky's astronomical regularity and sublimity in an attempt to comfort the Argonauts in their time of terror—is strongly suggestive of the motifs typical of a Senecan *consolatio*.[59] In particular, what we might hear in Tiphys' words is a largely Stoic perspective that the sky is not to be feared, but rather should give comfort, because it reveals the existence of a cosmic *sympatheia* that unites men and gods, and because it is predictably governed by a divine plan.[60] Furthermore, given the Argonauts' recent departure from their homeland, in a sort of exile,[61] we might also hear implicit in Tiphys' disquisition the consolatory theme of universal visibility: that same regulated sky is visible and useable no matter where in the world the Argonauts may be forced to travel, as the whole of the physical cosmos is equally regulated by the divine. His overall message is that the cosmos is subject not to divine caprice, but divine order.

At the same time, Seneca did not dwell on such themes only in his *consolationes*, but also in his *Natural Questions*,[62] where his approach is somewhat different, especially in his formulation of what precisely will bring comfort—indeed, his outlook on the consolation of disaster-inspired terror that can be

[57] Poortvliet (1991: 58, *ad loc.*) briefly notes that Lucan's lines are Valerius' model; other allusions to these lines of Lucan are audible throughout the passage, including a closing echo of *ille regit puppes* (Luc. 8.176) in *regunt sua sidera puppem* ("their stars guide their ship," Val. Fl. 2.71).

[58] See further Fantham 2011 on Seneca's attitudes and approaches to the celestial firmament.

[59] Cf. *Ad Marc.* 18.1–2 and *Ad Helv.* 8.6.

[60] On Tiphys as an Aratean helmsman, see Krasne 2014b; beyond the nascent Stoicism of his poetic model, his concern for the stars is, in general, in line with Stoic principles.

[61] Cf. Aeetes' perception of the Argonauts: *quinquaginta Asiam . . . penetrauit Iason / exulibus* ("Jason has penetrated Asia with fifty exiles," Val. Fl. 7.44).

[62] Limburg 2007; Williams 2012: 213–257.

provided by mental efforts to categorize and comprehend the unfathomable and sublime is strikingly close to Lucretius'.[63] As Gareth Williams (2012: 214) notes, Seneca, in contrast to the popular tendency to explain natural phenomena or disasters as supernatural or divine happenings, "privileg[es] *ratio* over *religio*." It is, therefore, not just the contemplation but the comprehension that provides solace: for Seneca, as for Lucretius, a correct understanding of the natural world leads to having the correct response to it,[64] namely imperturbability of spirit. Tiphys' consolatory discourse therefore seems to cut across the grain: while he too advocates equanimity as the correct response to the cosmic vastness of the night sky, his own equanimity is gained not from an understanding of the natural world itself, nor even from his own rational observations, but rather from an understanding of, and encounter with, the divine regulation of that world. Unlike Seneca, who advocates contemplation of the natural world as a means to learning the nature of the divine, for Tiphys it is inversely the divine that leads to knowledge (albeit not an understanding) of the natural world.

I would even argue that the divine shaping of Tiphys' outlook bears a certain resemblance to Juno's earlier intervention to abstract Jason from his fears and troubles: Minerva's interaction with Tiphys has likewise obviated any need for his self-driven pursuit of philosophical wisdom, privileging taught *doctrina* over investigative *ratio*.[65] Much as Juno deprived Jason of knowledge rather than philosophically educating him, here Minerva provides Tiphys with knowledge rather than positioning him to pursue philosophical inquiry.[66] As a result, Tiphys is depicted as a skilled scientific practitioner with an understanding of *signa* but not as a philosopher with an understanding of *causae*,[67] and while in a regular consolatory context such a characterization might be unproblematic,[68] in the context of providing consolation for terror caused by the natural world, it is hardly adequate. For all that Tiphys' tendency to speak in personifications echoes Valerius' own, and for all that he has certainly learned to read and

[63] Williams (2012: 214–225, 241–247, 255–257) argues that Lucretius' approach was fundamental in shaping Seneca's own; see also De Vivo 1992: 81–109.

[64] See Limburg 2007: 56–83.

[65] For the evolution of *ars* and *ratio* in astronomical and astrological contemplation, especially in Manilius, see Glauthier 2011: 78–86; for Manilius, however, *ratio* is itself often cast as the teacher, or else Manilius himself is (cf. Glauthier 2011: 43–67), and any sort of stellar determinism is notably lacking from Tiphys' discourse.

[66] Both goddesses replay their interferences in Colchis, when their actions (and those of Mars) dictate the unfolding of the war's events; cf. Ferenczi (2014: 149), who notes the overt divine limitation of knowledge and decision-making power available to Jason.

[67] See Limburg 2007: 75–79 for the important distinction that Seneca draws between philosophers and scientists. Although inquiry into stars and planets—and their connection with the divine—as *signa* but not as *prodigia* forms part of the subject of Sen. *QNat*. 7 (on which see Limburg 2007: 344–349), the goal of such inquiry, in addition to expunging *religio* from one's consideration, is to develop an understanding of the nature of god, not to see *signa* as things which god may reveal the nature of.

[68] *Consolationes* often depend on *topoi* and tropes; see Limburg 2007: 299–302.

interpret the motions and effects of the cosmos's constituent parts, he shows no deeper comprehension of its workings.[69]

CONCLUSION

I propose that what we ought to see arising in the spaces opened up between the external philosophical doctrines and their implementation within the text is precisely the nature of those workings of the cosmos. The divine—both the personified *numina* and the Olympian gods—suffuses this epic's cosmos at every level, instantiating elements, creating and reshaping landscape, imposing fate, instilling and negating fear, and suborning philosophical doctrine. Over the course of the Argonauts' earliest voyage, therefore, we likewise see Valerius developing a multi-layered and responsive construction of the cosmos—physical, philosophical, and divine—through which they sail.

The Argonauts' own reactions to this cosmos demonstrate their fundamental naivety and religiosity in the face of cosmic grandeur, and yet justification for their response is revealed at every turn, contradicting the expectations fashioned by the intertextual and doctrinal models that predicate our own readerly response. These same frictions between model and text also reveal a multiplicity of ways in which the philosophical intersects with and is usurped by the divine; and Valerius' repeated revelation that the *causae* of his cosmos are the gods themselves will be further borne out by events at Lemnos, Cyzicus, Mysia, and elsewhere.[70] And while we should not expect to extrapolate a complete Argonautic worldview of the philosophical, physical, and divine from this one extended scene, its lessons must be taken into account beyond the opening of the Argo's voyage. They will, for instance, be substantially borne out and amplified on Lemnos, where Valerius draws on both Homeric allegory and Lucretian atomics to closely align Vulcan's fall from Olympus to Lemnos with the heaven-and-earth-bridging fall of a demythologized lightning bolt.[71] More than just replicating a Virgilian remythologizing, Valerius overstrikes the mythological onto the atomic without obliterating the atomic.

The very paradox presented by this fusion of incompatible systems may be yet another reimagining of epic's eternal paradox of free will and divine fate that, in the case of Valerius' *Argonautica*, Attila Ferenczi has expressed in terms of a philosophical dilemma. As he frames it (2014: 146), it is not just that "either

[69] Even Tiphys' claim of an *immutabile caelum* (Val. Fl. 2.55) is not unassailable; I have argued elsewhere (Krasne 2014a) that the Argo's eventual catasterism may be inverted from reality, but even if this is not the case, the simple addition of a constellation to the heavens refutes their immutability.

[70] See Ferenczi 2014 on Valerius' engagement with the traditional conflict between human free will and divinely fated causality.

[71] I explore this extended form of allegorizing, personification, and aetiology on Lemnos, which compasses more than Vulcan's fall, in the larger project from which this article derives (Krasne forthcoming); for one instance of Homeric allegory at the opening of the Lemnos episode, however, see Feeney 1991: 328–329.

everything is destined, or there is an open scope for human agency" (which he sees as Valerius' oblique reshaping of Stoic predestination versus Epicurean randomness), but that there is a friction produced by Valerius' "integrat[ion of] the quasi-monotheistic Stoic supreme god into the traditional polytheistic epic world" (150). The result, for Ferenczi, is that "the relation between the disordered passions of the individual and the harmonising power of the god of nature" (150) plays out exclusively within the divine world, leaving the unwitting human actors to be pulled in contradictory directions by "the violent intervention of the gods and their ever-present passions" (151).

We may now move Ferenczi's formulation of the *Argonautica*'s philosophical dilemma one step further. The Epicurean is wrong that the divine does not interfere—and, indeed, wrong that the gods are imperturbable[72]—but perhaps right that the cosmos is chaotic. The Stoic is right to take an animistic view of the cosmos, but perhaps wrong that the divine mind—and the cosmos it imbues and drives—is productively providential, or that the stars reveal any sort of determinism. After all, for all that Jupiter delivers a far-reaching prophecy in the epic's first book, it is a prophecy that holds indeterminacy and change at its heart (Val. Fl. 1.498–560):[73] even if this is a Stoic Jupiter, he is a Stoic Jupiter who governs a swerving atomic universe.

Not just this realization, but the approach that led to it, should be deeply significant for further studies of the epic, and again we can keep Ferenczi's reading in view. He takes as his starting point the ancient reader's expectation that philosophical ideas will be present in any epic and posits two ways in which the reader might encounter such ideas: either as essentially ecphrastic moments of inset narration, such as Mopsus' disquisition in Book 3 on the fate of unjustly slain souls, or as intertextually laden "passages integrated into the narrative that may recall a philosophical context, but where this is not inevitably the only reading."[74] My reading of the opening of Book 2 here uncovers a third philosophical mode, one which is simultaneously integrated, intertextually laden and activated, and undeniably philosophical, and one which, through its programmatic placement in the narrative, trains the reader in how to read this epic.

In short, we must give due weight to Valerius' intertextual systems, rather than shying away from them as hopelessly complex, or as too intertextual to be comprehensibly meaningful on a philosophical level.[75] They are not simply

[72] Cf. the striking formulation *metus . . . deum* ("the gods' fear," Val. Fl. 2.16), of the Gigantomachy and its remains. The gods may also be susceptible to the awesomeness of the sublime, as the description of the volcanic Typhon as *maximus . . . horror* ("the greatest dread," Val. Fl. 2.23–24) possibly activates a resonance of Lucretius' key phrase *quaedam divina voluptas / . . . atque horror* ("a certain divine ecstasy and frisson of dread," Lucr. 3.28–29).

[73] On the Valerian Jupiter's commitment to perpetual flux, see Krasne 2018.

[74] Ferenczi 2014: 136–138; quotation from 138.

[75] The latter perspective is that of Ferenczi (2014: 144): "The heterogeneous character of the references can (and must) be interpreted as a result of the extremely rich epic tradition behind

allusive shading but, through their intertextual activity, produce meaning in their own right, and this is all the more true when such intertexts are philosophically loaded. Much as one would never imagine reading and interpreting Jupiter's prophecy to Sol without bringing the Virgilian Jupiter's prophecy to Venus into the picture, nor try to discuss any portion of the epic without setting it against Apollonius' *Argonautica*, so too the full range of philosophical intertexts embedded in the epic must be given their due weight, not just for the richness and interpretative angles they add, but for the difficulties they both resolve and introduce. Some of these added layers may be usefully extended throughout the epic (for instance, in our present study, the quasi-atomic character of the gods) while others may appear to be more localized (for instance, Tiphys' evident failure to employ *ratio*). Either way, if we want to claim to "understand" Valerius' epic—if we want to have any hope of addressing its most elusive and contentious questions, such as whether it has a political agenda (and if so, what it is), or whether the overall tone of the epic shades more toward the positive or the negative—then we must unearth and give due weight to this layer that lies, not very subtly, immediately below the text's surface.

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Valerian poetry. This approach would, nevertheless, lead us to further intertextual analysis of the text; I will try to show *instead*, staying *closer* to the topic of philosophical ideas . . ." (italics mine).

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