SPUDASMATA

Studien zur Klassischen Philologie und ihren Grenzgebieten
Begründet von Hildebrecht Hommel und Ernst Zinn
Herausgegeben von Gottfried Kiefner und Ulrich Köpf

Band 162

VON URSACHEN SPRECHEN
EINE AITIOLOGISCHE SPURENSUCHE

TELLING ORIGINS
ON THE LOOKOUT FOR AETIOLOGY

Herausgegeben von
Christiane Reitz und Anke Walter

Vorwort

Im Juli 2012 konnten wir in Rostock eine Tagung mit dem Thema „Dichtung und Ursache. Strukturen aitiologischen Erzählens / Telling origins. Structures of aetiological narrative" durchführen. Die bereichernden Beiträge und Diskussionen haben uns den Anstoß gegeben, unsere Überlegungen weiter zu verfolgen. So sind in diesem Band nun sowohl einige der damaligen Vorträge wie weitere Beiträge vereint.

Wir danken allen, die uns bei beiden Vorhaben, Tagung und Veröffentlichung, unterstützt haben: den nimmermüden Helferinnen am Heinrich Schliemann-Institut für Altertumswissenschaften, besonders Frau Anke Wegner und Frau Brigitte Meyer, allen Teilnehmern an der Tagung, Kollegen wie Studenten, für die Diskussionen und Gespräche, insbesondere Alessandro Schiesaro für seinen anregenden und grundlegenden Vortrag. Finanzielle Unterstützung erhielten wir vom Department Wissen Kultur Transformation der Universität Rostock und von den Rostocker Freunden der Altertumswissenschaften e. V. Eric Naujoks hat uns kompetent und geduldig bei der Vorbereitung der Druckfassung geholfen. Wir danken den Herausgebern der Reihe Spudasmata, dass wir die Ergebnisse hier veröffentlichen dürfen. Die Zusammenarbeit mit dem Georg Olms Verlag verlief höchst angenehm und kooperativ.

Rostock, im Juli 2014

Ch. Reitz   A. Walter

Where Have All the Aetia Gone?: Aetiological Reassignment in Valerius Flaccus's *Argonautica*

Darcy Krasne

Obwohl Valerius Flaccus nicht nach der Art des Apollonius in Aitiologien schwelgt, die die argonautischen Ursprünge von künftigen Wahrzeichen und Ritualen erhellen, gibt es in seinen *Argonautica* dennoch eine erkennbare aitiologische Strömung, die besonders die Einrichtung der Welt erklärt, die schon vor der Fahrt der Argo abgeschlossen ist. Das ermöglicht es den Argonauten in Valerius' Epos, das stark von den späteren Ereignissen in Senecas *Medea* beeinflusst ist, das Verbrechen zu begehen, das ihnen der Chor von Senecas *Medea* vorhält: das Verbrechen, von den Göttern errichtete Grenzen einzureißen (*Med.* 335–339). Valerius' geänderte Aitiologie trägt dazu bei, eine Welt zu schaffen, die dazu ausersehen ist, von der Fahrt der Argonauten in der Weise verändert zu werden, wie es Senecas Chor erklärt, anstelle einer Weltordnung, die die Argonauten vollenden, wie in Apollonius' Epos. In der Mitte der römischen *Argonautica* ändert Valerius dagegen seinen Zugang zur Aitiologie. Er verwendet ausschließlich Aitien aus dem Werk des Apollonius. Dieses ist ein Aspekt einer Metapoetik, die den mittleren Teil des Epos durchzieht (der sich in etwa von der Abfahrt aus dem Reich des Phineus im vierten Buch bis zur mittleren Musenanrufung des fünften Buches erstreckt). Tiphys, der Steuermann und Lenker eines von der Forschung als poetisch charakterisierten Schiffes, hat während der Hinfahrt als ‚Muse' des Valerius gedient, in der Folge von Arats himmlischen σήματα. Sein Tod ist daher katastrophal für das Epos; ohne ihn kann Valerius nur den irdischen σήματα

folgen, die Apollonius zuvor mit der Fahrt der Argonauten nach Kolchis geschaffen hat. An dieser Stelle kann sich Valerius von der Erzählung des Apollonius befreien, indem er eine neue Muse für das neue Lied anruft, das er jetzt in Angriff nimmt: die „Aitiologie" der Medea aus Senecas *Medea*.

1. Shaping Worlds

We begin in the middle. The Harpies are fleeing away from the dinner table of Phineus, pursued by the Boreads, Zetes and Calais; they approach a cluster of low-lying islands at the edge of the Ionian sea. These, our poet tells us, will one day be called the Strophades.[1] That is it. No explanation of why, no further elaboration. But this is, nonetheless, an important moment in Valerius Flaccus's *Argonautica* – we might go so far as to call it a turning point. Nearly halfway through the epic, this is the very first time that Valerius has included an aetion that was also used by Apollonius Rhodius.

A representative example of the scholarly consensus on Valerius and aetiology is Poortvliet's opinion that "aetiology is not [Valerius's] cup of tea."[2] Despite Valerius's strong engagement with Apollonius's epic, their apparent variance in this regard should come as little surprise; after all, in recent years, the connection between the aetiological nature of Apollonius's *Argonautika* and the work's Ptolemaic context has repeatedly been stressed,[3] and Valerius is writing a very different *Argonautica* for a very different audience and age.[4] Accordingly, it makes sense that he would

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[1] *Iamque et ad Ionii metas atque intima tendunt / saxa, vocat magni Strophadas nunc incola ponti* ("Then they even head for the boundaries of the Ionian and the remotest rocks; now the great sea's inhabitant calls them the Strophades," Val. Fl. 4.512–513). See further below.

[2] Poortvliet 1991: 31.

[3] E. g., Stephens 2003; Barnes 2003; Mori 2008; Thalmann 2011; also, Klooster in this volume.

[4] See, e. g., Zissos 2003; Zissos 2009; Krasne 2011; Landrey 2012; Stover 2012.

not retain such a highly Ptolemaic aspect of Apollonius's poem. Nevertheless, despite the claims of most, Valerius has not actually discarded an aetiological framework.

When applied to Apollonius's *Argonautika*, the term "aetion" largely presupposes cultural, ritual, or etymological explanation that links past (narrative time) to present (time of composition or performance). Well over half of Apollonius's aetia explain places or customs that the Argonauts themselves leave in their wake, and thus Apollonius, by locating his poetic voice in his own present time, positions his aetiological narrative in the past – a past that aligns with the narrative present. While Valerius rarely includes this particular type of aetion,[5] favored by Apollonius, he by no means eschews aetia altogether. I therefore propose that a more accurate formulation of Valerius's aetiological ventures would be "*Apollonian* aetiology is not Valerius's cup of tea." Even the density of Valerius's aetia seems to correlate with Apollonius's; for instance, approximately twenty aetia occur in both poets' texts prior to their respective aetia of the Strophades.[6] If nothing else, this should demonstrate that Valerius's narrative is much more aetiological than scholars have previously given it credit for, although the reason for this scholarly blind-spot is readily apparent: scholars are looking for the same type of easily-recognizable aetion that we find in Apollonius, and as I have said, that is indeed harder to find in Valerius. Nevertheless, despite his rejection of Apollonian "Hellenocentric" aetiology,[7] Valerius does engage quite extensively – and innovatively – in aetiology, and I argue in what follows that his aetiological narrative should in fact inform our reading of his epic.

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[5] The rarity of this sort of aetion, that draws together past and present, is what scholars have focused on; see, e. g., Venini 1971: 583.

[6] See Table 1 (p. 548) for a list of Valerius's aetia.

[7] Zissos 2008: xlii: "The Roman poet naturally exhibits less interest in such 'Hellenocentric' material."

1. 1.286–293: Hellespont
2. 1.481–483: constellations as nighttime guides
3. 1.531–560: rise and fall of empires
4. 1.568–573: St Elmo's fire, Dioscuri as patron gods of sailors*
5. 1.585–590: intermixing of land and sea; split between Calpe and Libya, Italy and Sicily
6. 1.648–650: maritime deaths*
7. 1.677–680: increased worship of Poseidon and Triton (*promised by Jason*)
8. 2.16–23: mountains at Pallene
9. 2.23–33: volcanic activity of Aetna
10. 2.82–98: Vulcan's worship on Lemnos
11. 2.361–366: storms at Pleiades' rising
12. 2.572–573: the Aeneadae and a new Troy (i. e., Rome)
13. 2.585–586: Hellespont
14. 2.616–620: split between Europe and Asia
15. 3.15–31: [internal] cause of battle at Cyzicus
16. 4.122–123: constellation of Orion
17. 4.346–421: naming of Bosporus
18. 4.369: peacock eyes (*implication via simile*)
19. 4.416–418: Isis
20. 4.419–420: Bosporus
21. 4.512–513: Strophades*⌢
22. 4.709–710: Symplegades (Clashing Rocks)*⌢
23. 5.74–81: Callichoros River⌢
24. 5.99–100: Lyra*⌢
25. 5.103–104: Parthenius River⌢
26. 5.107–112: Sinope⌢
27. 5.142–146: steel weapons and war
28. 5.152–153: Philyra⌢
29. 5.207–209: statue of Phasis in Thessaly (*promised by Jason*)
30. 5.226–228: constellation of Aries
31. 5.417–424: Colchians
32. 5.425–428: Aea
33. 7.355–363: Promethean drug⌢
34. 7.604–606: Lapithes, the first horseman†
35. 8.217: Peuce
36. 8.255–256: Peuce

*: effected within the text (5)
⌢: borrowed from Apollonius Rhodius (8)

Table 1. List of *aitia* in Valerius Flaccus.

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†An aetion according to Zissos 2008: 276.

In Apollonius's epic, the sense given by the pervasive aetia is very much that of a world still in formation, which is touched and drawn toward completion by the Argonauts.[8] Like Orpheus's cosmogonic song, Apollonius's Argonauts pull order out of chaos where they pass, leaving σήματα, or "signs," inscribed upon the landscape.[9] Thus one effect of the aetia – namely, the traces of the Argonauts' passage – is to impose a stabilizing order on a previously chaotic world,[10] reminding the audience that this was the ultimate result of the Argonauts' civilizing journey to the far ends of the earth. Valerius's aetia, however, provide a very different sort of explanation than Apollonius's. At least in the first half of the narrative, they primarily explain the prior, rather than ongoing, formation of the cosmos. Where Apollonius positions his narrative in the past relative to his poetic utterance, Valerius aligns his poetic voice with the temporality of his narrative;[11] even so, his *aetiological* narrative remains located in the past, as it took place in the Argonauts' past as well as his own.

Valerius's aetia are, therefore, palpably different from Apollonius's, and a tacit alteration of Apollonius's aetiological paradigm evidently does not suffice. Instead, no sooner have the Argonauts set off on their voyage than he draws attention to his innovative rejection of Apollonius's aetia. In Apollonius's narrative, as I have mentioned, the majority of aetia result from the actions of the Argonauts themselves, and the first of these so-called "Argonautic aetia" occurs following the Argonauts' first day of sailing, as

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[8] See Klooster in this volume.

[9] For σήματα in Apollonius, see Barnes 2003: 84–100; Clare 2002: 73.

[10] This is at least partially the thrust of Barnes's argument. Cf. Clare 2002: 60: "the simile [at 1.545–546] implies that the ship's passage imposes order upon the sea, normally that most insubstantial and unpredictable of spaces."

[11] See p. 547. The Roman *vates*, unlike the Hellenistic scholar-poet, experiences in "real time" the events which he utters (cf. Val. Fl. 2.216–219).

Apollonius explains the origins of the name Aphetai Argous for the Magnesian headland:[12]

> A. R. 1.583–591:
> φαίνετο δ' εἰναλίη Σκίαθος, φαίνοντο δ' ἄπωθεν
> Πειρεσιαὶ Μάγνησσά θ' ὑπεύδιος ἠπείροιο
> ἀκτὴ καὶ τύμβος Δολοπήιος. ἔνθ' ἄρα τοίγε   585
> ἑσπέριοι ἀνέμοιο παλιμπνοίῃσιν ἔκελσαν·
> καί μιν κυδαίνοντες ὑπὸ κνέφας ἔντομα μήλων
> χεῖαν ὀρινομένης ἁλὸς οἴδματι, διπλόα δ' ἀκταῖς
> ἤματ' ἐλινύεσκον. ἀτὰρ τριτάτῳ προέηκαν
> νῆα, τανυσσάμενοι περιώσιον ὑψόθι λαῖφος·   590
> τὴν δ' ἀκτὴν Ἀφέτας Ἀργοῦς ἔτι κικλήσκουσιν.

> And now Skiathos appears on the sea, and Peiresiai appears far off and, under a calm sky, the Magnesian headland of the mainland, and the Dolopeian tomb. Here they put in at evening, due to the adverse blowing of the wind; and, honoring him in the darkness, they burned offerings of sheep at the swelling of the rising sea, and they stayed on the headlands for two days. But on the third, they launched the ship, stretching out the immense sail above them; and they still call the headland Aphetai Argous ["Departure of the Argo"].

Valerius omits this whole narrative. There are, of course, many aetia in Apollonius which Valerius does not imitate; what is of interest here, therefore, at the beginning of the journey, is not his omission of the aetion, but rather, how clearly he marks his avoid-

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[12]Herodotus says that this, or at least a spot called Aphetai somewhere on the Magnesian headland, is where the Argonauts left Heracles, having put in there for water (Hdt. 7.193). Neither Apollonius nor Valerius makes any reference to this alternative story. The creation of an altar to Apollo Aktios (of the sea-shore) and Embasios (of embarkation) at A. R. 1.402–404 may be aetiological (Valverde Sánchez 1989 does class this as an aetion), but if so, it is unmarked as such, and there is no reason that the altar could not be a temporary structure. The exclusion or inclusion of such altars is a primary difference between the aetia-counts of Barnes 2003 (sixty-six) and Valverde Sánchez 1989 (eighty), along with their different systems of enumeration (Barnes would have seventy-three aetia if he employed the same system of enumeration as Valverde Sánchez and several more if he included the altars as well).

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ance of the location.[13] Up until this stop, the itinerary of the two groups of Argonauts has been almost point for point.[14] However, instead of seeing and then stopping at the tomb of Dolops on account of adverse winds, Valerius's Argonauts only *think* they see the tomb of Dolops, and then they take in their sails and row on *despite* adverse winds:

> Val. Fl. 2.8–14:
> iam Sciathos subsedit aquis, iam longa recessit
> Sepias. attollit tondentes pabula Magnes
> campus equos: vidisse putant Dolopeia busta   10
> intrantemque Amyron curvas quaesita per oras
> aequora, flumineo cuius redeuntia vento
> vela legunt. remis insurgitur, inde salutant
> Eurymenas.

> Now Sciathos sinks below the waters, now Sepias has faded into the distance. The Magnesian plain rises before them, its horses cropping at fodder; they think they see the Dolopeian tomb and the Amyros as it enters the waters sought through its curving shores; they take in the sails blown back by its river breeze. They haul on their oars, then they greet Eurymenae.

Valerius's explicit rejection of Apollonius's very first Argonautic aetion turns out to be programmatic, signaling a broader pattern of avoidance which continues until the middle of the narrative.[15]

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[13]For another "literal *praeteritio*" by Valerius of a passage in Apollonius's *Argonautika*, see Feeney 1991: 324.

[14]Valerius postpones the periplus section until his second book (the first, after the Argonauts' departure, is taken up with Jupiter's prophecy of future events, a storm, and the tragic deaths of Jason's family back in Thessaly), but once it begins, he adheres fairly closely to the Apollonian itinerary. Shreeves 1978 gives a detailed account of the correspondences and discrepancies between the two itineraries. Poortvliet 1991: 31 thinks that Valerius avoids the time-wasting stop at Aphetai Argous because "he just wants the Argonauts to move on, even if this means that they have to sail all the way to Pallene on their first day at sea. ... Besides, aetiology is not his cup of tea."

[15]For instance, at Cyzicus, they never climb Mount Dindymon, the location of several Apollonian aetia. Indeed, Cybele's rites there seem to have been already established prior to the Argonauts' arrival; not only does Cyzicus

But, to reiterate, it is not aetiology as a whole that Valerius avoids, simply Apollonian aetiology.

Valerius is writing a post-Apollonian *Argonautica*, and in the same way, I would suggest, his Argonauts are sailing a post-Apollonian voyage. I say this in part because a primary aetiological strategy for Valerius seems to be to embed his Argonauts in a fully-finished cosmos. Valerius's aetia are largely analeptic, concerned with the shaping of the natural world that has already occurred *prior* to the Argo's voyage.[16] This is vastly different from Apollonius's aetiological strategy and, indeed, is reliant on it: Valerius's post-Apollonian, pre-Argonautic world is already a stable place and needs no more Argonautic inscription upon its surface.[17] Instead, the divine purpose of the Argonauts' journey, as Jupiter declares it, is the abolishment of *otium*:

> Val. Fl. 1.498–500:
> siderea tunc arce pater pulcherrima Graium
> coepta tuens tantamque operis consurgere molem
> laetatur; patrii neque enim probat otia regni.   500

> Then the Father, looking from his starry citadel at the resplendent undertakings of the Greeks and at the inception of so great an effort, is happy; for he does not approve of the leisure of his father's reign.

Valerius's Jupiter, contrary to the order-imposing Greek Zeus, appears to be a proponent of shaking things up, of introducing progress to a previously static world. Borders are opened; the uncrossed sea becomes a thoroughfare (for war as well as commerce, cf. Val. Fl. 1.545–546). This, of course, taps into the Roman poetic topos of the Argo's voyage as the end of the Saturnian Golden

Age,[18] but I propose that there is another motivation behind Valerius's aetiological emphasis on reshaping the shaped, and that is the influence of another literary predecessor.

Valerius's epic is, as I observed, a post-Apollonian *Argonautica*, but just as Apollonius himself was writing a post-Euripidean *Argonautika*, Valerius is also writing a post-Senecan *Argonautica*. Barchiesi has observed that "readers of Apollonius ... experience a recurring bifurcation: are we reading a new version of the traditional construct 'Medea', or the early biography (and aetiology) of Euripides' *Medea*?"[19] The same can be said of Valerius's *Argonautica*, but regarding Seneca's *Medea*.[20] Accordingly, Valerius's epic bears the heavy imprint of that tragedy, and one place that the *Medea* has left its mark is on Valerius's aetiological narrative. For Seneca, the Argo's crime is repeatedly expressed as the dissolution of natural boundaries, especially the bridging and mixing of land and sea (e. g., Sen. *Med.* 335–339),[21] an image which is completely contrary to Apollonius's formulation of the Argonauts' journey, where an early description and simile of the Argo's movement across the water even suggests that the Argo *imposes* divisions, and therefore order, upon the sea:[22]

> A. R. 1.542–546:
> ἀφρῷ δ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα κελαινὴ κήκιεν ἅλμη
> δεινὸν μορμύρουσα περισθενέων μένει ἀνδρῶν,
> στράπτε δ' ὑπ' ἠελίῳ φλογὶ εἴκελα νηὸς ἰούσης
> τεύχεα· μακραὶ δ' αἰὲν ἐλευκαίνοντο κέλευθοι,   545
> ἀτραπὸς ὡς χλοεροῖο διειδομένη πεδίοιο.

> And here and there the black brine bubbled, seething terribly with foam through the strength of mighty men, and their

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allude to this fact (Val. Fl. 3.231ff.), but Valerius calls Cybele's mountain *aerisono* (Val. Fl. 3.28).

[16] E. g., Val. Fl. 1.585ff., 2.16ff., 2.616ff.

[17] An example of this is Valerius's repeated suggestion that the cult of Cybele is already in place on Mount Dindymon (see n. 15); Apollonius's Argonauts had *instituted* that very cult (A. R. 1.1134–1139).

[18] See, e. g., Davis 1989; Zissos 2006; Feeney 2007: 118–136; Fabre-Serris 2008.

[19] Barchiesi 2001: 106.

[20] Cf. Davis 1989: 57: "Valerius' bold ship ... will break literary boundaries as well as geographical ones on her journey, ... for Valerius' Jason and Medea seem to move from the *Argonautica* to the Senecan tragedy."

[21] See especially Fyfe 1983. Lucan, too, at 3.193–197, follows this notion of the Argo's criminal tendency to dissolve *discrimina*.

[22] See Clare 2002: 60.

weapons flashed like the sun's fire as the ship went along; and
always its long wakes were growing white, like a path seen across
a green plain.

Valerius's *Argonautica*, by contrast, conforms to Seneca's vision.
In the mode of Barchiesi's so-called "allusion in the future tense,"
Valerius's Argonauts recapitulate, or rather, enact, the crime of
boundary dissolution which Seneca's chorus lays at their feet;[23] as
a post-written prequel, Valerius's *Argonautica* appropriately an-
ticipates its Senecan "response." Valerius's aetiological empha-
sis on the formation of the natural world is particularly key in
this Senecan anticipation – in order for the Argo's journey to
impose a deformation, the world must already be formed. The
world through which Valerius's Argonauts sail has, therefore, been
shaped partly by the world-shaping voyage of Apollonius's Argo-
nauts and partly in expectation of the "future" accusations of the
chorus in Seneca's *Medea*: Valerius's positioning of his epic "be-
fore" Seneca is performed through the same aetia that assert his
belatedness with regards to Apollonius.

In order to emphasize the completed shaping of the natural world
while constructing a post-Apollonian, pre-Senecan world,
Valerius's primary aetiological framework is one of geographic ex-
planation. For instance, among the aetia that he provides in the
first half of his epic are explanations for why the land is not con-
tiguous but rather is broken up by the sea (1.586–590), the origin of
the mountains at Pallene (2.16–22), the volcanic activity of Aetna
(2.24–33), and the rupture between the coastlines of Europe and
Asia (2.616–620). Such explanations reflect a contemporary Ro-
man interest in the natural world, as preserved in works of Seneca
and Pliny the Elder, but in Valerius's formulation, none of these
features of the natural world has occurred by chance. Instead,
all have been effected through divine effort, perhaps reflecting the

fact that some higher being's agency in shaping the world is pre-
cisely what makes the Argonauts' voyage a crime in the eyes of
Seneca's chorus.[24]

The Argonauts' primary impact upon the world of Valerius's *Arg-
onautica*, then, is the criminal Senecan boundary-dissolution
caused by their voyage.[25] Moreover, posterity's payment for this
crime becomes the only declarative aetion of the epic – declarative
because it is labeled with the word *causa*, the Latin term for αἴτιον
(or perhaps αἰτία):[26]

> Val. Fl. 1.640–650:
>
> undique fervent   640
> aequora, cum subitus trifida Neptunus in hasta
> caeruleum fundo caput extulit. 'hanc mihi Pallas
> et soror hanc,' inquit, 'mulcens mea pectora fletu
> abstulerint; veniant Phariae Tyriaeque carinae
> permissumque putent. quotiens mox rapta videbo   645
> vela Notis plenasque aliis clamoribus undas!
> non meus Orion aut saevus Pliade Taurus

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[23] They do so, in particular, by traveling through (or otherwise penetrating)
discrimina and other barriers which are meant to keep the separate apart
(e. g., 1.3–4, 1.217, 1.463–464, 2.613–628, 4.689–690, 4.710–715). For "al-
lusion in the future tense," see Barchiesi 2001.

[24] Zissos 2008: xliv takes the opposite perspective: "The description of land
masses sundered by the sea's incursions within a larger textual dialectic
on the invention of sailing provides an implicit counterargument to the
primitivist view of sailing as an unnatural incursion of terrestrial elements
into sea." Also see Zissos 2006: 89–91, e. g., "Seneca's chorus speaks of
sancta foedera mundi ('the sacred universal covenants', *Med.* 605–606),
the violation of which results in divine persecution of the Argonauts. With
a deft and subtle gesture, Valerius neutralizes this primitivist tenet by
appealing to the 'scientific' authority of contemporary theories of natural
history" (90).

[25] Feeney 1991: 331 and Zissos 2008: 106 observe the Senecan shading of *dis-
crimina* in Valerius's epic. Feeney appears to read Valerius's use of the
concept as positive, however: "The Argonauts are going to produce the
civilized world of Jupiter's new order by travelling right through *discrim-
ina rerum* (1.217) – right through the sea, in other words, the thing that
keeps the parts of the world separate."

[26] This is the first use of *causa* in the epic and the only use with a truly ae-
tiological gist. The next closest "aetiological" usage of *causa* is its double
occurrence in Book 3, bookending the war at Cyzicus, when Valerius re-
quests the *causae* of the nighttime war from Clio (3.14) and Mopsus offers
Jason the *causae* of the Argonauts' spiritual malaise (3.377).

mortis causa novae; miseris tu gentibus, Argo,
fata paras nec iam merito tibi, Tiphy, quietum
ulla parens volet Elysium manesque piorum.'   650

The waters are seething everywhere, when suddenly Neptune,
armed with his three-pronged spear, raised up his sea-blue head
from the depths. "This one, just this one ship let Pallas and my
sister steal from me, soothing my breast with their weeping; let
Pharian and Tyrian keels come and think that it is permitted.
How often, soon, shall I see sails snatched by south winds and
waves full of other cries! The cause of this new death is not
my Orion or Taurus, savage with the Pleiades; you, Argo, are
preparing deaths for unhappy folk, and deservedly now, Tiphys,
will no mother wish for you restful Elysium and the shades of
the pious.

Neptune calms in Vergilian fashion the truly epic storm caused by
Boreas and his fellow winds, but not before uttering an aetiological
proclamation. The Argo will be allowed to sail, but as a result, he
will reap a reward of death forever after from those who sail upon
the sea; and the Argo is the cause of this new sort of death.[27] This
responds to and modifies Seneca's catalogue of Argonautic deaths,
which the chorus claims are a sufficient penalty to be paid for the
Argo's crime:

> Sen. *Med*. 607–615, 668–669:
> quisquis audacis tetigit carinae
> nobiles remos, nemorisque sacri
> Pelion densa spoliavit umbra,
> quisquis intravit scopulos vagantes   610
> et tot emensus pelagi labores
> barbara funem religavit ora
> raptor externi rediturus auri,
> exitu diro temerata ponti
>   iura piavit.   615
> ...
> iam satis, divi, mare vindicastis:
>   parcite iusso.

Whoever touched the noble oars of the bold ship and despoiled
Pelion of the dense shade of its sacred woodland, whoever entered
the wandering rocks and, having traversed so many labors of the
sea, bound his rope to a foreign shore, to return as a snatcher
of foreign gold – he has atoned for the outraged laws of the sea
with a dreadful destruction. ... Now you have taken enough
vengeance for the sea, gods: spare the one who was ordered.

Valerius's Neptune effectively demonstrates that Seneca's chorus
is wrong, and that there is no possibility for a complete expiation
of the Argo's crime.[28] The lives of all future sailors are forfeit.

But Jupiter has preempted his brother's proclamation. A scant
line before Boreas first saw the ship and called for the storm which
would come to an end with Neptune's curse upon sailing, Jupiter
had provided the one thing that would mitigate Neptune's curse
– two newly-minted patron gods of despairing sailors:

> Val. Fl. 1.568–573:
> dixit et ingenti flammantem nubila sulco
> derexit per inane facem, quae puppe propinqua
> in bifidum discessit iter fratresque petivit   570
> Tyndareos, placida et mediis in frontibus haesit
> protinus amborum lumenque innoxia fundit
> purpureum, miseris olim implorabile nautis.

He spoke and directed through the void a bolt that set the clouds
ablaze with a huge furrow. As it neared the ship, it split into
a forked path and sought the Tyndarean brothers, and right
away it clung calmly to the mid-foreheads of both and harmlessly
poured forth a purple light, one day to be beseeched by distressed
sailors.

Although this is the traditional aetion for the mysterious phe-
nomenon of St Elmo's Fire, imagined as shining flames above
the foreheads of the Dioscuri, here it becomes a play in Jupiter

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[27]Statius's Neptune, in the *Achilleid*, seems to acknowledge that Jupiter ul-
timately has more authority over the universe than he, as he claims to be
unable (or unwilling?) to grant Thetis' request of sinking Paris' Trojan
ships (*Ach*. 1.61–94) – the Trojan War is fated.

[28]The Argo's responsibility for *mors nova* is also strongly influenced by Lu-
can 3.193–196, which echoes Seneca's description of the Argo's boundary-
dissolving crime and concludes with *fatisque per illam / accessit mors una
ratem* ("and because of that ship, one death got added to the fates").

and Neptune's cosmic game of chess. This aetion effectively positions the Dioscuri as a necessary *antidote* to the overarching aetion stemming from the Argonauts' venture. Scholars have sometimes commented that it is odd that the Dioscuri gain their stars and their patronage over sailors before the storm occurs, rather than during or after it, as in other Argonautic authors;[29] however, the order of events serves to demonstrate Jupiter's providence and perhaps explains the seeming *hysteron proteron*. Moreover, just as Neptune's aetion of maritime deaths is explicitly marked as an aetion by the use of *causa* (1.648), this aetion of St Elmo's Fire is also marked as such by a reference to its continuation into future (present) time (*olim*, 1.573). Any such aetiological marking, while common in Apollonius, is extremely rare in Valerius's poem, lending an added significance to these two aetia. Jupiter and Neptune both take a long view of cause and effect, but Jupiter has the upper hand over his brother. Here and elsewhere in the epic, Jupiter is fully in charge; he is not to be easily diverted from his plans by the other gods. And the Argonauts' voyage is an integral part of his plan to set the world forever spinning, with all the vicissitudes that this will bring to human fortune.[30]

2. Turning Points

For the first three and a half books of the epic, then, this is the thrust of Valerius's aetiological narrative, expressed as a struggle between two divine brothers and their differing opinions over whether or not the world is complete, as well as their respective definitions of *fas* and *nefas*. But halfway through the poem, Apollonius's aetiological narrative suddenly erupts without warning:

> Val. Fl. 4.512–513:
> iamque et ad Ionii <u>metas</u> atque intima tendunt
> saxa, vocat magni <u>Strophadas</u> nunc incola ponti.
>
> And then [the Harpies] even head for the <u>boundaries</u> of the Ionian and the remotest rocks; now the inhabitant of the great sea calls them the <u>Strophades</u> ["Turners"].

As I mentioned previously, this aetion is borrowed directly from Apollonius:

> A. R. 2.284–287, 295–297:
> καί νύ κε δή σφ' ἀέκητι θεῶν διεδηλήσαντο,
> πολλὸν ἑκὰς νήσοισιν ἔπι Πλωτῇσι κιχόντες,   285
> εἰ μὴ ἄρ' ὠκέα Ἴρις ἴδεν, κατὰ δ' αἰθέρος ἄλτο
> οὐρανόθεν, καὶ τοῖα παραιφαμένη κατέρυκεν·
> . . .
> οἱ δ' ὅρκῳ εἴξαντες ὑπέστρεφον ἂψ ἐπὶ νῆα   295
> σώεσθαι· <u>Στροφάδας</u> δὲ μετακλείουσ' ἄνθρωποι
> νήσους τοῖο ἕκητι, πάρος Πλωτὰς καλέοντες.
>
> And now indeed [the Boreads] would have torn [the Harpies] to pieces, even against the gods' will, having reached the far distant Plotai ["Floating"] Islands, had not swift Iris seen them and leapt down from the air of the upper sky; and she held them back, suggesting such things. . . . And [the Boreads], having given in to her oath, <u>were turning [hupéstrephon]</u> to get back to the ship; and on account of this, men changed the name of those islands to the <u>Strophades</u>, though previously they called them the Plotai.

Rather than being a unique occurrence of an Apollonian aetion, however, it stands as the first in a series. The Strophades are, appropriately, a turning point in the aetiological narrative.

To call Valerius's mention of the Strophades an aetion is, apparently, a controversial statement. Levin, in his analysis of Apollonius's first two books, claims that "the Roman poet's two verses barely constitute an αἴτιον . . . because the Latin language provides

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[29] E. g., Zissos 2008: 326: "VF's treatment involves a curious inversion inasmuch as the honorific scene is immediately *followed* by a storm – and one in which the Dioscuri are as hapless as their comrades – rather than being motivated by one." In Apollonius, Zeus entrusts the Dioscuri with future ships after the Argonauts make it through a storm due to the Dioscuri's prayers (A. R. 4.650–653). In Diodorus Siculus, stars appear over the Dioscuri's heads as the storm dies down thanks to the prayers of Orpheus, who was an initiate of Samothrace (D. S. 4.43).

[30] Jupiter outlines his plan at Val. Fl. 1.544–560, immediately prior to marking the Dioscuri with forehead-flames; there is an implied connection.

no verb which both sounds the same and means the same thing as ὑποστρέφειν."[31] It is true that Latin can provide no direct etymology for the name of the Strophades, but this does not prevent it from being an aetion. In fact, a number of Apollonius's own aetia function this way, with part of the explanation left unexplained – this is one category of what Valverde Sánchez calls Apollonius's "*aitia* «implícitos»."[32] And, as it happens, Valerius has provided us with the next best thing to an etymology, namely a bilingual pun on the words *metae* and *Strophades*. In this context, *metae* means "boundaries," strictly speaking, since the islands are at the very edge of the Ionian sea. However, it also incorporates the idea of "turning posts," which matches the meaning of Strophades and reminds the knowledgeable reader of the reason Apollonius had given for the islands' future name: namely, that this is where the Boreads turned and flew back after their pursuit of the Harpies. And even were the meaning of "turning posts" not automatically inherent in *metae*, it would surely be activated for readers by the racing context of the Boreads' pursuit of the Harpies.[33] Moreover, the pun is highlighted by the parallel placement of *metas* and *Strophadas* immediately after the third-foot caesura in consecutive lines.

This is an unprecedented effort on Valerius's part to incorporate an Apollonian aetion into his epic, and among other things, it demonstrates that he has not been avoiding Apollonius's aetia simply because the occasional linguistic difficulties could not be surmounted.[34] Instead, as I have been suggesting, it appears that Apollonius's aetia may have been kept out of the poem for a reason. Accordingly, there must be a reason that they make their

appearance now; and I say "they" because the aetia that follow this turning-point are markedly different from those that precede it, in that almost every single one of them, until the Argonauts reach the shores of Colchis, is drawn directly from Apollonius. The aetion of the Strophades stands as a gateway, or even a self-referential marker, to this aetiological *volte face*.

The placement of this shift within the poem is also appropriate. Zissos has identified a "middle" of the *Argonautica*, which he defines as encompassing the narrative between the Argonauts' departure from Phineus's kingdom in Book 4 and the medial reinvocation of the Muse in Book 5.[35] This segment corresponds almost precisely with the run of Apollonian aetia. Given the exigencies of this new, Apollonian, aetiological narrative, therefore, I would extend the central region to include the aetion of the Strophades, which then serve as the bounding *metae* not only of the Ionian Sea, but also of the central narrative. This is not just arbitrary punning. These two topics – the string of Apollonian aetia and the epic's middle – will turn out to be closely connected.

The connection is not immediately apparent. The Strophades are, of course, aptly chosen for their lynchpin positioning, and the aetion which follows, the stilling of the Symplegades, is both the most important event of the Argonauts' journey and an unavoidable aetion for any Argonautic narrative.[36] Indeed, the Argonauts' stilling effect on the Symplegades can be perceived as a perfect encapsulation of their effect on the world in both Apollonius and Valerius, despite their different world-shaping roles in the two epics.

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[31] Levin 1971: 165. He is echoed in this by Shreeves 1978: 40; Murgatroyd 2009: ad loc. does at least observe the pun.

[32] Valverde Sánchez 1989: 65ff. Suppression of the keyword is the first category of these "implicit" aetia.

[33] I owe this observation to Lauren Ginsberg.

[34] Might there also be a similar (but more tacit) pun hidden in Valerius's *avoidance* of Aphetai Argous? By omitting the aetion of The Argo's Departure, he himself 'departs' from Apollonius's aetiological epic.

[35] Zissos 2004: 311–319. See Conte 1992 on the *topos* of the medial proem.

[36] Valerius's four-line proem focuses almost exclusively on the Argo's novel (and forceful) passage through the Clashing Rocks. In versions where the Argo is not the first ship, her importance is often considered to be her primacy in passing through the Clashing Rocks. Hunter 1993: 138 observes that the Argo's penetration of the Clashing Rocks is "the most striking symbol of man's conquest of the oceans," with all the positive and negative implications of this feat ("a triumph of Greek technology and the human spirit" versus "the original hybristic foolishness of men who refuse to accept divinely ordained limits, and ... the start of moral decay").

For Apollonius, the Argonauts bring a stabilizing order to a pre-viously chaotic world. Their passage through the Symplegades, imposing fixity on what had been a locus of perpetual motion, is therefore symptomatic of the cosmogonic effect of their journey: the previously-fluid becomes static. For Valerius, however, while the immobilization of the Symplegades is again symptomatic, its significance has changed. The previously impenetrable boundary between West and East is penetrated, and the clear distinction (*discrimen*, 4.689) between the two sides is lost.

Accordingly, the aetia of the Strophades and the Symplegades, both of which are independently significant in Valerius's narrative, can be distinguished from the subsequent cluster of aetia, which, although they also derive from Apollonius, are significant only for being precisely that – a group of aetia that derives directly from Apollonius. These aetia, which appear towards the beginning of Valerius's fifth book and towards the end of Apollonius's second book, are almost identical in both poems:

APOLLONIUS'S AITIA (2.904–1241)	VALERIUS'S AETIA (5.74–153)
Kallichoros River and Aulion Cave (2.904–910)	Callichoros River (5.74–81)
Lyra (2.911–929)	Lyra (5.82–100)
Parthenios River (2.936–939)	Parthenios River (5.102–104)
Sinope (2.946–954)	Sinope (5.109–112)
Argo's Speech	*Steel weapons and war (5.142–146)*
Golden Fleece (2.1143–1147)	
Guardian Dragon (2.1208–1210)	
Typhaonian Rock (2.1210–1213)	
Typhaon under Lake Serbonis (2.1213–1215)	
Philyra Island (2.1231–1242)	Philyra Island (5.152–153)

Immediately after the Argonauts depart from Lycus's kingdom, they pass by the Callichoros River, and both Apollonius and Valerius tell us how Bacchus's thiasos had danced there as the god

returned from his Indian conquests.[37] Next, the ghost of Sthenelus appears, and Mopsus instructs the Argonauts in propitiatory rituals, after which Orpheus dedicates his lyre. Although Apollonius is more explicit than Valerius, both explain that the land takes its name, Lyra, from this event.[38] The Argonauts then pass by a river called Parthenius, a name which both poets implicitly associate with Artemis.[39] After that, the Argonauts land at Sinope, and again, both Apollonius and Valerius tell how Sinope was once a nymph who rejected the advances of three gods: Zeus, Apollo, and the river Halys.[40]

At this point, the chain of matching aetia temporarily breaks. Apollonius's Argonauts stop at the Island of Ares and meet the sons of Phrixus, who include several aetia in their narrative excursus.[41] Valerius, who removes the sons of Phrixus from this part of the narrative, includes – in place of their appearance and their tale – his single addition to this Apollonian 'itinerary' of aetia, namely an excursus on the Chalybes which attributes the very origin of war to their mining of iron and forging of steel.[42] This dismal aetion is appropriate to Valerius's refashioned universe and the wars that lie ahead, as well as a thematically appropriate substitute for the Island of Ares, which is circumvented in Valerius's narrative. But there is still one more Apollonian aetion to come: in the final segment of the periplus, we hear from both poets about the island

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[37] A. R. 2.904–910, Val. Fl. 5.74–81. The MSS read *Callirhoen* or *Callirhoan* rather than *Callichoron*, but few editors retain this reading (although see Wijsman 1996: 52–53 for a defense of the manuscript reading).

[38] A. R. 2.911–929, Val. Fl. 5.82–100.

[39] A. R. 2.936–939, Val. Fl. 5.102–104.

[40] A. R. 2.946–954, Val. Fl. 5.109–112.

[41] The origin of the Golden Fleece (A. R. 2.1143–1147), the origin of the dragon who guards it (A. R. 2.1208–1210), and the origin of the dragon's origin (i. e., the Typhaonian Rock, A. R. 2.1210–1215).

[42] Val. Fl. 5.142–146. For Apollonius, Eros was the origin of war, or at least of strife (ἔριδες, 4.445–447), but Valerius has removed much of Apollonius's erotic program. Feeney 1991: 324–325 observes that Valerius is turning the Chalybes into the Telchines of Callimachus's *Aetia*.

named after Philyra, whom Kronos, or Saturn, raped there in the form of a horse.[43]

Once the Argonauts arrive in Colchis, Apollonian aetiology again recedes from Valerius's poem. In fact, Valerius includes only one other Apollonian aetion, much later in the narrative.[44] What is it, then, that causes the unparalleled proliferation of Apollonian aetia in the central region? I would argue that they are one manifestation of the intensive metapoetics that pervade the poem's middle.

3. A Death of the Poet as a Young Man

I have already mentioned that we must define a central region of Valerius's *Argonautica*, rather than a precise center-point. This is due in part to the incomplete ending of the epic – without knowing how many lines a poem has, it is naturally impossible to determine a precise center. But even were the poem complete, we would likely still need to speak of the middle 'region,' since the last 250 lines of Book 4 and the first 200 lines of Book 5, from the aetion of the Strophades to the overly-postponed medial proem, are filled with references to middles and turning-points and even, as Zissos has shown, a series of endings.[45]

One of those endings almost brings a halt to the entire poem. As Don Fowler has observed, the middle of a narrative is always a place of uncertainty, a point where the journey could either continue or prematurely conclude.[46] In Valerius's *Argonautica*, this potential caesura of the narrative journey is enacted within both the poetic narrative and the actual journey through the death

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[43] A. R. 2.1231–1242, Val. Fl. 5.152–153.

[44] This is the Promethean drug which Medea harvests in order to protect Jason (A. R. 3.845–866, Val. Fl. 7.355–370); there is a suggestion of this aetion in Seneca's *Medea*, as well (708–709).

[45] Zissos 2004.

[46] Fowler 1997: 20–21.

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of the Argo's helmsman, Tiphys, who is himself what Fowler would call an "authorial surrogate."[47] Not only does he determine the Argonauts' course, but Seneca had even ascribed to Tiphys the power of writing, a power through which he could rearrange the cosmos:

> Sen. *Med.* 318–320:
> ausus Tiphys pandere uasto
>   carbasa ponto
> legesque nouas <u>scribere</u> uentis   320
>
> Tiphys dared to spread canvases over the vast sea and <u>to write</u> new laws for the winds.

It is Tiphys's death, I propose, that really opens the door for Apollonian aetiology to enter the epic.

Although Tiphys is not alone in his role as poetic stand-in – indeed, there is an extraordinary surplus of potential authorial surrogates within the epic – Tiphys occupies a special place. As the helmsman, he literally controls the journey. His authority over the ship and her crew is expressed early on through a simile that likens him to Jupiter controlling the elements:

> Val. Fl. 1.689–692:
> Tiphys agit tacitique sedent ad iussa ministri,
> qualiter ad summi solium Iovis omnia circum   690
> prona parata deo, ventique imbresque nivesque
> fulguraque et tonitrus et adhuc in fontibus amnes.
>
> Tiphys guides them, and his attendants sit silent, waiting for his command, just as, at the throne of highest Jupiter, all things around him are poised, prepared for the god: the winds and clouds and snows and lightnings, and thunders, and floods as yet in their fountains.

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[47] Fowler 1997: 17: "Internal narrators and related authorial surrogates (prophets, controlling gods, visual artists, letter-writers), in drawing their own stories to a close, will often provoke reflection on the way that the framing narration may be read."

While the Jupiter-figure of any poem may, of course, be the author, who decides where and how the poem will run, the author does not, in fact, reign supreme. Instead, he must bow to an even higher poetic authority, namely his Muse. It is she, the guide of the poet and his poetic craft, whom Tiphys most closely resembles. Valerius underscores this parallel by giving Tiphys the toponymic epithet "Thespiades," a name which in Latin (and as a feminine) is primarily used for the Muses.[48]

But Tiphys may not be just any old Muse. He guides the ship, and accordingly the epic, in a very particular fashion: by constellation. Valerius makes it explicit, in fact, through an early aetion, that Tiphys himself is the one who has given the stars this function, allowing them to serve as guiding σήματα for the Argo's course:[49]

> Val. Fl. 1.481–483:
> pervigil Arcadio Tiphys pendebat ab astro
> Hagniades, felix stellis qui segnibus usum
> et dedit aequoreos caelo duce tendere cursus.

> Wakeful Tiphys, Hagnias's son, was depending on the Arcadian star, he who, blessed, gave a use to the lazy stars and granted that [the Argonauts] extend their paths over the waters with the sky as their leader.

Again, this is not without poetological significance. The stellar guide *par excellence* is the *Phaenomena* of Aratus, a work which scholars are in the process of recognizing as deeply important for Valerius,[50] and Katharina Volk has recently discussed the poetic significance of Aratus's constellations as meaning-bearing σήμα-τα.[51] In particular, she explicates the role of both poet and reader in creating and comprehending them. If we understand Valerius's Tiphys as the poet's Aratean guide, not just the ship's guide, we can detect a similar sematological and poetic function of the constellations in Valerius's epic.[52]

Valerius's Argonauts, as we have seen, do not create σήματα in the same way as Apollonius's Argonauts do. Valerius's Tiphys, however, *does* appear to create, as well as follow, the heavenly Aratean σήματα, filling the shoes of Aratus's anonymous πρῶτος εὑρετής (Arat. 373–381).[53] This, too, associates him with both Jupiter and the Muses, the former of whom Aratus hails as the

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[48]This is not true in Greek, where it usually refers to the sons of Herakles by the fifty daughters of Thespios. In Valerius's narrative, Tiphys shares the toponymic with the shipwright Argus; an association with the Muses is equally appropriate for the builder of the poetic craft. Neither Argonaut is given the toponymic with great frequency; indeed, Argus is only called Thespiades once, while he is actually engaged in the act of building the ship (a scene that is wrought with poetic resonance, for which see Stover 2010). Tiphys, however, receives the epithet twice, at moments of narrative crisis: once during a dangerous lapse in the poem's narrative progression, when the Argonauts are at risk of abandoning their journey to stay on Lemnos, (see n. 52), and once in the center of the epic, at his death (see below).

[49]The direct Latin translation of σήματα is *signa*, and we know that this is a word that Valerius associates with constellations, although he does not use it here: he addresses the (to-be-)catasterized Vespasian with *si tu signa dabis* ("if you give signs," 1.19) in the context of guiding ships.

[50]See especially the ongoing work of Cristiano Castelletti (e. g., Castelletti 2012; Castelletti 2014); see also Soubiran 1997 and Krasne 2014.

[51]Volk 2012.

[52]The first reference to Tiphys as Thespiades occurs in a highly Aratean passage (Val. Fl. 2.367–369), which additionally comes at a point when the journey's (and epic's) narrative progression is in danger; either fact or both may explain the poetically-charged toponymic. When Tiphys stirs the voyage back into motion, it is with a call for *arma viros* (2.392), indicating something of a renewal (a reinvocation?) for the voyage. The passage imitates Arat. 783–787 and Verg. *georg.* 1.427–435; it even bears a gamma acrostic, *et qui*, in a nod to the famous acrostics of both models (see Castelletti 2008 and Castelletti 2014 on several of Valerius' acrostics). It is also worth drawing attention, in the context of this passage, to the parallels between Tiphys's constellations and the poet's acrostics: specifically, Volk 2012: 227–229 and Castelletti 2014 argue for an Aratean parallel between the letters that form words and the stars that form constellations (which, I would add, is identical to the parallel that Lucretius explicitly draws at Lucr. 1.820–829 between the letters of words and atoms).

[53]See Volk 2012: 219–220 on this passage. The helmsmen in Lucan, too, display Aratean knowledge; Valerius's Tiphys, while technically their heir, is cast as their archetype.

ultimate source of the constellations (Arat. 10–13), and the latter of whom he asks to provide guiding signs for his song:

> Arat. 15–18:
> χαῖρε, πάτερ, μέγα θαῦμα, μέγ' ἀνθρώποισιν ὄνειαρ,   15
> αὐτὸς καὶ προτέρη γενεή. χαίροιτε δὲ Μοῦσαι
> μειλίχιαι μάλα πᾶσαι. ἐμοί γε μὲν ἀστέρας εἰπεῖν
> ᾗ θέμις εὐχομένῳ <u>τεκμήρατε πᾶσαν ἀοιδήν</u>.

> Hail, father, great wonder, great gift to men, yourself and your early races. And hail Muses, all exceedingly honeyed. For me, praying that it be lawful to speak thus of the stars, <u>signpost my entire song</u>.

It seems that Valerius, in addition to fashioning his cosmos along Senecan lines, prefers the predetermined, celestial σήματα of Aratus (created by Zeus) to the evolving, terrestrial σήματα of Apollonius (created by the Argonauts).[54] But as we have seen, Apollonius's σήματα, or rather his aetia, do eventually emerge into Valerius's formerly Senecan and Aratean world. I think it is no coincidence that the cluster of Apollonian aetia subsequent to the Clashing Rocks episode begins immediately following Tiphys's death.

Because Tiphys guides the poem as well as the ship, his death at the beginning of Book 5, as I have mentioned, brings to a simultaneous halt the voyage and the narrative. In lamenting over his funeral pyre, Jason inquires how the Argo will move on without Tiphys, and who will take his place:

> Val. Fl. 5.44–47, 52–54:
> "<u>te sine, Thespiade, nos ulla movebimus ultra aequora?</u> nec summa speculantem puppe videbo   45
> Pleiadumque globos et agentes noctibus Arctos?
> <u>cui Minyas caramque ratem, cui sidera tradis?</u>
> ...

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[54] Aratus's description of constellations as ἐξείης στιχόωντα (372) matches Apollonius's description of the trees marshaled into lines by Orpheus's song (ἐξείης στιχόωσιν, A. R. 1.30); see Klooster in this volume (p. 538–539) on the possible poetic significance inherent in the Apollonian passage, which could certainly be shared by the Aratean passage.

> nunc quoque, si tenui superant in imagine curae,
> adsis umbra, precor, venturi praescia caeli
> <u>rectoremque tuae moneas ratis</u>."

> "<u>Without you, Thespiades, shall we set in motion any further waters?</u> Shall I not see you watching, from the top of the poop-deck, the globes of the Pleiades and the Bears that lead us in the night? <u>To whom do you hand over the Minyae and your dear ship, to whom the stars?</u> ... Now too, if cares survive in an evanescent ghost, be you present as a shade, I pray, prescient of the sky to come, <u>and guide the helmsman of your ship</u>."

Within the confines of the poem, with an eye to the movement of the physical Argo alone, Jason's fears are unfounded. The Argo herself speaks up to appoint a replacement helmsman, Erginus, and the voyage gets back on its feet. But on a metapoetic level, Jason appears to be spot on. His aporetic response to Tiphys's death contains hints of proemial language, in essence pointing out the *absence* of a re-invocation of the Muse, which would, following Vergil, be expected at this point in the narrative.[55] The final line, in particular, asking the prognostic shade of Tiphys to stand by and direct the ship's new helmsman (*rectoremque tuae moneas ratis*), echoes not only Vergil's medial apostrophe to his Muse, but also Valerius's own initial invocation to Apollo:

> Verg. *Aen.* 7.41–45:
> <u>tu uatem, tu, diua, mone.</u> dicam horrida bella,
> dicam acies actosque animis in funera reges,
> Tyrrhenamque manum totamque sub arma coactam
> Hesperiam. maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo,
> <u>maius opus moueo.</u>   45

> <u>You, goddess, you, guide your bard.</u> I shall tell of horrible wars, I shall tell of battle-lines and of kings driven to death by their spirits, and of the Tyrrhenian band and all Hesperia pressed under arms. A greater order of things is born for me, <u>I set a greater work in motion</u>.

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[55] The correspondence is precise: Jason's monologue begins at 5.37, while Vergil's medial invocation to Erato begins at *Aen.* 7.37 – in both cases, the thirty-seventh line of the first book of the second half.

Val. Fl. 1.5–6:
Phoebe, mone, si Cymaeae mihi conscia vatis   5
stat casta cortina domo …

Phoebus, guide me, if a tripod, knowing of the Cymaean prophet-
ess, stands in my chaste home …

And while Vergil had promised to move on to a greater work,
Jason plaintively asks how they shall move on at all – his question
becomes, essentially, a metapoetic query of narrative progression.
Several scholars have discussed Tiphys's importance for the voyage
and, accordingly, for the epic.[56] I want to take this one step
further and point out Tiphys's relevance to Valerius's own ability
to innovate.

In Apollonius's text, where Orpheus is the primary poetic figure,
his σήματα μολπῆς ("signs of singing," A. R. 1.28) at the poem's
onset demonstrate the terrestrial focus of the poem. For Valerius,
however, where Tiphys is the primary (or at least most controlling)
poetic figure, and where catasterisms are highlighted at the ends
of both the proem (1.4) and the longer invocation to the Flavian
gens (1.16–20),[57] it is celestial *signa* that are the guiding lights to
follow. Fittingly, therefore, it is precisely with Tiphys's death that
Valerius seems to lose his ability to write a new *Argonautica* that
builds on but alters the aetiological foundation of the old, rather
than simply repeating it. Instead, deprived of the literary innova-
tion that is enabled by the presence of his Aratean Muse, Valerius
must cling to the Apollonian aetiological narrative as he makes
his way forward, repeating the previous poem aetion for aetion.
No one can now interpret the heavenly σήματα, the stellar signs
of writing, for Valerius, allowing him to make his own way across
the sea of poetry. Apollonius's aetia, which had marked the land-
scape with σήματα, become Valerius's only guide. They signpost
the way for him, even as the shining yet traditional constellation
Helice guides the Argo's new helmsman (Val. Fl. 5.69–71); Tiphys,

by contrast, had made the Serpent, rather than the Bear, his guide
(Val. Fl. 2.64–65).[58] It is surely significant that the poet addresses
a lamenting apostrophe to Tiphys himself in the midst of this ae-
tiological redux, observing how his further journey was denied by
the Fates:

Val. Fl. 5.101–104:
altius hinc ventos recipit ratis ac fugit omne
Crobiali latus et fatis tibi, Tiphy, negatum
Parthenium, ante alios Triviae qui creditur amnis
fidus et Inopi materna gratior unda.

From here the raft receives stiffer winds and flees the whole coast
of Crobialus and the Parthenius, denied to you by the fates,
Tiphys, a river which is believed to be faithful to Trivia beyond
all others and dearer than her mother's wave of Inopus.

Valerius's craft is rudderless without its poetic helmsman, stuck
drifting on a predetermined path that, fortunately, leads to Col-
chis. Not *everything* about the two narratives is now the same,
of course – for instance, as we saw, Valerius's Argonauts do not
encounter the sons of Phrixus – but Valerius has nonetheless been
sucked into the easy, pre-worn aetiological tracks of the earlier
poem.[59]

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[56] E. g., Fowler 1997; Zissos 2004: 328–331; van der Schuur 2014.
[57] A passage modeled on Arat. 36–44.

[58] Castelletti 2012 discusses the importance of the heavenly serpent for Va-
lerius.
[59] The new helmsman, Erginus, is simply not an innovator: he will suggest
in Book 8, out of the blue (*subito*, 8.177), that the Argo travel home via
the Hister (Val. Fl. 8.183–201), an idea borrowed from Apollonius's text,
where it had actual context (there, Phineus foretells that their homeward
route will be different [A. R. 2.421–422], and it is Phrixos's son Argos who
proposes the Istros as a possibility [A. R. 4.257–293]). Similarly, whereas
Tiphys is the inventor of stargazing, Erginus has accordingly simply learned
the skill (Wijsman 1996: 45 observes that "in Sen. *Med.* 618 Tiphys leaves
the ship's *regimen* to an *indoctus magister*," which could easily be reinter-
preted with poetic overtones). Meyer 2001: 227 refers to Apollonius fol-
lowing "an imaginary map on which earlier poets and historians have left
their marks"; this is, I think, the same imaginary map (now with Apollo-
nius's markings added) that Valerius's Erginus – although not his Tiphys
– employs, but without putting their itinerary under the hermeneutic knife
as does Apollonius (for which, see Klooster in this volume).

Freedom from the Apollonian narrative comes violently, in a way that no one would expect, immediately following the final Apollonian aetion before the Argonauts reach Colchis. In Apollonius's *Argonautika*, the Argonauts sail past the site of Prometheus's torments just prior to their arrival in Colchis; they hear his cries and see Zeus's eagle that torments him (A. R. 2.1251–1255). Scholars from antiquity onwards have viewed the eagle in Apollonius as a parallel for the Argo,[60] so it is significant that Valerius's Argonauts pass by Prometheus just as the bird is in the process of being slain by Hercules (Val. Fl. 5.171–176). I have argued elsewhere that this is, effectively, the death of what might be considered a veritable incarnation of Apollonius's Argo, or even his *Argonautika*.[61] The murder, therefore, almost appears to be a violent reaction to the intensified Apollonian narrative of aetiology that has preceded this scene, and it sets Valerius free.[62]

On the shores of Colchis, where a highly original and non-Apollonian narrative awaits the Argonauts, Valerius can finally invoke a new Muse.[63] He invokes her in the style of another poetic prede-

cessor, Vergil, who had previously helped him to define the absence of his Muse, and who will, from this point onwards, be his primary model. Valerius is still writing his way towards Seneca's *Medea*, but his angle of approach has changed: he is no longer telling the aetiological story of the crime which Seneca's Argonauts once perpetrated, but the aetiology of the Medea who will become Seneca's Medea. He is off the high seas and no longer (at least for now) needs the stars to guide him; perhaps Juno or Venus will be his new Muse, guiding the epic towards Medea's destruction.[64] He has cut himself free of the ties that bind and reasserted the originality of his epic, singing *cantus alios*, a different song.

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[60]Gow 1938: 14 has argued that authors as early as Theocritus picked up on and reversed this symbolism, since Theocritus's Argo enters the bay of Colchis αἰετὸς ὥς (Theoc. 13.24). See also Byre 2002: 52–53 and Newman 1986: 82.

[61]Krasne 2014. The damage caused to the Argo by the Clashing Rocks, the illusory burning of the Argo together with Tiphys' and Idmon's funeral pyre, and the death of the vulture (no longer an eagle) that tormented Prometheus form a trio of metaphorical deaths of the Argo in the central section of the epic.

[62]It may also be relevant that Tiphys's death is preceded by an eradication of the Aratean Argo – Valerius inverts the traditional catasterism, saying that the prow, rather than the stern, of the ship will be catasterized (see Krasne 2014 for an elaboration).

[63]*Incipe nunc cantus alios, dea* ("Begin now other songs, goddess," Val. Fl. 5.217). She is not explicitly the *same* as Vergil's mezzoproemial Muse, who was Erato, the same as the Muse of Apollonius's second half. But she is, nonetheless, Vergilian. Wijsman 1996: 103 sees 5.1–216 as a unit: "At the end of section 1–216 words return (214) reminiscent of some at the start (9), forming a ring composition. This indicates that the section functions as a recapitulation of the 'Odyssey part' (in the special sense of 'beyond

the everyday world'), serving to introduce the highly fantastic world of Aeetes."

[64]Monaghan 2002 argues for Juno as a poetic figure, but she also shows how Venus takes over the reins of the narrative at a certain point. Medea herself is likely not imagined as the Muse – here, she is still the 'silent' Lavinia-figure – but she will retroactively step into an authorial role for Seneca, with the Furies as her Muses (see Schiesaro 2003: 17–18).

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