

Veluti cum Coeus: Civil War's Release in Valerius' Argonautica

In *Argonautica* 3, Valerius describes Cyzicus' vain fight against the Argonauts with an unprecedented simile depicting the Titan Coeus' attempted escape from the abyss in which he is imprisoned (*Arg.*3.224-8). The negatively gigantomachic character of the simile, suggestive of civil war, has been recognized (Fucecchi, Stover 137), but the full chain of literary allusions behind it, reaching via Manilius back to Vergil, has not. Pursuing these intertexts also illuminates a wider network of allusions within Valerius' epic.

Scholars have previously pointed out that, in the first line of the simile, *fundo in imo* predictably alludes to the imprisonment of the Titans at *Aen.*6.581, but no one has observed that standing behind the second line is a passage of Manilius' *Astronomica* (*Astr.*1.922-4) which depicts Discordia chained by Augustus. This Manilius passage, in turn, alludes to two passages of Vergil's *Aeneid*: first, and most obviously, Jupiter's prophecy of the cessation of civil wars and imprisonment of Furor (*Aen.*1.291-6; Volk 47-8), but also the Winds confined in Aeolus' prison (*Aen.*1.52-6). Bringing this chain of allusions full circle, a late simile in Valerius' *Argonautica* imagines two Winds bursting their chains and escaping (*Arg.*7.569-70), directly associating Coeus and the Winds through the shared image of broken bonds. (We also, unsurprisingly, see Vergil's depiction of the imprisoned Winds behind Valerius' description of the pre-Jovian state of affairs prior to the Winds' imprisonment [*Arg.*1.601-2; Zissos 2006, Stover 87-8].) Yet another layer of allusion can be added on top of this complex: Valerius' Coeus simile also looks, through a multi-paned window allusion, at the imprisonment of the Titans themselves as portrayed in Hesiod, a description that inspired the portrayal of Vergil's imprisoned Winds (Hardie 91).

Linked by allusions and shared language, then, are the Winds, Discordia and Furor, and the Titans. Each is strongly associated with civil war: Discordia is the personification of civil war and Furor the madness that drives it; the Winds, which constantly feud with each other given half a chance, are a band of discordant brothers (Fantham); and Coeus, as an imprisoned Titan, stands metonymically for the divine civil war, the Titanomachy, which he is now trying to revive. In Vergil and Manilius, the imprisonment of the Winds and Furor/Discordia serves to demonstrate that civil war (cosmic and Roman) has definitively been brought to an end, and Manilius' transference of the Winds' adamant chains to the figure of Discordia (replacing Furor's bronze chains) underscores the hoped-for permanence: the mythically-hard adamant is, as its name implies, unbreakable. In Valerius, however, where Coeus has inherited the adamant chains of the Winds and Discordia, the explicit *fracto adamante* (Arg.3.225) of his chains, also implied in the Winds' later burst bonds, answers Manilius' prayer with an unsettling paradox. The chains have not been unfastened, they have been broken—and if adamant can be broken, if the Winds and the Titans can escape, even briefly, then nothing in the cosmos is certain, and either Jupiter's authority is not so firm as we have been led to believe, or Jupiter has endorsed the escape and the cosmos' paradoxical unpredictability.

Either perspective is enhanced by an odd redundancy in the Coeus simile: Coeus drags behind him not just *fracto adamante catenas* but *vincla Iovis* (Arg.3.225). As the *Argonautica* is constructed on a largely Stoic framework (Monaghan, Zissos 2014), these *vincla Iovis* are strongly suggestive of the Stoic "chain of fate"; as with the broken adamant, a disruption in the chain of fate is contrary to the orderly functioning of the cosmos. Whether we are meant to see Jupiter's hand behind this threat is unknowable; what is clear, however, is Valerius' response to Vergil's and Manilius' praise of and prayers for stability. By revisiting and reshaping Manilius'

original combination of Vergil's imprisoned Winds and imprisoned Furor, Valerius uses his series of allusions to undermine those earlier, Augustan-era poetic suggestions that civil war can be eradicated and the cosmos made stable. Such a worldview cannot be faulted: in the intervening half-century, civil war has, of course, returned.

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