

The Fires of Campania: Typhoeus and the Theomachic Tradition in Valerius' *Argonautica*

Of all the Flavian epicists, Valerius alone does not follow the Homero-Vergilian tradition that places the gods' greatest opponent Typhoeus beneath the Campanian offshore volcano Inarime, retaining him instead under Mount Aetna (cf. *Arg.*2.24-33). I demonstrate in this paper, however, that Valerius does associate Typhoeus with the eruption of a different Campanian volcano, Mount Vesuvius, and I argue that he uses his audience's awareness of the tradition which places Typhoeus under Inarime to implicate Vesuvius in the mythological pattern of volcanoes which imprison *theomachoi*.

Vesuvius appears twice in the *Argonautica*. At *Arg.*3.209-10, the increased frenzy of the nighttime battle at Cyzicus is likened to the rumblings of Inarime and Vesuvius. While Inarime is traditionally mentioned in Roman poetry in conjunction with other volcanoes that sit above vanquished *theomachoi*, Valerius alone (until Claudian) links Inarime with Vesuvius, an initial hint that Vesuvius too belongs in that tradition. A book later, the Harpies' flight is compared to the ashes launched by Vesuvius' eruption (*Arg.*4.507-11), quickly followed by the appearance of the Harpies' father, Typhoeus (*Arg.*4.516-18). This genealogy is unique to Valerius: the Harpies, who etymologically embody rapacious storm-winds, are regularly the daughters of Thaumas (Hes.*Th.*265-9), whereas Typhoeus is the father of a different set of ill-blowing winds (Hes.*Th.*869); Valerius conflates the two. The Vesuvius-simile recalls Hesiod's description of Typhoeus' wind-children (*Th.*872-80), while the advent and depiction of Typhoeus anticipate later descriptions of Vesuvius' eruption (Plin.*Min. Ep.*6.20, Dio.*Hist.*66.23.5). In addition, the revised genealogy allows Valerius to hint at philosophical theories which make winds responsible for volcanic action (cf. Lucr.*DRN*.6.639ff).

The volcanic landscape of Campania is commonly associated with scenes of civil war and gigantomachy in Flavian poetry, but Valerius' poem is geographically divorced from Italy. Nonetheless, he takes the opportunity of Vesuvius' recent eruption to renew and expand the link between Campania and the divine gigantomachy. Rather than indulge in a radical revision of Typhoeus' location to place him under Vesuvius, Valerius associates them—and bolsters Vesuvius' cosmic importance—through genealogy, proximity, and imagery, while simultaneously expanding and further Romanizing the framework of civil war and gigantomachy that underlies his own epic.