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STATIUS

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STATIUS

THEBAID, BOOKS 1–7

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY
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THEBAID
ACHILLEID

INTRODUCTION

Apart from a marginal mention by his younger contemporary Juvenal, what is known of the poet's life and personality comes from his *Silvae*. His name, Publius Papinius Statius, is given in his manuscripts. The surname (*cognomen*) Statius was by origin an Italian personal name, and so like other such borne by slaves, who after getting their freedom would take it as a surname and pass it on to their descendants. The poet of course was no slave, neither was his father, whose name is nowhere actually attested. Statius' father was a native of Velia on the southwest coast of Italy, but moved to Neapolis (Naples), a Greek colony, which remained a centre of Hellenic culture after acquiring Roman citizenship. Here his son was born, probably about 50 AD. Papinius senior was a savant and a poet, winning prizes for his compositions at the regularly recurring festivals both in Naples (the Augustalia) and in Greece (Pythian, Isthmian, and Nemean Games). He was probably a Knight, but may have lost his qualification because of a financial reverse, after which he made a career as a teacher of literature, especially Greek, and Roman antiquities. According to his son, pupils flocked in from far and wide, and Romans of high rank were schooled to fit them for their futures, particularly as members of the great priestly colleges. While planning a poem on the eruption

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of Vesuvius in 79 he died¹ and was buried on a small property he (or his son) owned near Alba Longa, a few miles from the capital.

Following in his father's footsteps the young Statius won prizes at the Augustalia and later at the Alban festival instituted by the Emperor Domitian (ruled 81–96), where he produced a poem on the founder's German and Daeian campaigns. Probably after his father's death he moved to Rome and competed unsuccessfully at the great Capitoline festival, possibly in 90—the disappointment of his life. That may have had something to do with his subsequent decision to return to Naples, where he will have died in about 96. He married Claudia, widow of a well-known singer and mother of a musically gifted daughter. He himself was childless, but in his closing years he made up for it with a favourite slave boy whom he freed and whose early death he laments in his last extant poem (*Silvae* 5.5). But contrary to what has sometimes been assumed from v. 73 of the same, there was no adoption (vv. 10–11).

Thebaid

Statius' *magnum opus*, an epic in twelve Books on the mythological theme of the Seven against Thebes, in which he had been preceded by the fifth–fourth century Antimachus of Colophon, was published after twelve years of work (*Thebaid* 12.811) and torturous revision (*Silvae* 4.7.26), probably in 92. Meanwhile the *Silvae* with prob-

¹ Not, however, necessarily soon after it but at any rate before March 90: see the discussion in Coleman's edition of *Silvae* Book IV, pp. xviii–iv.

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able composition dates 89–96 appeared in three instalments; see Introduction to the same in volume I of this edition of Statius. In 95 he began a new epic, ambitiously planned to cover the life and death of Achilles, but broke it off in its second Book, leaving the hero on his way to Troy.

Virgil was Statius' unapproachable idol: 'Rival not divine Aeneis, but follow from afar and ever venerate her footsteps,' so he takes leave of his *Thebaid* (12.310–19). At the same time he had high hopes for the latter's immortality, claiming that the Emperor already deigns to notice it and that the youth of Italy is learning it by heart—presumably at school. Extracts, therefore, had already become available, taken down perhaps in shorthand or handed out at periodic recitations before audiences that included senators (*Silvae* 5.2.161). Writing about a quarter of a century later, Juvenal tells us that these exhibitions were eagerly looked forward to and enthusiastically received, but financially unrewarding—the poet went hungry. However, with a property at Alba and the support of the Emperor and wealthy patrons, Statius was assuredly no pauper:

The *Thebaid* is set firmly in epic tradition, complete with sky-dwellers and infernals, heroes and elders, tyrants and prophets, Games and catalogues, and a generous supply of lions to populate relentless similes. The war at Thebes occupies the latter half; it is held in frame by the successive dooms of the champions. Their diversity mitigates the monotony of slaughter, along with forceful or pathetic figures and narratives. In the earlier Books the poet has a freer range, creating loosely connected tableaux, episodes within episodes: Coroebus and the monster, Hypsipyle's story. Imagination is not lacking: Polynices' journey and arrival at Argos, Tydeus' embassy and ambush

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once read are not forgotten. Lacking is the dynamic, psyche fused with theme, that gave wings to Dido's death and, yes, to Pompey's funeral. *Si vis me flere, dolendum est*. Statius sees his pageant from outside.

There is style: 'dense and elaborate' (Coleman), replete with conceit and hyperbole, stretching language to the point of obscurity, favouring spacious periods intricately articulated; a feast for amateurs of the ornate, but for some a challenge readily declined. It is constant throughout in *Silvae* and *Thebaid*; as to the *Achilleid*, an implicit palinode, more later.

There is metrical technique. No question about Statius' mastery there, second only to if not rivalling Virgil's, earning an incidental accolade from Housman ('this superb versifier'), who 'read the *Thebaid* not more than three times, nor ever with intent care and interest' (*Cl. Papers* 1197).

In the Middle Ages the author of the *Thebaid* was a prime favourite, Dante's sweet poet, highlighted by the encounter in *Purgatorio*. For Julius Caesar Scaliger in the cinquecento, as D. W. T. Vessey has reminded us, Statius was, aside from Virgil ('we should add Homer,' and I for one should add Lucan), 'both of Latin and Greek Epic writers easily the chief'—not after all so lavish a tribute as it sounds. In the shadow of nineteenth-century Romanticism and its aftermath Statius' reputation went into a long eclipse, but the last three decades of the twentieth saw a marked revival of interest and appreciation, however parochial, for both parts of his oeuvre.

Well over a hundred extant manuscripts of the *Thebaid* testify to its vogue in medieval and renaissance culture.

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One of them, Parisinus 8031 (P), called Puteanus after a sixteenth-century owner, is of the ninth or tenth century, probably a product of Corbie Abbey. Like Juvenal's Montepessulanus, it has no peer. The rest, leaving aside those later than the twelfth century as negligible, are collectively known as ω . Hill's edition, for example, uses seventeen, plus two fragmenta, and lists another three, plus five fragmenta, as 'rarius citata.' P and ω derive from a common archetype of uncertain date and provenance. But it is no longer permissible to say, with J. H. Mozley, that the latter hang very much together; closer research has blurred the edges, as with Martial's three families. P readings abound throughout in individual members or minority combinations of members, and certain of them can be classed as intermediate.² But this being a matter of virtually no practical importance, my critical notes, necessarily skeletal, do not cite ω manuscripts individually but use ψ to indicate minority readings within the group (whether shared with P or not) when these seem worth notice. Add that ς has its usual function as denoting early readings of conjectural status, whether or not they happen to occur in a late manuscript. Where my text prints a correction, my notes regularly give the manuscript reading followed by the name of the corrector in parenthesis, except that many early ones are passed over as obvious and generally accepted.

Of interest is the occurrence of variants (e.g. 1.32 *perio* P: *laurigero* ω ; 3.527 *celi* P: *nili* ω) which cannot be due to graphical error. Whatever their origin, the theory of a second edition made by the poet himself can be ruled out sim-

² See R. Lesueur's Budé edition, I, lxiii.

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ply because he cannot be thought responsible for some of them.³

By common consent the general superiority of P entitles it to preference over ω except where ω prevails by merit; a principle that every editor must apply as his judgment, or want of it, dictates.

Scholia (Σ) attributed to one Lactantius Placidus, thought to have lived between the fourth and sixth century, were edited by R. Jahnke in 1898. As commentary they are of little help, but their readings have evidential value.

Statius' works were first edited in Rome in 1419. D. E. Hill's list of the *Thebaid's* nine most illustrious editors ('clarissimi cuiusque editoris'), with brief descriptive comments,⁴ begins with J. F. Gronovius (1653). The lists of critical articles and monographs include other great names: Bentley, N. Heinsius, Markland, Madvig, Housman. More recently L. Håkanson's *Thebaid* (1973), following his *Silvae*, stands out.

Lately, however, Statian scholarship has taken a different road, and again I am deeply indebted to Kathleen Coleman for her expert survey of this activity, relating to the epics, in this volume.

There is no modern commentary on the *Thebaid*, though a number of Books have been edited separately (see Coleman's survey).

Translations, verse and prose, exist in several lan-

³ On the similar situation in Martial see p. vii of my Teubner edition: 'trium recensionum lectiones varias ad poetam non redire ex ipsarum natura certo certius est.'

⁴ See also Lesueur, I, lxxiv–lxxvi.

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guages. Mine is mostly independent of these, though I have kept an eye on Mozley's Loeb translation (1928) and occasionally consulted Lesueur's and a verse rendering by A. D. Melville (Oxford 1992). Statius' style makes the proper balance between fidelity and readability particularly hard for his interpreters to capture, provoking diversities of understanding and nuance to be distinguished from mere blunders. As in the *Silvae*, my notes, supplemented by the index of names, provide a minimum of requisite information plus revelatory or argumentative matter as occasion arises.

Achilleid

The *Thebaid* disposed of, Statius launched a second epic on the life and death of Achilles. According to its opening it was to contain the hero's career from his youthful adventure in Scyros on. One Book and part of a second survives, leaving him *en route* for the Trojan War.

The obvious assumption is that death or ill-health leading to death made him abandon the project. After the publication of *Silvae* Book IV in 95⁵ nothing is heard of him, apart from the posthumous publication of Book V. As for the *Achilleid*, *Silvae* 4.7.21–24 mentions a stoppage, flatteringly ascribed to the absence of the friend to whom the piece is addressed (probably written in 94 between spring and early autumn); yet in 5.2.161–64, probably written in the summer of 95, he is looking forward to public recitations of his ongoing composition.

But suppose he had been able to stay at work long

⁵ On this date see Coleman's edition, p. xii.

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enough to complete the project. The Scyros episode is a light-hearted story with details supplied, as far as we know, by the poet's own imagination.⁶ It makes pleasant reading and the tone is a world apart from the sombre and sanguinary tale of the Seven. But after Achilles' arrival at the war—what? A rehash of the *Iliad*? An unpromising prospect surely. Did Statius find himself in a cul-de-sac?

Furthermore: if the style of the surviving *Achilleid* is the man, here is a new Statius. All that is meant by 'mannerism' has almost disappeared. The new look is Ovidian, short of Ovid's levity. The revolution⁷ must have been deliberate, not imposed by the theme. Mannerism, pervasive in the *Silvae* as in the *Thebaid*, need not change with genre. We may suppose that after his disappointment at the Capitoline festival, which evidently rankled (*Silvae* 3.5.28–33; 5.3.231–33), he simply decided that it was time for a change. But I have failed to think of a good literary parallel.

Not all manuscripts of the *Thebaid* contain the *Achilleid*, but a good many (including P) do, so that the textual situation is essentially the same. The workmanlike edition with commentary by O. A. W. Dilke (Cambridge, 1954) remains unique.

⁶ The trumpet blast which brought Achilles out of disguise (1.874ff.) diverges from the usual account; see J. G. Frazer, Apollodorus (Loeb edition), II, 74, n.1. Apollodorus and Hyginus have it from a common source if not from Statius himself.

⁷ Mostly unremarked in secondary literature. Mozley is an honourable exception: 'the poet's style is simpler and less artificial than in the *Thebaid*.'

RECENT SCHOLARSHIP ON THE *THEBAID* AND *ACHILLEID*: AN OVERVIEW*

KATHLEEN M. COLEMAN

Given the renaissance of interest in post-Virgilian epic in the latter decades of the twentieth century, this essay is perforce drastically selective. It does not include items on Statius' background and formation, since these topics are covered in the essay on the *Silvae* that is the companion to this one (Coleman 2003). Nor does it venture to assess scholarship on the vast influence of the *Thebaid* in the Middle Ages, powerfully epitomized for readers of Dante by his meeting with Statius and Virgil in Purgatory. The enormous range of modern studies on the *Thebaid* has been summarized as far as the middle of the nineteen-nineties (Dominik 1996a); the focus in what follows is on English-language scholarship, although it would be unfair to omit reference to a pioneering work of the "Statius renaissance" in German (Schetter 1960). For the *Achilleid*, however, adequate coverage demands that scholarship in other languages be given prominence. Although treated

* In preparing this survey I have sought advice from Bruce Gibson, Peter Heslin, and Charles McNelis, to all of whom I am properly grateful.

selectively here, a multilingual volume of essays celebrating Statius' nineteen-hundredth anniversary provides a representative cross-section of trends in contemporary criticism on his entire *oeuvre* (Delarue *et al.* 1996).

Thebaid

The first half of the twentieth century failed to find much to appreciate in the *Thebaid*. Because Statius explicitly envisages his epic following in the footsteps of the *Aeneid*, his self-acknowledged debt to Virgil at times earned him labels along the lines of "derivative," "slavish imitator," and "lacking in originality."¹ These views have been variously and resoundingly refuted in the late twentieth-century rehabilitation of Statius' reputation as a consummate epic artist, although the concept of "defensive imitation" still betrays the tenacity of the old view (Williams 1986). But the problem is not only aesthetic; it is also ideological. Even while earning admiration for his literary qualities, Statius has been tarred with the brush of Domitianic despotism, a repressive regime that the *Thebaid* has been assumed to vindicate (Vessey 1973). Towards the end of the century, however, a revisionist interpretation promoted the poem as a commentary upon the evils of civil war, and hence an explicit challenge to the legitimacy of the Flavian

¹ A random example expresses the insult with Gallic elegance: "Les épopées de Stace sont des oeuvres artificielles, sans originalité dans l'invention et surtout sans sincérité," J. Humbert, *Histoire illustrée de la Littérature Latine. Précis méthodique* (Paris and Toulouse, 1932), 298.

regime (Ahl 1986) and to the brutal means that Vespasian employed to restore order after the “year of the four emperors” in AD 69 (Dominik 1989). Indeed, the latter view has been developed into a somewhat inflexible thesis equating power in the *Thebaid* with relentless cruelty, and concluding that Statius’ audience (like the inhabitants of the free world in the twentieth century) would necessarily recoil from the horror of this picture (Dominik 1994b).

The view that sees Statius as a heroic voice for the opposition has been adduced to explain certain characteristics of the narrative. The contemporary political and intellectual climate has been held to account for such features as the prominence of suicide in both Statius’ *Thebaid* and Silius’ *Punica*, suicide and assassination being held to be the only options for escaping from a tyranny (McGuire 1989). Despite the risks of anachronism, a more extensive study by the same author interprets all three instances of Flavian epic (*Punica*, *Thebaid*, and Valerius Flaccus’ *Argonautica*) as protest literature (McGuire 1997). An influential general study of the post-Virgilian epic tradition, however, shows that epic is a genre that shares one of the primary concerns of any imperial system, namely a preoccupation with finding a balance amid “the instabilities of power” (Hardie 1993). All the successors to Virgil, Hardie argues, confront this problem in some way, as they also confront the struggle between good and evil, and the issue of succession, both political and literary. Not that Statius necessarily finds an equilibrium: on the contrary, the *Thebaid* can be said to display a marked imbalance, war and violence far outweighing forgiveness and peace. It has recently been suggested that this imbalance need not,

however, be read as a critique of the Domitianic regime, but rather as a reflection of Statius' view of mankind as a whole (Franchet d'Espèrey 1999).

In the *Thebaid* Greek myth can be seen as a vehicle for a particularly Roman preoccupation with the relationship between politics and the family (Hardie 1993). On this analysis, the relationship that is at the heart of the Roman power structure lies at the heart of the *Thebaid* also; in this respect Statius demonstrates a self-conscious debt to his predecessors, especially Lucan. Succession is thwarted as one hero after another is snatched away by death. Still, Hardie's study concedes that a model for smooth succession seems to be offered in the choice of Theodamas to take over the role of seer from Amphiaraus after his tragic and premature death; the smooth transfer of office is posited as a model for cooperation and for continuity of authority. If, however, Flavian epic seems to reflect the male-dominated structure of contemporary Roman society, a recent feminist study of the role of women in the entire genre of Roman epic has highlighted a contrasting dimension (Keith 2000). Keith argues that Statius and his contemporaries employ the theme of civil war to reflect conflict between the sexes, and to explore the function of female impulses (personified, most obviously, in the Furies) in precipitating conflict.

Contemporary relevance, however, is not restricted to the sphere of politics and moral codes. The funeral games for Archemorus (previously called Opheltes) in *Thebaid* 6 have long been recognized as heir to the games for Patroclus in *Iliad* 23 and to their Roman counterpart, the games in honor of Anchises in *Aeneid* 5. But a recent study points to unique aspects of Statius' treatment of this mo-

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tif (Thuillier 1996). Thuillier argues that some details in Statius' presentation reflect conventions in the contemporary Roman circus, stadium, and boxing ring, and suggests that they may derive from Statius' familiarity with the gymnastic competitions that formed part of the *certamina* in which he is known to have competed as a literary contestant. This practical approach is at one end of the critical spectrum; at the other lies the contention that all poems are ultimately about the craft of writing poetry. This latter theory has been variously applied to the *Thebaid*. In one study, the ambiguous relationship between Hypsipyle and her father Thoas has been interpreted as a reflection of ambiguity in Statius' relationship with Virgil (Nugent 1996). In another, madness—in both its creative and its destructive aspects—is seen as a metaphor for epic composition, a metaphor already employed by Virgil and subsequently developed by Statius (Hershkowitz 1998).

The bursts of irrationality that periodically threaten to engulf the characters have their structural counterpart in the abruptly episodic nature of the narrative. Scholars have begun to appreciate this structural feature as a deliberate device whereby the progress of the plot is repeatedly delayed. This strategy has a venerable epic pedigree stretching back to the *Odyssey* (though paradoxically the *Odyssey* is the only major epic whose influence is overtly absent from the *Thebaid*, which has no "Odyssean" half) (Hardie 1993 and 1997). Hence the perpetual postponement of the critical duel between the rival brothers is no longer to be seen as a structural flaw caused by Statius' desire to exploit every epic device at the expense of narrative cohesion. Rather, his self-conscious references to delays in the story are interpreted as drawing attention to the chaos

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and confusion of the whole Theban tragedy (Feeney 1991). The care with which Statius positions and structures scenes within the epic has also begun to be appreciated. A case study of Polynices' first and last fight (the first with Tydeus, over the palace doorstep, and the last with Eteocles, over the kingdom) reveals a complex system of structural parallels and inversions that turns the instance of a trivial quarrel into a commentary on a drama of mortal combat; arching from Book 1 to Book 11, these conflicts frame the entire narrative (excluding the "coda" of Book 12) (Bonds 1985).

Indeed, far from comprising a meandering and formless discourse,² the episodic structure of the *Thebaid* is now recognized as a very tightly controlled design, even if consensus has not yet been reached on its precise configuration. Parallels and correspondences have been usefully set out in diagrammatic form in a study that emphasizes Statius' Ovidian legacy of a *carmen perpetuum*, "continuous song" (Vessey 1973). On one recent interpretation, the overall structure of the poem comprises three major phases, in which dialogue, narrative, and description are juxtaposed in parallel and contrasting sequences to emphasize key themes and create contrasts in atmosphere and tone (Dominik 1996b). Another view posits simultaneous progression on two separate planes: the divine, in six major sequences, and the human, in four sequences of three books each (Delarue 2000). These approaches, and

² Cf. W. C. Summers, *The Silver Age of Latin Literature from Tiberius to Hadrian* (London, 1920), 51 (on the *Thebaid*): "Nothing could be much worse than the composition: the first six books drag terribly. . ."

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others like them, are helpful in drawing attention to major axes in the structure of the poem, though ultimately its dynamic movement resists mathematical symmetry.

In the analysis of the epic's structure, special attention has been paid to Statius' debt to Virgil. A study of Book 1 has demonstrated that the first three hundred lines establish the *Thebaid's* Virgilian pedigree in a series of remarkable structural similarities and transpositions; the rest of the book then fans out to embrace a wide range of episodic models, not only from the entire *Aeneid* but also from a wide generic spectrum of antecedents in Latin poetry (Hill 1989). The middle of the epic also attests Statius' debt to Virgil, and the creative use that he makes of it. A new analysis shows that Book 7 articulates a fresh martial beginning after the hesitations of the first hexad, which is not "Odyssean," as in the *Aeneid*, but rather "Callimachean" in its overriding preoccupation with stories of origins and beginnings; characteristically, Statius combines his debt to Virgil with a sophisticated new departure in epic design (McNelis, forthcoming).

Alongside focus on the structure of the poem, intertextuality as a mode of criticism has demonstrated that Statius' adaptation of motifs in his predecessors creates a commentary of great vigor and subtlety upon the themes and situations of epic. A case study of Parthenopaeus as a "simultaneous reading" of several warrior youths in the *Aeneid* shows that Statius combines a multiplicity of correspondences and contrasts to create a portrayal that is profoundly enriched by recognition of the myriad Virgilian strands in its woof and warp (Hardie 1989). Virgil, however, is not the only poet whose influence informs the narrative fabric of the *Thebaid*; the characters in this poem

have been shown to respond in detail to Ovid's Theban narrative in Books 3 and 4 of the *Metamorphoses* (Keith 2002). And Statius' reading included even his immediate contemporaries, as has been demonstrated with reference to his reception of Homeric motifs via the intermediary of his coeval Valerius Flaccus (Smolenaars 1991). Immediate contemporaries (and the critical approaches of intertextual analysis) have unfortunately been excluded from a compendious study that traces Statius' models for specific thematic elements such as Tisiphone's hiss or the reflection of the sun on the shield of Mars (Taisne 1994).

Since all the ingredients of the epic "recipe" are present in the *Thebaid*, we are in danger of taking them for granted. Starting from Edward Gibbon's famous complaint two hundred years earlier to the effect that an epic catalogue is merely an irritating interruption, a contribution to Statius' nineteen-hundredth anniversary volume offers a stimulating deconstruction of the catalogues of the *Thebaid* (Georgacopoulou 1996). This study shows that each of the numerous catalogues in the poem is a repository of memory that is either integral to the narrative or else summarizes a theme that will not be addressed *in extenso* elsewhere. The detached authorial voice usually narrates the catalogues pertaining to the Argives; a more subjective perspective is contributed to the Theban material in those instances where the narrator is one of the characters from Thebes itself. This variety is further compounded by instances where a catalogue is delivered in not one voice but two. Georgacopoulou concludes that the catalogues do indeed suspend the action, while simultaneously functioning as a repeated motif that unifies the narrative.

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The traditional role assigned to the gods in epic had been destabilized by Lucan's radical renunciation of divine agency in human affairs. But Statius found fertile new ways of reintegrating them and revitalizing their role. It has been observed that his human characters interact more effectively with the powers of the Underworld than with the celestial gods above, and only they (and not the gods) are capable of moving between all three realms (Feeney 1991). The role of Jupiter in particular has provoked conflicting interpretations. Feeney's influential reading builds upon an earlier study of Jupiter's role across Flavian epic (Schubert 1984). Feeney argues that in the *Thebaid* Jupiter is consistently reduced in status and his efficacy usurped, either by personifications representing elemental forces in human nature or by the heroes themselves, most notably Theseus; Jupiter becomes almost a caricature of his own traditional qualities. This tendency towards allegory Feeney interprets as a definitive step towards the intellectual context of the Middle Ages, although we have been reminded that the allegorizing interpretation should not be exaggerated at the expense of the individuality of the gods (Hutchinson 1993).

Statius' response to the problem of divine responsibility for human tragedy has been clarified in a recent study showing that the balance between the authority of Jupiter and the power of fate is not a neat subdivision (Davis 1994). Jupiter treats fate as an instrument to justify his own actions; yet events both at Thebes and at Argos are presented just as much in terms of generic heredity, a heredity that the characters are aware of and upon which they base their assessment of one another. Hence, Davis concludes, the *Thebaid* is inevitably topical, and cannot be abstracted

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from contemporary society and politics, in that “the forces which govern the world of the *Thebaid* govern the world at large.” This interpretation is different from the views glossed at the beginning of this article that posit the *Thebaid* as a text of protest or subversion; a Domitian prone to suspect dissidents of treason was also a well-educated emperor who paid close attention to the administration of the Empire. An epic poem investigating the role of power and authority in shaping the human condition is not necessarily incompatible with the outlook and preoccupations of such a person. A caution against overdetermined readings that equate a tyrannical Jupiter with the Domitian of popular perception has been expressed in the context of the hazards inherent in speaking out against tyranny (Hill 1996).

The *Thebaid* has been said to “challenge” the entire epic tradition. The martial theme, offset by the comradely relationship between Polynices and Tydeus (subsequent to their fracas over the doorstep), infuses epic with something of the tenor of Euripidean tragedy. Indeed, in handling the gods Statius has been said to dress up tragedy in an epic costume, alternating between the two poles of *furor* and *pathos* (Criado 2000). In exploring the savage irrationality of war through the different viewpoints of the individual characters, Statius deepens his readers’ understanding of the grim subtext to the *Aeneid* (Henderson 1993). A character such as the Lemnian queen Hypsipyle recalls not only Dido but also, in certain aspects, Aeneas; while her manner and appearance encourage a parallel with Dido, her reactions to events are often quite different, so that the immediate comparison sets up expecta-

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tions that are then undermined by Hypsipyle's behavior (Gruzelier 1994). v

The speeches of the *Thebaid* have been classified typologically, and analyzed as a means of advancing the plot, delineating character, and developing the major themes of the epic (Dominik 1994a). A nuanced study has been devoted to the number and interaction of the speech partners, the immediate circumstances in which the speeches are delivered, the gestures that accompany them (sometimes objectively described by the narrator, sometimes remarked on by the interlocutors themselves), and the interruptions that fracture the discourse in telling ways (e.g. parentheses, or aposiopesis, i.e. an abrupt halt in mid-sentence) (Frings 1991). These features are shown to contribute great variety to the characterization and plot development of the *Thebaid*. Frings observes that neither the characters nor the stages of the plot are necessarily described by the narrator; rather, character is revealed through the speech and actions of individuals, and the plot is developed through action that is reported by one or other of the participants.

In the vanguard of the movement to rehabilitate the *Thebaid*, the poem was read as an "elaborate and sustained allegory of the emotions" (Vessey 1973). Since then, the violence—emotional as well as physical—that saturates the poem has prompted detailed studies of the ancient view of negative passions and irrational behavior. A study of the motif of hatred between brothers, *odia fraterna*, compares Statius' treatment with Seneca's in *Thyestes* (Frings 1992). Frings argues that Statius surpasses the deployment of this motif by Seneca in extending it beyond the human plane

to the divine, so that the enmity between Eteocles and Polynices reflects the hatred between Jupiter and Pluto. In Frings' view, however, the terrible inevitability that this divine paradigm imposes upon human behavior is redeemed, if slightly, by man's simultaneous capacity for positive relationships, as represented by the friendship between Polynices and Tydeus. Madness, too, has been explored as an epic motif (Hershkowitz 1998). In the *Thebaid* madness is shown by Hershkowitz to be associated with sexual deviance, and to be fundamental to Statius' characterization of all the children of the royal house of Thebes, including the virgins Antigone and Ismene. Meanwhile, man's precarious position, poised between god and beast (or: Heaven and Hell), is a theme of post-Virgilian epic that is strikingly exemplified in the lapse of the heroic Tydeus into cannibalistic impotence (Feeney 1991, Hardie 1993).

The *Thebaid* has been called a "Stoic" epic, because the doom-laden narrative unfolds in a fated series of events, *fatorum series* (Vessey 1973). But it has been demonstrated that, insofar as distinctively Stoic elements can be distinguished from the general tenor of Roman thought, Stoicism in Flavian epic is largely the literary inheritance of the *Aeneid*, though displaying also the influence of Seneca and Lucan (Billerbeck 1986). On this analysis, Statius shows fewer Stoic elements than Valerius Flaccus, and Silius Italicus far more than either of these two. More recently, the fundamental Stoicism of the *Thebaid* has been challenged in a study that examines whether the concept of hatred, central to the epic, conforms to the psychological aspects of Stoic doctrine (Fantham 1997). Fantham argues that in the *Thebaid*, where the gods display hatred

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even before the humans do, hatred of human by human is presented as a fundamental evil that dominates the narrative and can only be overcome by piety and clemency. Like the other negative passions that give rise to it, hatred is shown to have no place in the proper pursuit of retribution, and it is only to persons free from the tyranny of the passions that Statius entrusts punishment and the dispensing of justice.

The close of the epic demonstrates that this is a story that cannot really end: male violence and, especially, female mourning are without limit. Just as the death of Turnus at the end of the *Aeneid* brings anything but closure to the moral issues at the heart of the poem, so the hatred between the warring brothers in the *Thebaid* bequeathes a continuing legacy after their deaths (Hardie 1993). The debate about the end of the poem essentially revolves around the status of Book 12 in its entirety: is it integral to the poem's structure, or an anticlimactic coda? What is the significance of the absence of the gods from the last thousand lines of the poem? One recent verdict supporting the cohesion of the whole suggests that it privileges individual acts of heroism, such as Theseus' in Book 12, over the entire machinery of divine revenge for the crimes committed against *pietas* by the royal house of Thebes (Kytzler 1996).

The narrative proper, however, ends at the point where Theseus strips Creon of his armor and denounces his wickedness (*Theb.* 12.781). A close examination of the remaining thirty-eight lines of the poem shows that they comprise three "supplements," which are interpreted as offering alternative forms of closure in response to the unfinished state of the *Aeneid* (Braund 1996). But the very end of

the poem is unprecedented in the formal epic tradition, though memorably anticipated in Ovid's "anti-epic," the *Metamorphoses*: in the last ten lines of the *Thebaid*, in emphatically modest phrasing, the poet expresses a hope for literary immortality. Why does Statius choose this ending? A cogent answer suggests that it sets upon the epic a neat and orderly seal in contrast to the limitless chaos of the narrative, and that, paying tribute to Virgil, it affords the irony of an entirely non-Virgilian (and indeed non-Homeric) authorial epilogue (Hardie 1997). Yet the end of the *Thebaid* continues to stimulate a variety of observations: the heroic deeds of battle giving way to female lament, Statius' personified epic behaves in a distinctly feminine way (Dietrich 1999); the authorial "afterword" matches the scenes of aftermath that are well established in Roman battle narratives and exemplified four times in the *Thebaid*, most notably in Book 12 itself (Pagán 2000); the question that Statius poses about the immortality of the *Thebaid* is so phrased as to gloss the entire spectrum of his predecessors in the epic genre, from Ennius to Lucan (Dominik 2003). In terms of supplying a provocative ending, the *Thebaid* has indeed proved to be a worthy successor to the *Aeneid*.

One more issue demands attention: no matter how sophisticated a poet's thought or how artful his handling of the tradition that he has inherited, the impact and individuality of a poem ultimately depend upon the micro-details of the poet's use of language. This aspect of a poem is hard to demonstrate economically; and fluctuations in taste can obscure it altogether. The luxurious style of the *Thebaid* clashed with the stark preferences of the late twentieth century; blame was laid at the door of "mannerism," a

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mode of expression that transgresses classical norms of restraint and exploits volleys of rhetorical effects (Vessey 1973 and 1992). A recent appreciation of Latin literature between the reigns of Nero and Hadrian, however, has illuminated the brilliance and audacity of Statius' style (Hutchinson 1993). Comprising a series of chronological case studies under different stylistic headings, Hutchinson's analysis repeatedly illustrates Statius' mastery of an immense range of tone, from dramatic grandeur to profound simplicity. It shows how, far from fragmenting the cohesion of the narrative, the contemporary taste for epigrammatic conceit and dazzling paradox is deployed with consummate discrimination and subtlety to sustain Statius' vast sweep of narrative. Discursiveness balances cohesion in a tightly controlled design that orchestrates a finely calibrated network of Virgilian allusions and re-spensions.

Already in late antiquity Statius' epics, like the epics of Homer and Virgil, attracted commentators. A commentary ascribed to a certain Lactantius Placidus is to be dated no later than the sixth or the late fifth century, and perhaps earlier. Its comments ("scholia") testify to the issues of diction, structure, narrative, and characterization that late antiquity considered interesting, and its citations have enabled scholars to correct some of the erroneous readings in the text of the *Thebaid* transmitted in the medieval manuscript tradition (Sweeney 1969 and 1997). The ninetee-neties saw the publication of the most reliable text of the *Thebaid* in the modern era, with generous space devoted to variants (Hill 1983). Modern commentaries on a lesser or greater scale, all but two (alas) predating Hill's text, are available for seven complete books: 1 (Caviglia 1973),

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2 (Mulder 1954), 3 (Snijder 1968), 7 (Smolenaars 1994), 9 (Dewar 1991), 10 (Williams 1972), and 11 (Venini 1970). A single commentary has also been devoted to the climactic episode in Book 12 in which, in defiance of Creon's ban, Argia and Antigone find Polynices' corpse and cremate it on what turns out to be Eteocles' pyre (Hoffmann 1999). Given that sound commentaries are of enduring value, it is also worth mentioning two editions from the nineteen-thirties, accompanied by a translation into Dutch and a commentary in Latin; these deal respectively with Book 1 (Heuvel 1932) and the episode of Opheltes' funeral at the beginning of Book 6 (Fortgens 1934). The extant fragment of the *Achilleid*, on the other hand, has had no commentary devoted to it since the nineteen-fifties (Jannaccone 1950, Dilke 1954), other than the useful annotations to the text and facing French translation in the Budé series (Méheust 1971).

Achilleid

Any epic poem invites comparison with its predecessors in the "epic tradition," most especially a fragment such as the *Achilleid* which, being incomplete, offers only limited scope for self-contained analysis of structure, characterization, diction, and all the other features exhibited by a literary work in its entirety. What remains of the *Achilleid* offers a vivid contrast with the *Thebaid*, yet little critical attention has been devoted to a sustained comparison between the two. The *Achilleid*, manifestly playful and irreverent in its surviving portion, has been called "Ovidian" in contrast to the "Virgilian" *Thebaid* (Fantham 1979, Hinds 1997), and its focus on a single protagonist (albeit in com-

petition with some powerful supporting roles) has earned it the label “Odyssean,” in comparison to an “Iliadic” *Thebaid* (Delarue 2000). Whereas Statius’ style in the *Thebaid* has seemed dense and ornate to the point of satiety, the *Achilleid* has been credited with a *faux-naïf* appearance of simplicity that belies the subtlety of Statius’ juxtapositions and the innovative nature of his diction (Vessey 1986).

Yet the relative lack of interest in setting the *Achilleid* beside the *Thebaid* is understandable, since the subject of Achilles demands comparison, first and foremost, with Homer. Here an immediate hierarchy suggests itself to account for the characteristics of Statius’ treatment: the evolution from “oral” to “literary” epic (or “primary” to “secondary”). Such a rigid distinction, however, may impose a straitjacket on the text; reading as performance is an aspect of Roman culture that is often overlooked. Just as the plot and structure of the *Iliad* create an eminently readable poem (“readable,” that is, in the accepted modern sense), so the virtuoso rhetorical features and sophisticated structural symmetry of the *Achilleid* (two bulky Scyros episodes bracketing a slender interlude at Aulis) are arguably best appreciated when the work is heard being read aloud (Johnson 1994).

The question has been raised: would the finished poem have qualified as an epic at all? Both implicitly and explicitly, the *Achilleid* declares its literary allegiance to the refined canons of the Hellenistic poets and to the sophisticated wit of Ovid. Literary influence is not inhibited by generic boundaries. The prominence of the theme of love combines the influence of Ovid’s “anti-epic,” the *Metamorphoses*, with elegiac elements from his irreverent love

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poetry. Drama, too, has left its imprint: Seneca's treatment of Andromache's attempt to hide her son Astyanax from harm in the *Troades* finds echoes in Statius' handling of the parallel situation in the *Achilleid* (Fantham 1979). On one reading, the private and domestic values of the poem make "epic" an ambiguous designation for a work so firmly affiliated to the epic tradition in its choice of eponymous hero, and yet so distant from it in its elegiac treatment of the characters and the plot (Rosati 1994). Still, Statius' programmatic statements at the beginning belie the tenor of the surviving portion, encouraging the belief that the completed work would have commandeered an arsenal of varied generic elements in a serious bid for inclusion in the epic canon (Arièd 1986 and 1996).

But the very novelty of Statius' approach poses a challenge to the "epic tradition" as an intellectual construct. Hence the multiplicity of generic influences at work here has been interpreted as evidence of Statius' attempt to revitalize and enlarge the epic tradition. The complexity of his responses to earlier poets outside the epic canon is part of a process of dynamic engagement that alters the balance within that very canon. His intertextual allusions are therefore seen to confer epic status on Catullus 64, the "epyllion" on the marriage of Peleus and Thetis (clearly of signal importance for an epic about their son), and to affirm the epic affiliations of the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid (Hinds 1997). Simply put, the *Achilleid* seems to be taking Latin epic in a new direction (Hinds 1998). It is self-evident that only the most sophisticated alternative model has any hope of challenging the supremacy of the Homeric-Virgilian epic "code." Thus the prologue to the *Achilleid* has been read as a programmatic statement of Statius' in-

tion to write an epic that is an allegory of the difficulty of completing the task that he has set himself (Barchiesi 1996).

Did Statius in fact start as he meant to go on? Or would the exuberant beginning of the *Achilleid* have simmered down into a narrative more like the *Thebaid*? A teaser of one and a quarter books provokes speculation about the rest, although we are not even sure how many more Statius was planning. To fill the remaining books with the standard epic fare of heroic exploits and bloody battles would have involved a dramatic shift of tone and focus. Perhaps Statius intended, rather, to build the rest of his epic around the subsequent erotic adventures of his hero, whose string of conquests encompassed heroines as diverse as Agamemnon's doomed daughter at Aulis and the Amazon queen, Penthesilea; the *Heroides*, Ovid's collection of fictitious letters from heroines to their fickle lovers, could have provided suitable impetus (Koster 1979).

The striking delineation of feminine emotions in the surviving fragment has already been foreshadowed in the female characters of the *Thebaid*, most memorably Hypsipyle. The prominence of Thetis in the surviving portion of the poem displays Statius' sophisticated manipulation of maternal psychology to drive the plot (Mendelsohn 1990). By the end of Book 1 her worst fears have been realized, and her son's bid for independence has precipitated him towards the doom that she knows is waiting for him at Troy. But by entrusting her child to the avuncular centaur Chiron Thetis effectively upstages herself, since Chiron is to supplant her in her son's affections. Once again, Statius demonstrates acute psychological insight: the relationship between foster-father and son, of which Chiron and Achil-

les are the archetype, is one that is replicated in several examples in the *Silvae*, including the relationship between Statius and his own foster-child in *Silvae* 5.5 (Fantham 1999).

The “subversive” reading that was in vogue in criticism of the *Silvae* in the nineteen-seventies and nineteen-eighties, and that we have seen applied to the *Thebaid*, has been tried on the *Achilleid* as well. It has been argued that in the portrayal of Achilles Statius chose to emphasize aspects that would evoke flaws in the character, appearance, and achievements of the emperor; it has even been suggested that such effrontery may have cost Statius his life, which would account for the fragmentary nature of the poem (Benker 1987). At the other extreme, a “propagandist” reading interprets Achilles’ capitulation to the lure of battle as an endorsement of Domitian’s military campaigns on the Danube (Aricò 1986). On a third and more reasonable interpretation, however, contemporary relevance in the *Achilleid* may rather be found in the portrayal of domestic scenes and civilized values, reflecting the world of the *Silvae*, in which Statius endorses his patrons’ leisured and graceful lifestyle (Konstan 1997).

Despite its fragmentary nature, the *Achilleid* held great appeal for subsequent generations. Similarities have been noted between the education of Achilles as portrayed in the *Achilleid* and in the poetry and rhetoric of late antiquity. While the Greek rhetoricians of the Roman Empire from the late first century onwards may have shared with the *Achilleid* a common source, the Latin poets from Ausonius to Corippus seem to have been influenced directly by Statius (Pavlovskis 1965). If the *Iliad* generated a paradigm of Achilles as a great warrior dominated by tow-

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ering anger, the *Achilleid* and its roughly contemporary poem, the *Ilias Latina*, are responsible for the more sentimental picture of Achilles as a warrior whose immense physical prowess is matched by a comparable capacity to conquer women's hearts. It is this romanticized portrait that captured the imagination of the Middle Ages (King 1987). The poem's medieval popularity is attested by a vast plethora of manuscripts, manifold witness to the regularizing impulse that divided the extant 1,128 lines into self-contained episodes of 200–300 lines each, in an attempt to approximate the scope of a proper epic by transforming the fragment into five numbered books (Clogan 1968). Indeed, our modern attempt to confront and embrace the fragmentary nature of the *Achilleid* may be the one facet of our reaction that differentiates us from our medieval ancestors; for the first time since the Middle Ages, this beguiling virtuoso piece is at last captivating a new audience.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Housman	A. E. Housman, <i>Classical Papers</i> (Cambridge 1972)
OLD	Oxford Latin Dictionary
RE	Pauly–Wissowa: <i>Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
SB	D. R. Shackleton Bailey (this edition)
SB ¹	Museum Helveticum 40 (1983) 51–60
SB ²	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology 100 (2000) 463–76
TLL	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i>

Conventional abbreviations for classical authors and works are used in the critical notes.

THEBAID

LIBER I

- Fraternas acies alternaque regna profanis
decertata odiis sontesque evolvere Thebas
Pierius menti calor incidit. unde iubetis
ire, deae? gentisne canam primordia dirae,
5 Sidonios raptus et inexorable pactum
legis Agenoreae scrutantemque aequora Cadmum?
longa retro series, trepidum si Martis operti
agricolam infandis condentem proelia sulcis
expediam penitusque sequar, quo carmine muris
10 iusserit Amphion Tyriis accedere montes,
unde graves irae cognata in moenia Baccho,
quod saevae Iunonis opus, cui sumpserit arcus
infelix Athamas, cur non expaverit ingens
Ionium socio casura Palaemone mater.
15 atque adeo iam nunc gemitus et prospera Cadmi
practeriisse sinam: limes mihi carminis esto
Oedipodae confusa domus, quando Itala nondum

¹⁰ tyrios ΠωΣ (*Gronovius*)

¹ Agenor, king of Tyre, ordered his son Cadmus to go in search of his daughter Europa, who had been carried off overseas by Jupiter in the form of a bull, and not to return without her. Eventually Cadmus found himself at the site of Thebes.

BOOK 1

Pierian fire falls upon my soul: to unfold fraternal warfare, and alternate reigns fought for in unnatural hate, and guilty Thebes. Where do you command me to begin, goddesses? Shall I sing the origins of the dire folk, the rape Sidonian, the inexorable compact of Agenor's ordinance, and Cadmus searching the seas?¹ Far back goes the tale, were I to recount the affrighted husbandman of covered soldiery hiding battle in unholy furrows² and pursue to the uttermost what followed: with what music Amphion bade mountains draw nigh the Tyrian walls, what caused Bacchus' fierce wrath against a kindred city,³ what savage Juno wrought,⁴ at whom hapless Athamas took up his bow, wherefore Palaemon's mother did not fear the vast Ionian when she made to plunge in company with her son.⁵ No; already shall I let the sorrows and happy days of Cadmus be by-gones. Let the limit of my lay be the troubled house of Oedipus. For not yet do I dare breathe forth Italian

² Dragon's teeth, sown by Cadmus in the Theban Field of Mars, came up as warriors, who fought each other until only five survived.

³ Thebes, whose king Pentheus had resisted him (theme of Euripides' *Bacchae*). But his wrath was against the king, not the city. Bacchus was the son of Jupiter and Cadmus' daughter Semele.

⁴ See Semele in Index.

⁵ See Ino in Index.

THEBAID

signa nec Arctoos ausim spirare triumphos
 bisque iugo Rhenum, bis adactum legibus Histrum
 20 et coniurato deiectos vertice Dacos
 aut defensa prius vix pubescentibus annis
 bella Iovis. tuque, o Latiae decus addite famae
 quem nova maturi subeuntem exorsa parentis
 aeternum sibi Roma cupit, licet artior omnes
 25 limcs agat stellas et te plaga lucida caeli,
 Pleiadum Boreaeque et hiulci fulminis exers,
 sollicitet, licet ignipedum frenator equorum
 ipse tuis alte radiantem crinibus arcum
 30 imprimat aut magni cedat tibi Iuppiter aequa
 parte poli, maneat hominum contentus habenis,
 undarum terraeque potens, et sidera dones.
 tempus erit, cum Pierio tua fortior oestro
 facta canam: nunc tendo chelyn; satis arma referre
 Aonia et geminis sceptrum exitiale tyrannis
 35 nec furiis post fata modum flammisque rebelles
 seditione rogi tumulisque carentia regum
 funera et egestas alternis mortibus urbes,
 caerulea cum rubuit Lernaeo sanguine Dirce
 et Thetis arentes assuetum stringere ripas
 40 horruit ingenti venientem Ismenon acervo.
 quem prius heroum, Clio, dabis? inmodicum irae
 Tydea? laurigeri subitos an vatis hiatus?
 urguet et hostilem propellens caedibus annem

²² tuque ω: teque P *ante corr.*

²³ mature *Lachmann*

²⁸ late *Schrader*

⁶ After Domitian's campaigns against the German Chatti and the Dacians, which can be left to historians, we come to the fight-

BOOK 1

standards and northern triumphs—Rhine twice subjugated, Hister twice brought under obedience, Dacians hurled down from their leagued mountain, or, earlier yet, Jove's warfare warded off in years scarce past childhood.⁶ And you, glory added to Latium's fame, whom, as you take on your aged father's enterprises anew,⁷ Rome wishes hers for eternity: though a narrower path move all the planets and a radiant tract of heaven invite you, free of Pleiades and Borcas and forked lightning; though the curber of the fire-footed horses⁸ himself set his high-shining halo on your locks or Jupiter yield you an equal portion of the broad sky, may you remain content with the governance of mankind, potent over sea and land, and waive the stars. A time will come when stronger in Pierian frenzy I shall sing your deeds. For now I but tune my lyre; enough to recount Aonian arms, sceptre fatal to tyrants twain, fury outlasting death and flames renewing battle in the strife of the pyre,⁹ kings' bodies lacking burial, and cities emptied by mutual slaughter, when Dirce's blue water blushed with Lernaean blood and Thetis was aghast at Ismenos, as wont to skirt dry banks he came on in a mighty heap. Clio, which of the heroes do you offer first? Tydeus, untrammelled in his wrath? Or the laurelled seer's sudden chasm? Stormy Hippomedon too is upon me, pushing the river his enemy

ing on the Capitol in 69 A.D. (the year of the four emperors) between supporters of Vitellius and Vespasian; cf. *Silvae* 1.1.79. Domitian was on the spot, though his role was in fact insignificant.

⁷ The brief reign of Domitian's elder brother Titus (79–81) is ignored. ⁸ The Sun.

⁹ As described in Book 12, the brothers' funeral fire split in two.

turbidus Hippomedon, plorandaque bella protervi
 45 Arcados atque alio Capaneus horrore canendus.

Impia iam merita scrutatus lumina dextra
 merserat aeterna damnatum nocte pudorem
 Oedipodes longaue animam sub morte trahebat.
 illum indulgentem tenebris imaeque recessu

50 sedis inaspectos caelo radiisque penates
 servantem tamen assiduis circumvolat alis
 saeva dies animi, scelerumque in pectore Dirae.
 tunc vacuos orbes, crudum ac miserabile vitae
 supplicium, ostentat caelo manibusque cruentis
 55 pulsat inane solum saevaue ita voce precatur:

‘Di, sontes animas angustaque Tartara poenis
 qui regitis, tuque umbrifero Styx livida fundo,
 quam video, multumque mihi consucta vocari
 annue, Tisiphone, perversaque vota secunda:
 60 si bene quid merui, si me de matre cadentem
 fovisti gremio et traiectum vulnere plantas
 firmasti, si stagna peti Cirrhaea bicorni
 interfusa iugo, possem cum degere falso
 contentus Polybo, trifidaeque in Phocidos arto

⁴⁸ trahebat Σ *ad 11.582*: tene- Pω

¹⁰ Night and death hover over the doomed (*Aeneid* 6.866, Horace, *Satires* 2.1.58). In Oedipus' case the hovering thing is the night of his own conscience, the only daylight he now knows. His story is the subject of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*.

¹¹ Has he emerged from his underground den? I rather think not, though Tisiphone can hear him, if not see him, from the underworld (line 89). *Inane solum* is not Tartarus (as the scholiast explains) but the floor he stands on, hollow because the under-

BOOK 1

with corpses. And I must mourn the fight of the overbold Arcadian, and sing Capaneus in consternation never felt before.

Oedipus had already probed his impious eyes with guilty hand and sunk deep his shame condemned to everlasting night; he dragged out his life in a long-drawn death. He devotes himself to darkness, and in the lowest recess of his abode he keeps his home on which the rays of heaven never look; and yet the fierce daylight of his soul flits around him with unflagging wings and the Avengers of his crimes are in his heart.¹⁰ Then does he show the sky his vacant orbs,¹¹ the raw, pitiable punishment of survival, and strike the hollow earth with bleeding hands, and utter this wrathful prayer:

‘Gods that rule guilty souls and Tartarus too small for punishments; and Styx, livid in your shadowed depth, you that I see;¹² and Tisiphone, on whom I so often call: give me your nod and favour my warped desire. If I have done aught of service, if you cherished me in your lap when I dropped from my mother and strengthened me when they pierced my feet; if I sought Girrha’s pool poured out between two mountain peaks¹³ and in quest of father (though I might have lived content with the impostor Polybus) entwined the aged king¹⁴ in that narrow place of triply sun-

world is below. ‘Show the sky’ does not put him in the open, since to the blind the ceiling and the sky come to the same thing. He just lifts up his head.

¹² He ‘sees’ only darkness and Styx is dark.

¹³ Of Parnassus. Oedipus had gone to Delphi to consult the oracle about his parentage. The pool is the spring of Castalia.

¹⁴ Laius, his real father, though neither knew it.

THEBAID

- 65 longaevum implicui regem secuique tremantis
 ora senis, dum quaero patrem, si Sphingos iniquae
 callidus ambages te praemonstrante resolvi,
 si dulces furias et lamentabile matris
 conubium gavisus ini noctemque nefandam
- 70 saepe tuli natosque tibi, scis ipsa, paravi,
 mox avidus poenae digitis cedentibus ultro
 incubui miseraque oculos in matre reliqui:
 exaudi, si digna precor quaeque ipsa furenti
 subiceres. orbum visu regnisque carentem
- 75 non regere aut dictis maerentem flectere adorti,
 quos genui quocumque toro; quin ecce superbi
 —pro dolor!—et nostro iamdudum funcere reges
 insultant tenebris gemitusque odere paternos.
 hisne etiam funestus ego? et videt ista deorum
- 80 ignavus genitor? tu saltem debita vindex
 huc ades et totos in poenam ordire nepotes.
 indue quod madidum tabo diadema cruentis
 unguibus abripui, votisque instincta paternis
 i media in fratres, generis consortia ferro
- 85 dissiliant. da, Tartarei regina barathri,
 quod cupiam vidisse nefas. nec tarda sequetur
 mens iuvenum: modo digna veni, mea pignora nosces.⁷
- Talia dicenti crudelis diva severos
 advertit vultus. inamoenum forte sedebat
- 90 Cocyton iuxta, resolutaque vertice crines
 lambere sulphureas permiserat anguibus undas.
 illicet igne Iovis lapsisque citatior astris

⁷¹ cedentibus P (v. Håkanson): caed- ω

BOOK 1

dered Phocis and cut off the trembling old man's head; if under your tutelage I had cunning to solve the riddle of the cruel Sphinx; if I joyfully entered sweet madness and my mother's lamentable wedlock, enduring many a night of evil and making children for *you*, as well you know; if thereafter, avid for punishment, I pressed down upon yielding fingers¹⁵ and left my eyes upon my hapless mother:¹⁶ hear oh hear, if my prayer be worthy and such as you yourself might whisper to my frenzy. Those I begot (no matter in what bed) did not try to guide me, bereft of sight and sceptre, or sway my grieving with words. Nay behold (ah agony!), in their pride, kings this while by my calamity, they even mock my darkness, impatient of their father's groans. Even to *them* am I unclean? And does the sire of the gods see it and do naught? Do you at least, my rightful champion, come hither and range all my progeny for punishment. Put on your head this gore-soaked diadem that I tore off with my bloody nails. Spurred by a father's prayers, go against the brothers, go between them, let steel make partnership of blood fly asunder. Queen of Tartarus' pit, grant the wickedness I would fain see. Nor will the young men's spirit be slow to follow. Come you but worthy, you shall know them my true sons.'

The cruel goddess turned her stern countenance upon him as he spoke. As it chanced, she was sitting by unlovely Cocytos and had loosed the hair from her head and let the serpents lick the sulphurous waters. At once she leapt up from the gloomy bank, swifter than Jove's fire or falling

¹⁵ A characteristic inversion.

¹⁶ Her corpse. As in Sophocles, Jocasta's suicide here precedes the blinding, whereas in 11.637ff. it is the other way round.

THEBAID

tristibus exsiluit ripis: discedit inane
 vulgus et occursus dominae pavet. illa per umbras
 95 et caligantes animarum examine campos
 Taenariae limen petit irremeabile portae.
 sensit adesse Dies, piceo Nox obvia nimbo
 lucentes turbavit equos; procul arduus Atlans
 horruit et dubia caelum cervice remisit.
 100 arripit extemplo Maleae de valle resurgens
 notum iter ad Thebas; neque enim velocior ullas
 itque reditque vias cognatave Tartara mavult.
 centum illi stantes umbrabant ora cerastae,
 turba minor diri capitis; sedet intus abactis
 105 ferrea lux oculis, qualis per nubila Phoebes
 Atracia rubet arte labor; suffusa veneno
 tenditur ac sanie gliscit cutis; igneus atro
 ore vapor, quo longa sitis morbique famescque
 et populis mors una venit; riget horrida tergo
 110 palla, et caerulei redeunt in pectora nodi:
 Atropos hos atque ipsa novat Proserpina cultus.
 tum geminas quatit ira manus: haec igne rogali
 fulgurat, haec vivo manus aëra verberat hydro.

Ut stetit, abrupta qua plurimus arce Cithaeron
 115 occurrit caelo, fera sibila crine virenti
 congeminat, signum terris, unde omnis Achaei
 ora maris late Pelopeaque regna resultant.
 audiit et medius caeli Parnasos et asper
 Eurotas, dubiamque iugo fragor impulit Oeten

17 Taenarus and Malea, the two southern extremities of the Peloponnese, are some forty miles apart. By poetic licence, in which he is apt to indulge, Statius chuses to conflate them; cf.

BOOK 1

stars. The phantom crowd disperses, fearing their mistress' encounter. Through shades and fields dark with the swarm of ghosts she makes for the threshold of Taenarus' gate, past which none may return. Day felt her at hand, Night met him with a pitchy cloud and scared his bright horses. A far steep Atlas shuddered and let go the sky from his unsteady neck. Straightway rising from Malea's valley,¹⁷ she hastens along the familiar road to Thebes. No route does she travel faster to and fro, nor likes kindred Tartarus better. One hundred asps erect shaded her face, lesser population of her fearful head.¹⁸ In her sunken eyes sits a steely glow, as when Atracian art makes labouring Phoebe blush through clouds.¹⁹ Suffused with venom, her skin stretches and swells with matter. In her black mouth is a fiery vapour, whereby comes long drought and distempers and famine and a common death upon the nations. At her back lies stiffly a horrid mantle and blue-black knots return upon her breast. Atropos and Proserpine herself refurbish her attire. Then wrath shakes both her hands: the one glares with funeral fire, the other lashes the air with a living snake.

She halted where Cithaeron's highest peak meets the sky and with green tresses utters hiss after fierce hiss, a sign to earth; the whole coast of the Achaean sea and the realms of Pelops echo wide. Half way to heaven Parnassus heard and rough²⁰ Eurotas; the sound pushed

2.33f. *Valle* may refer to low ground east of Malea. From the map in *RE* Taenarus does not look as if it has any valleys to speak of.

¹⁷ Most of the snakes were at the *back* of her head.

¹⁹ I.e. as when Thessalian witches make a lunar eclipse.

²⁰ Connoting Spartan discipline.

THEBAID

- 120 in latus, et geminis vix fluctibus obstitit Isthmos.
 ipsa suum genetrix curvo delphine vagantem
 abripuit frenis gremioque Palaemona pressit.
 Atque ea Cadmeo praeceps ubi culmine primum
 constitit assuetaque infecit nube penates,
 125 protinus attoniti fratrum sub pectore motus,
 gentilisque animos subiit furor aegraque laetis
 invidia atque parens odii metus, inde regendi
 saevus amor, ruptaeque vices iurisque secundi
 ambitus impatiens, et summo dulcius unum
 130 stare loco, sociisque comes discordia regnis.
 sic ubi delectos per torva armenta iuvenco
 agricola imposito sociare affectat aratro,
 illi indignantes, quis nondum vomere multo
 ardua nodosos cervix descendit in armos,
 135 in diversa trahunt atque aequis vincula laxant
 viribus et vario confundunt limite sulcos:
 haud secus indomitos praeceps discordia fratres
 asperat. alterni placuit sub legibus anni
 exsilio mutare ducem. sic iure maligno
 140 Fortunam transire iubent, ut scepra tenentem
 foedere praecipiti semper novus angeret hercs.
 haec inter fratres pietas erat, haec mora pugnae
 sola nec in regem perduratura secundum.
 et nondum crasso laquearia fulva metallo,
 145 montibus aut alte Grais cffulta nitebant
 atria, congestos satis explicitura clientes;
 non impacatis regum advigilantia somnis
 pila, nec alterna †ferri statione gementes†
 excubiae, nec cura mero committere gemmas

137 anceps *Hall*

148 ferrum . . . gerentes *SB*¹

BOOK 1

Oeta's unsteady²¹ range sideways and Isthmos scarce withstood twin waves. Palaemon's mother²² herself snatched him from the reins as he roamed on his curving dolphin and pressed him to her bosom.

When first she stayed her headlong course at the Cadmean citadel and tainted the dwelling with her wonted mist, shock stirred the brothers' hearts. The family madness invaded their minds, envy sick at another's good fortune and fear, parent of hate, then fierce love of rule, breach of give and take, ambition intolerant of second place, hankering to stand at the top alone, strife, the companion of shared sovereignty. So when a farmer essays to yoke two bullocks chosen from the fierce herd at one plough, they rebel; not yet has many a ploughshare bowed their lofty necks into their brawny shoulders. They pull opposite ways and with equal strength loosen their bonds, perplexing the furrows with motley track. Not otherwise does headlong strife enrage the tameless brethren. It was agreed that each change rule for banishment as the alternate year decreed. Thus by an ungenerous law they bid Fortune change sides, so that the holder of the sceptre be ever tormented by a new heir as the compact hurries by. This was brotherly love between the two, this the sole stay of conflict, one that would not endure till the second king! And not yet did panelled ceilings shine fulvous with thick metal or lofty halls propped upon Greek marble, with space to spread assembled clients. There were no spears watching over the restless slumbers of monarchs nor steel-bearing (?) sentinels in alternating station, nor were they at

²¹ Proleptic: shaken by the noise.

²² Ino/Leucothea.

THEBAID

150 atque aurum violare cibus: sed nuda potestas
 armavit fratres, pugna est de paupere regno.
 dumque uter angustae squalentia iugera Dirces
 verteret aut Tyrii solio non altus ovaret
 exsulis ambigitur, periit ius fasque bonumque
 155 et vitae mortisque pudor. quo tenditis iras,
 a, miseri? quid si peteretur crimine tanto
 limes uterque poli, quem Sol emissus Eoo
 cardine, quem porta vergens prospectat Hibera,
 quasque procul terras obliquo sidere tangit
 160 avius aut Borea gelidas madidive tepentes
 igne Noti? quid si Phrygiae Tyriaeque sub unum
 convectentur opes? loca dira arcesque nefandae
 suffecere odio, furiisque immanibus emptum
 Oedipodae sedisse loco.

Iam sorte iacebat

165 dilatus Polynicis honos. quis tunc tibi, saeve,
 quis fuit ille dies, vacua cum solus in aula
 respiceres ius omne tuum cunctosque minores,
 et nusquam par stare caput! iam murmura serpunt
 plebis Echioniae, tacitumque a principe vulgus
 170 dissidet, et, qui mos populis, venturus amatur.
 atque aliquis, cui mens humili laesisse veneno
 summa nec impositos unquam cervice volenti
 ferre duces, 'hancne Ogygiis,' ait, 'aspera rebus
 Fata tulere vicem, totiens mutare timendos
 175 alternoque iugo dubitantia subdere colla?
 partiti versant populorum fata manuque
 Fortunam fecere levem. semperne vicissim

¹⁵⁸ portu . . . hiberno P ω (ζ , Gruter)

¹⁶¹ quid ω : non P Σ

¹⁶⁴ carebat P ω Σ (SB1)

BOOK 1

pains to trust jewels to wine and pollute gold with victuals: naked power armed the brethren, their fight is for a pauper crown. While they disputed who should plough cramped Dirce's barren acres or lord it on the Tyrian exile's lowly throne, law human and divine, morality and decency in life and death, went by the board. Alas you wretches, to what end do you stretch your wrath?²³ What if by such crime you sought both of heaven's boundaries, that to which the Sun looks when he is sent forth from the eastern hinge and that to which he gazes as he sinks from his Iberian gate, and those lands he touches from afar with slanting ray, lands the North Wind chills or the moist South warms with his heat? What if the riches of Phrygia and Tyre be brought together in one? A place of terror, a citadel accursed, sufficed your hate, monstrous madness did it cost to sit where Oedipus had sat.

Already Polynices' royalty lay low, deferred by the lot. What a day that was for you, cruel monarch, when alone in empty palace you saw authority all yours, every man your inferior, nowhere a head standing as high! Already grumbling creeps among the Echionian commons and the crowd is at silent odds with the prince. As is the way of a populace, the man of the future is the favourite. Thus one of them, whose bent it was to harm the highest with lowly venom nor ever to bear with a willing neck the rulers placed over him: 'Have the harsh Fates dealt this portion to Thebes, so often to change them we must fear and bow doubting necks beneath an alternating yoke? Dividing with each other they direct the destiny of peoples and by force have made Fortune fickle. Am I always to be given as

²³ I.e. what you are fighting for is of little value.

THEBAID

exsulibus servire dabor? tibi, summe deorum
 terrarumque sator, sociis hanc addere mentem
 180 sedit? an inde vetus Thebis extenditur omen,
 ex quo Sidonii nequiquam blanda iuveni
 pondera Carpathio iussus sale quaerere Cadmus
 exsul Hyanteos invenit regna per agros,
 fraternasque acies fetae telluris hiatu
 185 augurium seros demisit ad usque nepotes?
 cernis ut erectum torva sub fronte minetur
 saevior assurgens dempto consorte potestas.
 quas gerit ore minas, quanto premit omnia fastu!
 hicne unquam privatus erit? tamen ille precanti
 190 mitis et affatu bonus et patientior aequi.
 quid mirum? non solus erat. nos vilis in omnes
 prompta manus casus, domino cuicumque parati,
 qualiter hinc gelidus Boreas, hinc nubifer Eurus
 vela trahunt, nutat mediae fortuna carinae.
 195 heu dubio suspensa metu tolerandaque nullis
 aspera sors populis! hic imperat, ille minatur.'

At Iovis imperiis rapidi super atria caeli
 lectus concilio divum convenerat ordo
 interiore polo. spatiis hinc omnia iuxta,
 200 primaeque occidnaeque domus et fusa sub omni
 terra atque unda die. mediis sese arduus infert
 ipse deis, placido quatiens tamen omnia vultu,
 stellantique locat solio; nec protinus ausi
 caelicolae, veniam donec pater ipse sedendi
 205 tranquilla iubet esse manū. mox turba vagorum

¹⁸⁵ dimisit P ω (ζ , *Hall*)

²⁰⁰ effusa P ω (*Markland*)

BOOK 1

a slave to exiles taking turns? Did you resolve, supreme creator of heaven and earth, to make the partners²⁴ so will? Or does the ancient omen for Thebes extend from the time when Cadmus, ordered to search the Carpathian Sea in vain for the Sidonian bull's seductive freight, found in exile a kingdom in Hyantean fields and sent down fraternal warfare from the opening of pregnant earth as an augury to his remote posterity? See you how power, rising crueller with none to share it, threatens us straight of stance and stern of brow? What menace in his countenance, how his pride abases all things! Will *he* ever be a private citizen? Ah, but the other was gentle to the suppliant, kind of speech and more tolerant of justice. No wonder; he was not alone. As for us, we are a cheap company, ready to hand for any venture, for any master to use. Even as chill Boreas pulls canvass one way and cloudy Eurus another and the vessel's fate wavers between (alas harsh lot, hanging in doubtful suspense, too hard for any folk to bear!); the one commands, the other threatens.'

Now at Jove's decree the chosen hierarchy of the gods had assembled in council in the hall of the whirling firmament, at the sky's centre. From this point all is at close distance, the halls of rising and setting, land and sea spread out under every heaven. He himself proceeds towering through the midst of the deities, making all things quake though his countenance be serene, and places himself on his starry throne. Nor dare heaven's denizens follow suit straightway, but wait until the Father himself with tranquil gesture orders licence to be seated. Presently a crowd of

²⁴ Eteocles and Polynices (SB²), not 'your kith and kin' or 'your allies (the Thebans).'

THEBAID

semideum et summis cognati Nubibus Amnes
 et compressa metu servantes murmura Venti
 aurea tecta replent. mixta convexa deorum
 maiestate tremunt, radiant maiore sereno
 210 culmina et arcano florentes lumine postes.
 postquam iussa quies siluitque exterritus orbis,
 incipit ex alto (grave et immutabile sanctis
 pondus adest verbis, et vocem Fata sequuntur):
 'Terrarum delicta nec exsaturabile Diris
 215 ingenium mortale queror. quonam usque nocentum
 exigam in poenas? taedet saevire corusco
 fulmine, iam pridem Cyclopum operosa fatiscunt
 bracchia et Aeoliis desunt incudibus ignes.
 atque adeo tuleram falso rectore solutos
 220 Solis equos, caelumque rotis errantibus uri,
 et Phaëthontea mundum squalere favilla.
 nil actum, neque tu valida quod cuspide late
 ire per illicitum pelago, germane, dedisti.
 nunc geminas punire domos, quis sanguinis auctor
 225 ipse ego, descendo. Perseos alter in Argos
 scinditur, Aonias fluit hic ab origine Thebas.
 mens cunctis imposta manet: quis funera Cadmi
 nesciat et totiens excitam a sedibus imis
 Eumenidum bellasse aciem, mala gaudia matrum
 230 erroresque feros nemorum et reticenda dcorum

²⁵ They forged Jupiter's thunderbolts inside Mt Aetna. Similarly Vulcan, working in the Aeolian Islands off the northeast coast of Sicily.

²⁶ The genealogies may be left to commentators: 'The ancients did not agree on mythological stemmatics, and Statius is often quite vague' (Vessey).

BOOK 1

wandering demigods and Rivers kin to the lofty Clouds and Winds keeping their roars under fear's restraint fill the golden edifice. The dome trembles with the mingled majesty of the deities, the towers shine in a larger blue, and the portals bloom with a mystic light. Silence was ordered and mute in terror fell the world. From on high he begins. His holy words have weight heavy and immutable and the Fates follow his voice:

'Earth's sins and the mind of man that no demons of vengeance can satiate I do protest. How much longer shall I be driven to punish the guilty? Weary am I of raging with flashing bolt, the busy arms of the Cyclopes²⁵ have long been faint and the Aeolian anvils out of fire. And indeed I suffered the loosing of the Sun's horses under a false driver, the burning of the sky as the wheels ran wild, the world caked with Phaëthon's ashes. It availed not; nor yet that you, my brother, with your strong spear let the sea go at large through territory not its own. Now I descend to punish two houses, my own blood. One stream branches to Persean Argos, the other flows from its fount to Aonian Thebes.²⁶ The character stamped on all of them abides. Who would not know of Cadmus' calamities, how often the host of Furies, summoned from their infernal dwellings, made war, the evil joys of mothers²⁷ and their wild wanderings in the forests, the gods' reproaches²⁸ best unspoken.

²⁷ Bacchanals.

²⁸ Sometimes understood as 'crimes against the gods,' which makes doubtful Latin and indifferent sense (with *reticenda*). Jupiter may be supposed to be thinking of his own affair with Semele and the slayings of the Niobids and Pentheus.

THEBAID

crimina? vix lucis spatio, vix noctis abactae
 enumerare queam mores gentemque profanam.
 scandere quin etiam thalamos hic impius heres
 patris et immeritae gremium incestare parentis
 235 appetiit, proprios (monstrum!) revolutus in ortus.
 ille tamen superis aeterna piacula solvit
 proiecitque diem, nec iam amplius aethere nostro
 vescitur; at nati (facinus sine more!) cadentes
 calcavere oculos. iam iam rata vota tulisti,
 240 dire senex. meruere tuae, meruere tenebrae
 ultorem sperare Iovem. nova sontibus arma
 iniciam regnis, totumque a stirpe revellam
 exitiale genus. belli mihi semina sunt
 Adrastus socer et superis adiuncta sinistris
 245 conubia. hanc etiam poenis incessere gentem
 decretum; neque enim arcano de pectore fallax
 Tantalus et saevae periit iniuria mensae.'

Sic pater omnipotens. ast illi saucia dictis
 flammato versans inopinum corde dolorem
 250 talia Iuno refert: 'mene, o iustissime divum,
 me bello certare iubes? scis, semper ut arces
 Cycloperum magnique Phoroneos incluta fama
 scepra viris opibusque iuvenem, licet improbus illic
 custodem Phariae somno letoque iuvencae
 255 extinguas, saeptis et turribus aureus intres.
 mentitis ignosco toris: illam odimus urbem
 quam vultu confessus adis, ubi conscia magni
 signa tori tonitrus agis et mea fulmina torques.

²⁹ 'Expelled' by artificial light; see SB². He means 'in the space of a day and a wakeful night.'

³⁰ Adrastus' ancestor Tantalus served up his son Pelops for the gods to eat.

BOOK 1

Scarce in the space of daylight and of night expelled²⁹ could I enumerate the unholy ways of that race. Why, this impious heir essayed to climb into his father's bed and to defile the womb of his innocent mother, returning (oh monstrous!) to his own origin. He, however, has paid an everlasting penalty to the High Ones, casting the daylight away, and no longer does he feed upon our air; but his sons (outrageous deed!) trampled his eyes as they fell. Now, now your prayers are answered, dire ancient. Your darkness has deserved, ay truly, to hope for Jove as its avenger. I shall bring new warfare on the guilty reigns and tear the whole deadly stock out from the root. Let Adrastus' gift of his daughter in a marriage unblest of heaven be my seed of battle. This line also I have resolved to assail and punish, for false Tantalus and the outrage of the cruel banquet³⁰ have not vanished from my secret heart.' ✓

So spoke the Father Almighty. But wounded by his words and with sudden pain in her burning heart thus Juno makes answer: 'Most just of the gods, is it I whom you bid go to war, I? You know how always with men and wealth I aid the towers of the Cyclopes and great Phoroneus' sceptre famed in story, even though you in that land scruple not to destroy the warder³¹ of the Pharian heifer by sleep and death and to enter the guarded turret³² in golden guise. I forgive the couchings you deny. But I hate that city where you go and do not hide your face, where you make thunder, the signal and accomplice of our mighty union, and hurl

³¹ Hundred-eyed Argus, set by Juno to watch Io. Mercury killed him on Jupiter's orders as he slept.

³² Of Danaë.

THEBAID

- facta luant Thebae: cur hostes eligis Argos?
 260 quin age, si tanti est thalami discordia sancti,
 et Samon et veteres armis exscinde Mycenae,
 verte solo Sparten. cur usquam sanguine festo
 coniugis ara tuae, cumulo cur turis Eoi
 laeta calet? melius votis Mareotica fumat
 265 Coptos et aerisoni lugentia flumina Nili.
 quod si prisca luunt auctorum crimina gentes
 subvenitque tuis sera haec sententia curis,
 percensere aevi senium, <a> quo tempore tandem
 terrarum furias abolere et saecula retro
 270 emendare sat est? iamdudum ab sedibus illis
 incipe, fluctivaga qua praeterlabitur unda
 Sicarios longe relegens Alpheos amores:
 Arcades hic tua (nec pudor est) delubra nefastis
 imposuere locis, illic Mavortius axis
 275 Oenomai Geticoque pecus stabulare sub Haemo
 dignius, abruptis etiamnum inhumata procorum
 reliquiis trunca ora rigent; tamen hic tibi templi
 gratus honos; placet Ida nocens mentitaque manes
 Creta tuos. me Tantaleis consistere terris
 280 quae tandem invidia est? belli deflecte tumultus
 et generis miserescere tui. sunt impia late
 regna tibi, melius generos passura nocentes.'

260 tanta P ω (Gronovius)

265 add. Madvig

279 terris ψ : tectis P ω

33 Alluding to Semele.

34 Alluding to the *sistrum* (metal rattle) used by Isis worship-

BOOK 1

*my bolts.*³³ Let Thebes expiate her deeds; but why choose Argos as her foe? Nay then, if the discord of our sacred bedchamber is a price worth paying, raze Samos with battle and ancient Mycenae, level Sparte with the ground. Why does your spouse's rejoicing altar warm anywhere with festal blood and pile of eastern incense? Better that Mareotic Coptos smoke with vows and the mourning streams of brazen-clanging Nile.³⁴ But if the peoples expiate the ancient crimes of their first ancestors and this late resolve has entered your anxious thoughts, to pass time's old age in review, how far back, I ask, does it suffice to cancel earth's mad doings and purge the ages in reverse? Begin straightway with those dwellings³⁵ where the wave-wandering waters of Alpheus glide, distantly retracing his Sicilian love. Here the men of Arcady set your shrine (nor do you blush) in abominable ground; there was the chariot of Oenomaus, gift of Mars, and horses worthier to be stabled under Getic Haemus.³⁶ There even now stark and unburied are the mangled heads of the suitors, torn from their remains.³⁷ And yet the grace of a temple there pleases you; guilty Ida³⁸ and Crete that tells falsely of your death is to your liking. Why grudge *me* a home in the land of Tantalus? Turn aside war's turmoils and pity your own blood. You have wicked realms spread wide that will better suffer guilty husbands for their daughters.'

pers in the annual mourning for Osiris. Juno means 'let Isis (identified with Io) be worshipped rather than me.'

³⁵ Olympia, centre of Jupiter worship. ³⁶ Like the man-eating horses of Thracian Diomedes. ³⁷ Lit. 'maimed of their remains (i.e. bodies).' ³⁸ In Crete, where Jupiter was supposed to be buried (Cretans were proverbially liars).

THEBAID

Finierat precibus miscens convicia Iuno.
 at non ille gravis dictis, quamquam aspera †motu, †
 285 reddidit haec: 'equidem haud rebar te mente secunda
 laturam, quodcumque tuos, licet aequus, in Argos
 consulerem, neque me, detur si copia, fallit
 multa super Thebis Bacchum ausuramque Dionen
 dicere, sed nostri reverentia ponderis obstat.
 290 horrendos etenim latices, Stygia aequora fratris,
 obtestor, mansurum et non revocabile verbum,
 nil fore quod dictis flectar. quare impiger alis
 portantes praecede Notos, Cyllenia proles,
 aëra per liquidum regnisque illapsus opacis
 295 dic patruo: superas senior se attollat ad auras
 Laius, exstinctum nati quem vulnere nondum
 ulterior Lethes accepit ripa profundi
 lege Erebi; ferat hic diro mea iussa nepoti:
 germanum exsilio fretum Argolicisque tumentem
 300 hospitium, quod sponte cupit, procul impius aula
 arceat, alternum regni infitiatus honorem.
 hinc causae irarum, certo reliqua ordine ducam.'

Paret Atlantiades dictis genitoris et inde
 summa pedum propere plantaribus illigat alis
 305 obnubitque comas et temperat astra galero.
 tum dextrae virgam inseruit, qua pellere dulces
 aut suadere iterum somnos, qua nigra subire
 Tartara et exsanguis animare assueverat umbras.
 desiluit, tenuique exceptus inhorruit aura.

²⁸⁴ motu ω: -us P ante corr., Gruter: anne captu?

³⁹ Pluto's, whose Styx (by which the gods took their oaths) corresponds to the sea in the upper world.

BOOK I

Juno ended, reproach blent with supplication. But the words of his reply were not hard, though harsh to apprehend (?): 'Indeed I did not think you would take kindly to any intent of mine against your Argos, just though I be, neither am I unaware that given opportunity Bacchus and Dione would venture lengthy pleas on behalf of Thebes; but reverence for my authority forbids. And verily I call the dread waters, my brother's Stygian sea,³⁹ to witness, pronouncement fixed and irrevocable: no words shall ever change my purpose. Therefore, my son of Cyllene, stir your wings, speed faster than the winds that bear you, glide through the clear air to the realms of darkness and thus address your uncle: Let old Laius ascend to the upper atmosphere; slain by his son's sword, Lethe's bank has not yet received him, according to deep Erebus' law.⁴⁰ Let him bear my commands to his fell grandson, whose brother counts on exile and waxes proud with Argive hospitality. Him let the ruler keep far from the palace (as is his own desire), flouting kinship and repudiating the royal dignity alternate. Hence cause of ire; the rest I shall guide in sure process.'

Atlas' grandson⁴¹ obeys his sire's words and hastily thereupon binds the winged sandals on to his ankles and with his wide hat covers his locks and tempers the stars. Then he thrusts the wand in his right hand; with this he was wont to banish sweet slumber or recall it, with this to enter black Tartarus and give life to bloodless phantoms. Down he leapt and shivered as the thin air received him. No

⁴⁰ Under which unburied dead wandered for a hundred years outside the boundary of the underworld (Lethe).

⁴¹ Mercury's mother Maia was Atlas' daughter.

THEBAID

- 310 nec mora, sublimes raptim per inane volatus
 carpit et ingenti designat nubila gyro.
 Interea patriis olim vagus exsul ab oris
 Oedipodionides furto deserta pererrat
 Aoniae. iam iamque animis male debita regna
 315 concipit, et longum signis cunctantibus annum
 stare gemit. tenet una dies noctesque recursans
 cura virum, si quando humilem decedere regno
 germanum et semet Thebis opibusque potitum
 cerneret; hac aevum cupiat pro luce pacisci.
 320 nunc queritur ceu tarda fugae dispendia, sed mox
 attollit flatus ducis et sedisse superbum
 deiecto iam fratre putat: spes anxia mentem
 extrahit et longo consumit gaudia voto.
 tunc sedet Inachias urbes Danaëiaque arva
 325 et caligantes abrupto sole Mycenae
 ferre iter impavidum, seu praevia ducit Erinys,
 seu fors illa viae, sive hac immota vocabat
 Atropos. Ogygiis ululata furoribus antra
 deserit et pingues Baccheo sanguine colles.
 330 inde plagam, qua molle sedens in plana Cithaeron
 porrigitur lassumque inclinat ad aequora montem,
 praeterit. hinc arte scopuloso in limite pendens
 infames Scirone petras Scyllaeaque rura
 335 purpureo regnata seni ditemque Corinthon
 linquit et in mediis audit duo litora campis.

³²¹ superbus Pω (ς)

³³⁴ mitem Pω (*Schrader*)

⁴² The anticipated joy of returning to Thebes as king.

⁴³ When Atreus served up the sons of his brother Thyestes to their father and the Sun reversed course.

BOOK 1

pause; he takes swift and lofty flight through the void and traces a vast arc across the clouds.

Meanwhile, long now a wandering exile from his native land, the son of Oedipus stealthily strays over lonely reaches of Aonia. Already his mind envisages the royalty overdue and groans at the long year's halt and the loitering of the constellations. One thought obsesses him day and night, ever recurring: would he one day see his brother humbly leave the throne and himself in possession of Thebes and power? For that day he would willingly barter a lifetime. One moment he complains of the dragging stretch of exile, but anon he hoists princely pride and fancies he sits haughty, his brother already cast down. Torturing hope drags out his soul and in prolonged desire exhausts his joy.⁴² Then he decides to take his way boldly to the cities of Inachus and Danaë's fields and Mycenae darkened with sun cut short.⁴³ Does a guiding Fury lead him on, or is it the chance of the road, or was inexorable Atropos summoning him that way? He leaves the glades where Ogygian madness howls and hills fat with Bacchic gore.⁴⁴ Thence he passes the tract where Cithaeron stretches out, gently sinking into the flat, and inclines his weary steep to the sea. From here the rocky path is high and narrow. He leaves Sciron's ill-famed cliffs and Scylla's fields where the purple anemone⁴⁵ ruled and wealthy Corinth; and in mid land hears two shores.

⁴⁴ Where Bacchanals tore their victims to pieces.

⁴⁵ Nisus, king of Megara, whose life-preserving lock of hair was cut off by his daughter Scylla (distinct from the marine monster).

THEBAID

Iamque per emeriti surgens confinia Phoebi
 Titanis late mundo subvecta silenti
 rorifera gelidum tenuaverat aëra biga;
 iam pecudes volucresque tacent, iam Somnus avaris
 340 irrepsit curis pronusque ex aethere nutat,
 grata laboratae referens oblivia vitae.
 sed nec puniceo rediturum nubila caelo
 promiserere iubar, nec rarescentibus umbris
 longa repercusso nituere crepuscula Phoebō:
 345 densior a terris et nulli pervia flammae
 subtexit nox atra polos. iam claustra rigentis
 Aeoliae percussa sonant, venturaque rauco
 ore minatur hiems, venti transversa frementes
 confligunt axemque emoto cardine vellunt,
 350 dum caelum sibi quisque rapit; sed plurimus Auster
 inglomerat noctem, tenebrosa volumina torquens,
 defunditque imbres sicco quos asper hiatu
 praesolidat Boreas; nec non abrupta tremescunt
 fulgura, et attritus subita face rumpitur aether.
 355 iam Nemea, iam Taenariis contermina lucis
 Arcadiae capita alta madent; ruit agmine magno
 Inachus et gelidas surgens Erasinus in undas.
 pulverulenta prius calcandaque flumina nullae
 aggeribus tenere morae, stagnoque refusa est
 360 funditus et veteri spumavit Lerna veneno.
 frangitur omne nemus, rapiunt antiqua procellae
 brachia silvarum, nullisque aspecta per aevum
 solibus umbrosi patuere aestiva Lycaei.

Ille tamen, modo saxa iugis fugientia ruptis

³⁴³ crebrescentibus *Imhof*

³⁵⁷ in undas *P ante corr.:* ad arctos ω

BOOK 1

And now Phoebus' work is done; Titanis rises nearby, through the wide spaces, borne up in the silent sky, thinning the cool atmosphere with her dewy car. Now beasts and birds are still, now Sleep steals upon greedy cares, hanging down from the air, bringing back sweet forgetfulness of toilsome living. But no clouds in a red sky promised daylight's return, nor in lessening⁴⁶ shadows did a long twilight gleam with reflected sun. Black night that no ray can pierce comes ever denser from earth, veiling the heavens. Now the dungeons of icy Aeolia sound with buffets and a coming storm hoarsely threatens. The winds roar across each other and colliding pluck at the arch of heaven, dislocating the hinges, as each snatches the sky for himself. But Auster most of all concentrates the night, hurling convoluted murk and pouring down rain that harsh Boreas with his dry mouth makes solid before it falls. Quivering lightnings burst out, the chafed air is broken by sudden flashes. Now Nemea is drenched and the high Arcadian summits adjoining the forests of Taenarus.⁴⁷ Inachus⁴⁸ rushes in torrent, and Erasinus rising into icy waves. No restraint of dykes held back the rivers, that had been dusty tracks. Lerna's swamp surged from its depths, foaming with ancient venom. Every forest is shattered; gusts snatch aged branches, the summer stations of shady Lycaeus, seen by no suns in history, are laid open.

Now he wondered at rocks fleeing from ruptured

⁴⁶ The conjecture *crebrescentibus* ('as the shadows thicken') is tempting.

⁴⁷ Geographical license again. Cape Taenarus is not adjacent to Arcadia (cf. 2.50).

⁴⁸ Statius seems to have thought that the river Inachus had its source in Nemea; cf. 575 with Häkanson's note.

THEBAID

- 365 miratus, inodo nubigenas e montibus annes
 aure pavens passimque insano turbine raptas
 pastorum pecorumque domos, non segnius amens
 incertusque viae per nigra silentia vastum
 haurit iter; pulsat metus undique et undique frater.
- 370 ac velut hiberno deprensus navita ponto,
 cui neque Temo piger neque amico sidere monstrat
 Luna vias, medio caeli pelagique tumultu
 stat rationis inops, iam iamque aut saxa malignis
 expectat summersa vadis aut vertice acuto
- 375 spumantes scopulos erectae incurrere prorae:
 talis opaca legens nemorum Cadmeius heros
 accelerat, vasto metuenda umbone ferarum
 excutiens stabula, et prono virgulta refringit
 pectore (dat stimulos animo vis maesta timoris)
- 380 donec ab Inachiis victa caligine tectis
 emicuit lucem devexa in moenia fundens
 Larisaeus apex. illo spe concitus omni
 evolat, hinc celsae Iunonia templa Prosymnae
 laevus habens, hinc Herculeo signata vapore
- 385 Lernaesi stagna atra vadi, tandemque reclusis
 infertur portis. actutum regia cernit
 vestibula; hic artus imbri ventoque rigentes
 proicit ignotaeque acclinis postibus aulae
 invitat tenues ad dura cubilia somnos.
- 390 Rex ibi tranquille, medio de limite vitae
 in senium vergens, populos Adrastus habebat,
 dives avis et utroque Iovem de sanguine ducens.
 hic sexus melioris inops sed prole vivebat

379 *dist. Håkanson*

390 tranquille ψΣ, O. Mueller: -llae Pω: -llos Hall

BOOK 1

heights, now his ears feared cloud-born rivers coursing from the mountains and the dwellings of shepherds and flocks swept everywhere away in the mad whirl. Distracted and doubtful of his way, no less swiftly did he devour his desolate route through the black silences. Terror strikes from every side, terror and his brother. As a mariner caught in a winter sea, to whom neither lazy Wain nor Moon with friendly radiance shows directions, stands clueless in mid commotion of land and sea, expecting every moment rocks sunk in treacherous shallows, or foaming cliffs with spiky tops to run upon the rearing prow: so the Cadmean hero traversing the dark forest quickens pace, shaking out the perilous lairs of wild beasts with his huge shield, and with thrusting breast bursts open the thickets (grim force of fear spurs him on), until the darkness was overborne by the dwellings of Inachus and Larisa's pinnacle flashes out, beaming light upon the shelving town. Thither he darts, urged on by all his hope, to the left of Juno's temple of lofty Prosymna on one hand, with the black pools of Lerna's marsh, marked by the heat of Hercules,⁴⁹ on the other. At last the gates are open and in he comes. At once he sees the royal forecourt; here he flings down limbs stiffened by wind and rain and leaning against the doors of the unknown palace invites light slumbers to his hard couch. ♪

There king Adrastus governed his people in tranquility, verging from life's midway into old age. Rich was he in ancestry, back to Jove on either side. The better sex he lacked, but flourished in female offspring, supported by

⁴⁹ The fire with which he cauterized the Hydra's severed necks.

THEBAID

feminea, gemino natarum pignore fultus.
 395 cui Phoebus generos (monstrum exitiabile dictu!
 mox adaperata fides) fato ducente canebat
 saetigerumque suem et fulvum adventare leonem.
 id volvens non ipse pater, non docte futuri
 Amphiaræ vides, etenim vetat auctor Apollo.
 400 tantum in corde sedens aegrescit cura parenti.

Ecce autem antiquam fato Calydonia relinquens
 Olenius Tydeus (fraterni sanguinis illum
 conscius horror agit) eadem sub nocte sopora
 lustra terit, similesque Notos dequestus et imbres,
 405 infusam tergo glaciem et liquentia nimbis
 ora comasque gerens subit uno tegmine, cuius
 fusus humo gelida partem prior hospes habebat.
 hic vero ambobus rabiem Fortuna cruentam
 attulit: haud passi sociis defendere noctem
 410 culminibus; paulum alternis in verba minasque
 cunctantur, mox ut iactis sermonibus irae
 intumuere satis, tum vero erectus uterque
 exsertare umeros nudamque lacessere pugnam.
 celsior ille gradu procera in membra simulque
 415 integer annorum; sed non et viribus infra
 Tydea fert animus, totosque infusa per artus
 maior in exiguo regnabat corpore virtus.
 iam crebros ictus ora et cava tempora circum
 obnixi ingeminant, telorum aut grandinis instar
 420 Rhipaeac, flexoque genu vacua ilia tundunt.
 non aliter quam Pisaco sua lustra Tonanti
 cum redeunt crudisque virum sudoribus ardet
 pulvis; at hinc teneros caveae dissensus ephobos

BOOK 1

twin pledge of daughters. To him Phoebus prophesied (a deadly prodigy to tell, but the truth of it was soon revealed) that husbands for them were on their way by fate's leading; a bristly pig and a tawny lion. That pondering, neither the father himself nor Amphiaraus skilled in futurity sees light, for Apollo the source forbids. Only in the parental heart anxiety sits and festers.

But see! Fate makes Olenian Tydeus leave ancient Calydon, driven by guilty terror of a brother's blood,⁵⁰ and in the slumbrous night tread the selfsame wild. Like wind and rain aggrieve him and with ice lying on his back and face and hair astream with tempest showers he comes to that single shelter whereof the earlier stranger held part, stretched on the cold ground. Here Fortune brought bloody rage to both. They brooked not to ward off the night under a shared roof. For a brief while they delay, exchanging verbal threats; presently, when their wrath had swelled enough with hurling of speech, each rose and bared his shoulders and challenged to naked combat. The one walked taller, long of limb and in prime of years; but no lesser strength backs Tydeus' bold spirit, and valour instilled through every member reigned all the greater in his small frame.⁵¹ Now strenuously they shower blows thick and fast on face and hollow temples, like darts or Rhipaeian hail, or on bended knee pound unprotected loins. Even as when his lustral terms return to the Pisaeon Thunderer⁵² and the dust warms with the crude sweat of men—but yonder the discord of the crowd spurs on the tender youths

⁵⁰ The killing was accidental.

⁵¹ Homeric (*Iliad* 5.801)—a mythical James Cagney.

⁵² At the beginning of an Olympiad (four-year cycle).

THEBAID

concitat, exclusaeque expectant praemia matres:
 425 sic alacres odio nullaque cupidine laudis
 accensi incurrunt, scrutatur et intima vultus
 unca manus penitusque oculis cedentibus intrat.
 forsan et accinctos lateri (sic ira ferebat)
 nudassent enses, meliusque hostilibus armis
 430 lugendus fratri, iuvenis Thebanc, iaceres,
 ni rex insolitum clamorem et pectore ab alto
 stridentes gemitus noctis miratus in umbris,
 movisset gressus, magnis cui sobria curis
 pendebat somno iam deteriore senectus.
 435 isque ubi progrediens numerosa luce per alta
 atria dimotis aduerso limine claustris
 terribilem dictu faciem, lacera ora putresque
 sanguineo videt imbre genas: 'quae causa furoris,
 440 externi iuvenes (neque enim meus audeat istas
 civis in usque manus), quisnam implacabilis ardor
 exturbare odiis tranquilla silentia noctis?
 usque adeone angusta dies, et triste parumper
 pacem animo somnumque pati? sed prodite tandem
 unde orti, quo fertis iter, quae iurgia? nam vos
 445 haud humiles tanta ira docet, generisque superbi
 magna per effusum clarescunt signa cruorem.'

Vix ea, cum mixto clamore obliqua tuentes
 incipiunt una: 'rex o mitissime Achivum,
 quid verbis opus? ipse undantes sanguine vultus
 450 aspicias.' haec passim turbatis vocis amarac
 confudere sonis; inde orsus in ordine Tydeus
 continuat: 'maesti cupiens solacia casus
 monstriferae Calydonis opes Acheloiaque arva
 deserui; vestris haec me ecce in finibus ingens
 455 nox operit. tecto caelum prohibere quis iste

BOOK I

and their excluded mothers wait for the prizes: so, lively with hate nor inspired by any desire of glory, they rush in. The clawing hand searches the inmost places of the visage and enters deep into the yielding eyes. And mayhap they would have unsheathed the swords that girt their sides (so anger urged) and the young Theban would have fallen by an enemy's weapon for his brother to mourn (and better so), save that the king, whose old age, sober and care-ridden, hovered in asleep no longer sound, wondered at this unwonted hubbub in the dark of night and the groans shrilling from the depth of their breasts and thither took his way. Passing through the lofty halls in the light of many a torch and unbarring the doors, he sees a sight dreadful to tell on the threshold before him—torn faces and cheeks clotted with gory shower. 'Why this madness, young strangers?—for no countryman of mine would dare violence such as this. What this implacable urge to disrupt night's tranquil silence with your brawls? Is the day so short, does it so irk you to suffer peace of mind and sleep for a little while? But come, reveal: where are you from, whither your way, what your quarrel? For such wrath argues you of no mean degree and great signs of proud race show plain in your blood-letting.'

Scarce had he spoken when they begin together with mingled shouting and looks askance. 'Most clement king of the Achaeans, what need of words? You see for yourself faces astream with blood': such words do they confound at large in jumbled accents of angry utterance. Then Tydeus takes up an ordered tale: 'Craving solace for sad chance, I left the wealth of monster-bearing Calydon and Achelous' fields. Here, see, night of night cloaks me in your bounds. Who is this fellow that forbade me to shelter from the

THEBAID

- arcuit? an quoniam prior haec ad limina forte
 molitus gressus? pariter stabulare bimembres
 Centauros unaque ferunt Cyclopas in Aetna
 compositos. sunt et rabidis iura insita monstris
 460 fasque suum: nobis sociare cubilia terrae—
 sed quid ego? aut hodie spoliis gavisus abibis,
 quisquis es, his, aut me, si non effetus oborto
 sanguis hebet luctu, magni de stirpe creatum
 Oeneos et Marti non degenerare paterno
 465 accipies.’ ‘nec nos animi nec stirpis egentes—’
 ille refert contra, sed mens sibi conscia fati
 cunctatur proferre patrem. tunc mitis Adrastus:
 ‘immo agite, et positis, quas nox inopinaque suasit
 aut virtus aut ira, minis succedite tecto.
 470 iam pariter coeant animorum in pignora dextrae.
 non haec incassum divisque absentibus acta;
 forsitan et has venturus amor praemiserit iras,
 ut meminisse iuuet.’ nec vana voce locutus
 fata senex, siquidem hanc perhibent post vulnera iunctis
 475 esse fidem, quanta partitum extrema protervo
 Thesea Pirithoo, vel inanem mentis Oresten
 opposito rabidam Pylade vitasse Megaeram.
 tunc quoque mulcentem dictis corda aspera regem
 iam faciles (ventis ut decertata residunt
 480 aequora, laxatisque diu tamen aura superstes
 immoritur velis) passi, subiere penates.
 Hic primum lustrare oculis cultusque virorum
 telaque magna vacat: tergo videt huius inanem
 impexis utrimque iubis horrere leonem,
 485 illius in speciem quem per Teumesia tempe

⁴⁷⁴ post ω: per P

BOOK 1

weather? Or was it because he happened to turn his steps to this threshold before me? They say that bifurmed Centaurs lodge together and Cyclopes in Aetna lie down with one another. Savage monsters have their inbred rules, their law. For us to share beds of earth—but why go on? Today you shall either leave rejoicing in these spoils, whoever you are, or, unless my strength be outworn or dulled by my grief, you shall find me of great Oeneus' stock, no degenerate from my father's Mars.⁵³ The other rejoins: 'Neither do I lack courage or race'—but his heart, conscious of fate, hesitates to announce his father. Then kindly Adrastus: 'Nay come, put aside the threats that night and sudden valour or sudden wrath inspired, and pass under my roof. Let your right hands now join and pledge your hearts. This that has passed is not in vain, nor were the gods elsewhere. It may even be that your anger is harbinger of amity to come, to be pleasant in memory.' Nor was the old man's prophesy idle. For 'tis said that after these wounds they were bonded in such loyalty as made Theseus share the worst with reckless Pirithous, or Pylades face Megaera's fury to shield a maddened Orestes. Even then they suffered the king as he soothed their ruffled hearts with his words, and passed into the palace, pliable now, as a sea for which the winds have fought falls to rest; and a long, lingering breeze yet dies upon the drooping canvass.

Here first he has time to survey the heroes' garb and mighty weapons. On the back of one he sees on either side⁵⁴ a lion's pelt, stiff with uncombed mane, like to him that in Teumesos' valley Amphitryon's son in youthful

⁵³ The genealogy varies.

⁵⁴ Hanging from both shoulders.

THEBAID

Amphitryoniades fractum iuvenalibus annis
ante Cleonaei vestitus proelia monstri.
terribiles contra saetis ac dente recurvo
Tydea per latos umeros ambire laborant
490 exuviae, Calydonis honos. stupet omine tanto
defixus senior, divina oracula Phoebi
agnoscens monitusque datos vocalibus antris.
obtutu gelida ora premit, laetusque per artus
horror iit; sensit manifesto numine ductos
495 affore, quos nexis ambagibus augur Apollo
portendi generos, vultu fallente ferarum,
ediderat. tunc sic tendens ad sidera palmas:
'Nox, quae terrarum caelique amplexa labores
igne multivago transmittis sidera lapsu,
500 indulgens reparare animum dum proximus aegris
infundat Titan agiles animantibus ortus,
tu mihi perplexis quaesitam erroribus ultro
advehis alma fidem veterisque exordia fati
detegis: assistas operi tuaque omina firmes.
505 semper honoratam dimensis orbibus anni
te domus ista colet; nigri tibi, diva, litabunt
electa cervice greges, lustraliaque exta
lacte novo perfusus edet Vulcanius ignis.
salve prisca fides tripodum obscurique recessus.
510 deprendi, Fortuna, deos.' sic fatus, et ambos
innectens manibus tecta interioris ad aulae
progreditur. canis etiamnum altaribus ignes

511 ulterioris P ω (*Schrader*)

55 The killing of the Nemean lion was Hercules' first Labour.

BOOK 1

years broke and clothed himself therewith before his bout with the monster of Cleonae.⁵⁵ Set against that, the glorious spoils of Calydon strive to surround Tydeus' broad shoulders, terrible with bristles and backward-curving tusk. Stunned motionless by so great an omen, the old king recognizes Phoebus' oracle divine, warning issued from the vocal cavern. Fixed his eyes, mute his frozen lips, and a shudder of joy ran through his frame. He saw that here would be⁵⁶ the sons-in-law led by manifest deity whose portended advent in the delusive semblance of wild beasts augur Apollo had announced in riddling wise. Then stretching his palms to the stars, 'Night,' he cried, 'that embracing the toils of heaven and earth do send the fiery stars across in their wide-ranging course, granting sick creatures to recruit their spirit until the morrow's sun prompt them rise to action, graciously you offer me the proof I have long sought in perplexity and error, unveiling the rudiments of ancient destiny: stand to the work and make firm your omens. Ever shall this house do you honour and worship as the years measure out their circles. Black herds with chosen neck shall be your sacrifice, goddess, and Vulcan's flame, drenched with fresh milk, shall consume the lustral entrails. Hail ancient truth of tripods, dark recesses!⁵⁷ Fortune, I have caught the gods.' So he spoke, and taking both by the hand, proceeds to the chambers of the inner palace. On the grey altars heat still kept

⁵⁶ The future infinitive *affore* has been variously explained. I take it as corresponding to an indicative *aderunt*, 'will be (are like to be) here.'

⁵⁷ The cave where the Delphic priestess (the Pythia) delivered her oracles.

THEBAID

sopitum cinerem et tepidi libamina sacri
 servabant; adolere focos epulasque recentes
 515 instaurare iubet. dictis parere ministri
 certatim accelerant; vario strepit icta tumultu
 regia: pars ostro tenues auroque sonantes
 emunire toros alteque inferre tapetas,
 pars teretes levare manu ac disponere mensas.
 520 ast alii tenebras et opacam vincere noctem
 aggressi tendunt auratis vincula lychnis.
 his labor inserto torrere exsanguia ferro
 viscera caesarum pecudum, his cumulare canistris
 perdomitam saxo Cererem. laetatur Adrastus
 525 obsequio fervere domum, iamque ipse superbis
 fulgebat stratis solioque effultus eburno.
 parte alia iuvenes siccati vulnera lymphis
 discumbunt, simul ora notis foedata tuentur
 inque vicem ignoscunt. tunc rex longaevis Acasten
 530 (natarum haec altrix eadem et fidissima custos
 lecta sacrum iustae Veneri occultare pudorem)
 imperat acciri tacitaque immurmurat aure.

Nec mora praeceptis, cum protinus utraque virgo
 arcano egressae thalamo: mirabile visu,
 535 Pallados armisonae pharetrataeque ora Dianae
 aequa ferunt, terrore minus. nova deinde pudori
 visa virum facies: pariter pallorque ruborque
 purpureas hausere genas, oculique verentes
 ad sanctum rediere patrem. postquam ordine mensae
 540 victa fames, signis perfectam auroque nitentem
 Iasides pateram famulos ex more poposcit,
 qua Danaus libare deis seniorque Phoronus

⁵³² tactaque *Eden*

BOOK 1

sleeping ash and offerings of sacrifice yet warm. He gives order to rouse the fires and renew the recent feast. The servants hasten in rivalry to obey his word. The royal abode hums with various bustle. Some furnish the couches with fine-spun purples and rustling gold, piling high the cushions, some polish the round tables and set them in place. Yet others essay to overcome dark night's shades, stretching chains with gilded lamps. To these falls the task of roasting bloodless flesh of slaughtered beasts on spits, to those the heaping of baskets with grain crushed by the millstone. Adrastus is happy in the busy obedience of the house, and now himself shone propped up on proud draperies and ivory throne. Elsewhere the young men recline, their wounds dry with ablution, and gaze at their bruised and battered faces and forgive each other. Then the long-lived king bids summon Acaste, his daughters' nurse and faithful guardian, chosen to hide modesty sacred to lawful love. He murmurs in her silent ear.⁵⁸

Prompt was she to his command and straightway the two girls left their secret bower. A wonder to behold, they bear faces matching armed Pallas' and quiver-bearing Diana's, all but the terror. Then they saw men's visages, new to their bashful eyes. Pallor and blush together consumed their radiant cheeks, and their eyes in shame returned to their reverend sire. When appetite was vanquished by the course of the banquet, Iasus' scion, as was his custom, asked the attendants to bring the bowl wrought with reliefs and shining with gold wherefrom Danaus and old Phoroneus used to pour libations to the gods. Its chased

⁵⁸ Eden (*Cl. Quart.* 1998, p. 321) proposes *tactaque* 'touching her ear,' by way of admonition to keep his words in mind.

THEBAID

assueti. tenet haec operum caelata figuras:
 aureus anguicomam praesecto Gorgona collo
 545 ales habet, iam iamque vagas (ita visus) in auras
 exsilit; illa graves oculos languentiaque ora
 paene movet vivoque etiam pallescit in auro.
 hinc Phrygius fulvis venator tollitur alis,
 Gargara desidunt surgenti et Troia recedit;
 550 stant maesti comites frustra que sonantia lassant
 ora canes umbramque petunt et nubila latrant.
 hanc undante mero fundens vocat ordine cunctos
 caelicolas, Phoebum ante alios, Phoebum omnis ad aras
 laude ciet comitum famulumque evincta pudica
 555 fronde manus, cui festa dies largoque refecti
 ture vaporatis lucent altaribus ignes.

‘Forsitan, o ivuenes, quae sint ea sacra quibusque
 praecipuum causis Phoebi obtestemur honorem,’
 rex ait, ‘exquirant animi. non inscia suasit
 560 religio, magnis exercita cladibus olim
 plebs Argiva litat; animos advertite, pandam.
 postquam caerulei sinuosa volumina monstri,
 terrigenam Pythona, deus, septem orbibus atris
 amplexum Delphos squamisque annosa terentem
 565 robora, Castaliis dum fontibus ore trisulco
 fusus hiat nigro sitiens alimenta veneno,
 perculit, absumptis numerosa in vulnera telis,
 Cirrhaeique dedit centum per iugera campi

553 aras ω: aram P

⁵⁹ Perseus, ‘golden’ with reference to Danaë’s golden shower (Håkanson).

BOOK 1

surface held worked figures: the golden flyer⁵⁹ carries the snake-tressed Gorgon's severed head, and even now, so seems it, leaps into the wandering airs; almost she moves her heavy eyes and drooping countenance and pales even in the living gold. Here the Phrygian hunter⁶⁰ is raised aloft on tawny wings, Gargara sinks as he mounts and Troy recedes; his comrades stand dismayed. In vain the hounds weary their sounding mouths, attacking the shadow and barking at the clouds. With this he pours the streaming wine and invokes all the sky-dwellers in turn, Phoebus before all. The band of his companions and servants, garlanded with chaste foliage,⁶¹ all praise Phoebus and summon him to the altar. For him the festal day, for him glow the fires revived by lavish incense on the smoking hearth.

'Perchance, young sirs,' says the king, 'you are curious to know the meaning of these rites and for what reason we declare chief honour to Phoebus. Not void of knowledge has religion so persuaded. Tried of old with sore afflictions do the Argive people make sacrifice. Pay heed, I shall unfold. The god had struck down earthborn Python, dark monster of the winding coils, embracing Delphi with his seven black circlets and grinding ancient oaks with his scales, even as he sprawled by the Castalian spring and opened his triple-cleft mouth in thirst of nourishment for his black venom. Many the wounds on which the god spent his darts, till finally he left the creature outspread over a hundred acres of Cirrha's plain. Then, seeking to expiate the recent slaying, he came to the modest dwelling of our

⁶⁰ Ganymede.

⁶¹ Laurel, chaste because Daphne was changed into a laurel while fleeing from Apollo.

THEBAID

- vix tandem explicitum, nova deinde piaeuia caedis
 570 perquirens nostri teeta haud opulenta Crotopi
 attigit. huie primis et pubem ineuntibus annis
 mira dcore pios servabat nata penates
 intemerata toris. felix, si Delia numquam
 furta nec occultum Phoebosoeiasset amorem!
- 575 namque ut passa deum Nemeaei ad fluminis undam,
 bis quinos plena cum fronte resumeret orbes
 Cynthia, sidereum Latonae feta nepotem
 edidit; ac poenae metuens (neque enim ille eoaetis
 donasset thalamis veniam pater) avia rura
 580 eligit ac natum saepta inter ovilia furtim
 montivago peeoris eustodi mandat alendum.
 non tibi digna, puer, generis eunabula tanti
 gramineos dedit herba toros et vimine querno
 texta domus; clausa arbutei sub cortice libri
 585 membra tepent, suadetque leves eava fistula somnos,
 et peori eomme solum. sed Fata nee illum
 concessere larem; viridi nam caespitae terrae
 proieetum temere et patulo caelum ore trahentem
 dira eanum rabies morsu depasta eruento
 590 disicit. hie vero attonitas ut nuntius aures
 matris adit, pulsus ex animo genitorque pudorque
 et metus; ipsa ultro saevis plangoribus amens
 teeta replet, vacuumque ferens velamine pectus
 occurrit eonfessa patri; nec motus et atro
 595 imperat (infandum!) cupientem oeeumbere leto.
 sero memor thalami maestae solacia morti,
 Phoebe, paras monstrum infandis Aeheronte sub imo

572 pio P ω (*Bentley*)

592 saevis ω ; maestis P

BOOK 1

Crotopus.⁶² He had a daughter in his virtuous home, in early years scarce past childhood, of marvellous beauty, a virgin inviolate. Happy had she been if she had never shared Delian dalliance and Phoebus' secret love. For by the water of Nemea's stream⁶³ she suffered the god, and when Cynthia resumed her full countenance for the tenth time, gave birth to a child, Latona's starlike grandson. Fearing chastisement (for no mercy would that father have shown in forgiveness of forced union), she chooses a pathless tract and amid the sheepfolds secretly consigns her son to a hillfaring keeper of the flock for him to rear. The grass gave the boy his bed, cradle unworthy of his high birth, and his house was woven of oaken withies. His limbs were snug in a wrapping of arbutus bark, a hollow pipe lulls him to light slumbers, he shares the ground with the sheep. But not even such a home did the Fates permit. For as he lay stretched carelessly on the green sod, wide-mouthed to drink the sky, the fell rage of dogs, feeding with bloody bite, tears him asunder. But when the news of it reached his mother's shocked ears, driven from her mind were father, shame, and fear. Unprompted she fills the house with wild laments, distraught, and with breast uncovered comes to her father and confesses all. He pities her not, but gives order (oh unspeakable!) that she meet the black death she desires. Too late Phoebus remembers their union. To solace her sad end he gets him a monster conceived in the

⁶² Crotopus was king of Argos and Adrastus' ancestor. But here he seems to be a man of the people (Eitrem *RE* XI.1419.26). In 2.221 he is confused with the monster-killer Coroebus, a confusion not peculiar to Statius (*ibid.* 2027f.). A tangled skein.

⁶³ Inachus; see on 357.

THEBAID

conceptum Eumenidum thalamis, cui virginis ora
 pectoraque; aeternum stridens a vertice surgit
 600 et ferrugineam frontem discriminat anguis.
 haec tum dira lues nocturno squalida passu
 illabi thalamis, animasque a stirpe recentes
 abripere altricum gremiis morsuque cruento
 devesci et multum patrio pinguescere luctu.
 605 haud tulit armorum praestans animique Coroebus
 seque ultro lectis iuvenum, qui robore primi
 famam posthabita faciles extendere vita,
 obtulit. illa novos ibat populata penates
 portarum in bivio; lateri duo corpora parvum
 610 dependent, et iam unca manus vitalibus haeret
 ferratique ungues tenero sub corde tepescunt:
 obvius huic, latus omne virum stipante corona,
 fit iuvenis, ferrumque ingens sub pectore duro
 condidit, atque imas animae mucrone corusco
 615 scrutatus latebras tandem sua monstra profundo
 reddit habere Iovi. iuvat ire et visere iuxta
 liventes in morte oculos uterique nefandam
 proluviem et crasso squalentia pectora tabo,
 qua nostrae cecidere animae. stupet Inacha pubes
 620 magnaue post lacrimas etiamnum gaudia pallent.
 hi trabibus duris (solacia vana dolori)
 proterere exanimos artus asprosq;e molares
 deculcare genis; nequit iram explere potestas.
 illam et nocturno circum stridore volantes
 625 impastae fugistis aves, rabidamque canum vim
 oraue sicca ferunt trepidorum inhiasse luporum.
 saevior in miseros fatis ultricis ademptae
 Delius insurgit, summaue biverticis umbra

BOOK 1

Furies' gruesome chambers at Acheron's bottom. It had the face and bosom of a girl; from its head rises a serpent ever hissing, parting the livid brow. This dreadful pest, moving by night, slides squalid into bedrooms and tears lives newly born from their mothers' breasts, to devour them with bloody bite and feed fat on the land's mourning. That was too much for Coroebus, outstanding in arms and courage; he offered himself to a chosen few young men, the toughest, right ready to hold life below enduring fame. *She* was wending her way between double gates⁶⁴ after laying waste a new household. At her side hang the bodies of two little ones and already her clawed hand is in their vitals and the iron nails grow warm beneath a tender heart. The young man confronts her surrounded by the warrior band and buries his great blade in her flinty breast; searching her spirit's inmost hiding places with the flashing point, at length he returns his monster to nether Jove to keep. 'Twas pleasure to come and see from close at hand the eyes dark in death, the abominable efflux of the womb, and the breasts filthy with thick gore where our lives were lost. The men of Inachus were stunned; after tears great joy, but pallor still. Some crush the lifeless limbs with hard stakes, vain solace for sorrow, and stamp sharp rocks upon her visage. The power is theirs, but cannot satisfy their wrath. Birds fled from her unfed, flying around with midnight screech; and ravening dogs, 'tis said, and the jaws of frightened wolves gaped dry. Deprived of his avengeress, the Delian rose all the fiercer for her fate against the hapless folk.

⁶⁴ From *Aeneid* 9.238 in *bivio portae quae proxima ponti*, also of doubtful meaning. Possibly 'in the two-way road outside the gate.' The plural *portae* is often used of a double gate.

THEBAID

- Parnasi residens arcu crudelis iniquo
 630 pestifera arma iacit, camposque et celsa Cyclo-
 pum tecta superiecto nebularum intendit amictu.
 labuntur dulces animae, Mors fila Sororum
 ense metit captamque tenens fert manibus urbem.
 quaerenti quae causa duci, quis ab aethere laevus
 635 ignis et in totum regnaret Sirius annum,
 idem auctor Paeon rursus iubet ire cruento
 inferias monstro iuvenes, qui caede potiti.
 fortunate animi longumque in saecula digne
 promeriture diem! non tu pia degener arma
 640 oculis aut certae trepidas occurrere morti.
 comminus ora ferens Cirrhaei in limine templi
 constitit et sacras ita vocibus asperat iras:
 “Non missus, Thymbraee, tuos supplexve penates
 advenio: mea me pietas et conscia virtus
 645 has egere vias. ego sum qui caede subegi,
 Phoebe, tuum mortale nefas, quem nubibus atris
 et squalente die, nigra quem tabe sinistri
 quaeris, inique, poli. quod si monstra effera magnis
 cara adeo superis, iacturaque vilior orbi
 650 mors hominum, et saevo tanta inclementia caelo est,
 quid meruere Argi? me, me, divum optime, solum
 obiecis caput Fatis praestabat. an illud
 lene magis cordi quod desolata domorum
 tecta vides, ignique datis cultoribus omnis
 655 lucet ager? sed quid fando tua tela manusque

⁶³¹ incendit P ω (*Madvig*)

⁶³⁴ quis P ω : quid *Gronovius*

BOOK 1

Seated in the topmost shade of twin-peaked Parnassus, the cruel god discharges pest-bearing shafts from his hostile bow, covering the fields and the lofty towers of the Cyclopes⁶⁵ with a blanket of fog. Sweet lives fail, Death with his sword severs the Sisters' threads and gripping the captured town bears it to the shades. Their lord asks the reason: what the sinister fire from heaven,⁶⁶ why Sirius reigned all the year round? Paeon is still the mover; this time he commands that the young men who compassed the slaughter be sacrificed to the bloody monster. Happy in your bravery, you that worthily shall earn long life down the ages! You do not basely hide your patriot deed of arms or fear to meet certain death. He⁶⁷ stood at the threshold of Cirrha's shrine, facing square, and with these words sharpens the sacred ire:

“Thymbraean, I come to your dwelling not sent or in supplication. My love of country and conscious valour made me journey hither. Phoebus, I am he who laid low in death your mortal evil, he whom you, cruel god, seek with black clouds and murky daylight, with dark corruption of the baleful heavens. But if savage monsters are so dear to great gods and the world can more easily sacrifice the lives of men, if the cruel heavens are so merciless, what has Argos deserved? Better that I, I only, best of deities, should have offered my head to the Fates. Or does that gentle way⁶⁸ please you rather, to see homes desolate and all the land alight with husbandmen given to fire? But why delay

⁶⁵ Supposed to have been active as builders in the area.

⁶⁶ The answer to the first question is Sirius the Dog star. In the second *quid* (why) has to be understood from *quis*.

⁶⁷ Coroebus. ⁶⁸ Irony. On 652–57 see SB².

THEBAID

demoror? expectant matres, supremaque fiunt
 vota. mihi satis est. merui ne parcere velles.
 proinde move pharetras arcusque intende sonoros
 insignemque animam leto demitte; sed illum,
 660 pallidus Inachiis qui desuper imminet Argis,
 dum morior, dispelle globum.”

Sors aequa merentes
 respicit. ardentem tenuit reverentia caedis
 Letoiden, tristemque viro summissus honorem
 largitur vitae; nostro mala nubila caelo
 665 diffugiunt, at tu stupefacti a limine Phoebi
 exoneratus abis. inde haec stata sacra quotannis
 sollemnes recolunt epulae, Phoebeaque placat
 templa novatus honos.

Has forte invisitis aras
 vos quae progenies? quamquam Calydonius Oeneus
 670 et Porthaoniac, dudum si certus ad aures
 clamor iit, tibi iura domus. tu pande quis Argos
 advenias, quando haec variis sermonibus hora est.’

Deiecit maestos extemplo Ismenius heros
 in terram vultus, taciteque ad Tydea laevum
 675 obliquare oculos; tum longa silentia movit:
 ‘non super hos divum tibi sum quaerendus honores,
 unde genus, quae terra mihi, quis defluat ordo
 sanguinis antiqui: piget inter sacra fateri.
 sed si praecipitant miserum cognoscere curae,
 680 Cadmus origo patrum, tellus Mavortia Thebe,
 est genetrix Iocasta mihi.’ tum motus Adrastus:

657 *dist.* SB²

666 *exoratus* P ω (*Hall*)

670 *si dudum* P ω (*edd. ante O. Mueller*)

674 *laesum* P ω (*Koestlin*)

BOOK 1

with my words your darts, your violence? The mothers wait, they offer their last prayers.⁶⁹ For me it is enough. I have deserved no grace from you. So stir your quiver and stretch your twanging bow, send a noble soul down to death. But while I am dying, dispel the mass that hangs dim over Inachian Argos.”

Just measure heeds the deserving. Scruple to slay seized Leto's hot son, and yielding he bestows upon the hero the sad benison of life. The evil mists dissipate from our sky and he departs from marvelling Phoebus' threshold, cleared of blame. Thence comes it that every year this solemn feast celebrates the rites appointed and worship renewed appeases Phoebus' shrine.

You two that visit this altar by chance, what is your stock?—though for you there is Calydonian Oeneus and membership of Porthaon's house, if sure was the shout that came to my ears just now. But *you*, unfold. Who are you that come to Argos? For now is the time for various converse.’

Forthwith the Ismenian hero cast sad eyes down to earth and silently looked askance at Tydeus on his left. Then he broke a lengthy silence: ‘Not at this divine worship should you ask whence my breed, what my country, what line of ancient blood flows down. It irks me to confess it amid the ritual. But if you are agog to know an unfortunate, from Cadmus stems my ancestry, my land is Martian Thebes, Jocasta is my mother.’ Adrastus was moved. ‘Why

⁶⁹ For the pestilence to end.

THEBAID

'hospitiis' (agnovit enim) 'quid nota recondis?
 scimus,' ait, 'nec sic aversum Fama Mycenis
 685 volvit iter. regnum et furias oculosque pudentes
 novit et Arctois si quis de solibus horret
 quique bibit Gangen aut nigrum occasibus intrat
 Oceanum et si quos incerto litore Syrtes
 destituunt. ne perge queri casusque priorum
 annumerare tibi: nostro quoque sanguine multum
 690 erravit pietas, nec culpa nepotibus obstat.
 tu modo dissimilis rebus mereare secundis
 excusare tuos. sed iam temone supino
 languet Hyperboreae glacialis portitor Ursae.
 fundite vina focus, servatoremque parentum
 695 Letoiden votis iterumque iterumque canamus.
 Phoebe parens, seu te Lyciae Pataraea nivosis
 exercent dumeta iugis, seu rore pudico
 Castaliae flavos amor est tibi mergere crines,
 seu Troiam Thymbraeus habes, ubi fama volentem
 700 ingratis Phrygios umeris subiisse molares,
 seu iuvat Aegaeum feriens Latonius umbra
 Cynthus et assiduam pelago non quaerere Delon:
 tela tibi longaque feros lentandus in hostes
 arcus et aetherii dono cessere parentis

692 etiam P ω : et iam ψ (*edd.*)

704 parentes P ω Σ (*Barth*)

70 Sometimes used as equivalent to Argos, sometimes distinct.

71 Almost a repetition of Lucan 5.23 *Hyperboreae pluastrum glaciale sub Ursae*. From Homer (*Iliad* 18.487) on, the Bears are called Wagons and in Germanicus 25f Bears and Wagons are ex-

BOOK 1

hide from your hosts,' he said (for he recognized him), 'what they well know? Yes, we know, nor does Fame journey so far from Mycenae.⁷⁰ Whoso shivers from Arctic sunshine or drinks Ganges or enters Ocean dark with sunsets or finds himself stranded on Syrtes' wavering shores—all know of the reign and the madness and the shame-struck eyes. Complain not still nor reckon to yourself the misfortunes of your forbears. In my line too respect of kin went oft awry, but the guilt does no hurt to later generations. Only may you be different and deserve with Fortune's favour to excuse your family. But now the icy carrier of the Hyperborean Bear⁷¹ grows faint, his pole is backward bent. Pour wine upon the hearth and let us again and yet again sing prayers to Leto's son, our parents' saviour.

Father Phoebus, whether Patara's thickets task you in Lycia's snowy hills, or your pleasure be to dip your yellow hair in Castalia's chaste waters, or as Thymbra's patron you frequent Troy, where story has it that you willingly bore blocks of Phrygian stone on your unrequited shoulders,⁷² or whether you favour Latona's Cynthus, whose shadow strikes the Aegean, with no need to seek for Delos now steady in the deep:⁷³ yours by gift of your heavenly parent are darts and the bow you bend against fierce foes and

plicitly synonymous. But also our King Charles' Wain or Plough is regarded as part of the Greater Bear, or, more often, of the neighbouring constellation of Boötes or Arctophylax (Bearward): so Lucan 2.722 *plaustra Boötæ* and often. Probably thinking of Boötes, Statius substitutes *portitor* for Lucan's *plaustrum*.

⁷² Building Troy along with Neptune. According to some accounts its king Laomedon bilked them of their due.

⁷³ Delos, previously mobile, was stabilized at Apollo's birth.

THEBAID

- 705 aeternum florere genas; tu doctus iniquas
 Parcarum praenosse manus fatumque quod ultra est
 et summo placitura Iovi, quis letifer annus,
 bella quibus populis, quae mutent scepra cometae;
 tu Phryga summittis citharae, tu matris honori
 710 terrigenam Tityon Stygiis extendis harenis;
 te viridis Python Thebanaque mater ovanem
 horruit in pharetris, ultrix tibi torva Megaera
 ieiunum Phlegyan subter cava saxa iacentem
 aeterno premit accubitu dapibusque profanis
 715 instimulat, sed mixta famem fastidia vincunt:
 adsis o memor hospitii, Iunoniaque arva
 dexter ames, seu te roseum Titana vocari
 gentis Achaemeniae ritu, seu praestat Osirim
 frugiferum, seu Persei sub rupibus antri
 720 indignata sequi torquentem cornua Mithram.'

BOOK I

cheeks eternally abloom; you have skill to know the cruel spinning of the Parcae and the fate that lies beyond and highest Jove's future decrees—what peoples a year of pestilence betide, what peoples wars, what sceptres comets change: you subject the Phrygian⁷⁴ to your lyre and for your mother's honour spread earthborn Tityos over Stygian sands, green Python and the Theban mother⁷⁵ shuddered to see you triumphing with your quiver, for you avenging, grim Megaera presses starving Phlegyas with everlasting table fellowship as he lies under hollow cliffs, urging him with unholy viands, but mingled nausea overcomes his hunger: oh come, mindful of our hospitality, and bestow your love and favour upon Juno's fields, whether 'tis best to call you rosy Titan in the fashion of the Achae-menian race, or Osiris the grain-bringer, or Mithras twisting the horns wroth to follow in the rocks of Perses' cavern.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Marsyas; see Celaenae in Index.

⁷⁵ Niobe.

⁷⁶ "The reference is to the sun worship of the Persians: Mithras is frequently represented dragging a bull to be sacrificed. "Persean," from Perses, son of Perseus and Andromeda, founder of the Persian nation, cf. Herodotus 7.61' (Mozley). Osiris too appears here as a sun god by conflation with Re-Horus.

LIBER II

Interea gelidis Maia satus aliger umbris
iussa gerens magni remeat Iovis; undique pigrae
ire vetant nubes et torpidus implicat aër,
nec Zephyri rapuere gradum, sed foeda silentis
5 aura poli. Styx inde novem circumflua campis,
hinc obiecta vias torrentum incendia claudunt.
pone senex trepida succedit Laius umbra
vulnere tardus adhuc; capulo nam largius illi
transabiit animam cognatis ictibus ensis
10 impius et primas Furiarum pertulit iras;
it tamen et medica firmat vestigia virga.
tum steriles luci possessaque manibus arva
et ferrugineum nemus astupet, ipsaque Tellus
miratur patuisse retro, nec livida tabes
15 invidiae functis quamquam et iam lumine cassis
defuit. unus ibi ante alios, cui laeva voluntas
semper et ad superos (hinc et gravis exitus aevi)
insultare malis rebusque aegrescere laetis,
'vade,' ait, 'o felix, quoscumque vocaris in usus,
20 seu Iovis imperio, seu maior adegit Erinys

³ turbidus P ω (*Baehrens*): turpi- *cod. saec. xi*

⁹ animam P: costas ω

BOOK 2

Meanwhile Maia's winged son returns from the chill shades bearing great Jove's command. From every side sluggish clouds forbid his passage and torpid air envelops him; no Zephyrs speeded his course, but the foul breath of the silent hemisphere. On one side Styx flowing round nine tracts, on the other blazing torrents block and bound his path. After comes old Laius' trembling shade, still slow from his wound. For the impious blade transfixed his life beyond the hilt with kindred thrust and rammed home the Furies' first wrath.¹ Yet on he goes, steadying his steps with the healing wand.² Then the barren groves and ghost-haunted fields and forest of sombre hue stand amazed, and Earth herself marvels to have opened rearwards; nor did even the dead and lightless lack the livid corruption of envy. One in particular, whose warped will it ever was even in the upper world (hence his life ended ill) to insult misfortune and wax sour at prosperity, 'Go,' he cries, 'happy one, for whatever uses you are summoned—whether Jove's command or a greater Fury has forced you to face

¹ Thus inaugurating the series of horrors centring on Oedipus.

² Mercury's. How Laius did this is not made clear, but the wand had magic properties; cf. 30 and 70.

THEBAID

ire diem contra, seu te furiata sacerdos
 Thessalis arcano iubet emigrare sepulcro,
 heu dulces visure polos solemque relictum
 et virides terras et puros fontibus amnes,
 25 tristior has iterum tamen intrature tenebras.’

Illos et caeco recubans in limine sensit
 Cerberus atque omnes capitum surrexit hiatus;
 saevus et intranti populo, iam nigra tumebat
 colla minax, iam sparsa solo turbaverat ossa,
 30 ni deus horrentem Lethaeo vimine mulcens
 ferrea tergemino domuisset lumina somno.

Est locus (Inachiae dixerunt Taenara gentes)
 qua formidatum Maleae spumantis in auras
 it caput et nullos admittit culmine visus.
 35 stat sublimis apex ventosque imbresque serenus
 despicit et tantum fessis insiditur astris.
 [illic exhausti posuere cubilia venti,
 fulminibusque iter est; medium cava nubila montis
 insumpsero latus, summos nec praepetis alae
 40 plausus adit colles, nec rauca tonitrua pulsant.]
 ast ubi prona dies, longos super aequora fines
 exigit atque ingens medio natat umbra profundo.
 interiore sinu scandentia litora curvat
 Taenaros, expositos non audax frangere fluctus.
 45 illic Aegaeo Neptunus gurgite fessos
 in portum deducit equos; prior haurit harenas
 ungula, postremi solvuntur in acquora pisces.
 hoc, ut fama, loco pallentes devius umbras

26 ut P ω (Watt)

37-40 om. P ω , add. in marg. man. rec. P ψ

43-44 frangentia . . . scandere P ω (Koestlin)

BOOK 2

the daylight or a Thessalian priestess³ in frenzy bids you leave your secret tomb, you shall see the sweet sky, alas, and the sun you left behind and the green earth and the pure founts of rivers; yet the sadder shall you enter this gloom a second time.'

Cerberus too, lying on the dark threshold, saw them and reared all his gaping heads. Fierce as he was even to the entering multitude, his black neck was already swelling in menace, already he had jumbled the bones scattered on the ground, but that the god soothed him as he bristled with Lethe's wand and tamed his steely eyes in triple slumber.

There is a place (the peoples of Inachus called it Taenarus) where the dread promontory of foaming Malea rises into the air;⁴ its peak admits no gaze. Lofty stands the summit and serene, looking down on winds and rain; only the weary stars make it their seat. [There the exhausted winds have placed their sleeping quarters and there is a path for lightnings. Hollow clouds take the mountain's midway flanks; the highest slopes no flap of flying wing approaches nor hoarse thunders strike.] But when the sun moves downwards, a huge shadow draws long lines over the waters and swims in the midst of the deep. Inside an inner bay Taenarus curves climbing shores, not daring to break the open billows. There Neptune brings into harbour his horses weary from the Aegean flood; their forehooves paw the sands, their fishy rears dissolve into the water. At this spot, 'tis said, a winding path drives pale ghosts

³ I.e. a witch. They were credited with the power to raise the dead.

⁴ See on l.100.

THEBAID

trames agit nigrique Iovis vacua atria ditat
 50 mortibus. Arcadii perhibent si vera coloni,
 stridor ibi et gemitus poenarum, atroque tumultu
 fervet ager; saepe Eumenidum vocesque manusque
 in medium sonuere diem, Letique triformis
 ianitor agricolas campis auditus abegit.

55 Hac et tunc fusca volucer deus obsitus umbra
 exsilit ad superos, infernaque nubila vultu
 discutit et vivis afflatibus ora serenat.

inde per Arcturum mediaeque silentia Lunae
 arva super populosque meat. Sopor obvius illi
 60 Noctis agebat equos, trepidusque assurgit honori
 numinis et recto decedit limite caeli.

inferior volat umbra deo, praereptaque noscit
 sidera principiumque sui; iamque ardua Cirrhae
 pollutamque suo despectat Phocida busto.

65 ventum erat ad Thebas; gemit prope limina nati
 Laius et notos cunctatus inire penates.

ut vero et celsis suamet iuga nixa columnis
 vidit et infectos etiamnum sanguine currus,
 paene retro turbatus abit: nec summa Tonantis
 70 iussa sed Arcadiae retinent spiramina virgae.

Et tunc forte dies noto signata Tonantis
 fulmine, praerepti cum te, tener Euhie, partus
 transmisere patri. Tyriis ea causa colonis
 insomnem ludo certatim educere noctem
 75 suaserat; effusi passim per tecta, per agros,

⁶⁷ et celsis Pψ: exc- ω

⁶⁹⁻⁷⁰ nec . . . nec Pω (SB¹; sed . . . sed Dubner)

⁷² praerupti Pω (Heinsius)

BOOK 2

and enriches the vast halls of black Jupiter⁵ with deaths. If the husbandmen of Arcady⁶ speak true, there is screaming here and groaning of punishments, the land is astir with dark tumult. Often have the voices and hands of the Furies sounded into the broad of day, and the triformed janitor of Death⁷ been heard by rustics driving them from the fields.

Then too by this way the swift god enveloped in dusky shadow leapt into the upper world and shook the subterranean mists from his countenance, clearing his face with draughts of living air. Thence by Arcturus⁸ and the silence of full moon he passes over fields and peoples. Sleep met him driving Night's horses and rises hastily to honour the deity, turning aside from heaven's straight pathway. The shade flies below the god, recognizing the ravished stars and his own beginning. And now he looks down on Cirrha's heights and Phocis polluted by his own burial. They had arrived at Thebes. Laius groaned at his son's threshold and scrupled to enter the familiar dwelling. But when he saw his yoke resting on the lofty pillars and the chariot still bloodstained, he almost turned tail in confusion; nor do the high commands of the Thunderer hold him back, but the breathings⁹ of the Arcadian wand.

It chanced to be the day marked by the Thunderer's famed bolt when your forestalled delivery, tender Euhius, handed you over to your father. That gave the Tyrian settlers their reason to draw out a sleepless night in sportive rivalry. Stretched everywhere, indoors or in the fields,

⁵ Pluto.

⁶ I.e. Laconia, again by poetic license; cf. 1.355f.

⁷ Cerberus.

⁸ Travelling north.

⁹ Apparently a magic power emanating from the wand; cf. on 11.

THEBAID

serta inter vacuosque mero crateras anhelum
 proflabant sub luce deum; tunc plurima buxus
 aeraque taurinos sonitu vincentia pulsus;
 ipse etiam gaudens nemorosa per avia sanas
 80 impulerat matres Baccho meliore Cithaeron:
 qualia per Rhodopen rabido convivium coetu
 Bistones aut mediae ponunt convallibus Ossae:
 illis semianimum pecus excussaeque leonum
 ore dapes et lacte novo domuisse cruorem
 85 luxus; at Ogygii si quando afflavit Iacchi
 saevus odor, tunc saxa manu, tunc pocula pulchrum
 spargere et immerito sociorum sanguine fuso
 instaurare diem festasque reponere mensas.

Nox ea cum tacita volucer Cyllenius aura
 90 regis Echionii stratis allapsus, ubi ingens
 fuderat Assyrii exstructa tapetibus alto
 membra toro. pro gnara nihil mortalia fati
 corda sui! capit ille dapes, habet ille soporem.
 tunc senior quae iussus agit; neu falsa videri
 95 noctis imago queat, longaevi vatis opacos
 Tiresiae vultus vocemque et vellera nota
 induitur. mansere comae propexaque mento
 canities pallorque suus, sed falsa cucurrit
 infula per crines, glaucaeque innexus olivae
 100 vittarum provenit honos; dehinc tangere ramo
 pectora et has visus Fatorum expromere voces:
 'non somni tibi tempus, iners qui nocte sub alta,

84 cruorem ω: furo- P

10 Drums.

11 Not raving, like those that murdered Pentheus.

BOOK 2

amid garlands and empty wine bowls they were exhaling the panting god as day approached. Then sounded many a boxwood pipe and cymbals louder than the beating of bullhide.¹⁰ Cithaeron himself had merrily driven sane¹¹ mothers through the wooded wilds under a kinder Bacchus. Such feasts do Bistones in wild assembly lay out on Rhodope or amid Ossa's vales; for them a sheep half living, food shaken from lions' jaws, and blood diluted with new milk is luxury; but if ever the fierce odour of Ogygian Iacchus breathes upon them, then they love to scatter stones and winecups, and after spilling guiltless blood of comrades to begin the day afresh and reset the festal boards.

Such the night when from the silent air the swift Cyllenian glided to the Echionian monarch's bed, where he had spread his huge frame on a high mattress, his limbs piled on Assyrian¹² draperies. Ah mortal hearts all unknowing of their destinies! He banquets, he sleeps—even he! Then the ancient does as he was bidden; and lest he could seem a false vision of the night, he takes upon himself the shadowed¹³ features and voice and familiar woolen circlets of long-lived Tiresias. His hair remained, as did the white beard combed down from the chin and his own pallor; but a false headband ran through his locks and the grace of fillets entwined with grey olive emerged to view. Then he seemed to touch the king's breast with a branch and utter these words of destiny: 'No slumber time is this

¹² Perhaps simply meaning eastern, but Sardanapalus, the archetypal voluptuary, was king of Assyria.

¹³ Tiresias was blind.

THEBAID

- germani secure, iaces; ingentia dudum
 acta vocant rerumque graves, ignave, paratus.
 105 tu, veluti magnum si iam tollentibus Austris
 Ionium nigra iaceat sub nube magister
 immemor armorum versantisque aequora clavi,
 cunctaris. iamque ille novis (scit Fama) superbit
 conubiis viresque parat, quis regna capessat,
 110 quis neget, inque tua senium sibi destinat aula.
 dant animos socer augurio fatalis Adrastus
 dotalesque Argi, nec non in foedera vitae
 pollutus placuit fraterno sanguine Tydeus.
 hinc tumor, et longus fratri promitteris exsul.
 115 ipse deum genitor tibi me miseratus ab alto
 mittit: habe Thebas, caecumque cupidine regni
 ausurumque eadem germanum expelle, nec ultra
 fraternos inhiantem obitus sine fidere coeptis
 fraudibus aut Cadmo dominas inferre Mycenae.
 120 Dixit, et abscedens (etenim iam pallida turbant
 sidera lucis equi) ramos ac vellera fronti
 deripuit, confessus avum, dirique nepotis
 incubuit stratis; iugulum mox caede patentem
 nudat et undanti perfundit vulnere somnum.
 125 illi rupta quies; attollit membra toroque
 eripitur plenus monstris, vanumque cruorem
 excutiens simul horret avum fratremque requirit.
 qualis ubi audito venantum murmure tigris

¹²⁶ eripitur P: erigitur ω

¹⁴ When called upon to step down in his turn.

¹⁵ *Erigitur* is quite acceptable, but *eripitur* has better author-

BOOK 2

for you who lie sluggish in the depths of night, heedless of your brother. Mighty deeds summon you the while, lie-abed, and weighty preparations. You dally, like a skipper lying prone beneath a dark cloud when the winds are already raising the great Ionian, unmindful of his tackle and sea-churning rudder. Even now *he* (Rumour knows) plumes himself on a new wedlock, gathers strength to seize the monarchy and to deny it,¹⁴ and promises himself an old age in your palace. Adrastus, fated by prophecy to be father of his bride, and Argos, her dowry, embolden him, and Tydeus, stained by a brother's blood, is his chosen partner in a lifetime bond. Hence swollen pride; and you are promised to your brother in long-lasting banishment. Pitying from on high, the sire of the gods himself sends me to you. Keep Thebes, drive out your kin, blind with lust for monarchy, as he would you, nor suffer him to trust in the mischief he has started, coveting his brother's death, or to foist Mycenae's rule on Cadmus.'

He spoke and departing (for already the steeds of light are putting the paling stars to rout) tore the branches and fillets from his head, revealing himself—the grandfather. Then bending over his fell grandson's couch, he bares the gaping wound of his throat and drenches the sleeper with a stream of gore. The king's slumber was broken. He raises his body and wrenches¹⁵ from the bed, full of horrors. As he shakes off the phantom blood, he shudders at his grandfather and in the same motion seeks his brother. As when a tigress hears the noise of the hunters, she bristles into her

ity and a livelier sense. Hill's objection that the verb is not found reflexively is hardly formidable, especially as *rapere* is so used (*rapitur, se rapere*).

THEBAID

130 horruit in maculas somnosque excussit inertes,
bella cupit laxatque genas et temperat ungues,
mox ruit in turmas natisque alimenta cruentis
spirantem fert ore virum: sic excitus ira
ductor in absentem consumit proelia fratrem.

Et iam Mygdoniis elata cubilibus alto
135 depulerat caelo gelidas Aurora tenebras,
rorantes excussa comas multumque sequenti
sole rubens; illi roseus per nubila seras
advertit flammam alienumque aethera tardo
Lucifer exit equo, donec pater igneus orbem
140 impleat atque ipsi radios vetet esse sorori,
cum senior Talaionides nec longa morati
Dircaeusque gradum pariterque Acheloius heros
corripuere toris. illos post verbera fessos
exceptamque hiemem cornu perfuderat omni
145 Somnus; at Inachio tenuis sub pectore regi
tracta quies, dum mente deos inceptaque versat
hospitia, et quae sint generis ascita repertis
fata movet. postquam mediis in sedibus aulae
congressi inque vicem dextras iunxere locumque,
150 quo serere arcanas aptum atque evolvere curas,
insidunt, prior his dubios compellat Adrastus:

‘Egregii iuvenum, quos non sine numine regnis
invexit Nox dextra meis, quibus ipse per imbres
fulminibus mixtos intempestumque Tonantem
155 has meus usque domos vestigia fecit Apollo,
non equidem obscurum vobis plcbique Pelasgae
esse rear, quantis conubia nostra procorum

135 impulerat P ω (*Lachmann, qui etiam disp-*)

153 dextra P; atra ω

BOOK 2

stripes¹⁶ and shakes off the sloth of sleep; athirst for battle she loosens her jaws and flexes her claws, then rushes upon the troop and carries in her mouth a breathing man, food for her bloody young; so in fury does the chieftain fight it out against his absent brother.

And now Aurora had risen from her Mygdonian couch and thrust the cold shadows from heaven's height, shaking the dew from her tresses and blushing deep with the pursuing sun. From her through clouds rosy Lucifer turns his waning fires as with slow steed he leaves the sky no longer his until the fiery father fills full his orb and forbids even his sister's rays. Then did Talaus' time-worn son and with no long delay the Dircaean hero together with him of Achelous hasten from their beds. On those two, wearied after buffets and beating storm, had Sleep poured out all his horn; but in the breast of the Inachian monarch slumber was drawn thin as he revolves the gods' intent and the new-formed ties of hospitality and asks himself what destinies the finding of these sons-in-law has made his own. They meet in the central apartments of the palace and join hands in turn, then sit them down where secret concerns might be broached and unfolded fitly. As the two hesitated, Adrastus first addressed them:

'Young men and goodly, whom not without a higher will has favouring Night brought to my realm, whose steps my Apollo himself has guided to this my dwelling through rains and lightning and freak of weather, I cannot think it unknown to you and the Pelasgian folk how eagerly a crowd of suitors seek marriage into my house; for I have

¹⁶ On *maculae* of a tiger's stripes see SB².

THEBAID

turba petant studiis; geminae mihi namque, nepotum
 laeta fides, aequo pubescunt sidere natae.
 160 quantus honos, quantusque pudor (ne credite patri)
 et super hesternas licuit cognoscere mensas.
 has tumidi solio et late dominantibus armis
 optavere viri (longum enumerare Pheraeos
 Oebaliosque duces) et Achaea per oppida matres,
 165 spem generis, nec plura tuus despexerat Oeneus
 foedera Pisaeisque socer metuendus habenis.
 sed mihi nec Sparta genitos nec ab Elide missos
 iungere fas generos: vobis hic sanguis et aulae
 cura meae longo promittitur ordine fati.
 170 di bene, quod tales stirpemque animosque venitis
 ut responsa iuvent: hic durae tempore noctis
 partus honos, haec illa venit post verbera merces.’

Audierant, fixosque oculos per mutua paulum
 ora tenent, visique inter sese ordine fandi
 175 cedere. sed cunctis Tydeus audentior actis
 incipit: ‘o quam te parcum in praeconia famae
 mens agitat matura tuae, quantumque ferentem
 Fortunam virtute domas! cui cedat Adrastus
 imperiis? quis te solio Sicyonis avitae
 180 excitum infrenos componere legibus Argos
 nesciat? atque utinam his manibus permittere gentes,
 Iuppiter aequae, velis, quas Doricus alligat intus

163 phereos Σ: phaer- P: phar(a)eos ω

182 intus P: undis ω

17 Thessalian and Spartan. On *Pharaeos*, supposedly from Pharae, an obscure place in Achaca(?), see Håkanson. That there

BOOK 2

two daughters growing into womanhood under an equal star, happy pledge of grandchildren. Their grace and modesty (credit not their father) you could e'en judge at yesterday's feast. Men proud in throne and far-dominating arms ('twere long to tell over the Pheraean and Oebalian¹⁷ chieftains), and mothers throughout the towns of Achaea have desired them, hope of posterity; nor did your Oeneus despise more matches¹⁸ or that other father¹⁹ feared for his Pisaeon bridle. But for me it is not lawful to choose husbands among Sparta's children or comers from Elis: to you is promised in destiny's long sequence my blood and the care of my palace. Thanks be to the gods, such you come in birth and spirit that the oracles are welcome. This is the prize you have won in the space of a harsh night, this the reward that follows those fisticuffs.'

They heard and for a while held their eyes fixed on each other's faces, each seeming to yield first speech. But Tydeus, in every action the bolder, begins: 'Ah, how grudgingly does your ripe wisdom prompt you to proclaim your renown! How by virtue do you tame favouring Fortune! To whom should Adrastus yield in lordship? Who but knows that summoned from the throne of your ancestral Sicyon you bring law and order to unruly Argos?²⁰ And would that kind Jupiter might consign to these your hands the peoples that Dorian Isthmus binds within and those others that its

were places of that name in Laconia and Messene does not make this unlikely option less unattractive.

¹⁸ For his daughter Deianira, who married Hercules.

¹⁹ Oenomaus, whose daughter Hippodamia married Pelops.

²⁰ According to *Iliad* 2.572 Adrastus originally reigned in Sicyon, and so Statius, as also in 4.49.

THEBAID

Isthmos et alterno quas margine summovet ultra.
 non fugeret diras lux intercisa Mycenae,
 185 saeva nec Eleae gemerent certamina valles,
 Eumenidesque aliis aliae sub regibus, et quae
 tu potior, Thebane, queri. nos vero volentes
 expositique animis.' sic alter fatus, et alter
 subicit: 'anne aliquis soceros accedere tales
 190 abnuat? exsulibus quamquam patriaque fugatis
 nondum laeta Venus, tamen omnis corde resedit
 tristitia, affixique animo cessere dolores.
 nec minus haec laeti trahimus solacia, quam si
 praecipiti convulsa Noto prospectet amicam
 195 puppis humum. iuvat ingressos felicia regni
 omina quod superest fati vitaeque laborum
 fortuna transire tua.' nec plura morati
 consurgunt dictis, impensius aggerat omne
 promissum Inachus pater, auxilioque futurum
 200 et patriis spondet reduces inducere regnis.
 Ergo alacres Argi, fuso rumore per urbem
 advenisse duci generos primisque hymenaeis
 egregiam Argian nec formae laude secundam
 Deipylen tumida iam virginitate iugari,
 205 gaudia mente parant. socias it Fama per urbes
 finitimisque agitatur agris procul usque Lycaeos
 Partheniosque super saltus Ephyraeaeque rura,
 nec minus Ogygias eadem dea turbida Thebas

¹⁸³ infra PωΣ (Alton) *post 185 lac. ind. Dubner*

¹⁸⁸ interfatus Pω (Hall)

²¹ See Atreus in Index.

²² Again referring to Oenomaus.

further boundary removes on the far side. The interrupted light would not have fled dire Mycenae²¹ nor the valleys of Elis bewailed cruel contests²² nor had there been²³ different Furies under different kings nor all that you, Theban, can better deplore. But as to us, we are willing and our hearts lie open.' So spoke the one,²⁴ and the other adds: 'Would any man not join such a father-in-law? Not yet is Venus our joy, exiled as we are and banished from our native lands. None the less, the sorrow in our hearts has all settled back and the pains there anchored have withdrawn. No less happily do we take this solace than if a ship wrenched by a rushing gale were to see friendly land ahead. Glad are we to enter on fair omens of royalty and pass what is left of destiny and life's labours under your fortune.' No further tarrying in speech, they rise. The Inachian father heaps every promise higher and pledges to be their helper and to bring them back to their native kingdoms.

So the report spreads through the city that bridegrooms have come for the king's daughters and that admired Argia and Deipyle, her peer in beauty, virgins already ripe, are to be joined in first nuptials. Cheerfully Argos makes ready to rejoice. Rumour goes through allied cities, and is busy far in the neighbouring countryside, even to the glades of Lycaeus and Parthenius and beyond, and Ephyre's fields; nor less does the same troubler goddess leap upon Ogygian Thebes. With all her wings she

²³ Understanding *fuissent*. But the ellipse is very harsh and a line may be missing after 185.

²⁴ The manuscripts have *interfatus*, 'spoke between' or 'interrupted,' against the context.

THEBAID

insilit: haec totis perfundit moenia pennis

- 210 Labdaciumque ducem praemissae consona nocti
 territat; hospitia et thalamos et foedera regni
 permixtumque genus (quae tanta licentia monstro,
 quis furor?) et iam bella canit.

Diffuderat Argos

exspectata dies: laeto regalia coetu

- 215 atria complentur, species est cernere avorum
 comminus et vivis certantia vultibus aera.
 tantum ausae perferre manus! pater ipse bicornis
 in laevum prona nixus sedet Inachus urna;
 hunc tegit Iasiusque senex placidusque Phoroneus
 220 et bellator Abas indignatusque Tonantem
 Acrisius nudoque ferens caput ense Coroebus
 torvaque iam Danaï facinus meditantis imago;
 exin mille duces. foribus cum immissa superbis
 unda fremit vulgi, procerum manus omnis et alto
 225 quis propior de rege gradus stant ordine primi.
 interior sacris calet et sonat aula tumultu
 femineo; casta matrem cinxere corona
 Argolides, pars virginibus circum undique fusae
 foedera conciliant nova solanturque timorem.
 230 ibant insignes vultuque habituque verendo
 candida purpureum fusae super ora pudorem
 deiectaeque genas; tacite subit ille supremus
 virginitatis amor, primaeque modestia culpa
 confundit vultus; tunc ora rigantur honestis
 235 imbribus, et teneros lacrimae iuvere parentes.
 non secus ac supero pariter si cardine lapsae

²¹³ est iam (*Lachmann*)

BOOK 2

overspreads the city and affrights the Labdacian ruler with echoes of the night just passed: she chants of guests and weddings, pacts of royalty and mingling of families, and now (such licence has the monster, such her madness!) of war.

The awaited day had spread Argos abroad. The royal halls fill up with a happy throng; they can see from close at hand semblances of ancestors and bronze vying with living faces. So much have hands dared execute! Father Inachus himself, two-horned, sits leaning leftward on his sloping urn. Old Iasius²⁵ flanks him and gentle Phoroneus and warrior Abas and Acrisius in wrath against the Thunderer and Coroebus²⁶ bearing a head upon his naked sword and the grim likeness of Danaus, his crime already in his heart. A thousand leaders follow. The wave of commoners clamours, admitted by the proud doors, while all the band of notables and they whose rank more nearly approaches the king's majesty stand first in order. The inner palace is warm with fire of sacrifice and loud with women's tumult. A chaste band of Argive dames surrounds the mother, others circle the girls, commending their new ties and comforting their fears. Conspicuous they moved, majestic in visage and garb, blushing modesty on their fair faces, eyes down-cast. Last love of virginity creeps silently upon them and bashfulness of first fault troubles their countenances. Then seemly rains bedew their faces and their tears rejoice their tender parents. It was as though Pallas and Phoebus'

²⁵ Alternative form of Iasus (not adjectival).

²⁶ The monster-killer, here confused with Crotopus; see on 1.570.

THEBAID

Pallas et asperior Phoebi soror, utraque telis,
 utraque torva genis flavoque in vertice nodo,
 illa suas Cyntho comites agat, haec Aracyntho;
 240 tunc, si fas oculis, non umquam longa tuendo
 expedias, cui maior honos, cui gratior, aut plus
 de Iove; mutatosque velint transumere cultus,
 et Pallas deceat pharetras et Delia cristas.

Certant laetitia superosque in vota fatigant
 245 Inachidae, quae cuique domus sacrique facultas.
 hi fibris animaque litant, hi caespite nudo,
 nec minus auditi, si mens accepta, merentur
 ture deos, fractisque obtendunt limina silvis.
 ecce metu subito (Lachesis sic dura iubebat)
 250 impulsae mentes, excussaue gaudia patri,
 et turbata dies. innuptam limite adibant
 Pallada, Monychiiis cui non Argiva per urbes
 posthabita est Larisa iugis; hic more parentum
 Iasides, thalamis ubi casta adolesceret aetas,
 255 virgineas libare comas primosque solebant
 excusare toros. celsam subeuntibus arcem
 in gradibus summi delapsus culmine templi,
 Arcados Euhippi spoliium, cadit aereus orbis,
 praemissasque faces, festum nubentibus ignem,
 260 obruit, eque adytis simul exaudita remotis

251 *limine Pω (Baehrens)*

²⁷ Sterner than Phoebus. The comparison with Adrastus' daughters does not begin felicitously, but Pallas and Diana were both daughters of Jupiter, both beautiful.

²⁸ Taken as 'at her threshold' (Mozley), *limine* is hard to construe and belied by 256f. The women are not at the threshold of the temple but advancing up the road that leads to it when the

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sterner sister,²⁷ both grim of weapons and of eye, blond braid upon their heads, were to glide together from the sky above leading their companions, the one from Cynthus, the other from Aracynthus; then could you never by long gazing (were your eyes permitted) determine which had the grander grace, which the more charming, which had more of Jupiter. And should they wish to change dress with each other, Pallas would beseem the quiver and Delia the helmet crest.

The sons of Inachus vie in joy and weary the gods with vows, each according to his home and means of worship. Some offer sacrifice with entrails and lives, others on the bare sod, deserve of the gods with incense (heard no less are they, if their hearts gain acceptance), and strew their thresholds with woodland fragments. But see, a sudden terror (so harsh Lachesis ordained) shocked their souls; the father's joy was shaken from him and the day marred. They were approaching virgin Pallas by the road,²⁸ she who values Argive Larisa among cities no less than Monychian heights. Here, when their chaste years grow ripe for wedlock, by ancestral usage Iasus' daughters were wont to dedicate their maiden locks and make excuse for their first marriage bed. As they breasted the lofty citadel, a brazen shield, spoil of Arcadian Euhippus, fell from the temple's topmost summit onto the steps, overwhelming the torches at the head of the procession, the brides' festal fire; along with that, while they still dared not step firmly forward, they were terrified by the sound of a mighty trum-

shield falls on the steps as they approach. In a phrase like *limite adibant* an epithet would usually be needed. Not so here, where *limite* stands on its own feet, fixing the women's whereabouts.

THEBAID

nondum ausos firmare gradum tuba terruit ingens.
 in regem conversi omnes formidine prima,
 mox audisse negant; cunctos tamen omina rerum
 dira movent, variisque metum sermonibus augent.
 265 nec mirum: nam tu infaustos donante marito
 ornatus, Argia, geris dirumque monile
 Harmoniae. longa est series, sed nota, malorum.
 persequar, unde novis tam saeva potentia donis.
 Lemnius hoc, ut prisca fides, Mavortia longum
 270 furta dolens, capto postquam nil obstat amori
 poena nec ultrices castigavere catenae,
 Harmoniac dotale decus sub luce iugali
 struxerat. hoc, docti quamquam maiora, laborant
 Cyclopes, notique operum Telehines auica
 275 certatim iuvare manu; sed plurimus ipsi
 sudor. ibi arcano florentes igne zmaragdus
 cingit et infaustas percussum adamanta figuras
 Gorgonosque orbes Siculaque incude relictos
 fulminis extremi cineres viridumque draconum
 280 lucentes a fronte iubas; hic flebile germen
 Hesperidum et dirum Phirixei velleris aurum;
 tum varias pestes raptumque interplicat atro
 Tisiphones de crine duces, et quae pessima ceston

269 haec P ω (*Schrader*)

278-79 relectos . . . hesterni *Heinsius*

²⁹ Vulcan, who loved the island, which had sheltered him when Jupiter threw him out of Olympus. The Homeric story (*Odyssey* 8.266ff.) tells how he entrapped his wife Venus and her lover Mars with a bed which he had fitted with chains.

pet from the depths of the shrine. At the first alarm all turn to the king, then deny their ears. But the dire omens of things to come move them all and they swell the fear with various talk. And no wonder. For Argia wears the unlucky ornament that her husband gave, the dire necklace of Harmonia. Long is the sequence of woes but well known. Whence the new gift came by so cruel a power I shall tell.

The Lemnian,²⁹ so goes the old belief, who had long resented Mars' stolen pleasures, when punishment failed to hinder detected love and avenging chains to castigate, had wrought this for Harmonia, dotal adornment for her wedding day. The Cyclopes worked on it, though skilled in larger labours, and the Telchines, craftsmen renowned, lent friendly hands in emulation. But he himself sweated most of all. Around it he sets a circle of emeralds flowering with hidden fire, adamant stamped with ill-omened shapes, Gorgon eyes, ashes of a thunderbolt end left on Sicilian anvil, crests shining from the heads of green serpents; here is tearful fruit of the Hesperides³⁰ and the dire gold of Phrixus' fleece. Then he entwines various harms, a chieftain torn from Tisiphone's black hair and the most noxious of the powers that attest the Girdle.³¹ These he

³⁰ According to the account followed by Statius, their golden apples were carried off by Hercules, who killed a guardian snake. Bewailing the loss, the Nymphs were changed into trees (Apollonius Rhodius 4.1396ff.). The partially parallel legend of the Heliades, sisters of Phaëthon changed into poplars, is not relevant.

³¹ Cestos, the girdle of Venus, provocative of sexual desire; cf. *Iliad* 14.214.

vis probat; haec circum spumis lunaribus unguis
 285 callidus atque hilari perfundit cuncta veneno.
 non hoc Pasithea blandarum prima sororum,
 non Decor Idaliusque puer, sed Luctus et Irae
 et Dolor et tota pressit Discordia dextra.
 prima fides operi, Cadmum comitata iacentem
 290 Harmonia versis in sibila dira querelis
 Illyricos longo sulcavit pectore campos.
 improba mox Semele vix dona nocentia collo
 induit, et fallax intravit limina Iuno.
 teque etiam, infelix, perhibent, Iocasta, decorum
 295 possedisse nefas; vultus hac laude colebas,
 heu quibus, heu, placitura toris! post longior ordo.
 tunc donis Argia nitet vilesque sororis
 ornatus sacro praeculta supervenit auro.
 viderat hoc coniunx perituri vatis, et aras
 300 ante omnes epulasque trucem secreta coquebat
 invidiam, saevis detur si quando potiri
 cultibus, heu nihil auguriis adiuta propinquis.
 quos optat gemitus, quantas cupit impia clades!
 digna quidem: sed quid miseri decepta mariti
 305 arma, quid insontes nati meruere furores?
 Postquam regales epulas et gaudia vulgi
 bissemi clausere dies, Ismenius heros
 respicere ad Thebas iamque et sua quaerere regna.

³² Cf. Valerius Flaccus 6.447, Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 1.3. Witches were supposed to get spume from the moon when they drew her down to earth, thereby making their poisons deadlier.

³³ Cupid. ³⁴ In disguise, of course, to persuade Semele to make the fatal request of her lover Jupiter that he appear to her in his full splendour.

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cunningly smears about with lunar spume³² and over the whole spreads gay poison. Not Pasithea, chief of the charming sisters, nor Beauty, nor the Idalian boy³³ shaped it, but Mourning and Anger and Grief and Strife with all the power of her hand. The work first proved itself when Harmonia's plaints turned to dire hisses and in company with prostrate Cadmus she furrowed Illyria's plains with her trailing breast. Then Semele overbold scarce set the baneful gift upon her neck when false Juno crossed the threshold.³⁴ They say that you too, hapless Jocasta, possessed the beauteous curse. With this glory you decked your countenance³⁵ to please—ah, what a marriage bed! Thereafter a long series.³⁶ Now Argia shines with the gift, outdoing her sister's paltry gauds with superior splendour of accursed gold. The wife of the doomed prophet saw it and at all the altars and banquets secretly nursed a fierce envy; if only she might some day possess herself of the cruel bauble! Alas, the auguries so close at hand availed her nothing. Ah, the laments she prays for, impious woman, the disasters she desires! She merits them; but the cheated arms of her hapless husband, the guiltless madness of her son—what did *they* deserve?

Twice six days ended the royal feasting and the people's celebration. Now the Ismenian hero turns his eyes to Thebes and seeks his own kingdom as well. For to his mind

³⁵ But this is a necklace. Licence or inadvertence?

³⁶ Beginning with Eriphyle, who in exchange for the necklace persuaded her husband Amphiaraus to take part in the war. Their son Alcmaeon later killed her in revenge and was driven mad by the Furies.

quippe animum subit illa dies qua, sorte benigna
 310 fratris, Echionia steterat privatus in aula,
 respiciens descisse deos trepidoque tumultu
 dilapsos comites, nudum latus omne fugamque
 Fortunae. namque una soror producere tristes
 exulis ausa vias; etiam hanc in limine primo
 315 liquerat et magna lacrimas incluserat ira.
 tunc quos excedens hilares, quis cultus iniqui
 praecipuus ducis, et profugo quos ipse notarat
 ingemuisse sibi per noctem ac luce sub omni
 digerit; exedere animum dolor iraque demens
 320 et, qua non gravior mortalibus addita curis,
 spes, ubi longa venit. talem sub pectore nubem
 consilii volvens Dircen Cadmique negatas
 apparat ire domos. veluti dux taurus amata
 valle carens, pulsum solito quem gramine victor
 325 iussit ab erepta longe mugire iuvenca,
 cum profugo placuere tori cervixque recepto
 sanguine magna redit fractaeque in pectora quercus,
 bella cupit pastusque et capta armenta reposit
 iam pede, iam cornu melior; pavet ipse reversum
 330 victor, et attoniti vix agnovere magistri:
 non alias tacita iuvenis Teumesius iras
 mente acuit. sed fida vias arcanaque coniunx
 senserat; utque toris primo complexa iacebat
 aurorae pallore virum, 'quos, callide, motus
 335 quamve fugam moliris?' ait. 'nil transit amantes.
 sentio, pervigiles acuunt suspiria questus,
 numquam in pace sopor. quotiens haec ora natate
 fletibus et magnas latrantia pectora curas

338 latrantia PΣ: iacta- ω

comes that day when by his brother's favouring lot he stood in the Echionian palace a private man; the gods, he saw, had left him, his companions scattered in panic confusion, none stood at his side, Fortune had fled. Only his sister³⁷ dared bear the exile company on his sad way. Even her he had left on the threshold, stifling his tears in mighty rage. Every night and day he makes the count; whom had he himself marked rejoicing as he left, who paid particular court to the unrighteous ruler,³⁸ and who had a tear for the fugitive? Grief and mad wrath devoured his soul, and hope, heaviest of mortal cares when long deferred. Revolving such a cloud of counsel in his breast, he makes ready to go to Dirce and the forbidden home of Cadmus. Like a leader bull banished from his beloved valley, whom a victor has driven from his familiar meadow and condemned to low afar from his stolen heifer; but when the fugitive's sinews are to his liking and his great neck back again full-blooded and oaks shatter against his breast, he craves battle and reclaims pasture and captured herd, stronger now than ever in hoof and horn—the victor himself fears him returned and the wondering herdsmen scarce recognize: not otherwise does the young Teumesian hone his wrath in the silence of his heart. But his faithful wife sensed his secret urge to be away. Lying on their bed at the first pale of dawn, her arms around him: 'Trickster,' she said, 'what moves, what flight are you plotting? Nothing escapes a lover. I feel it, sighs sharpen your sleepless plaints, never do you slumber in peace. How often when I touch you do I catch your face awash with tears and your

³⁷ Antigone.

³⁸ *Quis* (= *quibus*) *cultus praecipuus* (*fuisse*) instead of *quis* (= *quibus*) *cultum praecipuum* (*fuisse*).

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admota deprendo manu! nil foedere rupto
 340 conubiisve super moveor viduaque iuventa,
 etsi crudus amor necdum post flammea toti
 intepuere tori: tua me, propracabo fateri,
 angit, amate, salus. tune incomitatus, inermis
 345 regna petes? poterisque tuis decedere Thebis,
 si neget? atque illum sollers deprendere semper
 Fama duces tumidum narrat raptoque superbum
 difficilemque tibi: necdum consumpserat annum.
 me quoque nunc vates, nunc exta minantia divos
 350 aut avium lapsus aut turbida noctis imago
 terret et (a, memini!) numquam mihi falsa per umbras
 Iuno venit. quo tendis iter? ni conscius ardor
 ducit et ad Thebas melior socer.'

Ilic breve tandem

risit Echionius iuvenis tenerumque dolorem
 coniugis amplexu solatus et oscula maestis
 355 tempestiva genis posuit lacrimasque repressit:
 'solve metus animo: dabitur, mihi crede, merentum
 consiliis tranquilla dies. te fortior annis
 nondum cura decet. sciat haec Saturnius olim
 fata parens, oculosque polo demittere si quos
 360 Iustitia et rectum terris defendere curat:
 fors aderit lux illa tibi, qua moenia cernes
 coniugis et geminas ibis regina per urbes.'

Sic ait, et caro raptim se limine profert.
 Tydea iam socium coeptis, iam pectore fido

³⁹ The expression is Homeric (*Odyssey* 20.13); cf. 411 *ignea corda fremunt*.

breast barking³⁹ grievous cares! A broken bond, my marriage, a widowed youth move me not, though my love is fresh and our bed has not all cooled after the bridal: 'tis your safety, beloved—I hasten to confess it—that tortures me. Shall you seek your kingdom unaccompanied, unarmed? And will you be able to leave your Thebes should he refuse? And Rumour, ever skilful to find rulers out, reports him puffed up and arrogant with his plunder and obdurate toward you; and he had not yet used up his year! Prophets too alarm me now and entrails making threat of gods or gliding birds or troubled vision of the night and Juno comes to me in the dark, she who never (ah, I remember!) played me false.⁴⁰ Whither your journey? Unless a secret passion draws you and a better father-in-law in Thebes.'

Here at length the young Echiōnian briefly laughed and comforted his wife's tender grief with an embrace, planting timely kisses on her sad eyes and checking her tears: 'Loose fears from your heart; a day of peace, believe me, will be granted to the counsels of the deserving. Care stronger than your years does not yet become you. Let the Saturnian father one day know these destinies, and Justice, if she choose to send down a glance from heaven and defend right on earth: mayhap the time will come for you to see your husband's walls and walk a queen through two cities.'

So he speaks and hastens forth from the beloved threshold. Sadly he addresses Tydeus, now partner in his

⁴⁰ Or the exclamation could be taken with *venit*. The motif recurs in 5.621f. *numquam impune per umbras / attonitae mihi visa Venus*.

- 365 aequantem curas (tantus post iurgia mentes
vinxit amor) socerumque affatur tristis Adrastum.
fit mora consilio, cum multa moventibus una
iam potior cunctis sedit sententia, fratris
praemptare fidem tutosque in regna precando
370 explorare aditus. audax ea munera Tydeus
sponte subit; nec non et te, fortissime gentis
Aetolum, multum lacrimis conata morari
Deipyle, sed iussa patris tutique regressus
legato iustaeque preces vicere sororis.
- 375 Iamque emensus iter silvis ac litore durum,
qua Lernaea palus, ambustaque sontibus alte
intepet Hydra vadis, et qua vix carmine raro
longa sonat Nemea nondum pastoribus ausis,
qua latus Eoos Ephyres quod vergit ad Euros
380 Sisyphiique sedent portus irataque terrae
curva Palaemonio secluditur unda Lechaeo.
hinc praetervectus Nisum et te, mitis Eleusin,
laevus abit, iamque arva gradu Teumesia et arces
intrat Agenoreas. ibi durum Eteoclea cernit
385 sublimem solio saeptumque horrentibus arnis.
iura ferus populo trans legem ac tempora regni
iam fratris de parte dabat; sedet omne paratus
in facinus queriturque fidem tam sero repositi.
- Constitit in mediis (ramus manifestat olivae
390 legatum) causasque viae nomenque rogatus
edidit; utque rudis fandi pronusque calori
semper erat, iustis miscens tamen aspera coepit:

369 Pω peremptare Pω (ς)

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enterprise and loyally matching his cares (so strong a love has bound them after their quarrel), and Adrastus, his wife's father. Counsel long delays, as considering many courses all finally settle on one as best: to test first his brother's good faith, exploring by plea safe access to sovereignty. Bold Tydeus volunteers for the task. You also, bravest of Aetolians, did Deipyle try hard with tears to hold back; but her father's commands and an envoy's assurance of safe return and her sister's just pleas prevailed.

And now he covers the rough path through forest and shore, where lies Lerna's swamp and the scorched Hydra is warm deep down in the guilty waters; and where the length of Nemea the shepherds are still fearful and their song rarely heard;⁴¹ where Ephyre's side slopes toward eastern winds and the harbour of Sisyphus sits and the curving wave, angry at the land, is kept apart by Palae-mon's Lcchaeum. From there he passed by Nisus and to the left of gentle Eleusin, and now walks the Teumesian fields and enters the towers of Agenor. There he sees harsh Eteocles aloft on his throne, fenced with bristling lances. Beyond the lawful period of his reign, the fierce ruler already governs the people out of his brother's portion. He sits ready for any crime and grumbles that his promise is claimed so late.

Tydeus stood in their midst; the olive branch manifests the ambassador. Asked his name and the reason for his journey, he announced them. Unpracticed in speaking and ever quick-tempered as he was, his words were mingled,

⁴¹ The Hydra of Lerna and the shepherds of Nemea keep traces of their past. The former is still warm from Hercules' burning of her heads (cf. 1.384), the latter still fear the lion he slew.

'si tibi plana fides et dicti cura maneret
 foederis, ad fratrem completo iustius anno
 395 legatos hinc ire fuit teque ordine certo
 fortunam exuere et laetum descendere regno,
 ut vagus ille diu passusque haud digna per urbes
 ignotas pactae tandem succederet aulae.
 sed quia dulcis amor regni blandumque potestas,
 400 posceris. astriferum iam velox circulus orbem
 torsit et amissae redierunt montibus umbrae
 ex quo frater inops ignota per oppida tristes
 exsul agit casus; et te iam tempus aperto
 sub Iove ferre dies terrenaque frigora membris
 405 ducere et externos summissum ambire penates.
 pone modum laetis; satis ostro dives et auro
 conspicuus tenuem germani pauperis annum
 risisti; moneo regnorum gaudia temet
 dedoceas patiensque fugae mereare reverti.'

410 Dixerat. ast illi tacito sub pectore dudum
 ignea corda fremunt, iacto velut aspera saxo
 comminus erigitur serpens, cui subter inanes
 longa sitis latebras totumque agitata per artus
 convocat in fauces et squamea colla venenum:
 415 'cognita si dubiis fratris mihi iurgia signis
 ante forent nec clara odiorum arcana paterent,
 sufficeret vel sola fides. quam torvus et illum
 mente gerens, ceu saepta novus iam moenia laxet
 fossor et hostiles inimicent classica turmas,
 420 praefuris! in medios si comminus orsa tulisses
 Bistonas aut refugo pallentes sole Gclonos,

417 quam P ω : qua ζ torvus (-vos Housman) et ω : servo
 sed P

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just but harsh, as he began: 'If clear good faith and care for uttered pledge abode with you, 'twas fairer that envoys go hence to your brother now that the year is out and that you put off your dignity as in order determined and cheerfully descend from royalty, so that after long wandering through strange cities and sufferings unmeet he should at last succeed to the covenanted palace. But since love of royalty is sweet and power seduces, it is required of you. Already the swift axis has turned the starry globe and the lost shades have come back to the mountains since your brother has been living his sad adventures in towns unknown, a pauper exile. Now it is time for you too to bear days under the open sky and draw earth's chills through your limbs and humbly court foreign hearths. Set a limit to good times. Rich in purple and conspicuous in gold, you have mocked the lean year of your penniless brother long enough. I counsel you: unlearn the joys of royalty and by patience of exile deserve to return.'

He spoke. But the other's fiery heart growls the while in his silent breast. So an angry snake rears up close at the cast of a stone; long his thirst down in his hollow den; stirred through his body, it calls all his venom into his jaws and scaly neck: 'Were the signs uncertain that gave me foreknowledge of my brother's quarrel nor plain to view his secret hate, sufficient in itself would be the proof. How grimly furious in advance are you, his mental image, as though stranger sappers were already loosening our fenced walls and trumpets calling enemy squadrons to the assault! If you had brought your message face to face into the midst of the Bistones or the Geloni that the fleeing sun

THEBAID

parcior eloquio et medii reverentior aequi
 inciperes. neque te furibundae crimine mentis
 arguerim: mandata refers. nunc omnia quando
 425 plena minis, nec sceptrā fide nec pace sequestra
 poscitis, et propior capulo manus, haec mea regi
 Argolico, nondum aequa tuis, vice dicta reporta:
 quae sors iusta mihi, quae non indebitus annis
 sceptrā dicavit honos, teneo longumque tenebo:
 430 te penes Inachiae dotalis regia dono
 coniugis, et Danaae (quid enim maioribus actis
 invidiam?) cumulentur opes. felicibus Argos
 auspiciis Lernamque regas: nos horrida Dirces
 pascua et Euboicis artatas fluctibus oras,
 435 non indignati miserum dixisse parentem
 Oedipoden: tibi larga (Pelops et Tantalus auctor)
 nobilitas, propiorque fluat de sanguine iuncto
 Iuppiter. ane feret luxu consucta paterno
 hunc regina larem? nostrae cui iure sorores
 440 anxia pensa trahant, longo quam sordida luctu
 mater et ex imis auditus forte tenebris
 offendat saccr ille senex. iam pectora vulgi
 assuevere iugo: pudet heu plebisque patrumque:
 ne totiens incerta ferant mutentque gementes
 445 imperia et dubio pigcat parere tyranno.
 non parcit populis regnum breve; respice quantus
 horror, ut attoniti nostro in discrimine cives.
 hosne ego, quis certa est sub te duce poena, relinquam?
 iratus, germane, venis. fac velle: nec ipsi,

447 horror et *Koestlin*

makes pale, your opening would have been more sparing of eloquence and more heedful of impartial justice. Yet I would not accuse you of crazed wits; you deliver your commission. Now since all is full of threats and you demand the sceptre without good faith or peace to mediate and the hand is at the hilt, take these my words back in turn to the Argive king, words still not matching yours. The sceptre that a just lot and a grace due to my years have made mine I hold and long shall. To you belongs dotal kingship by gift of your Inachian bride. Let Danaë's riches pile high—for why should I be jealous of a greater career? Rule Argos and Lerna with happy auspices, while I keep Dirce's rough pastures and the shores narrowed by Euboea's waves, not disdaining to call poor Oedipus my father. Yours be generous nobility—Pelops and Tantalus your ancestors—with Jupiter flowing closer from allied blood.⁴² Will the queen accustomed to her father's luxury endure a home like this?—where our sisters would in duty spin anxious threads for her, where our mother, unkempt in long mourning, and that accursed ancient, heard perhaps from lowest darkness, would offend her? By now the people's hearts have grown used to the yoke. Alas, I take shame for commons and elders both. Must they so often bear uncertainty and change rulers groaning and grudge obedience to a doubtful lord? A brief reign spares not the folk. See the dread, the dismay of the citizens in our contest. Shall I abandon these whom certain punishment awaits under your sway? Brother, you come in anger. Suppose me willing; the elders themselves, if I know their

⁴² Polynices, himself descended from Jupiter, had married another less remote descendant; cf. 1.224–26.

450 si modo notus amor meritique est gratia, patres
reddere regna sinent.'

Non ultra passus, et orsa
iniecit mediis sermonibus obvia: 'reddes,'
ingeminat, 'reddes; non si te ferreus agger
ambiat aut triplices alio tibi carmine muros

455 Amphion auditus agat, nil tela nec ignes
obstiterint, quin ausa luas nostrisque sub armis
captivo moribundus humum diademate pulses.
tu merito; ast horum miseret, quos sanguine viles
coniugibus natisque infanda ad proelia raptos
460 proicis excidio, bone rex. o quanta, Cithaeron,
funera sanguineusque vadis, Ismene, rotabis!
haec pietas, haec magna fides! nec crimina gentis
mira equidem duco: sic primus sanguinis auctor
incestique patrum thalami; sed fallit origo:
465 Oedipodis tu solus eras. haec praemia morum
ac scelcris, violente, feres. nos poscimus annum.
sed moror.'

Haec audax etiamnum in limine retro
vociferans, iam tunc impulsa per agmina praeceps,
evolat. Oencae vindex sic ille Dianae

470 erectus saetis et aduncae fulmine malae,
cum premeret Pelopea phalanx, saxa obvia volvens

465 oedipodes P ω (*Jortin*)

⁴³ A verb ('you shall see') has to be supplied from what follows—zeugma, a figure much employed by Statius.

⁴⁴ A foolish flourish. If Polynices was not Oedipus' son, whose was he and what right did he have to the throne?

affection and if there be gratitude for desert, will not allow me to return the throne.'

Tydeus bore it no further, but even as the words continued flung in his counterspeech: 'You shall return it' and again 'Return it you shall. Though an iron rampart surround you or Amphion with another song be heard and make you triple walls, neither steel nor fire shall protect you from the price of your deeds as you die beneath our arms, striking the ground with captive diadem. So you deserve; but these I pity whose blood is cheap, whom you fling forth to their destruction, snatched from their wives and children into accursed battle, good king. What carnage, Cithaeron,⁴³ and you, Ismenos, shall you roll in your bloody waters! This is brotherly love, this mighty faith! Nor do I wonder at the crimes of your race. Thus was the first author of your blood, thus the impure wedlock of your fathers. But the source deceives: you alone came of Oedipus.⁴⁴ This, man of violence, is the reward you shall reap of your ways and your crime. We demand our year—but I tarry.'

This still on the threshold he boldly shouts behind him and in the shouting dashes out headlong through the reeling ranks. So Oenean Diana's avenger,⁴⁵ proud with his spines and the thunderbolt of his curving jaw,⁴⁶ as the Pelopean band presses him hard, rolling rocks in his path

⁴⁵ The Calydonian boar sent by Diana to punish Oeneus for neglecting her worship. 'Oeneus' Diana' has to convey 'Diana whom Oeneus offended' or the like, but is that really possible? *Evolat Oenides. vindex?* In the simile the boar seems to be on the offensive, despite *premeret* in 471.

⁴⁶ Or *erectus* = 'erect,' i.e. bristling with spines and tusks.

THEBAID

fractaque perfossis arbusta Acheloia ripis,
 iam Telamona solo, iam stratum Ixiona linquens
 te, Meleagre, subit: ibi demum cuspede lata
 475 haesit et obnixo ferrum laxavit in armo.
 talis adhuc trepidum linquit Calydonius heros
 concilium infrendens, ipsi ceu regna negentur,
 festinatque vias ramumque precantis olivae
 abicit. attonitae tectorum e limine summo
 480 aspectant matres, saevoque infanda precantur
 Oenidae tacitoque simul sub pectore regi.

Nec piger ingenio scelerum fraudisque nefandae
 rector eget. iuvenum fidos, lectissima bello
 corpora, nunc pretio, nunc ille hortantibus ardens
 485 sollicitat dictis, nocturnaue proelia saevus
 instruit, et (sanctum populis per saecula nomen)
 legatum insidiis tacitoque invadere ferro
 (quid regnis non vile?) cupit. quas quaereret artes
 si fratrem, Fortuna, darcs? o caeca nocentum
 490 consilia! o semper timidum scelus! exit in unum
 plebs ferro iurata caput: ceu castra subire
 apparet aut celsum crebri arietis ictibus urbis
 inclinare latus, densi sic agmine facto
 quinquaginta altis funduntur in ordine portis.
 495 macte animi, tantis dignus qui crederis armis!

Fert via per dumos propior, qua calce latenti
 praecelerant densaeque legunt compendia silvae.
 lecta dolis sedes: gemini procul urbe malignis
 faucibus urguntur colles, quos umbra superne
 500 montis et incurvis claudunt iuga frondea silvis

474 ibi ω : tibi P475 lassavit *Madvig*479 limine P: culm- ω

BOOK 2

and broken trees from Achelous' perforated banks, now leaves Telamon stretched on the ground, now Ixion, and turns on Meleager. Here at last he stops at thrust of spear and loosens the steel in his struggling shoulder. Like to him the Calydonian hero leaves the still fearful council grinding his teeth, as though himself were denied the throne. He hastens on his way, throwing aside the branch of suppliant olive. From the thresholds' edge of their dwellings the matrons watch amazed and heap curses on the fierce son of Oeneus, and in their secret hearts on the king to boot.

Nor is the ruler idle. He lacks not wit for crimes and heinous treachery. He urges trusty young men, bodies chosen for battle, now with gold, now with ardent persuasion, and viciously sets up a fight by night, eager to violate by ambush and stealthy steel an ambassador, name sacred to peoples throughout the centuries—but what does royalty not hold cheap? What arts would he devise if Fortune gave him his brother? Blind counsels of the wicked! Crime cowardly ever! A populace goes forth sworn in arms against a single life. 'Twas as if they were about to attack a camp or topple a city's high flank with frequent blows of battering ram. So in close array fifty pour out in order from the lofty gates. Honour to your valour, you that are deemed worthy of such an armament!

A short cut leads through thickets. By a hidden track they hasten ahead through the dense forest, saving distance. A spot for guile is chosen. Far from the city a grudging pass constrains two hills; enclosing it is the shade of the heights above, leafy ridges with curving woods. Nature set

⁴⁹² crebris arietibus P ω (*Unger*)

⁴⁹⁹ quas *O. Mueller* superni P ω (*O. Mueller*)

THEBAID

(insidias Natura loco caecamque latendi
 struxit opem), mediasque arte secat aspera rupes
 semita, quam subter campi devexaque latis
 arva iacent spatiis. contra importuna crepido,
 505 Oedipodioniae domus alitis; hic fera quondam
 pallentes erecta genas suffusaque tabo
 lumina, concretis infando sanguine plumis
 reliquias amplexa virum semesaque nudis
 pectoribus stetit ossa premens visuque trementi
 510 collustrat campos, si quis concurrere dictis
 hospes inexplicitis aut comminus ire viator
 audeat et dirae commercia iungere linguae;
 nec mora, quin acuens exsertos protinus ungues
 liventesque manus strictosque in vulnera dentes
 515 terribili applausu circum hospita surgeret ora;
 et latuere doli, donec de rupe cruenta
 (heu simili deprensa viro!) cessantibus alis
 tristis inexpletam scopulis affligeret alvum.
 monstrat silva nefas: horrent vicina iuveni
 520 gramina, damnatis avidum pecus abstinet herbis.
 non Dryadum placet umbra choris non commoda sacris
 Faunorum, diraeque etiam fugere volucres
 prodigiale nemus. tacitis huc gressibus acti
 deveniunt peritura cohors, hostemque superbum
 525 annexi iaculis et humi posita arma tenentes
 expectant, densaque nemus statione coronant.
 Coeperat umentis Phoebum subtexere palla
 Nox et caeruleam terris infuderat umbram.

509 trementi ω : fr- P

514 fractosque P ω (*Housman*) vulnera P: -re ω

BOOK 2

up ambush for the place,⁴⁷ dark aid to hiding. A rough, narrow path divides the rocks midway; below lies a plain, a broad stretch of sloping fields. Opposite is a grim ledge, the home of Oedipus' fowl.⁴⁸ Here once the savage creature stood, lifting up her pallid cheeks and eyes suffused with putrefaction, her feathers clotted with hideous gore, covering human remains, pressing half-eaten bones with her naked breast, and with wavering stare surveyed the plain, watching for a stranger who might dare to meet her in riddling words, a traveller to approach and have commerce with her evil tongue.⁴⁹ And speedily sharpening her protended nails, with livid hands and teeth bared to wound, with frightful flapping she would rise around the stranger's face. Her wiles stayed hidden until a man like (alas!) to herself⁵⁰ caught her; and from her bloody cliff, cowed with flagging wings, she dashed her insatiate belly upon the rocks. The forest shows the horror; cattle dread the nearby meadows, the greedy flock shuns the sentenced grass. The shade pleases not the choirs of Dryads nor lends itself to the rites of Fauns, even foul birds flec the monstrous grove. Hither with muted steps comes the doomed band. Leaning on their spears and with their shields upon the ground they await the haughty foe, circling the wood with close guard.

Night had begun to screen Phocbus with her dewy mantle and had cast her dark shadow athwart the earth.

⁴⁷ Another inversion, after *faucibus urguentur colles* instead of *collibus urguentur fauces* in 499.

⁴⁸ The Sphinx.

⁴⁹ Wayfarers were confronted with her riddle.

⁵⁰ Also cunning and also a monster.

ille propinquabat silvis et ab aggere celso
 530 scuta virum galeasque videt rutilare comantes,
 qua laxant rami nemus adversaque sub umbra
 flammeus aeratis lunae tremor errat in armis.
 obstipuit visis, ibat tamen, horrida tantum
 spicula et inclusum capulo tenus admovet ense,
 535 ac prior 'unde, viri, quidve occultatis in armis?'
 non humili terrore rogat. nec reddita contra
 vox, fidamque negant suspecta silentia pacem.
 ecce autem vasto Cthonii contorta lacerto,
 quo duce freta cohors, fuscas intervola auras
 540 hasta; sed audenti deus et Fortuna recessit.
 per tamen Olenii tegimen suis atraque saetis
 terga super laevos umeros vicina cruori
 effugit et viduo iugulum ferit irrita ligno.
 tunc horrere comae sanguisque in corda gelari.
 545 huc ferus atque illuc animum pallentiaque ira
 ora ferens (nec tanta putat sibi bella parari):
 'ferite gradum contra campoque erumpite aperto!
 quis timor audendi, quae tanta ignavia? solus,
 solus in arma voco.' neque in his mora; quos ubi plures
 550 quam ratus innumeris videt excursare latebris,
 hos deire iugis, illos e vallibus inis
 crescere, nec paucos campo, totumque sub armis
 collucere iter, ut elausas indagine profert
 in medium vox prima feras, quae sola medendi
 555 turbata ratione via est, petit ardua dirae
 Sphingos et abscisis infringens eautibus uncas
 exsuperat iuga dura manus, scopuloque potitus,

530 galeas ω : cristas P

543 terit Hall

551 deire P Σ : prodire ω 557 dira P ω (Håkanson)

BOOK 2

Drawing near the woods, from a tall mound he sees the red gleam of soldiers' shields and crested helmets where the branches leave an opening in the grove and in the fronting shade tremulous moonlight strays flickering upon brazen armour. Astounded by what he saw, he yet kept on, only drawing closer his bristling darts and the hilt of his sheathed sword. Then in no ignoble alarm he questions first: 'Whence come you, men, in arms and what do you hide?' No voice responds and the suspect silence prompts distrust of peace. But see! A spear hurled by the huge arm of Cthonius, trusted leader of the band, flies through the darkling air; but the god and Fortune shunned the venture. Yet through the covering of Olenian boar and the black bristly hide above his left shoulder and close to the blood it takes its flight and with widowed wood⁵¹ strikes frustrate on the throat. His hair stood on end and the blood froze to his heart. Fiercely he points mind and visage pale with anger this way and that, nor thinks so many mean war against him: 'Come face me! Out, out into the open! What fear to dare, what arrant cowardice is this? Alone I challenge you to arms, alone.' Nor do they tarry. He sees them in numbers greater than he had thought rushing out from countless hiding places, some descending from the ridges, others multiplying from the depth of the valley, from the plain not a few, all the road gleaming with weaponry, as when a first shout brings net-encircled beasts into the open. Distraught, he has but one resource; he seeks the steep place of the fell Sphinx. Tearing his clutching hands on the sheer crag, he scales the harsh height and gains a

⁵¹ Having lost its metal head in the boarskin.

unde procul tergo metus et via prona nocendi,
 saxum ingens, quod vix plena cervice gementes
 560 vertere humo et muris valeant inferre iuveni,
 rupibus avellit; dein toto sanguine nixus
 sustinet, immanem quaerens librare ruinam,
 qualis in adversos Lapithas erexit inanem
 magnanimus cratera Pholus. stupet obvia leto
 565 turba superstantem atque emissi turbine montis
 obruitur; simul ora virum, simul arma manusque
 fractaque commixto sederunt pectora ferro.
 quattuor hic adeo disiecti mole sub una
 congemuere; fuga tremefactum protinus agmen
 570 excutitur coeptis. neque enim temnenda iacebant
 funcra: fulmineus Dorylas, quem regibus ardens
 aequabat virtus, Martisque e semine Theron
 terrigenas confisus avos, nec vertere cuiquam
 frena secundus Halys (sed tunc pedes occubat arvis)
 575 Pentheumque trahens nondum te Phaedimus aequo,
 Bacche, genus. quorum ut subitis exterrita fati
 agmina turbatam vidit laxare catervam,
 quae duo sola manu gestans acclinia monti
 fixerat, intorquet iacula et fugientibus addit.
 580 mox in plana libens, nudo ne pectore tela
 inciderent, saltu praecipit defertur et orbem,
 quem procul oppresso vidit Therone volutum,
 corripuit, tergoque et vertice tegmina nota
 saeptus et hostili propugnans pectora parma
 585 constitit. inde iterum densi glomerantur in unum
 Ogygidae firmantque gradum; trahit ocus ense

560 murisque (du- P) valent P ω (*Hall: alii alia*)

561 avellit ω : cv- P

568 disiecta P: deiecti ω (ζ , *Barth*)

cliff where danger from the rear is remote and the way to hurt runs downward. From the rocks he plucks a huge boulder, which groaning steers with full strength of neck could scarce tear from the ground and bring within walls;⁵² then striving with all his might, he raises and seeks to balance the monstrous bulk, like great-hearted Pholus hoisting an empty mixing bowl against his Lapith adversaries. Stupified, the crowd in death's path sees him standing above. He hurls the mountain and its rush overwhelms them. Their faces are squashed and their weapons and hands and shattered breasts, mingled with steel. Four groaned together here, scattered under a single mass. Straightway the terrified troop are shaken from their attempt. For they who lay fallen were of no small note: Dorylas the thunderbolt, whose ardent valour matched him with kings; Theron of Mars' seed, confident in his earthborn ancestors; Halys, rider second to none, but now a footsoldier, he lies dead upon the ground; Phaedinus of Pentheus' line—Bacchus has not yet forgiven. Appalled by their sudden fate the ranks break in confusion. As Tydeus sees it, he hurls two javelins (these only he had carried and planted them leaning against the mountain) in the wake of his fleeing foes. Then of his own will he leaps down to the level and lest weapons fall on his unprotected breast snatches up the shield that he had seen roll away when Theron was crushed. His back and head guarded by their familiar coverings, defending his breast with the enemy buckler, he took his stand. Once again the sons of Ogygus gather in one dense body and stand fast. Tydeus swiftly

⁵² To be used for building or as a projectile in a siege?

THEBAID

Bistonium Tydeus, Mavortia munera magni
 Oeneos, et partes pariter divisus in omnes
 hos obit atque illos ferroque micantia tela
 590 decutit; impeditant numero seque ipsa vicissim
 arma premunt, nec vis conatibus ulla, sed ipsae
 in socios errare manus et corpora turba
 involvi prolapsa sua; manet ille ruentes
 angustus telis et inexpugnabilis obstat.
 595 non aliter Getica, si fas est credere, Phlegra
 armatum immensus Briareus stetit aethera contra,
 hinc Phoebi pharetras, hinc torvae Pallados angues,
 inde Pelethroniam praefixa cuspidē pinum
 Martis, at hinc lasso mutata Pyracmoni temnens
 600 fulmina, cum toto nequiquam obsessus Olympo
 tot queritur cessare manus: non segnior ardet
 huc illuc clipeum obiectans, seque ipse recedens
 circumit; interdum trepidis occurrit et instat
 spicula devellens, clipeo quae plurima toto
 605 fixa tremunt armantque virum; saepe aspera passus
 vulnera, sed nullum vitae in secreta receptum
 nec mortem sperare valet. rotat ipse furem
 Deilochum, comitemque illi iubet ire sub umbras
 Phegea sublata minitantem bella securi
 610 Dircaeumque Gyan et Echionium Lycophonten.
 iam trepidi sese quaerunt numerantque, nec idem
 caedis amor, tantamque dolent rarescere turbam.
 Ecce Chronis Tyrii demissus origine Cadmi

593 involvit P ω (ζ , *Heinsius*) 595 geticae . . . phlegrae
 P ω (*Schrader*) 599 pyragmone P ω (*Hill, duce O. Mueller*)
 610 lycophontem P ω (*Housman*)
 612 tantamque ω : plenam P ante corr.

BOOK 2

draws his Bistonian sword, the Martian gift of great Oeneus, and divided all ways alike faces this group and that, shaking off the steel-flashing shafts. ✓ They clog each other⁵³ with their number, their shields press one another, their efforts lack force, their blows go wild against their own comrades, their bodies lurch entangled in their own multitude; whereas *he* awaits the attackers, presenting a slim target to the spears, impregnable. Not otherwise in Getic Phlegra, if we may believe it, did vast Briareus stand against heaven in arms, despising Phoebus' quiver on one side and the snakes of frowning Pallas on another, there Mars' steel-tipped Pelethronian pine, here thunderbolt after thunderbolt till Pyracmon grows weary; assailed in vain by all Olympus, he complains that so many hands⁵⁴ are idle. No less lively is Tydeus' ardour. This way and that he thrusts his shield, retires circling himself, anon accosts the trembling foe and bears upon them, plucking away the many missiles that stick a-quiver all over his shield, arming him. Often he suffers sharp wounds, but none penetrates life's secret places, none can hope to kill. Himself whirls furious Deilochus⁵⁵ and bids Phegeus, as he threatens battle with uplifted axe, go join him in the shades, and Dircaean Gyas and Echionian Lycophontes. Now fearfully they seek themselves and count; their appetite for slaughter has abated and ruefully they note the thinning of so large a crew.

But here comes Chromis, descended from Tyrian

⁵³ *Se* has to be understood with *impeditant* from the following *seque*.

⁵⁴ He had a hundred.

⁵⁵ Sends him head over heels?

- (hunc utero quondam Dryope Phoenissa gravato
 615 rapta repente choris onerisque oblita ferebat,
 dumque trahit prensis taurum tibi cornibus, Euhan,
 procidit impulsus nimiis conatibus infans)
 tunc audax iaculis et capti pelle leonis
 pinea nodosae quassabat robora clavae
 620 increpitans: 'unusne, viri, tot caedibus unus
 ibit ovans Argos? vix credet Fama reverso.
 heu socii, nullaene manus, nulla arma valebunt?
 haec regi promissa, Cydon, haec, Lampe, dabamus?
 dum clamat, subit ore cavo Teumesia cornus,
 625 nec prohibent fauces; atque illi voce repleta
 intercepta natat prorupto in sanguine lingua.
 stabat adhuc, donec transmissa morte per artus
 labitur immorsaque cadens obmutuit hasta.
 Vos quoque, Thespiadae, cur infitatus honora
 630 arcuerim fama? fratris moribunda levabat
 membra solo Periphas (nil indole clarius illa
 nec pietate fuit), laeva marcentia colla
 sustentans dextraque latus; singultibus artum
 exhaustit thoraca dolor, nec vincla coercent
 635 undantem fletu galeam, cum multa gementi
 pone gravis curvas perfringit lancea costas
 exit et in fratrem cognataque pectora telo
 conserit. ille oculos etiamnum in luce natantes
 sistit et aspecta germani morte resolvit.
 640 at cui vita recens et adhuc in vulnere vires
 'hos tibi complexus, haec dent,' ait, 'oscula nati.'

619 nodosam . . . clavam P: -sa . . . -va ω (*Jortin*)

637 ferro Σ *ad* 3.152

638 etiamnum ω; et adhuc P (*e* 640); extrema *Markland*

BOOK 2

Cadmus. Him once Phoenician Dryope bore in her laden womb, as suddenly snatched by the dancers she forgot her burden, and as she dragged a bull by the horn for your sake, Euhan, the child was pushed by her frantic efforts and fell forth. Then bold with spears and the hide of a captured lion, he was brandishing a knotty pinewood club, thus upbraiding them: 'Shall one man, warriors, one man go to Argos triumphing in so many slain? Fame will scarce believe him when he returns. Alack, comrades, shall no hands, no weapons avail? Were these the promises we made the king, Cydon? These, Lampus?' As he shouts, a Teumesian⁵⁶ javelin enters his open mouth, nor does his throat bar it. His voice is choked and the severed tongue swims in a gush of blood. Even yet he stood, until death coursed through his limbs and he collapsed. Silent he dropped, biting the spear.

You too, sons of Thespius, why should I deny and keep you from honourable fame? Periphas was raising his brother's dying body from the ground (none more than he renowned for natural gifts or love of kin), propping with his left hand the drooping neck and with his right the side. Grief exhausts the corselet scarce large enough for his sobs and the straps do not contain the helmet awash with tears. But as he groans and groans, a heavy lance from behind shatters his rib cage and issues forth into his brother, knitting the kindred breasts with the weapon. The other fixes his eyes still swimming in the light, and seeing his brother's death relaxes them. But his spirit was hardly gone and strength was still in the wound: 'May your sons give you⁵⁷ such embrace, such kisses,' he said. So they fell prostrate,

⁵⁶ I.e. Theban, from Tydeus' shield.

⁵⁷ Tydeus.

THEBAID

procubuere pares fatis, miserabile votum
mortis, et alterna clauserunt lumina dextra.

Protinus idem ultro iaculo parmaque Menoeten
645 proterrebat agens trepidis vestigia retro
passibus urgentem, donec defecit iniqua
lapsus humo, pariterque manus distractus in ambas
orat et a iugulo nitentem sustinet hastam:
‘parce per has stellis interlabentibus umbras,
650 per superos noctemque tuam; sine tristia Thebis
nuntius acta feram vulgique per ora paventis
contempto te rege canam: sic irrita nobis
tela cadant, nullique tuum penetrabile ferro
pectus, et optanti victor reveharis amico.’
655 dixerat. ille nihil vultum mutatus ‘inanes
perdis,’ ait, ‘lacrimas; et tu, ni fallor, iniquo
pollicitus mea colla duci. nunc arma diemque
proice; quid timidæ sequeris compendia vitæ?
bella manent.’ simul hæc et crassum sanguine telum
660 iam redit. ille super dictis infensus amaris
prosequitur victos: ‘non hæc trieterica vobis
nox patrio de more venit; non orgia Cadmi
cernitis aut avidas Bacchum scelerare parentes.
nebridas et fragiles thyrsos portare putastis
665 imbellem ad sonitum maribusque incognita veris
foeda Celacnaea committere proelia buxo?
hic aliae caedes, alius furor: ite sub umbras,
o timidi paucique!’ hæc intonat; ast tamen illi
membra negant, lassusque ferit praccordia sanguis.
670 iam sublata manus cassos defertur in ictus,
tardatique gradus, clipeum nec sustinet umbo

⁵⁸ To die together.

⁵⁹ Lascivious dances.

BOOK 2

alike in their doom, their sad prayer of death⁵⁸ answered, and closed their eyes with each other's hands.

Forthwith the warrior drove a terrified Menoetes before him with spear and shield as he hurried backward his panic steps till he tripped on the rough ground and collapsed. Both hands spread wide in entreaty, he stays the thrusting weapon from his throat: 'Have mercy I pray by these shades and the stars that glide among them, by the High Ones and this your night. Suffer me to bear sad tidings to Thebes, to sing your praises before the trembling folk in scorn of the king. So may our weapons fall idle nor any steel avail to pierce your breast, so may you return victorious to the prayer of your friend.' Unchanged of countenance, Tydeus made answer: 'You waste vain tears. You too, if I mistake not, promised my head to your unjust chief. Now cast forth arms and the light of day. Why seek to husband a dastard life? War is to come.' With the words the weapon returns thick with blood. Angrily he pursues his beaten foes with bitter speech: 'This night is not your tricennial returning by ancestral custom; you look not at Cadmus' orgies or mothers greedy to stain Bacchus with crime. Did you think you were carrying fawnskins and frail wands to unwarlike music, joining shameful battle⁵⁹ that real men know not of to the sound of Celaenae's pipe?⁶⁰ Here are different slayings, different frenzy. To the shades with you, cowardly handful!' Thus he thunders, but his limbs refuse their office and the blood throbbing in his breast is weary. Now his raised hand is borne down in frustrate blows, his steps are slow, its boss⁶¹ no longer holds up

⁶⁰ As played by Marsyas. Pipes were used in the rites of Cybele and of Bacchus.

⁶¹ I.e. the hand behind it.

nutantem spoliis; gelidus cadit imber anhelos
 pectore, tum crines ardentiaque ora cruentis
 roribus et taetra morientum aspergine manant:
 675 ut leo, qui campis longe custode fugato
 Massylas depastus oves, ubi sanguine multo
 luxuriata fames cervixque et tabe gravatae
 consedere iubae, mediis in caedibus astat
 aeger, hians, victusque cibus; nec iam amplius irae
 680 crudescunt: tantum vacuis ferit aëra malis
 molliaque eiecta delambit vellera lingua.

Ille etiam Thebas spoliis et sanguine plenus
 isset et attonitis sese populoque ducique
 ostentasset ovans, ni tu, Tritonia virgo,
 685 flagrantem multaque operis caligine plenum
 consilio dignata virum: 'sate gente superbi
 Oeneos, absentes cui dudum vincere Thebas
 annuimus, iam pone modum nimiumque secundis
 parce deis: huic una fides optanda labori.
 Fortuna satis usus abi.'

690 Restabat acerbis
 funeribus socioque gregi non sponte superstes
 Haemonides (ille haec praeviderat, omina doctus
 aëris et nulla deceptus ab alite) Maeon,
 nec veritus prohibere ducem, sed Fata monentem
 695 privavere fide. vita miserandus incerti
 damnatur; trepido Tydeus immitia mandat:
 'quisquis es Aonidum, quem crastina munere nostro
 manibus exemptum mediis Aurora videbit,
 haec iubeo perferre duci: cinge aggere portas,
 700 tela nova, fragiles aevo circum inspicere muros,

⁶⁷² mutatum $P\omega$ (*Lachmann*)

BOOK 2

the shield that nods with weight of spoils, a chill rain falls from his panting breast, his hair and burning face flow with bloody dew and the foul splashings of the dying. Even as a lion who has chased the shepherd far from the fields and gorged on Massylian sheep, when his hunger has revelled in blood galore and his neck and mane have sunk heavy with filth, stands sick amid the slaughter, gaping and o'erdone with food, nor any more does his fury swell; he only strikes air with empty jaws and licks soft wool with protruded tongue.

Replete with spoils and blood, Tydeus would have gone to Thebes and shown himself in triumph to people and ruler if you, Tritonian maid, had not deigned to counsel him, aflame as he was and quite dazed from his work: 'Offspring of proud Oeneus' race, to whom I have just granted victory over absent Thebes, make now an end and spare the too favouring gods. Ask only that this exploit be believed. You have used Fortune enough. Go.'

There was left an unwilling survivor from the sad carnage of his comrades, Maeon son of Haemon. He had foreseen it all, for skilled in the omens of the air no bird deceived him; Neither did he fear to forbid the ruler, but the Fates robbed his warnings of credence. Poor wretch, he is doomed to an unprofitable life. To him afraid Tydeus gives a pitiless charge: 'Whosoever you are of Aonia's sons whom tomorrow's dawn shall see saved from the midst of death by my grace, I command you to bring your lord this message: set a rampart round your gates, refurbish your weapons, look to the circuit of your walls grown frail with

⁷⁰⁰ circumspice ω: -um inspice P

THEBAID

praecipue stipare viros densasque memento
multiplicare acies. fumantem hunc aspice late
ense meo campum: tales in bella venimus.'

- Haec ait, et meritae pulchrum tibi, Pallas, honorem
705 sanguinea de strage parat, praedamque iacentem
comportat gaudens ingentiaque acta recenset.
quercus erat tencrac iam longum oblita iuventae
aggere camporum medio, quam plurimus ambit
frondibus incurvis et crudo robore cortex.
710 huic leves galeas perfossaque vulnere crebro
inserit arma ferens, huic truncos ictibus enses
subligat et tractas membris spirantibus hastas.
corpora tunc atque arma simul cumulata superstans
incipit (oranti nox et iuga longa resultant):
715 'diva ferox, magni decus ingeniumque parentis,
bellipotens, cui torva genis horrore decoro
cassis, et asperso crudescit sanguine Gorgon,
nec magis ardentem Mavors hastataque pugnae
impulerit Bellona tubas, huic annue sacro,
720 seu Pandionio nostras invisere caedes
monte venis, sive Aonia devertis Itone
laeta choris, seu tu Libyco Tritone repexas
lota comas, quo te biuigo temone frementem
intemeratarum volucer rapit axis equarum:
725 nunc tibi fracta virum spolia informesque dicamus
exuvias. at si patriis Porthaonis arvis
inferar et reduci pateat mihi Martia Pleuron,
aurea tunc mediis urbis tibi templa dicabo
collibus, Ionias qua despectare procellas

712 tractas P: fr- ω
Postgate

723 qua Pω (SB)

720 caedes ω: voces P: noctes

BOOK 2

time, above all take care to group your men tightly and multiply dense ranks. Behold this tract smoking far and wide with my sword. Such are we that come to war.'

So he speaks and prepares to do fair homage to Pallas his benefactor from the bleeding wreckage. Joyfully he collects the booty from the ground and reviews his great deeds. There was an oak, long forgetful of its tender youth, on a mound in the middle of the plain, encased in wealth of bark, with curving branches and crude timber. To this he brings and fixes shaven helmets and shields gashed with many a wound, binding swords broken off in blows and spears drawn from breathing limbs. Then standing over the bodies and piled weaponry he begins—night and the long ridges echo his speech: 'Fierce goddess, glory and wit of your great father, mighty in war, on whose cheeks sits the grim helm in fearful beauty, as the blood-bespattered Gorgon glowers (nor would Mars and Bellona spear-armed for battle rouse more fiery trumpet blasts), favour this rite—whether you come from Pandion's mount to witness my carnage or turn aside from Aonian Itone,⁶² dance-lover, or comb back your hair washed in Libyan Triton, whither bear you as you clamour the swift wheels of your inviolate mares in your pair-drawn chariot: now do I dedicate to you broken spoils of warriors, shapeless trophies. But if my way leads me to my native Porthaonian land and Martian Pleuron open her gates to my return, then shall I dedicate to you a golden temple amid the city's heights, where it may please you to look down on Ionian tempests, where wild

⁶² There were several places of that name. This one will have been near Coronea, where there was a cult of Athene Itonia.

THEBAID

- 730 dulce sit, et flavo tollens ubi vertice pontum
 turbidus obiectas Achelous Echinadas exit.
 hic ego maiorum pugnas vultusque tremendos
 magnanimum effingam regum, figamque superbis
 arma tholis, quaeque ipse meo quacsita revexi
 735 sanguine, quaeque dabis captis, Tritonia, Thebis.
 centum ibi virgineis votae Calydonides aris
 Actaeas tibi rite faces et ab arbore casta
 nectent purpureas niveo discrimine vittas,
 pervigilemque focis ignem longaeva sacerdos
 740 nutriet, arcanum numquam inspectura pudorem.
 tu bellis, tu pace feres de more frequentes
 primitias operum, non indignante Diana.
 dixerat, et dulces iter instaurabat ad Argos.

⁷⁴⁰ inspectura ωΣ: spret- P

BOOK 2

Achelous raises the sea with his yellow head and leaves the Echinades in his path. Here I shall fashion battles of ancestors and dread faces of great-hearted kings, shall nail arms to proud domes, arms that I have brought back won by my blood⁶³ and arms that you, Tritonia, shall bestow when Thebes is taken. There a hundred Calydonian maidens vowed to your virgin altars shall duly twine Actaeon torches from your chaste tree⁶⁴ and purple fillets striped with snow-white.⁶⁵ And an aged priestess shall feed an un-sleeping fire, who shall never scrutinize the seeret thing⁶⁶ of reverence. In war and in peace you shall receive many a customary first fruit, nor shall Diana take umbrage.⁶⁷ He spoke and took again his road to sweet Argos.

⁶³ In the fight just ended. The spoils would be transferred from the oak to Aetolia.

⁶⁴ The olive.

⁶⁵ I doubtfully translate as a harsh hyperbaton: *faces ab arbore casta et . . . vittas nectent*.

⁶⁶ The Palladium (image of the goddess). According to Lucan 1.597f, *only* the priestess could see it.

⁶⁷ She had been excluded from such tributes, hence the Calydonian boar.

LIBER III

At non Aoniae moderator perfidus aulae
nocte sub ancipiti, quamvis umentibus astris
longus ad auroram superet labor, otia somni
accipit; invigilant animo scelerisque parati
5 supplicium exercent curae; tum plurima versat,
pessimus in dubiis augur, timor. 'ei mihi,' clamat,
'unde morae?' (nam prona ratus facilemque tot armis
Tydea, nec numero virtutem animumque rependit)
'num regio diversa viae? num missus ab Argis
10 subsidio globus? an sceleris data fama per urbes
finitimas? paucosne, pater Gradive, manuve
legimus indecores? at enim fortissimus illic
et Chromis et Dorylas et nostris turribus aequi
Thespiadae; totos raperent mihi funditus Argos.
15 nec tamen ille meis, reor, impenetrabilis armis
aere gerens solidoque aptos adamante lacertos
venerat; heu segnes, quorum labor haeret in uno,
si conserta manus.' vario sic turbidus aestu
angitur ac sese culpat super omnia, qui non
20 orantem in mediis legatum coetibus ense
perculerit foedasque palam satiaverit iras.

¹ aulae ω: orae P

¹⁶ datos Pω (SB: satos Heinsius (cf. 7.43)

BOOK 3

But the perfidious governor of the Aonian palace takes not sleep's repose in the dubious¹ night, even though the dewy stars have long to labour before the dawn. Cares keep vigil in his mind and wreak punishment for plotted crime, and fear (in times of doubt the worst of prophets) revolves many things. 'Woe is me!' he cries. 'Why the delay?' For he had thought it an easy run: Tydeus would be no hard work for so large a force; he did not weigh courage and spirit against number. 'Did they go by different roads? Was a band sent from Argos to help him? Did rumour of the crime spread through neighbouring cities?² Were they that I chose too few, father Gradivus, or inglorious fighters? But bravest Chromis and Dorylas are there and the scions of Thespius, equal to our towers; they could raze all Argos to the ground at my behest. And yet methinks him not impenetrable to my arms; he did not come with limbs made up of bronze and solid adamant. Oh cowards, struggling helpless against one man—if combat was joined!' Thus he agonizes, in a tumult of shifting passion, blaming himself above all for that he had not cut down the envoy as he spoke in mid assembly and sated his foul fury in the

¹ Of doubtful issue.

² Who might interfere.

iam pudet incepti, iam paenitet. ac velut ille
 fluetibus Ioniis Calabrae datus arbiter alno
 (nec rudis undarum, portus sed linquere amicos
 25 purior Olenii frustra gradus impulit astri),
 cum fragor hiberni subitus Iovis, omnia mundi
 claustra tonant multusque polos inclinat Orion,
 ipse quidem malit terras pugnatque reverti,
 fert ingens a puppe Notus, tunc arte relicta
 30 ingemit et caecae sequitur iam nescius undas:
 talis Agenoreus ductor caeloque morantem
 Luciferum et seros maerentibus increpat ortus.

Ecce sub occiduas versae iam Noctis habenas
 astrorumque obitus, ubi primum maxima Tethys
 35 impulit Eoo cunctantem Hyperiona ponto,
 ima flagellatis, signum lugubre malorum,
 ponderibus trepidavit humus, motusque Cithaeron
 antiquas dedit ire nives; tunc visa levare
 culmina septemque iugo concurrere portae.
 40 et prope sunt causae: gelido remeabat Eoo
 iratus Fatis et tristis morte negata
 Haemonides; necdum ora patent, dubiusque notari
 signa dabat magnae longe manifesta ruinae
 planetuque et gemitu; lacrimas nam protinus omnes
 45 fuderat. haud aliter saltu devertitur orbis
 pastor ab agrestum nocturna strage luporum,
 cuius erile pecus silvis inopinatus abegit

⁴⁷ adegit *Ellis*

³ See Index.

⁴ Lowers the sky in tempest.

⁵ Oblivious of his surroundings; cf. Martial 3.67.1 *cessatis pueri, nihilque nostis* as explained in my Loeb edition.

BOOK 3

open. Now he is ashamed of the enterprise, now wishes it undone. Like to a skipper given charge of a Calabrian craft on Ionian waters (no stranger he to the waves, but a clear rising of the Olenian star³ deceived him into quitting the friendly harbour), when comes a sudden crash in the wintry sky and all the confines of the firmament thunder and Orion lustily bends the poles;⁴ he himself would fain be ashore and struggles to go back, but a mighty gale astern bears him on; then abandoning his skill, he groans and follows the blind waves, no longer knowing aught.⁵ Such the Agenorean leader, upbraiding Lucifer's dallying in the sky and dawn that rises too slow for men in trouble.

Lo! as Night had already turned and her car was setting and the stars were sinking, what time great Tethys first urged forth Hyperion as he tarried in the eastern sea, the ground quaked in its depth as the masses within were scourged⁶ (sad sign of trouble) and Cithaeron moved, granting departure to his ancient snows. The rooftops were seen to rise and the seven gates to meet the mountain ridge.⁷ The cause is close at hand: Haemon's son was returning in the chill of dawn, angry at the Fates and sorrowful at death denied. His face is not yet plain, but dim as he was to view, he gave from afar manifest signs of great calamity by beating his breast and groaning; as for tears, he had shed them all straightway. So leaves the pasture a herdsman bereft of his charge by wild wolves slaughtering by night; a sudden downpour and the gusty horns of the

⁶ By subterranean storms? Cf. Seneca, *Natural Questions* 6.7.6.

⁷ An extravagance. The earthquake signaled the bad news.

THEBAID

imber et hibernae ventosa cacumina lunae.
 luce patent caedes; domino perferre recentes
 50 ipse timet casus, haustaque informis harena
 questibus implet agros, stabulique silentia magni
 odit et amissos longo ciet ordine tauros.

 Illum congestae portarum ad limina matres
 ut solum videre (nefas!), nulla agmina circum
 55 magnanimosque duces, nil ausae quaerere tollunt
 clamorem, qualis bello supremus apertis
 urbibus, aut pelago iam descendente carina.
 ut primum invisi cupido data copia regis:
 'hanc tibi de tanto donat ferus agmine Tydeus
 60 infelicem animam, sive haec sententia divum,
 seu Fortuna fuit, sen, quod pudet ira fateri,
 vis invicta viri. vix credo et nuntius: omnes
 procubuere, omnes. noctis vaga lumina testor
 et socium manes et te, mala protinus ales
 65 qua redeo, non hanc lacrimis meruisse nec astu
 crudelem veniam atque inhonoraē munera lucis;
 sed mihi iussa deum placitoque ignara moveri
 Atropos atque olim non haec data ianua leti
 eripuere necem. iamque ut mihi prodiga vitae
 70 pectora et extremam nihil horrescentia mortem
 aspicias: bellum infandum ominibusque negatam
 movisti, funeste, aciem, dum pellere leges
 et consanguineo gliscis regnare superbus
 exsule; te series orbarum excisa domorum
 75 planctibus assiduis, te diro horrore volantes
 quinquaginta animae circum noctesque diesque

⁷³ gliscis ωΣ: gestis P

BOOK 3

winter moon had driven his master's cattle away into the woods and in the morning the carnage lies plain to view; he fears to tell his lord in person what has happened; ugly with dust upscraped, he fills the fields with his laments, hating the silence of the great stall, and summons in long series the lost bulls.

When the mothers massed at the threshold of the gate saw him alone (horror!) with no surrounding troop of high-hearted chieftains, they dared not ask a question but raised a cry like the last yell when warring cities are opened up or at sea when a ship goes down. As soon as he was granted the audience he craved of the hated king: 'From so large a company fierce Tydeus spares you this unhappy life, whether this was heaven's decree or Fortune or, what anger is ashamed to confess, the man's invincible might: I that report it scarce believe. All are fallen, all. Night's wandering lights I call to witness and my comrades' ghosts and the evil omen⁵ coming straight on my return: not by tears or cunning did I win this cruel favour, the gift of inglorious life. But the gods' command and Atropos who knows not how to move from her decree and destruction by this door long ago refused me,⁹ snatched death away. And now, so you may see my heart spendthrift of life, no whit afraid of final doom: murderer, 'tis an unholy war you have launched, battle by omens disapproved, as you itch to banish law and reign in pride with your kinsman in exile. A line of orphaned, extirpated homes shall haunt you with continual lament—fifty spirits flying around you with dire

⁵ The earthquake.

⁹ He was destined not to die in battle; cf. 9.254f., Lucan 7.676f. (of Pompey) *fatisque negatum / parte absente mori*. 'Atropos' = 'not turning.'

THEBAID

assilient; neque enim ipse moror.' iam moverat iras
rex ferus, et tristes ignescunt sanguine vultus.

inde ultro Phlegyas et non cunctator iniqui

80 Labdaeus (hos regni ferrum penes) ire manuque
proturbare parant. sed iam nudaverat ense
magnanimus vates, et nunc trucis ora tyranni,
nunc ferrum aspectans: 'numquam tibi sanguinis huius
ius crit aut magno feries imperdita Tydeo

85 pectora; vado equidem exsultans ereptaque fata
insequor et comites feror exspectatus ad umbras.
te superis fratrique—' et iam media orsa loquentis
absciderat plenum capulo latus; ille dolori

90 pugnat et ingentem nisu duplicatus in ictum
corrui, extremisque animae singultibus errans
alternus nunc ore venit, nunc vulnere sanguis.
excussae procerum mentes, turbataque mussant
concilia; ast illum coniunx fidiqque parentes

95 servantem vultus et torvum in morte peracta,
non longum reducem laetati, in tecta ferebant.
sed ducis infandi rabidae non hactenus irae
stare queunt; vetat igne rapi, pacemque sepulcri
impious ignaris nequiquam manibus arcet.

Tu tamen egregius fati mentisque nec umquam
100 (sic dignum est) passure situm, qui comminus ausus
vadere contemptum reges, quaque ampla veniret
libertas, sancire viam: quo carmine dignam,
quo satis ore tuis famam virtutibus addam,
augur amate deis? non te caelestia frustra
105 edocuit lauruque sua dignatus Apollo est,

* * * * *

et nemorum Dodona parens Cirrhaeaeque virgo

terror by night and day; for I myself tarry not.' The fierce king had already raised his wrath, his seowling face fires up with blood. Phlegyas and Labdacus, no loiterer he at mischief, custodians of the realm's weaponry, make ready to go unbidden and thrust him forth by force. But the great-hearted seer had already bared his sword and gazing now at the fierce tyrant's visage, now at the steel: 'Never shall you hold this blood in your power or strike a breast that great Tydeus left unscathed. I go rejoicing and press upon the doom that was snatched away and am borne to the comrade shades that await my coming. You to the gods and your brother'—and now his side plugged to the hilt cut short his speech midway. He fights the pain and doubles up thrusting against the mighty blow; he falls and with the last sobbing breaths the blood goes this way and that, coming now from the mouth, now from the wound. The lords are shocked, councillors mutter in consternation. Him his wife and loyal parents, not for long happy in his return, were bearing to his home, his countenance unmoved and grim in death accomplished. But the wild wrath of the infamous ruler cannot halt there; he forbids funeral fire and impiously but idly denies the peace of the tomb to the unwitting ghost.

But you, splendid of fate and soul nor ever to suffer oblivion (so 'tis meet), who dared go flout monarchs face to face and hallow a path for ample freedom—what song, what utterance of mine shall suffice to add due lustré to your merit, augur beloved of the gods? Not for nothing did Apollo teach you heavenly wisdom and judge you deserving of his laurel * * * and Dodona, mother of groves, and the Cirrhean maiden in Apollo's silence shall be

THEBAID

- gaudebit tacito populos suspendere Phoebō.
nunc quoque Tartareo multum divisus Averno
Elysias, i, carpe plagas, ubi manibus axis
110 inuis Ogygiis nec sontis iniqua tyranni
iussa valent; durant habitus et membra cruentis
inviolata feris, nudoque sub axe iacentem
et nemus et tristic volucrum reverentia servat.
- At nuptae exanimes puerique aegrīque parentes
115 moenibus effusi per plana, per avia, passim
quisque suas avidi ad lacrimas, miserabile, currunt,
certamen, quos densa gradu comitantur euntes
milia solandi studio; pars visere flagrant
unius acta viri et tantos in nocte labores:
120 fervet iter gemitu et plangoribus arva reclamant.
ut vero infames scopulos silvamque nefandam
perventum, ceu nulla prius lamenta nec atri
manassent imbres, sic ore miserrimus uno
exoritur fragor, aspectuque accensa cruento
125 turba furit: stat sanguineo discissus amictu
Luctus atrox caesoque invitat pectore matres.
scrutantur galeas frigentum inventaque monstrant
corpora, prociđuae super externosque suosque.
hae pressant in tabe comas, hae lumina signant
130 vulneraque alta rigant lacrimis, pars spicula dextra
nequiquam parcente trahunt, pars molliter aptant
bracchia trunca loco et cervicibus ora reponunt.

¹⁰⁷ audebit P ω (Markland)

¹³⁰ rigant P: replent ω

BOOK 3

glad¹⁰ to hold the peoples in suspense. Now too go, take your way through Elysian tracts far removed from Tartarean Avernus, where the sky is barred to Ogygian shades and the guilty tyrant's orders have no power. Your garb and limbs endure untouched by bloody beasts, and the forest and the sad reverence of the birds¹¹ keep you safe as you lie beneath the naked sky.

Swooning wives and children and sick parents pour from the city through the plain, the wilderness, everywhere, each running eager to find their own sorrow, a pitiful contest. As they go, thousands go thronging with them, fain to console. Some are afire to visit the deeds of one man, the night's mighty toils. The way is loud with lament, the fields echo with beating of breasts. But when they came to the ill-famed rocks and the accursed wood, it was as though no prior wailing, no bitter tears¹² had flowed—a clamour most pitiful rises in a single voice; inflamed by the bloody sight, the multitude maddens. There stands Mourning, terrible, his raiment torn and bleeding, and striking his bosom invites the mothers. They scrutinize the helmets of the cold ones and point to the bodies they have found, falling prostrate upon strangers and their own. Some press their hair in the gore, some seal eyes and wash deep wounds with tears, some draw out darts with hands that vainly spare, some gently fit severed arms in place and restore heads to necks.

¹⁰ Because the prophetic seizure might be the death of her. Housman cites Lucan 5.114–20; cf. 614.

¹¹ *Nemus* has been variously explained, most naturally of the forest animals, despite *feris* preceding. The birds mourn Maeon as an augur. ¹² Lit. 'black rains.'

THEBAID

At vaga per dumos vacuique in pulvere campi
 magna parens iuvenum, gemini nunc funeris, Ide
 135 squalentem sublata comam liventiaque ora
 ungue premens (nec iam infelix miserandaque, verum
 terror inest lacrimis), per et arma et corpora passim
 canitiem impexam dira tellure volutans
 quaerit inops natos omnique in corpore plangit.
 140 Thessalis haud aliter bello gavisia recenti,
 cui gentile nefas hominem revocare canendo,
 multifida attollens antiqua lumina cedro
 nocte subit campos versatque in sanguine functum
 vulgus et explorat manes, cui plurima busto
 145 imperet ad superos: animarum maesta queruntur
 concilia, et nigri pater indignatur Avernii.

Illi in secessu pariter sub rupe iacebant
 felices, quos una dies, manus abstulit una,
 pervia vulneribus media trabe pectora nexi.
 150 ut vidit lacrimisque oculi patuere profusis:
 'hosne ego complexus genetrix, haec oscula, nati,
 vestra tuor? sic vos extremo in fine ligavit
 ingenium crudele necis? quae vulnera tractem,
 quae prius ora premam? vosne illa potentia matris,
 155 vos uteri fortuna mei, qua tangere divos
 rebar et Ogygias titulis anteire parentes?
 at quanto melius dextraque in sorte iugatae
 quis steriles thalami nulloque ululata dolore
 respexit Lucina domum! mihi quippe malorum
 160 causa labor; sed nec bellorum in luce patenti
 conspicui fatis aeternaque gentibus ausi

141 revocare ω: renovare Pψ

BOOK 3

But Ide, great mother of sons, now of twin corpses, wanders through the thickets and the dust of the open plain, with hair standing up in squalor and pressing her bruised face with her nails—no more unhappy and pitiable, there is terror in her tears. Through weapons and bodies everywhere she helplessly seeks her boys and wails at every corpse, rolling her grey tresses on the direful earth. Not otherwise does a woman of Thessaly, whose nation's crime it is to bring the dead back to life by spells, visit the fields by night rejoicing in a recent battle, and holding high her splintered torch of ancient cedarwood turn the lifeless throng over in their blood and explore the dead—to which carcass¹³ should she give most orders in the upper world? The sorrowful conclave of the souls complain and dark Avernus' father is wroth.

They were lying together beneath a rock apart, fortunate in that one day, one hand took them off, bound by a shaft that linked their wound-pierced breasts. When she saw, her eyes opening wide for the stream of tears, 'Children,' she said, 'such your embrace, such your kisses do I see—your mother? Did death's cruel device so knit you in your ending? What wounds am I to stroke, which face press first? Are *you* the power a mother wields, the fortune of my womb, whereby I thought to touch the gods and surpass Ogygian parents in my glory? How much better joined, happy in their lot, are those whose chambers are barren, whose houses Lucina never regarded, summoned by labour's howl! For to me travail was cause of sorrow. But not in the open light of battle, conspicuous in your fate and daring deeds to live in the memory of nations, did you seek

¹³ I.e. spirit, recalled to its body from the underworld.

THEBAID

quaesistis miserae vulnus memorabile matri,
 sed mortem obscuram numerandaque funera passi,
 heu quantus furto cruor et sine laude iacetis!
 165 quin ego non dextras miseris complexibus ausim
 dividere et tanti consortia rumpere leti:
 ite diu fratres indiscretique supremis
 ignibus et caros urna confundite manes.'

Nec minus interea digesta strage suorum
 170 hic Cthonium coniunx, hic mater Penthea clamat
 Astyoche, puerique rudes, tua, Phaedime, proles,
 amissum didicere patrem, Marpessaque pactum
 Phyllea, sanguineumque lavant Acamanta sorores.
 tunc ferro retegunt silvas collisque propinqui
 175 annosum truncant apicem, qui conscius actis
 noctis et inspexit gemitus; ibi grandior aevo
 ante rogos, dum quisque suo nequit igne revelli,
 concilium infaustum dictis mulcebat Aletes:

'Saepe quidem infelix varioque exercita ludo
 180 Fatorum gens nostra fuit, Sidonius ex quo
 hospes in Aonios iecit sata ferrea sulcos,
 unde novi fetus et formidata colonis
 arva suis. sed nec veteris cum regia Cadmi
 fulmineum in cinerem monitis Iunonis iniquae
 185 consedit, neque funerea cum lande potitus
 infelix Athamas trepido de monte veniret,
 semianimem heu laeto referens clamore Learchum,
 hic gemitus Thebis, nec tempore clarius illo
 Phoenissae sonuere domus, cum lassa furorem
 190 vicit et ad comitum lacrimas expavit Agave.
 una dies similis fato specieque malorum

163 numeranda ω: -rosa P

173 Phylea coni. Klotz

BOOK 3

a wound for a grieving mother to tell of; you suffered a fameless end, a death for numbering,¹⁴ lying, alas, in so much blood stealthily, with none to praise. Nay, I dare not separate your hands locked in pitiful embrace and break the union of such a passing. Go, long be brothers, unsevered in the final pyre, and mingle your fond ashes in the urn.'

No less meanwhile, as they sort out their loved ones' carnage, does his wife lament Cthonius, and Pentheus his mother Astyoche. Your offspring, Phaedimus, boys unfledged, learned of their father's loss. Marpessa washes Phylleus, her betrothed, his sisters bleeding Acamas. Then they strip the woods with steel and mutilate the ancient summit of the neighbouring hill, that knew the night's work and watched the groaning. There before the pyres, as each one refuses to be torn from a particular fire, old Aletes soothed the ill-starred assembly with his words:

'Often to be sure has our race fared ill, tried by diverse sport of the Fates, ever since the stranger from Sidon flung his iron seed into Aonian furrows, whence came strange births and fields feared of their farmers. But no such lamentation was at Thebes when the palace of ancient Cadmus sank into thunderbolt ash at the bidding of cruel Juno, nor yet when hapless Athamas achieved funereal glory as he came down from the quivering mountain bearing—with joyous shout, alas!—a half-living Learchus. Neither did Phocnician homes echo more loudly when weary Agave overcame her madness and took fright at her companions' tears. *One* day was like to this in doom and equal in aspect

¹⁴ Just one of many, a statistic as it were.

aequa fuit, qua magniloquos luit impia flatus
 Tantalus, innumeris cum circumfusa ruinis
 corpora tot raperet terra, tot quaereret ignes.
 195 talis erat vulgi status, et sic urbe relicta
 primaevique senesque et longo examine matres
 invidiam planxere deis miseroque tumultu
 bina per ingentes stipabant funera portas.
 meque ipsum memini (necdum apta laboribus aetas)
 200 flesse tamen gemituque meos aequasse parentes.
 illa tamen superi. nec quod tibi, Delia, castos
 prolapsum fontes specula temerare profana
 heu dominum insani nihil agnovere Molossi,
 deflerim magis, aut verso quod sanguine fluxit
 205 in subitos regina lacus: sic dura Sororum
 pensa dabant visumque Iovi. nunc regis iniqui
 ob noxam immeritos patriae tot culmina cives
 exuimus, nec adhuc calcati foederis Argos
 fama subit, et iam bellorum extrema dolemus.
 210 quantus equis quantusque viris in pulvere crasso
 sudor! io quanti crudele rubebitis amnes!
 viderit haec bello viridis manus: ast ego doner
 dum licet igne meo terraque insternar avita!
 haec senior, multumque nefas Eteoclis acervat
 215 crudelem infandumque vocans poenasque daturum.
 unde ea libertas? iuxta illi finis et actas
 tota retro, seraeque decus velit addere morti.
 Haec sator astrorum iamdudum e vertice mundi

199 laboribus P: dolor- ω 203 nihil P: non ω 15 *Planxere* = *fecere plangendo*.

BOOK 3

of calamity, the day Tantalus' daughter expiated her prideful vaunts and encompassed by ruin past count snatched all those bodies from the earth, sought all those fires. Such was the people's state, so did young and old and mothers in lengthy swarm leave the city and wail reproach¹⁵ to the gods in piteous tumult as they thronged twin burials at the great gates.¹⁶ I remember how I myself, though my years were not yet apt for toils, wept none the less and matched my parents with my groans. But those things were the doing of the High Ones. Nor would I more lament, Delia, that mad Molossian hounds knew not their master when he went so far as to profane your chaste waters with his sacrilegious spying or that a queen flowed into a sudden lake, her blood transformed;¹⁷ the harsh spinning of the Sisters so gave, so willed it Jove. Now by the guilt of a wicked king we have shed so many innocent countrymen, crowns of the fatherland. The report of the trampled pact has not yet reached Argos and already we grieve for war's worst. What sweat in muddy dust for horses and for men! Ah, how high shall rivers be cruelly reddened! That is the business of youth green to war. As for me, let me be given my fire while I may and covered with my ancestral earth! Thus the elder, piling Eteocles' villainy high, calling him cruel and abominable and sure to pay. Whence such freedom? His end was near, his life all behind him; he would fain bring honour to death delayed.

The sire of the stars had watched the while from the

¹⁶ The bodies of the Niobids were carried out of the city for burial, two from each of the seven gates (so here, but in other accounts the number of victims varies).

¹⁷ References to Actaeon and Dirce.

THEBAID

prospectans primoque imbutas sanguine gentes
 220 Gradivum acciri propere iubet. ille furentes
 Bistonas et Geticas populatus caedibus urbes
 turbidus aetherias currus urguebat ad arces,
 fulmine cristatum galeae iubar armaque in auro
 tristia, terrificis monstrorum animata figuris,
 225 incutiens: tonat axe polus clipeique cruenta
 lux rubet, et solem longe ferit aemulus orbis.
 hunc ubi Sarmaticos etiamnum efflare labores
 Iuppiter et tota perfusum pectora belli
 tempestate videt: 'talis mihi, nate, per Argos,
 230 talis abi, sic ense madens, hac nubilis ira.
 exturbent resides frenos et cuncta perosi
 te cupiant, tibi praecipites animasque manusque
 devoveant; rape cunctantes et foedera turba,
 cui dedimus; tibi fas ipsos incendere bello
 235 caelicolas pacemque meam. iam semina pugnae
 ipse dedi: remeat portans immania Tydeus
 ausa, ducis scelus et, turpis primordia belli,
 insidias fraudesque, suis quas ultus in armis.
 adde fidem. vos, o superi, meus ordine sanguis,
 240 ne pugnare odiis, neu me temptare precando
 certetis; sic Fata mihi nigraeque Sororum
 iuraverunt colus: manet haec ab origine mundi
 fixa dies bello, populi que in proelia nati.
 quod ni me veterum poenas sancire malorum
 245 gentibus et diros sinitis punire nepotes,
 arcem hanc aeternam mentisque sacraria nostrae
 testor et Elysios, etiam mihi numina, fontes:

234 cui P: quae ω

BOOK 3

world's summit, watched the peoples stained in first bloodshed; and he bids Gradivus be summoned in haste. He had ravaged the raging Bistones and the Getic towns with carnage. Wildly he was urging his chariot to the heavenly citadel, brandishing the splendour of his bolt-crested helm and shield sombre in gold, alive with monsters' fearsome forms. The sky thunders with his wheels and his buckler's light blushes blood red, its orb striking the sun in distant challenge. When Jupiter sees him still breathing out Sarmatian toils, his breast steeped in all the tempest of war: 'My son, in such sort and no other, I pray you, get you forth through Argos. Let your sword drip so, your wrath so lour. Let them drive out sluggish restraints and, hating all things, crave you, dedicate lives and hands to you headlong. Sweep them on if they falter. Confound treaties. To you we have given it, to you 'tis lawful to set the very hosts of heaven aflame with war, and my peace withal. I myself have already sown the seeds of battle. Tydeus returns, bearing tidings of a monstrous attempt, the ruler's crime and the beginnings of a dishonourable war, ambush and treachery avenged with his own weapons. Make him believed. As for you, High Ones, my blood descendants, vie not in hate and strife nor attempt me with rival entreaty. Thus the Fates, the dark distaffs of the Sisters, have sworn to me. This day stands fixed for war from the world's origin, these peoples were born to battle. But if you do not permit me to exact retribution from the nations for old misdeeds and to punish evil posterity, I swear by this eternal citadel, the shrine of my mind, and the Elysian waters that I too

ipse manu Thebas correptaque moenia fundo
 excutiam versasque solo super Inachia tecta
 250 effundam turres aut stagna in caerulea verram
 imbre supericcto, licet ipsa in turbine rerum
 Iuno suos colles templumque amplexa laboret.⁷

Dixit, et attoniti iussis; mortalia credas
 pectora, sic cuncti vocemque animosque tenebant:
 255 non secus ac longa ventorum pace solutum
 aequior et inbelli recubant ubi litora somno,
 silvarumque comas et abacto flamine nubes
 mulcet iners aestas; tunc stagna lacusque sonori
 detumuere, tacent exusti solibus amnes.

260 Gaudet ovans iussis et adhuc temone calenti
 fervidus in laevum torsit Gradivus habenas.
 iamque iter extremum caelique abrupta tenebat,
 cum Venus ante ipsos nulla formidine gressum
 265 suppliciter posuere iubas, tunc pectora summo
 acclinata iugo vultumque obliqua madentem
 incipit (interea dominae vestigia iuxta
 spumantem proni mandunt adamantia iugales):
 'bella etiam in Thebas, socer o pulcherrime, bella
 270 ipse paras ferroque tuos abolere nepotes?
 nec genus Harmoniae nec te conubia caelo
 festa nec hac quicquam lacrimae, furibunde, morantur?

269 pulcherrime ω: -ma P

⁷ The Styx ('Elysian' = 'in the underworld'), by which the gods swore their oaths, balances the citadel (of heaven), sanctuary of Jupiter's mind and will.

¹⁹ Lit. 'fathers-in-law.' Mars' and (Venus') daughter had mar-

BOOK 3

reverence:¹⁸ with my own hands I shall seize Thebes and her walls, raze her from her foundations, tear up her towers and discharge them over Inachian dwellings or pour rain down upon them and sweep them into the blue deep—though Juno herself suffer in the universal turmoil, embracing her hills and temple.’

He spoke and they were amazed at his ordinance. You might have thought them mortal hearts, so did they all hold voice and mind in check. ’Twas as when the sea lies becalmed, winds keep a long peace, and shores stretch in strifeless slumber, while idle summer soothes forest leaves and clouds, breezes dismissed; the meres and loud lakes have subsided, the sun-scorched rivers make no sound.

Gradivus triumphed in his orders and still aglow in his hot chariot turned the reins leftward. Now he was at journey’s end, heaven’s downward plunge, when Venus takes fearless stand full in the horses’ front. They fell back, lowering their stiff manes little by little in supplication. Then, leaning her bosom against the top of the yoke, with tearful face turned to one side, she begins—meanwhile the horses bend their heads and champ the foaming adamant at their mistress’ feet: ‘War against Thebes, O paragon of parents,¹⁹ do you yourself plan war and destruction of your own grandchildren by the sword? Harmonia’s race, marriage festival in heaven, and these tears—do they not for a

ried Cadmus, who as sower of the dragon’s teeth is regarded as progenitor of the Thebans. In strictness ‘Harmonia’s race’ (271) should not include the Thebans as a whole, nor were they Mars’ descendants (*nepotes*), unless because by some accounts the dragon was his child. But again this may be merely lax terminology. Cf. 10.893 *Harmoniae populos*.

THEBAID

criminis haec merces? hoc fama pudorque relictus,
 hoc mihi Lemniacae de te meruere catenae?
 275 perge libens; at non eadem Vuleania nobis
 obsequia, et laesi servit tamen ira mariti.
 illum ego perpetuis mihi desudare eaminis
 si iubeam vigilesque operi transmittere noctes,
 gaudeat ornatusque novos ipsique laboret
 280 arma tibi; tu—sed seopulos et aëna precando
 flectere corda paro; solum hoc tamen anxia, solum
 obtestor, quid me Tyrio sociare marito
 progeniem caram infaustisque dabas hymenaeis,
 dum fore praeclaros armis et vivida rebus
 285 pectora vipereo Tyrios de sanguine iactas
 demissumque Iovis serie genus? a! mea quanto
 Sithonia malle nupsisset virgo sub Arcto
 trans Borean Thracasque tuos! indigna parumne
 pertulimus, divae Veneris quod filia longum
 290 reptat et Illyricas deiecat virus in herbas?
 nunc gentem immeritam—' lacrimas non pertulit ultra
 Bellipotens; hastam laeva transumit et alto
 (hand mora) desiliit curru elipeoque receptam
 laedit in amplexu dietisque ita mulcet amicis:
 295 'O mihi bellorum requies et saera voluptas
 unaque pax animo; soli cui tanta potestas
 divorumque hominumque, meis occurrere telis
 impune et media quamvis in caede frementes
 hos assistere equos, hunc ense avellere dextrae:
 300 nec mihi Sidonii genialia foedera Cadmi
 uec tua cara fides (ne falsa incessere gande!)
 exiderunt: prius in patris deus infera mergar

BOOK 3

moment hold you, madman? Is this the reward of guilt? Is this what my fame and honour abandoned and Lemnos' chains have deserved of you? Go your way rejoicing. Ah, but not so does Vulcan obey me. My wronged husband's wrath serves me still. Were I to tell him to sweat for me with ceaseless furnace, pass sleepless nights at work, he would be glad and toil at new gear, even weapons for you. You—but I make to move rocks and a heart of bronze with my pleading. Yet this only in anguish I adjure you, only this: why did you have me join my dear child to a Tyrian husband in ill-starred nuptials, boasting that Tyrians of viper blood, race descended of Jupiter's line,²⁰ shall be renowned in arms, hearts lively for action? Oh, how I wish my girl had rather married beneath the Sithonian Bear, beyond Boreas and your Thracians! Was it not shame enough for me to bear that goddess Venus' daughter crawls at length and spits venom on Illyrian grass? Now the innocent folk—. The Lord of War could bear her tears no longer. Changing his spear to his left hand, he leapt incontinent from his lofty chariot and took her to his shield, hurting her in his embrace. With fond words thus he soothes her:

'My respite from the wars, my sacred pleasure, my soul's only peace! Only you of gods and men have power so great, to meet my weapons unscathed, to stand at these horses' heads though they neigh in the midst of slaughter, to pluck this sword from my hand. I have not forgotten the nuptial bond with Sidonian Cadmus, nor your dear loyalty—take not pleasure in false reproach. Sooner let me, god that I am, be plunged into my uncle's nether pools and

²⁰ Through Cadmus.

stagna et pallentes agar exarmatus ad umbras.
 sed inme Fatorum monitus mentemque supremi
 305 iussus obire patris (neque enim Vulcania tali
 imperio manus apta legi), quo pectore contra
 ire Iovem dictasque parem contemnere leges,
 cui modo (pro vires!) terras caelumque fretumque
 310 delituisse deos? sed ne mihi corde supremos
 concipe, cara, metus: quando haec mutare potestas
 nulla datur, cum iam Tyriis sub moenibus ambae
 bellabunt gentes, adero et socia arma iuvabo.
 tunc me sanguineo late defervere campo
 315 res super Argolicas haud sic deiecta videbis;
 hoc mihi ins, nec Fata vetant.'

Sic orsus aperto

flagrantes immisit equos. non ocius alti
 in terras cadit ira Iovis, si quando nivalem
 Othryn et Aetoae gelidum caput institit Ossae
 320 arnavitque in nube mamma: volat ignea moles
 saeva dei mandata ferens, caelumque trisulca
 territat omne coura iamdudum aut ditibus agris
 signa dare aut ponto miseros involvere nautas.

Iamque remensus iter fesso Danaëia Tydens
 325 arva gradu viridisque legit devexa Prosymnae
 terribilis visu: stant fulti pulvere crines,
 squalidus ex umeris cadit alta in vulnera sudor,
 insonnesque oculos rubor excitat, oraque retro
 sorbet anhela sitis; mens altum spirat honorem
 330 conscia factorum. sic nota in pascua taurus
 bellator redit, adverso cni colla snoque

³²⁹ sorbet ω : solvit P

BOOK 3

driven disarmed to the pallid shades. But now, enjoined to carry out the Fates' admonishments and the will of the Father supreme (for Vulcan's hand is no fit choice for such a mission), how minded should I make to go against Jove and flout his uttered law? Just now I saw earth and sky and sea tremble before him as he spoke (what might!), saw great gods skulk in procession. But, dear one, I pray you, form no final fears in your heart. Since no power is given to change these things, when both nations shall do battle beneath the Tyrian walls, I shall be there and aid our allied arms. All over that bloody field you shall see me then boil down²¹ upon the fortunes of Argos, not deject as you are now. That is my right and the Fates forbid it not.' ✓

So saying he drove his flaming horses into the open. Not more swiftly does the wrath of lofty Jupiter fall to earth, should he take stand on snowy Othrys or the chill peak of Arctic Ossa and arm his hand in the clond. Flies the fiery mass, bearing the god's cruel commission, affrighting the while all heaven with triple tail, to give a sign to wealthy fields or plunge hapless mariners into the deep.²²

And now Tydeus has retraced his journey and with weary steps passes through the Danaan fields and the slopes of verdant Prosynna, fearsome he to behold. His hair stands up propped by dust, soiled sweat pours from his shoulders into his deep wounds, redness inflames his sleepless eyes, panting thirst sucks back his breath, but his spirit, conscious of his deeds, breathes high honour. So does the fighting bull return to his familiar pasture; his neck and shoulders swim with blood, his enemy's and

²¹ The metaphor seems to be of a pot boiling over.

²² The infinitives are best taken as final after *volat*.

THEBAID

sanguine proscissisque natant palearibus armi;
 tunc quoque lassa tumet virtus multumque superbit
 aequore despecto; vacua iacet hostis harena
 335 turpe gemens crudosque vetat sentire dolores.
 talis erat; medias etiam non destitit urbes,
 quidquid et Asopon veteresque interiacet Argos,
 inflammare odiis, multumque et ubique retexens:
 legatum sese Graia de gente petendis
 340 isse super regnis profugi Polynicis, at inde
 vim, noctem, scelus, arma, dolos; ea foedera passum
 regis Echionii, fratri sua iura negari.
 prona fides populis; deus omnia credere suadet
 Armipotens, geminatque acceptos Fama pavores.
 345 Utque introgressus portas (et forte verendus
 concilio pater ipse duces cogebat Adrastus),
 improvisus adest, iam illinc a postibus aulae
 vociferans: 'arma, arma, viri, tuque optime Lerna
 ductor, magnanimum si quis tibi sanguis avorum,
 350 arma para! nusquam pietas, non gentibus aequum
 fas aut cura Iovis; melius legatus adissem
 Sauromatas rabidos servatoremque cruentum
 Bebrycii nemoris. nec iussa incuso pigetve
 officii: iuvat isse, iuvat, Thebasque nocentes
 355 explorasse manu. bello me, credite, bello,
 ceu turrem validam aut artam compagibus urbem,
 delecti insidiis instructique omnibus armis
 nocte doloque viri nudum ignarumque locorum
 nequiquam clausere; iacent in sanguine mixti
 360 ante urbem vacuam. nunc, o nunc tempus in hostes,
 dum trepidi exsanguisque metu, dum funera portant,

³³⁴ pectore P ω (SB¹)

³³⁵ dolores ω : labo- P

BOOK 3

his own, his dewlaps are torn and his shoulders swim; even then his weary valour swells and he walks proudly, despising the ground; his foe lies on the open sand, shamefully groaning, nor lets him feel his raw pain. Such was Tydeus. Nor did he cease to inflame the cities on his way, whatever lies between Asopos and ancient Argos, retelling the tale everywhere over and over; how he had gone as envoy from a people of Greece to seek exiled Polynices' kingdom, but then came violence, night, crime, weapons, treachery. Such the Echionian monarch's pledge as he had suffered it. The brother was denied his rights. The people are quick to believe. The god, the Lord of Arms, persuades them to credit everything. Rumour doubles admitted fears.

Entering the gates, he is suddenly there—by chance venerable father Adrastus was convoking the leaders in council—shouting even from the palace door: 'Arms, arms, warriors! And you, most worthy lord of Lerna, if blood of high-hearted ancestors be in your veins, arms prepare! Gone is love of kin, the peoples know not justice or moral law or heed of Jupiter. I had better have gone envoy to wild Sarmatians or the bloody keeper of the Bebrycian forest. Not that I blame the orders or regret my office. I am glad I went, yes glad, and probed guilty Thebes with my own hand. With war, believe it, war, did men invest me, like a strong tower or a close-framed city. They were picked for ambush and equipped with every kind of weapon, they beset me with night and guile, defenceless and ignorant of the country. It was in vain. They lie mingled in their blood before an empty town. Now, oh now is the time to attack while the enemy are in panic, pale

345 verendus P: -dos ω

352 avidos Pω (*Wakefield*)

nunc, socer, haec dum non manus excidit; ipse ego fessus
 quinquaginta illis heroum immanibus umbris
 vulneraque ista ferens putri insiccata cruore
 protinus ire peto!

- 365 Trepidi de sedibus astant
 Inachidae, cunctisque prior Cadmeius heros
 accurrit vultum deiectus et 'o ego divis
 invisus vitaeque nocens haec vulnera cerno
 integer? hosne mihi reditus, germane, parabas?
 370 in me haec tela dabas? pro vitae foeda cupido!
 infelix, facinus fratri tam grande negavi.
 et nunc vestra quidem maneant in pace quieta
 moenia, nec vobis tanti sim causa tumultus
 hospes adhuc. scio (nec me adeo res dextra levavit)
 375 quam durum natis, thalamo quam triste revelli,
 quam patria; non me ullius domus anxia culpet
 respectentve truces obliquo lumine matres.
 ibo libens certusque mori, licet optima coniunx
 auditusque iterum revocet socer; hunc ego Thebis,
 380 hunc, germane, tibi iugulum et tibi, maxime Tydeu,
 debeo.'

Sic variis praetemptat pectora dictis
 obliquatque preces, commotae questibus irac
 et mixtus lacrimis caluit dolor. omnibus ultro
 non iuvenum modo, sed gelidis et inertibus aevo

362 *ita* P: dum capulo nondum manus ω

370 dabas ω : mei P

372 quieta P: serena ω

381 *pert-* P ω (ζ)

²³ How would he know? Statius seems to forget that Polynices had no wife or child in Thebes.

with fright, while they are carrying in their dead; now, my father, while this hand is not forgotten. I myself, weary from those huge shades of fifty heroes and bearing these wounds with the blood dried and foul, I ask to go and go now.”

The sons of Inachus start from their seats towards him in agitation and before them all the Cadmean hero runs up with countenance downcast: ‘Oh hated of the gods and guilty in my life that I am, do I see these wounds myself unseathed? Was this the return you purposed for me, my brother? Were you aiming these weapons at me? Oh hideous lust of living! Wretch that I am, I denied my brother so great a crime. And now, friends, let your walls at least rest in peace and quiet, nor let me be the cause for you of such commotion. I am still but a guest. I know (nor has good fortune raised me up so far) how hard it is and sad to be torn from children and wife and fatherland.²³ Let no man’s home blame me for its distress, no angry mothers eye me askance. I shall go willingly to certain death, though my best of wives and her father, whom I heard before,²⁴ call me back a second time. I owe this throat to Thebes, to you, brother, and to you, great Tydeus!’

Thus with various speech he tests their hearts and slants entreaty. His plaints stir anger and indignation grows warm, mingled with tears. One thought comes unbidden to all hearts, not young men’s only but to the chill

²⁴ When he stopped the fight at the palace door; see SB1. The scholiast’s explanation that Adrastus had previously forbidden Polynices to go to Thebes assumes something not in the poem (2.364–71).

THEBAID

385 pectoribus mens una subit, viduare penates,
 finitimas adhibere manus, iamque ire. sed altus
 consiliis pater imperique haud flectere molem
 inscius: 'ista quidem superis curaeque medenda
 linquite, quaeso, meae: nec te germanus inulto
 390 scepra geret, neque nos avidi promittere bellum.
 at nunc egregium tantoque in sanguine oventem
 excipite Oeniden, animosaque pectora laxet
 sera quies: nobis dolor haud rationis egebit.'

Turbati extemplo comites et pallida coniunx
 395 Tydea circum omnes fessum bellique viaeque
 stipantur. laetus mediis in sedibus aulae
 constitit, ingentique exceptus terga columna,
 vulnera dum lymphis Epidaurius eluit Idmon
 (nunc velox ferro, nunc ille tepentibus herbis
 400 mitior), ipse alta seductus mente renarrat
 principia irarum, quaeque orsus uterque vicissim,
 quis locus insidiis, tacito quae tempora bello,
 qui contra quantique duces, ubi maximus illi
 sudor, et indicio servatum Maeona tristi
 405 exponit. cui fida manus proceresque socerque
 astupet oranti, Tyriusque incenditur exsul.

Solverat Hesperii devexo margine ponti
 flagrantcs Sol pronus equos rutilamque lavabat
 Oceani sub fonte comam; cui turba profundi
 410 Nereos et rapidis accurrunt passibus Horae,
 frenaque et auratae textum sublimis coronae
 deripiunt, laxant calidis umentia loris
 pectora; pars meritos vertunt ad molle iugales
 gramen et erecto currum temone supinant.

³⁹⁹ tepentibus P: poten- ω

BOOK 3

and sluggish with age: to leave their homes bereft, summon neighbouring force, and on the instant march. But father Adrastus, deep of counsel and no novice in manipulating the weight of command: 'Leave all this, I pray you, to the High Ones and my care for remedy. Neither shall your brother wield the sceptre and you fail of satisfaction nor yet are we eager to let war loose. But now all welcome Oeneus' noble son triumphing in so great a bloodshed. Let rest at last relax his courageous spirit. For my part indignation shall not go short of reason.'

Straightway his troubled comrades and pale bride all throng around Tydeus weary with battle and travel. Happily he took stand in the midst of the hall, leaning his back against a huge pillar while Epidaurian Idmon bathes his wounds—Idmon, now swift with the knife, now gentle with warm herbs. Himself, withdrawn into his mind's depths he recounts once more the beginnings of anger, what each said in his turn, the place chosen for ambush, the time for silent war, the opposing leaders, who and how great, where his work was heaviest; and he tells how Maeon was spared to take sad news. The faithful band, the nobles, and his wife's father are amazed at his speech and the Tyrian exile kindles.

The sinking Sun had loosed his fiery steeds at the sloping edge of the western sea and was bathing his ruddy hair in Ocean's fount. To him run deep Nereus' throng and the swift-stepping Hours. They strip away the reins and the lofty texture of his golden crown and relieve his sweating breast from the hot straps. Some turn the faithful horses to soft pasture and set the chariot on its back, pole in the air.

THEBAID

- 415 Nox subiit curasque hominum motusque ferarum
 composuit nigroque polos involvit amictu,
 illa quidem cunctis, sed non tibi mitis, Adraste,
 Labdacioque duci: nam Tydea largus habebat
 perfusum magna virtutis imagine somnus.
- 420 Et iam noctivagas inter deus armifer umbras
 desuper Arcadiae fines Nemeaeaque rura
 Taenariumque cacumen Apollineasque Therapnas
 armorum tonitru ferit et trepidantia corda
 implet amore sui. comunt Furor Iraque cristas,
- 425 frena ministrat equis Pavor armiger. at vigil omni
 Fama sono vanos rerum succincta tumultus
 antevolat currum flatuque impulsa gementum
 alipedum trepidas denso cum murmure plumas
 excutit: urguet enim stimulis auriga cruentis
- 430 facta, infecta loqui, curruque infestus ab alto
 terga comasque deae Scythica pater increpat hasta.
 qualis ubi Aeolio dimissos carcere Ventos
 dux prae se Neptunus agit magnoque volentes
 incitat Aegaeo; tristis comitatus eunti
- 435 circum lora fremunt Nimbique Hiemcsque profundae
 Nubilaque et vulso terrarum sordida fundo
 Tempestas: dubiae motis radicibus obstant
 Cyclades, ipsa tua Mycono Gyaroque revelli,
 Dele, times magnique fidem testaris alumni.
- 440 Septina iam nitidum terris Aurora deisque
 purpureo vehit ore diem, Perseius heros
 cum primum arcana senior sese extulit aula,

⁴³³ volentes P: volan- ω

⁴³⁴ incitat P: inicit ω

BOOK 3

Night came on, laying to rest the cares of men and the movements of beasts, and wrapped the heavens in her cloak of darkness, gentle to all beside but not to you, Adrastus, or to the Labdacian chief. As for Tydeus, bounteous sleep held him steeped in valour's great semblance.²⁵

And now among night-wandering shades the weapon-bearing god strikes from aloft with thunder of arms Arcadia's boundaries and Nemea's fields and the peak of Tacnarus and Apollo's Therapne, and fills fluttering hearts with desire for himself. Madness and Wrath arrange his plume, Panic, his squire,²⁶ gives reins to his horses. But Rumour, alert to every sound and girt with false news of tumult, flies before his car; sped forward by the breath of the groaning coursers, she shakes out her ruffled feathers with a deep whirring; for the driver urges her with bloody goads to speak both true and false, and the father²⁷ from his lofty chariot angrily chides the back and hair of the goddess with his Scythian lance. Even as Neptune their leader drives the Winds before him discharged from their Aeolian prison and urges them nothing loath over the great Aegean; a gloomy company roars about his reins as he goes, Squalls and deep Storms and Clouds and murky Hurricane that tears earth's foundation; tottering on their shaken roots the Cyclades oppose, Delos herself fears to be torn from her Myconos and Gyaros and calls on her great foster son for succour.

Now the blushing countenance of a seventh dawn brings shining day to earth and gods, when the old Persean hero first comes forth from his private apartments. Dis-

²⁵ Dreaming of his brave deeds.

²⁶ Bellona has this function in 7.73.

²⁷ Mars.

THEBAID

- multa super bello generisque tumentibus amens
 incertusque animi, daret armis iura novosque
 445 gentibus incuteret stimulos, an frena teneret
 irarum et motos capulis astringeret enses.
 hinc pacis tranquilla movent, atque inde pudori
 foeda quies, flectique nova dulcedine pugnae
 difficiles populi; dubio sententia tandem
 450 sera placet, vatum mentes ac provida veri
 sacra movere deum. sollers, tibi cura futuri,
 Amphiaræ, datur, iuxtaque Amythaone cretus
 iam senior (sed mente viret Phoëboque) Melampus
 associat passus: dubium cui pronus Apollo
 455 oraque Cirrhaea satiarit largius unda.
 principio fibris pecudumque in sanguine divos
 explorant; iam tum pavidis maculosa bidentum
 corda negant diraque nefas minitanti vena.
 ire tamen vacuoque sedet petere omina caelo.
 460 Mons erat audaci seductus in aethera dorso
 (nomine Lernaëi memorant Aphasanta coloni)
 gentibus Argolicis olim sacer; inde ferebant
 nubila suspensio celerem temerasse volatu
 Persea, cum raptos pueri perterrita mater
 465 prospexit de rupe gradus ac paene secuta est.
 hoc gemini vates sanctam canentis olivæ
 fronde comam et niveis ornati tempora vittis
 evadunt pariter, madidos ubi lucidus agros
 ortus et argentes laxavit sole pruinas.
 470 ac prior Oeclides solitum prece numen amicat:

⁴⁵⁴ pronus P: dexter ω

traught he was, much perplexed in mind concerning war and his high-flying sons-in-law, whether to let arms have their way and put new spurs to the peoples or hold anger's reins and fasten the moved swords in their scabbards. The tranquil boons of peace sway him on the one hand, on the other the shame of inglorious quiet and peoples hard to turn from newfound delight in battle. As he wavers, at length a late resolve commends itself, to move the minds of prophets and the truth-prescient rites of deities. To you, wise Amphiaraus, is given the care of the future, and beside you Melampus son of Amythaon joins his steps, now riper in years but young in mind and Phoebus' gift. 'Tis doubtful to which of them Apollo leans and whose mouth he has more lavishly sated with water of Cirrha. To start, they explore the gods with entrails and in the blood of cattle; even then they take alarm as the spotted hearts of sheep threatening evil with ill-boding vein say them nay. None the less they resolve to go and seek omens in the open sky.

A mountain there was whose bold ridge drew away into the ether (the husbandinen of Lerna call it by the name of Aphasas), long time sacred to the Argive folk. They used to say that from it swift Perseus violated the clouds as he hovered in flight,²⁸ while his terrified mother saw from the crag her boy's rapt steps and almost followed. Hither the two seers, their holy hair adorned with leafage of grey olive and their temples with snowy fillets, together ascend when bright sunrise has melted the frigid frost on the wet fields. And first the son of Oecleus bespeaks with prayer

²⁸ Perseus was given winged sandals for his fight with Medusa. The name Aphasas is connected with ἀφήμι, 'let go,' with noun ἄφεις.

THEBAID

'Iuppiter omnipotens (nam te pernicipibus alis
 addere consilium volucresque implere futuri
 ominaque et causas caelo deferre latentes
 accipimus), non Cirrha deum promiserit antro
 475 certius, aut frondes lucis quas fama Molossis
 Chaonias sonuisse tibi, licet aridus Hammon
 invideat Lyciaeque parent contendere sortes
 Niliacumque pecus patrioque aequalis honori
 Branchus et undosae quem rusticus accola Pisae
 480 Pana Lycaonia nocturnum exaudit in umbra:
 ditior ille animi, cui tu, Dictae, secundas
 impuleris manifestus aves. mirum unde, sed olim
 hic honor alitibus, superae seu conditor aulae
 sic dedit effusum chaos in nova semina texens,
 485 seu quia mutatae nostraque ab origine versis
 corporibus subiere notos, sed purior axis
 amotumque nefas et rarum insistere terris
 vera docent: tibi, summe sator terraeque deumque,
 scire licet: nos Argolicae primordia pugnae
 490 venturumque sinas caelo praenosse laborem.
 si datur et duris sedet haec sententia Parcis
 solvere Echionias Lernaeva cuspide portas,
 signa feras laevusque tones; tunc omnis in astris
 consonet arcana volucris bona murmura lingua.
 495 si prohibes, hic necte moras dextrisque profundum
 alitibus praetexe diem.' sic fatus et alto
 membra locat scopulo; tunc plura ignotaque iungit
 numina et immensi fruitur caligine mundi.

479 qui $P\omega\Sigma$ (*O. Mueller*)

482 olim ω : $ol\bar{\iota}s$ P: $olimst$ *O. Mueller*

486 seu $P\omega$ (*SB²*)

BOOK 3

the favour of the wonted deity: 'Almighty Jupiter (for we are taught that you give wisdom to fleet wings, filling birds with the future, and bring down from heaven omens and hidden causes), not Cirrha could send forth the god from her cavern more surely or those Chaonian leaves that are famed to make sounds at your behest in Molossian groves: though parched Hammon envy and the Lycian oracle²⁹ make to compete and the beast of the Nile³⁰ and Branchus, who matches his father's repute, and Pan,³¹ whom the rustic dweller in wave-swept Pisa hears by night in Lycaonian shade, richer in spirit is he to whom you, Dictæan, manifest yourself by starting favourable birds. Marvellous the cause, but from long ago birds have this honour: whether the founder of the heavenly palace so disposed when he wove sprawling chaos into new seeds, or whether they went upon the winds changed with bodies transformed from what once were ours, but the purer sky with evil removed and rare landing upon earth teaches them truth—for you, supreme begetter of earth and gods, 'tis lawful to know. Permit us to learn beforehand by the sky the beginnings of the Argive strife and the toil to come. If 'tis granted and the harsh Parcae so resolve that we loosen the Echionian gates with Lerna's spear, bring a sign, thunder on the left; then let every flying creature among the stars utter good sounds in unison with secret tongue. If you forbid, here weave delay and with birds on the right screen the abyss of day.' So he spoke, and disposed his limbs on a high rock. Then he adds deities, more and unknown, and enjoys the darkness of the vast universe.

²⁹ Of Apollo, at Patara.

³⁰ Apis, the bull god, at Memphis.

³¹ With an oracle at Lycosura in Arcadia.

THEBAID

Postquam rite diu partiti sidera cunctas
 500 perlegere animis oculisque sequacibus auras,
 tunc Amythaonius longo post tempore vates:
 'nonne sub excelso spirantis limite caeli,
 Amphiaræ, vides, cursus ut nulla serenos
 ales agat liquidoque polum complexa meatu
 505 pendeat aut fugiens placabile clanxerit omen?
 non comes obscurus tripodum, non fulminis ardens
 vector adest, flavaeque sonans avis unca Minervae
 non venit auguriis melior; quin vultur et altis
 desuper accipitres exsultavcre rapinis.
 510 monstra volant: dirae strident in nube volucres,
 nocturnaeque gemunt striges et feralia bubo
 damna canens. quae prima deum portenta sequamur?
 hisne dari, Thymbraee, polum? simul ora recurvo
 ungue secant rabidae planctumque imitantibus alis
 515 exagitant Zephyros et plumea pectora caedunt.'

Ille sub haec: 'equidem varii, pater, omina Phoebi
 saepe tuli: iam tum, prima cum pube virentem
 semideos inter pinus me Thessala reges
 duceret, his casus terraeque marisque canentem
 520 obstipuere duces, nec me ventura locuto
 saepius in dubiis auditus Iasoni Mopsus.
 sed similes non ante metus aut astra notavi
 prodigiosa magis; quamquam maiora parantur.
 huc advcrte animum: clara regione profundi

499 cunctas ψ : -ta P: -tis ω 505 clanxerit *Pcorr.*, *Klotz*:
 pl- P *ante corr.*, $\omega\Sigma$ 508 qui P ω (ς)

510 stridunt P ω (ς)

519 hic P ω (SB): *cf. Val. Fl. 1.234 sic sociis Mopsoque canit. De pleonasmo his/duces vide Housman 1200 sq.*

BOOK 3

After they had duly apportioned the stars and long scrutinized all the air with their minds and close-following eyes, then at last spoke Amythaon's prophet son: 'See you not, Amphiarus, how beneath the lofty boundary of the breathing sky no winged creature plies a tranquil course or hangs circling the heavens in liquid flight or screams a kindly omen as it flees? No dark companion of the tripods, no fiery bearer of the thunderbolt is at hand, no hooked and hooting fowl of blond Minerva comes with favouring augury.³² Nay, vultures and hawks exult from above in their lofty plunder. Monsters are flying, direful birds shriek in the clouds, screech owls of night and the horned one wail, chanting death and disaster. Which portents of the gods should we follow first? Lord of Thymbra, can the heavens be given over to these? All together in fury they cut each other's faces with curving talons and with flappings like mourners' blows they harry the Zephyrs and strike their feathery breasts.'

The other answered: 'Often, my father, have I endured changeful Phoebus' omens. Even then, when in the green of first youth the Thessalian pine³³ bore me among royal demigods, the chiefs were amazed to hear me sing the chances of land and sea, and Jason in doubt listened to me no less often than to Mopsus as I told of things to come. But never before have I observed terrors like these or heavens more prodigious. Yet greater things are in store. Look hither: in the bright region of the deep ether count-

³² The three birds are raven, eagle, and owl.

³³ The Argo.

- 525 aetheros innumeri statuerunt agmina cycni,
 sive hos Strymonia Boreas eiecit ab Arcto,
 seu fecunda refert placidi clementia Nili.
 fixerunt cursus: has rere in imagine Thebas.
 nam sese immoti gyro atque in pace silentes
- 530 ceu muris valloque tenent. sed fortior ecce
 adventat per inane cohors; septem ordine fulvo
 armigeras summi Iovis exsultante caterva
 intuor: Inachii sint hi tibi, concipe, reges.
 invasere globum nivei gregis uncaque pandunt
- 535 caedibus ora novis et strictis unguibus instant.
 cernis inexperto rorantes sanguine ventos,
 et plumis stillare diem? quae saeva repente
 victores agitat leto Iovis ira sinistri?
 hic excelsa petens subita face solus inarsit
- 540 summisitque animos, illum vestigia adortum
 maiorum volucrum tenerae deponitis alae,
 hic hosti implicitus pariter ruit, hunc fuga retro
 volvit agens sociae linquentem fata catervae,
 hic nimbo glomeratus obit, hic praepete viva
- 545 pascitur inmortiens; spargit cava nubila sanguis.
 quid furtim illacrimas? illum, venerande Melampu,
 qui cadit, agnosco.' trepidos sic mole futuri
 cunctaque iam rerum certa sub imagine passos
 terror habet vates; piget irrupisse volantum

³⁴ The birds foreshadow the fate of six out of the seven: Capaneus, Parthenopaeus, Polynices, Adrastus, Hippomedon, Tydeus. Finally Amphiaraus sees his own fate.

³⁵ I.e. 'no need to keep your knowledge from me, I already know.'

less swans have marshalled their columns, whether Boreas expelled them from the Strymonian Bear or the fertile gentleness of placid Nile recalls them. They have halted their flight. These consider as symbolizing Thebes; for in peace and silence they hold themselves motionless in a ring, as though behind walls and rampart. But look, a braver band approaches through the void. I see seven arms-bearers of highest Jupiter, an exultant troop in tawny line. Imagine them to be the Inachian kings. They have invaded the circle of the snowy flock; opening their hooked beaks for fresh slaughter and with talons drawn they bear down. Do you see how the winds drizzle with blood as ne'er before, how the day drips with feathers? What fierce wrath of baleful Jove suddenly drives the victors to death? One, seeking the heights, has all at once taken fire from the sun's torch and abated his pride; another his young wings let down as he attempts the tracks of bigger birds; this one plunges entangled with his foe; his flight rolls backward as he leaves his allied squadron to their fate; another perishes caught up in a storm-wrack; another dying feeds upon a living bird;³⁴ blood bespatters the hollow clouds. Why do you weep aside?³⁵ Reverend Melampus,³⁶ he yonder that falls, I know him.' Terror seizes the seers, thus frightened by the weight of the future, as they suffer all that will betide under a sure semblance. They wish they had not broken in upon the assemblies of the birds and intruded

³⁶ The vocative *Melampu* from (unattested) *Melampūs* (Μελάμπος, Blackfoot) is to be noticed as supporting *Οιδίπου* in Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus* 461 and elsewhere against *Οιδίπους*, sometimes substituted by conjecture. But note *Argipūs* ('Fleetfoot') in 9.266.

THEBAID

550 cōncilia et caelo mentem insertasse vetanti,
auditique odere deos.

Unde iste per orbem

primus venturi miseris animantibus aeger
crevit amor? divumne feras hoc munus, an ipsi,
gens avida et parto non unquam stare quieti,
555 eruimus quae prima dies, ubi terminus aevi,
quid bonus ille deum genitor, quid ferrea Clotho
cogitet? hinc fibrae et volucrum per nubila sermo
astrorumque vices numerataque semita lunae
Thessalicumque nefas. at non prior aureus ille
560 sanguis avum scopulisque satae vel robore gentes
artibus his usae; silvas amor unus humumque
edomuisse manu; quid crastina volveret aetas
scire nefas homini. nos, pravum et flebile vulgus,
scrutati penitus superos: hinc pallor et irae,
565 hinc scelus insidiaeque et nulla modestia voti.

Ergo manu vittas damnataque vertice sarta
deripit abiectaue inhonorus fronde sacerdos
inviso de monte redit; iam bella tubaeque
comminus, absentesque fremunt sub pectore Thebae.
570 ille nec aspectum vulgi, nec fida tyranni
colloquia aut coetus procerum perferre, sed atra
sede tegi, et superum clausus negat acta fateri
(te pudor et curae retinent per rura, Melampu):
bissenos premit ora dies populumque ducesque

561 mentibus (SB²)

564 scrutati ω: -ari P

³⁷ Using a horoscope. But the date of birth would normally be known. Perhaps this is a loose way of saying 'an entire life.' Or it could relate to a child conceived but not yet born (SB²).

their purpose on heaven that forbade them. They hate the gods that heard their prayer.

Whence first for hapless mortals grew worldwide this sick craving for what is to come? Shall we call it a gift of the gods or do we ourselves, a greedy race never content to rest with what we have, dig out which day is the first³⁷ and where life ends, what that kindly begetter of the gods and what iron Clotho have in view? Hence entrails and the talk of birds in the clouds and the comings and goings of the stars and the counted path of the moon and the abomination of Thessaly. But that earlier golden race of our ancestors and the peoples born of rocks and timber³⁸ used not these skills.³⁹ Their one desire was to tame forest and earth with their hands; what the morrow's years might bring 'twas sin for man to know. We, a perverted and pathetic multitude, peer deep into the High Ones; hence pallor and anger, hence crime and treachery and prayer beyond all moderation.

So the priest tears down the fillets renounced and the garlands from his head, casts aside his branches and returns sans emblems of honour from the hated mountain. Now war's trumpets are at hand and absent Thebes clamours in his breast. He endures not the sight of the multitude nor confidential talk with the ruler nor gatherings of the notables, but hiding cloistered in his dark abode refuses to divulge the doings of the High Ones. (Melampus shame and anxiety hold back in the countryside.) For twice six days he keeps his mouth closed, racking people and

³⁸ As the Arcadians were supposed to have been.

³⁹ See SB2.

THEBAID

- 575 extrahit ineertis, et iam suprema Tonantis
iussa fremunt agrosque viris annosaque vastant
oppida; bellipotens prae se deus agmina passim
mille rapit; liquere domos dilectaque laeti
conubia et primo plorantes limine natos:
580 tantus in attonitos eecidit deus. arma paternis
postibus et fixos superum ad penetralia currus
vellere amor; tunc fessa pntri robigine pila
haerentesque situ gladios in saeva reeurant
vulnera et attrito cogunt inueneseere saxo.
585 hi teretes galeas magnorumque aerea suta
thoracum et tunicas Chalybum squalore crepantes
pectoribus temptare, alii Gortynia lentant
cornua; iam falces avidis et aratra caminis
rastraque et incurvi saevum tribuere ligones.
590 caedere nec validas sanctis e stirpibus hastas,
nec pudor emerito clipeum vestisse iuveno.
irrupere Argos maestique ad limina regis
bella animis, bella ore fremunt; it clamor ad auras,
quantus Tyrrheni gemitus salis, aut ubi temptat
595 Eneeladus mutare latus; super igneus antris
mons tonat: exundant apices, fluctusque Pelorus
contrahit, et sperat tellus abrupta reverti.

Atque hic ingenti Capaneus Mavortis amore
excitus et longam pridem indignantia pacem
600 corda timens (hinc ampla quidem de sanguine prisco
nobilitas; sed enim ipse manu praegressus avorum
facta, diu tuto superum contemptor et aequi
impatiens largusque animae, modo suaserit ira),

⁵⁸⁶ chalybum *edd.* (Hill)

BOOK 3

leaders with uncertainty. And now the Thunderer's supreme commands clamour and empty fields and ancient towns of their menfolk. Everywhere the God of War sweeps a thousand columns before him. Joyfully they left their homes and loved wives and children weeping at the threshold: so powerfully did the god fall upon them in their amazement. Eagerly they pluck weapons from family doorposts and chariots fixed to the shrines of the High Ones. Then they refurbish pikes weary with rotting rust and swords sticking neglected in their scabbards to deal cruel wounds, and make them young again with rub of stone. Some try on rounded helmets and at their breasts the bronze mail of great jerkins and tunics creaking with disused iron. Others draw bows of Gortyn. Now sickles and ploughshares and harrows and curving hoes cruelly redden in greedy furnaces. They scruple not to hew strong shafts from sacred stocks and to cover a shield from an ox past service. Into Argos they burst and at the sad king's doors they cry war with their hearts and war with their mouths. The shouting goes aloft, loud as the groaning of Tyrrhenian waters or as when Enceladus tries to change his side; above, the fiery mountain thunders in its caverns, the peaks gush forth, Pelorus contracts his waves, and the severed earth hopes to return.⁴⁰

Capaneus was spurred by mighty love of Mars, his swelling breast had long protested lengthy peace. Ample nobility was his from ancient blood, but he himself had outstripped the doughty deeds of his forbears. Long had he despised the High Ones with impunity, impatient of justice and prodigal of life if anger urged. Like a denizen

⁴⁰ With Sicily reunited with the mainland.

unus ut e silvis Pholoës habitator opacae
 605 inter et Aetnaeos aequus consurgere fratres,
 ante fores, ubi turba ducum vulgique frementis,
 Amphiaræ, tuas 'quæ tanta ignavia,' clamat,
 'Inachidae uosque o socio de sanguine Achivi?
 unius (heu pudeat!) plebeia ad limina civis
 610 tot ferro accinctae gentes animisque paratae
 pendemus? non si ipse cavo sub vertice Cirrhae
 (quisquis is est, timidis Famaeque ita visus) Apollo
 mugiat insano penitus seclusus in antro,
 exspectare queam dum pallida virgo tremendas
 615 nuntiet ambages. virtus mihi numen et ensis
 quem teneo. iamque hic timida cum fraude sacerdos
 exeat, aut hodie, volucrum quæ tanta potestas,
 experiar.'

Laetum fremit assensuque furentem
 implet Achaea manus. tandem prorumpere adactus
 620 Oeclides: 'alio curarum agitante tumultu
 non equidem effreno iuvenis clamore profani
 dictorumque metu, licet hic insana minetur,
 elicior tenebris; alio mihi debita fato
 summa dies, vetitumque dari mortalibus armis.
 625 sed me vester amor nimiusque arcana profari
 Phoebus agit; vobis ventura atque omne quod ultra est
 pandere maestus eo; nam te, vesane, moneri
 ante nefas, unigue tacet tibi noster Apollo.
 quo, miseri, Fatis superisque obstantibus arma,
 630 quo rapitis? quæ vos Furiarum verbera caecos
 exagitant? adeone animarum taedet? et Argos

628 tacet P: silet ω

of darkling Pholoë from out the forest or one that might rise equal among Aetna's brethren,⁴¹ he stands before Amphiaraus' doors, where leaders and clamouring multitude had congregated, crying: 'What poltroonery is this, sons of Inachus and you Achaeans of allied blood? So many peoples, sword-girt and ready-hearted, do we hang in doubt at the plebeian⁴² threshold of a single citizen? Oh for shame! Were Apollo himself, whoever he is (cowards and Rumour so think of him), to bellow under Cirrha's hollow peak, deep withdrawn in his frenzied cavern, I could not wait for the pale maiden⁴³ to announce her fearsome riddles. Valour is my deity, and the sword in my hand. Now let this priest come forth with his craven cheat, or this day I shall test the vaunted power of birds.'

The Achaean band yells joyfully and fills out his madness with their assent. Forced at length to burst forth, thus the son of Oecles: 'Tumult of other cares harasses me. Not for a young blasphemer's unbridled clamour or for fear of his words, frantic though his threats, am I drawn from darkness. My last day is owed me by a different fate; it may not be granted to mortal arms. But my love for you and too potent Phoebus drive me to speak secrets out. Sadly I am going to lay bare to you things to come and whatever lies beyond. As for *you*, madman, warning you would be sin, to you alone our lord Apollo is silent. Wretches, whither, oh whither do you rush your arms when the Fates and the High Ones oppose? What Furies' lash drives you in your blindness? Are you so weary of your lives? Do you hate

⁴¹ A Centaur or a Cyclops. ⁴² As distinct from the royal palace.
⁴³ The Pythia (Delphic priestess), pale because prophetic frenzy was apt to kill (cf. 106f.).

exosi? nil dulce domi? nulla omina curae?
 quid me Persei secreta ad culmina montis
 ire gradu trepido superumque irrupere coetus
 635 egistis? potui pariter nescire quis armis
 casus, ubi atra dies, quae fati exordia cunctis,
 quae mihi. consulti testor penetralia mundi
 et volucrum affatus et te, Thymbraee, vocanti
 non alias tam saeve mihi, quae signa futuri
 640 pertulerim: vidi ingentis portenta ruinae,
 vidi hominum divumque metus hilaremque Megacram
 et Lachesin putri vacuantem saecula penso.
 proicite arma manu: deus ecce furentibus obstat,
 ecce deus! miseri, quid pulchrum sanguine victo
 645 Aoniam et diri saturare novalia Cadmi?
 sed quid vana cano, quid fixos arceo casus?
 ibimus.' hic presso genuit semel ore sacerdos.

Illum iterum Capaneus: 'tuus o furor auguret unni
 ista tibi, ut serves vacuos inglorius annos
 650 et tua non umquam Tyrrienus tempora circum
 clangor eat. quid vota virum meliora moraris?
 scilicet ut vanis avibus natoque domoque
 et thalamis potiarc iacens, sileamus inulti
 Tydeos egregii perfossum pectus et arma
 655 foederis abrupti? quod si bella effera Graios
 ferre vetas, i Sidonios legatus ad hostes:
 haec pacem tibiserta dabunt. tua prorsus inani
 verba polo causas abstrusaque nomina rerum
 eliciunt! miseret superum, si carmina curae
 660 humanaeque preces. quid inertia pectora terres?

636 ubi P: et ω

658 nomina P: sem- $\omega\Sigma$ (*Bachrens: nem- Courtney*)

BOOK 3

Argos? Is nothing sweet at home? Care you for no omens? Why did you force me to go with trembling step to the secret top of Perseus' mountain and break in upon the gatherings of the High Ones? I might have stayed ignorant along with you; what the outcome of the fight, where the black day, what fate begins for all, and what for me. I call the secret places of the universe I questioned, and the speech of birds, and you, Lord of Thymbra, never before so harsh to my appeal, to witness what signs of futurity I endured. I saw portents of mighty downfall, I saw terrors of men and gods, and Megacra laughing and Laethesis voiding the generations with her rotting thread. Throw away your weapons. See, the god opposes your frenzy, see, the god! Wretches, where is the glory in drenching Aonia and dire Cadmus' meadows with your vanquished blood? But why do I prophesy in vain? Why ward off fortunes fixed? We shall go.' Here the priest groaned and closed his mouth once for all.

Him again Capaneus: 'Let your ravings make these auguries just to yourself, that you keep empty, inglorious years and Tyrrhenian clangour never echo around your temples. Why do you delay the better hopes of the brave? Forsooth, so that you may have your silly birds and your son and house and marriage chamber as you lie abed, are we to leave most noble Tydeus unavenged, naught saying of his pierced breast and the pact broken in arms? But if you forbid the Greeks to wage wild war, go you as envoy to our Sidonian foes. These chaplets will afford you peace. For a certainty your words draw causes and hidden impulses of things from the open sky! 'Tis pity of the High Ones if they take heed of spells and human prayers. Why

THEBAID

primus in orbe deos fecit timor! et tibi tuto
 nunc eat iste furor; sed prima ad classica cum iam
 hostilem Ismenon galeis Dircenque bibemus,
 ne mihi tunc, moneo, lituos atque arma volenti
 665 obuius ire pares venisque aut alite visa
 bellorum proferre diem: procul haec tibi mollis
 infula terrificaeque aberit dementia Phoebi:
 illic augur ego et mecum quicumque parati
 insanire manu.'

Rursus fragor intonat ingens
 670 hortantum et vasto subter volat astra tumultu;
 ut rapidus torrens, animos cui verna ministrant
 flamina et exuti concreto frigore montes,
 cum vagus in campos frustra prohibentibus exit
 obicibus, resonant permixto turbine tecta,
 675 arva, armenta, viri, donec stetit improbus alto
 colle minor magnoque invenit in aggere ripas.
 haec alterna ducum nox interfusa diremit.

At gemitus Argia viri non amplius aequo
 corde ferens sociumque animo miserata dolorem,
 680 sicut erat, laceris pridem turpata capillis,
 et fletu signata genas, ad celsa verendi
 ibat tecta patris parvumque sub ubere caro
 Thessandrum portabat avo iam nocte suprema
 ante novos ortus, ubi sola superstite Plaustro
 685 Arctos ad Oceanum fugientibus invidet astris,
 utque fores iniit magnoque affusa parenti est:
 'cur tua cum lacrimis maesto sine coniuge simplex

665 ventisque PωΣ (*Heinsius*)

680 turpata P: turbata ω

BOOK 3

frighten you untutored hearts? Fear first made gods in the world. And for now let this your raving go unpunished. But when we drink hostile Ismenos and Diree with our helmets to the sound of first trumpets, I warn you, do not then seek to balk me as I crave clarions and arms and to put off the day of battle at sight of entrails or bird. No help for you then in this soft fillet and the folly of bogy Phoebus. There I am the augur and all who are ready to play the fighting madman with me.'

Again thunders out the great roar of the backers and flies in vast tumult to the stars. 'Twas like a swift torrent, encouraged by spring breezes and mountains stripped of their frozen ehill, when it comes wandering out into the plain over obstructions that vainly stay its course: dwellings, fields, eattle, men resound in the mingled swirl, until the ungovernable flow halts bested before a high hill or finds banks in some great rampart. Night interposing parted this altereation of elieftains.

But Argia no longer bore her husband's misery calmly, pitying the distress she shared. Just as she was, her beauty long marred by tearing of her hair and with marks of weeping on her face, she went to her venerable father's lofty dwelling, carrying little Thessander⁴⁴ at her breast to his loved grandsire. Night was ending before a new dawn, when only Arctos with surviving wagon envied the stars as they fled to Ocean. When she entered the door and east herself down before her great parent: 'Why I seek your threshold at night in tearful supplication without my sor-

⁴⁴ Elsewhere Thersander (-dros), surely the proper form (cf. *θάπρος*, Thersites). The variant here will derive from Thessandrus in *Aeneid* 2.261, though probably a different person.

THEBAID

limina nocte petam, cessem licet ipsa profari,
 scis genitor. sed iura deum genialia testor
 690 teque, pater, non ille iubet sed pervigil angor.
 ex quo primus Hymen movitque infausta sinistram
 Iuno facem, semper lacrimis gemituque propinquo
 exturbata quies. non si mihi tigridis horror
 aequoreasque super rigeant praecordia cautes,
 695 ferre queam; tu solus opem, tu summa medendi
 iura tenes; da bella, pater, generique iacentis
 aspice res humiles, atque hanc, pater, aspice prolem
 exsulis; huic olim generis pudor. o ubi prima
 hospitia et iunctae testato numine dextrae?
 700 hic certe est quem Fata dabant, quem dixit Apollo.
 non egomet tacitos Veneris furata calores
 culpatamve facem: tua iussa verenda tuosque
 dilexi monitus. nunc qua feritate dolentis
 despiciam questus! nescis, pater optime, nescis
 705 quantus amor castae misero nupsisse marito.
 et nunc maesta quidem grave et illaetabile munus,
 ut timeam doleamque, rogo; sed cum oscula rumpet
 maesta dies, cum rauca dabunt abeuntibus armis
 signa tubae saevoque genas fulgebitis auro,
 710 ei mihi, care parens, iterum fortasse rogabo!
 Illius umentu carpens pater oscula vultu:
 'non equidem has unquam culparim, nata, querelas;
 pone metus, laudanda rogas nec digna negari.
 sed mihi multa dei (nec tu sperare quod urges
 715 desine), multa metus regnique volubile pondus
 subiciunt animo. veniet qui debitus istis,

⁶⁹⁴ aequoreaeque P ω (*Barth*)

⁶⁹⁹ testato ω ; funesto P: manifesto *Baehrens*

BOOK 3

rowing spouse you know, father, even if I were slow to tell. But I call the divine laws of wedlock to witness and you, sire, 'tis not he that commands me but sleepless suffering. Ever since Hymen and inauspicious Juno first raised the ill-omened torch, my rest has always been troubled by weeping and groaning at my side. Not if I were a bristling tigress or my heart harder than the cliffs of the sea could I bear it. Only you can aid, yours is the high authority to heal. Give war, father; regard the lowly fortunes of your fallen son-in-law and this child of an exile. One day he will be ashamed of his birth. Ah, where is that first welcome, hands joined with gods to witness? He of a surety is the man the Fates gave, of whom Apollo told. I stole no secret fires of love, no guilty torch; 'twas your revered commands, your admonitions I cared for. What cruelty now for me to despise the sorrower's complaint! Good father, you know not, you know not the love of a chaste bride wedded to an unhappy husband. In sadness now I ask a heavy, joyless boon—to fear and grieve. But when the sorrowful day shall break our kisses and the trumpets give their harsh signals to the departing host and your faces shall gleam with cruel gold, then, alas, perhaps, dear father, I shall ask a second time.⁴⁵

The father answered, taking kisses from her tearful face: 'Never, daughter, should I blame these plaints. Lay fears aside; what you ask is praiseworthy nor meet to be denied. But the gods (nay, cease not to hope for what you urge) and my qualms, and the ever shifting burden of ruling give me many a thought. The right mode in this matter

⁴⁵ To cancel the expedition.

THEBAID

nata, modus neque te incassum flevisse quereris.
tu solare virum, neu sint dispendia iustae
dura morae: magnos cunctamur, nata, paratus.
720 proficitur bello.' dicentem talia nascens
lux monet ingentesque iubent assurgere curae.

721 monet ψ : movet P ω

BOOK 3

will come, my child, neither shall you complain that you wept for naught. Comfort your husband; and take not hard the tarryings of a just delay. Great preparations, my child, are in our delaying. 'Tis gain for the war.' As he so speaks, the nascent light advises him and cares of great moment bid him rise.

LIBER IV

Tertius horrentem Zephyris laxaverat animum
 Phoebus et angusto cogebat limite vernum
 longius ire diem, cum fracta impulsaque Fatis
 consilia et tandem miseris data copia belli.

- 5 prima manu rutilam de vertice Larisaeo
 ostendit Bellona facem dextraque trabalem
 hastam intorsit agens, liquido quae stridula caelo
 fugit et Aoniae celso stetit aggere Dirces.
 mox et castra subit ferroque auroque coruscis
 10 mixta viris turmale fremit; dat emittibus enses,
 plaudit equos, vocat ad portas; hortamina fortes
 praeveniunt, timidisque etiam brevis addita virtus.

- Dicta dies aderat. cadit ingens rite Tonanti
 Gradivoque pecus, nullisque secundus in extis
 15 pallet et armatis simulat sperare sacerdos.
 iamque suos circum pueri nuptaeque patresque
 funduntur mixti summisque a postibus obstant.

² angusto . . . vernum P: -tum . . . -no ω Σ: -tam . . . -no ψ

⁴ miseris Pψ: -ri ω

¹ Two years had passed since Polynices left Thebes and a year since Tydeus' embassy. ² *Secundus* of the diviner echoes

Aeneid 11.739. My suggestion in SB² is cancelled.

BOOK 4

Thrice¹ had Phoebus relaxed harsh winter with his Zephyrs and was constraining the vernal day to take longer than its narrow bound when wise counsels were shattered by the urging Fates and licence given to the wretches at last for war. First from Larisa's peak Bellona showed her red torch and with her right hand sent her massive spear whirling; it sped whistling through the clear sky and landed on the lofty rampart of Aonian Dirce. Next she enters the camp and mingling with the warriors that flash with steel and gold she yells loud as a squadron, gives swords to the departing, claps horses, summons to the gates. The brave do not wait to be exhorted, even cowards gain brief access of courage.

The appointed day arrives. A huge number of beasts fall in ritual sacrifice to the Thunderer and Gradivus, and the priest, finding no good in the entrails,² feigns hope to the men in arms. And now children and wives and fathers pour mingling around their own and block their way from the outermost doorways.³ Weeping is

³ *Summis = extremis*, the last ditch, as it were. The departing warrior forces his way out of his house against the family's efforts to hold him back. For the preposition cf. 564 *oppositis Semelen a ventre lacertis*.

THEBAID

nec modus est lacrimis: rorant clipeique iubaeque
 triste salutantum, et cunctis dependet ab armis
 20 suspiranda domus; galeis iuvat oscula clausis
 inserere amplexuque truces deducere conos.
 illi, quis ferrum modo, quis mors ipsa placebat,
 dant gemitus fractaeque labant singultibus irae.
 sic ubi forte viris longum super aequor ituris,
 25 cum iam ad vela Noti et scisso redit ancora fundo,
 haeret amica manus: certant innectere collo
 bracchia, manantesque oculos hinc oscula turbant,
 hinc magni caligo maris, tandemque relict
 stant in rupe tamen; fugientia carbasa visu
 30 dulce sequi, patriosque dolent crebrescere ventos.
 [stant tamen et nota puppim de rupe salutant.]

Nunc mihi, Fama prior mundique arcana Vetustas,
 cui meminisse ducum vitasque extendere curae,
 pande viros, tuque, o nemoris regina sonori,
 35 Calliope, quas ille manus, quae moverit arma
 Gradivus, quantas populis solaverit urbes,
 sublata molire lyra: neque enim altior ulli
 mens hausto de fonte venit.

Rex tristis et aeger
 pondere curarum propiorque abeuntibus annis
 40 inter adhortantes vix sponte incedit Adrastus,
 contentus ferro cingi latus; arma manipuli
 ponc ferunt. volucres portis auriga sub ipsis
 comit equos, et iam inde iugo luctatur Arion.
 huic armat Larisa viros, huic celsa Prosymna,
 45 aptior armentis Midea pecorosaque Phlius,
 quaeque pavet longa spumantem valle Charadron

29-30 *absunt in ψ*

31 *abest in P, damnavit Barth*

BOOK 4

unrestrained. Shields and crests are bedewed as they bid sorrowful farewells and from every suit of arms hangs a family to be sighed for. They are fain to push kisses through closed vizors and draw down fierce helmet tops with their embrace. Those who but now called for the sword, for death itself, utter groans; broken, their anger collapses in sobs. So when men are haply about to go far overseas, when the wind is at the sails and the anchor returns from the ploughed bottom, a fond company clings; they vie to twine their arms about a neck, kisses and the great sea's fog blur their flowing eyes; at last abandoned, they will yet stand on a cliff; 'tis sweet to follow the fleeing canvass with their gaze and they grieve that their country's winds blow stronger.

Now, old-time Fame and secret Antiquity of the world, whose care it is to remember leaders and extend their lives, set me forth the men. And you, queen of the tuneful grove, Calliope, raise your lyre and tell what bands, what arms Gradivus set moving, how many cities he left deserted of their peoples. For to none comes deeper understanding from the fount you drain.

King Adrastus, sad and sick with weight of cares and nearer to departing years, walks scarce of his own accord amid words of good cheer, content with the steel that girds his side; soldiers bear his shield behind him. His driver grooms the swift horses right at the gate and Arion is already fighting the yoke. For him Larisa arms her men-folk and lofty Prosymna and Midea more fit for herds and sheep-wealthy Phlius and Neris fearing Charadros as he

- Neris, et ingenti turritae mole Cleonae
 et Lacedaemonium Thyrea lectura cruorem.
 iunguntur memores transmissi ab origine regis,
 50 qui Drepani scopulos et oliviferae Sicyonis
 culta serunt, quos pigra vado Langia tacenti
 lambit et anfractu riparum incurvus Elisson.
 saevus honos fluvio: Stygias lustrare severis
 Eumenidas perhibetur aquis; huc mergere suetas
 55 ora et anhelantes potio Phlegethonte cerastas,
 seu Thracum vertere domos, seu tecta Mycenes
 impia Cadmeumve larem; fugit ipse natantes
 annis, et innumeris livescunt stagna venenis.
 it comes Inoas Ephyre solata querelas
 60 Cenchreaeque manus, vatum qua conscius amnis
 Gorgoneo percussus equo, quaque obiacet alto
 Isthmos et a terris maria inclinata respellit.
 haec manus Adrastum numero ter mille secuti
 exsultant; pars gaesa manu, pars robora flammis
 65 indurata diu (non unus namque manipulis
 mos neque sanguis) habent, teretes pars vertere fundas

⁴⁸ thyla electura P: thyre lec- ω (*Weber*)

⁴⁹ regis ψ, *Gronovius*: reges Pω

⁵¹ langia ω: strangilla P

⁵² elisson P: -os ω ⁵⁴ sueta P: -tae ω (*Baehrens*)

⁶⁶ habet Pψ: inest ω (*O. Mueller*)

⁴ Adrastus; cf. 2.179.

⁵ Later on located in the Nemea region. The feminine (cf. 724, though masculine in 837) supports this reading against P's unknown Strangilla, since feminine rivers are a great rarity. Properly the name will have belonged to the Nymph of the spring.

BOOK 4

foams down his long valley and Cleonae of the massy tower and Thyrea fated one day to harvest Spartan blood. With them go the men who sow the rocks of Drepanum and the fields of olive-bearing Sicyon, mindful of the king whom they originally sent elsewhere,⁴ they whom lazy Langia⁵ laves with silent flow and Elisson⁶ curving through his sinuous banks. A grim honour has that river; with his stern waters he is reputed to wash the Stygian Eumenides. They are wont, 'tis said, to sink their faces therein and the horned snakes that pant from draughts of Phlegethon, whether they have wrecked Thracian dwellings⁷ or Mycenae's impious roofs or the house of Cadmus. The river himself flees them as they swim and his pools darken with countless poisons. Along too goes Ephyre, who comforted Ino's plaints,⁸ and the bands of Cenchreae, where the stream cognizant of poets was struck out by the Gorgon's horse⁹ and where Isthmos lies athwart the deep and repels the sloping seas from land. This band, three thousand strong, follows Adrastus exulting. Some carry pikes, some stakes long hardened in the fire (for each troop has its own fashion, its own blood), some are wont to whirl

⁶ 'Winding.' Hardly to be identified with the scholiast as Ilyssus in Attica (cf. 8.766; 12.631). Where Statius found the connection with the Furies is unknown.

⁷ Home of Tereus.

⁸ For Palaemon; see on 9.401–03.

⁹ 'The spring struck out by the hoof of Pegasus was usually placed on Helicon (Hippocrene), but was sometimes identified with Pirene, the fountain at Corinth, cf. *Silvae* 2.7.2' (Mozley). Pegasus, the winged horse, sprang from the head of the Gorgon Medusa, slain by Perseus.

THEBAID

assueti vacuumque diem praecingere gyro.
 ipse annis sceptrisque subit venerabilis aequae:
 ut possessa diu taurus meat arduus inter
 70 pascua iam laxa cervice et inanibus armis,
 dux tamen: haud illum bello attemptare iuvenis
 sunt animi; nam trunca vident de vulnere multo
 cornua et ingentes plagarum in pectore nodos.
 Proxima longaevo profert Dircaeus Adrasto
 75 signa gener, cui bella favent, cui commodat iras
 cuncta cohors: huic et patria de sede volentes
 advenere viri, seu quos movet exsul et haesit
 tristibus aucta fides, seu quis mutare potentes
 praecipuum, multi, melior quos causa querenti
 80 conciliat; dederat nec non socer ipse regendas
 Aegion Arenenque, et quas Theseia Troezen
 addit opes, ne rara movens inglorius iret
 agmina, neu raptos patriae sentiret honores.
 idem habitus, eadem arma viro quae debitus hospes
 85 hiberna sub nocte tulit: Teumesius implet
 terga leo et gemino lucent hastilia ferro,
 aspera vulnifico subter latus ense riget Sphinx.
 iam regnum matrisque sinus fidasque sorores
 spe votisque tenet, tamen et de turre suprema
 90 attonitam totoque exstantem corpore longe
 respicit Argian; haec mentem oculosque reducit
 coniugis et dulces avertit pectore Thebas.

67 vacuumque P ω (*Garrod*)

90 exstantem ω : insta- P

¹⁰ Editors keep *vacuo*, which must then be regarded as transferred.

¹¹ One of the towns known under these names was on the north coast of the Peloponnese, the other in Messene. There is no

BOOK 4

rounded slings and gird the empty¹⁰ sky with a circle. He himself joins them, venerable alike in years and sceptre, like a bull moving tall among the pastures he has long possessed; his neck is slack now and his shoulders empty, but still he is the leader; the steers have no stomach to attempt him in battle, for they see his horns broken from many a blow and the massive nodules of breast wounds.

Next to aged Adrastus his Dircaean son-in-law displays his standards, he in whose support they fight, to whom the whole army lends its wrath. To him come also volunteers from his native land. Some the exile moves and their loyalty has held, strengthened by misfortune, some chiefly want a change of ruler, many are won to his complaint by his better cause. Moreover, his father-in-law himself had given him Aegion and Arene¹¹ to rule and the power that Theseus' Troezen¹² brings, lest he march inglorious leading a scanty force and be conscious of his country's ravished honours. His dress and arms were those he wore as a destined guest that winter's night. A Teumesian lion fills his back and the points of two javelins gleam. At his side a threatening Sphinx sits rigid on his wound-dealing sword. Already in hope and prayer he possesses his realm and his mother's bosom and his faithful sisters, yet looks far back to Argia as she stands out with all her body from a turret-edge distraught. She calls back her husband's mind and eyes and turns sweet Thebes from his heart.

evidence for places so named in Argolis. The scholiast calls them cities of Arcadia. How Adrastus came to dispose of their contingents is not clear, but his reason might be to give his son-in-law a show of independence.

¹² Birthplace of Theseus, where his maternal grandfather Pittheus was king.

THEBAID

Ecce inter medios patriae ciet agmina gentis
 fulmineus Tydeus, iam laetus et integer artus,
 95 ut primae strepuere tubae: ceu lubricus alta
 anguis humo verni blanda ad spiramina solis
 erigitur liber senio et squalentibus annis
 exutus laetisque minax interviret herbis:
 a miser, agrestum si quis per gramina hianti
 100 obvius et primo fraudaverit ora veneno.
 huic quoque praesentes Aetolis urbibus affert
 belli fama viros: sensit scopulosa Pylene
 fletaque cognatis avibus Meleagria Pleuron
 et praeceps Calydon et quae Iove provocat Iden
 105 Olenos Ioniis et fluctibus hospita portu
 Chalcis et Herculea turpatus gymnade vultus
 annis; adhuc imis vix truncam attollere frontem
 ausus aquis glaucoque caput summersus in antro
 maeret, anhelantes aegrescunt pulvere ripae.
 110 omnibus acratae propugnant pectora crates,
 pilaque saeva manu; patrius stat casside Mavors.
 undique magnanimum pubes delecta coronant
 Oeniden, hilarem bello noctisque decorum
 115 vulneribus; non ille minis Polynicis et ira
 inferior, dubiumque adeo cui bella gerantur.
 Maior at inde novis it Doricus ordo sub armis:

100 fraudaverit P: sicca- ωΣ

101 praesentes P: -stantes ω

113 notisque Pω (ς, Jortin)

¹³ Meleager's sisters wept for him until Diana turned them into birds called Meleagrides (guinea fowl).

BOOK 4

See, bolt-like Tydeus in the midst rouses the hosts of his countrymen, happy now and sound of body, as the first trumpets bray; like a slippery snake rising at the coaxing breath of vernal sunshine from deep earth, free of mould and stripped of musty years—a green threat among the lush grasses; woe to the rustic who comes in his way as he gapes in the herbage to rob his fangs of their first venom. For Tydeus too rumour of war brings warriors to aid from Aetolia's cities. Rocky Pylene heard and Meleager's Pleuron bewept by sister birds¹³ and steep Calydon and Olenos, who challenges Ida with her Jupiter,¹⁴ and Chaleis¹⁵ that with her haven hosts the Ionian waves, and the river whose face was marred by wrestling Heracles;¹⁶ even now he scarce dares to lift his mutilated brow from the watery depths and glooms with head sunk in his green cavern, while his banks pant and sicken with dust. The breasts of all are protected by wicker shields covered with bronze, they carry fierce pikes and their country's¹⁷ Mars stands on their helmets. On all sides a chosen band surrounds the great-hearted son of Oeneus, cheerful for the fray and decorated with the night's scars. Equal he in threat and wrath to Polynices; 'tis doubtful for whom the war is waged.

But mightier after these comes the Doric rank, newly

¹⁴ Apparently conflated with Olenos in Achaëa, where the goat Amalthea was said to have fostered Jupiter.

¹⁵ In Aetolia. *Chalcide* should probably be retained after all in *Silv.* 5.3.155.

¹⁶ Achelous, who lost a horn wrestling with Hercules.

¹⁷ Father of the eponymous Actolus. Oeneus and Tydeus are both credited with his paternity.

qui ripas, Lyrcee, tuas, tua litora multo
 vomere suspendunt, fluviorum ductor Achivum,
 Inache (Persea neque enim violentior exit
 120 amnis humo, cum Taurum aut Pliadas hausit aquosas
 spumeus et genero tumuit Iove); quos celer ambit
 Asterion Dryopumque trahens Erasinus aristas;
 et qui rura domant Epidauria (dexter Iaccho
 collis at Hennaee Cereri negat); avia Dyme
 125 mittit opem densasque Pylos Neleia turmas
 (nondum nota Pylos iuvenisque aetate secunda
 Nestor, et ire tamen peritura in castra negavit).
 hos agitat pulchraeque docet virtutis amorem
 arduus Hippomedon; capiti tremit aerea cassis
 130 ter niveum scandente iuba, latus omne sub armis
 ferrea suta terunt, umeros ac pectora late
 flammeus orbis habet, perfectaue vivit in auro
 nox Danaï: sontes Furiarum lampade nigra
 quinquaginta ardent thalami; pater ipse cruentis
 135 in foribus laudatque nefas atque inspicit enses.
 illum Palladia sonipes Nemeaeus ab arce
 develhit arma pavens umbraque immane volanti
 implet agros longoque attollit pulvere campum.
 non aliter silvas umeris et utroque refringens
 140 pectore montano duplex Hylaeus ab antro

¹⁵ The constellation of the Bull, which included the group of stars called Hyades, supposed to bring rain.

¹⁹ Jupiter had seduced Inachus' daughter Io. His name can signify rain, as Bacchus wine or Ceres bread.

²⁰ They produce wine but no corn.

²¹ Another geographical oddity. From Argolis and the neighbouring Epidaurus the spotlight shifts to Dyme and Pylos, respec-

BOOK 4

armed; they that lift your bank, Lyrceus, with many a ploughshare and your shores, Inachus, leader of Achaean streams (for no rougher river comes out of Persean soil when he has drunk of Taurus¹⁸ or the watery Pleiades and foams and swells with Jupiter, his son-in-law¹⁹); they that swift Asterion encircles and Erasinus with Dryopian harvests in tow, and they that till the Epidaurian fields (kind to Iacchus is the hill, but Ceres of Henna is refused);²⁰ distant Dyme sends aid and Neleian Pylos²¹ her dense squadrons—not yet is Pylos famous, Nestor is still young in his second period,²² but he refused to join a doomed army. These tall Hippomedon moves and teaches them the love of beauteous valour. On his head sways a brazen helm with triply-climbing snowy plume,²³ iron mail chafes all his flanks beneath his shield, a fiery circle amply covers shoulders and breasts and the night of Danaus lives chased upon the gold; fifty guilty marriage chambers blaze with the darkling torch of the Furies and the father himself in the bloodstained doorway lauds the crime and scrutinizes the swords. A Nemean steed carries him down from Pallas' citadel,²⁴ fearing his arms, and fills the fields with a monstrous flying shadow, raising the plain with a long trail of dust. Not otherwise does double Hylaeus hurtle from his mountain cave, breaking the woods with his shoulders and

tively on the northwest and southwest coasts of the Peloponnese. The former was a well-known town, the latter famous (cf. on 224). Hippomedon was an Argive.

²² Nestor lived for three *saecla* (generations, but sometimes understood as centuries).

²³ The text has been queried. Exactly what it means is doubtful; cf. Dodds on Euripides, *Bacchae* 123 (Hill).

²⁴ In Argos.

praecipitat: pavet Ossa vias, pecudesque feraeque
 procubuere metu; non ipsis fratribus horror
 afit, ingenti donec Peneia saltu
 stagna subit magnumque obiectus detinet amnem.

- 145 Quis numerum ferri gentesque et robora dictu
 aequarit mortale sonans? suus excit in arma
 antiquam Tiryntha deus; non fortibus illa
 infecunda viris famave inmanis alumni
 degenerat, sed lapsa situ fortuna, neque addunt
 150 robur opes; rarus vacuis habitator in arvis
 monstrat Cyclopum ductas sudoribus arces.
 dat tamen haec iuvenum ter centum pectora, vulgus
 innumerum bello, quibus haud ammenta nec enses
 triste micant: flavae capiti tergoque leonum
 155 exuviae, gentilis honos; et pineus armat
 stipes, inexhaustis artantur tela pharetris.
 Herculeum paeana canunt vastataque monstris
 omnia; frondosa longum deus audit ab Oeta.
 dat Nemea comites, et quas in proelia vires
 160 sacra Clconaei cogunt vineta Molorchii.
 gloria nota casae, foribus simulata salignis
 hospitis arma dei, parvoque ostenditur arvo
 robur ubi et laxos qua reclinaverit arcus
 ilice, qua cubiti sedcant vestigia terra.
 165 At pedes et toto despectans vertice bellum
 quattuor indomitis Capaneus erepta iuencis
 terga superque rigens iniectu molis aënae
 versat onus; squallet triplici ramosa corona
 Hydra recens obitu: pars anguibus aspera vivis
 170 argento caelata micat, pars arte reperta

BOOK 4

twofold breast; Ossa dreads his path, cattle and wild beasts fall down in terror; even his brothers are not without fear, until with a mighty leap he reaches Peneus' pools and dams the great river with his bulk.

Who of mortal voice could match in words the quantity of steel, the peoples, and the might? Ancient Tiryns is roused to arms by her god.²⁵ Not barren is she of brave men nor degenerate from the fame of her huge son, but her fortune has sunk in decay and wealth adds not its power. A rare dweller in the empty fields points to the towers raised by Cyclopes'²⁶ sweat. Yet she gives three hundred warrior hearts, for war a countless multitude. No javelin straps have they or swords flashing bale. On head and back they carry yellow lionskins, their national ornament, and pine staves arm them, arrows cram their inexhaustible quivers. They sing the paeon of Hercules and a world cleared of monsters; far away from leafy Oeta the god hears. Nemea gives comrades, as do the hallowed vineyards of Cleonaeon Molorchus the strength they gather for battle. Famous is the glory of the cottage, the guest god's arms are portrayed on its willow doors and in the little field is shown the hohn oak on which he leaned his club and loosened bow, the ground where sit the marks of his elbow.

Capaneus goes on foot looking down upon the war by a whole head. He bears four hides stripped from unbroken steers and piled thereon the stiff weight of a brazen mass. The foul Hydra lies newly slain branching with triple crown. Part flashes rough with live snakes, chased in silver;

²⁵ Hercules.

²⁶ Cf. 1.252.

THEBAID

conditur et fulvo moriens nigrescit in auro;
 circum amnis torpens et ferro caerula Lerna.
 at laterum tractus spatiosaque pectora servat
 nexilis innumero Chalybum subtemine thorax,
 175 horrendum, non matris, opus; galeaeque corusca
 prominet arce Gigans; atque uni missilis illi
 cuspide praefixa stat frondibus orba cupressus.
 huic parere dati quos fertilis Amphigenia
 planaue Messene montosaque nutrit Ithome,
 180 quos Thryon et summis ingestum montibus Aepy,
 quos Helos et Pteleon, Getico quos flebile vati
 Dorion; hic fretus doctas anteire canendo
 Aonidas mutos Thamyris damnatus in annos
 ore simul citharaque (quis obvia numina temnat?)
 185 conticuit praeceps, qui non certamina Phoebi
 nosset et illustres Satyro pendente Celaenas.

Iamque et fatidici mens expugnata fatiscit
 auguris; ille quidem casus et dira videbat
 signa, sed ipsa manu cunctanti iniecerat arma
 190 Atropos obrueratque deum, nec coniugis absunt
 insidiae, vetitoque domus iam fulgurat auro.
 hoc aurum vati Fata exitiale monebant
 Argolico; scit et ipsa (nefas!), sed perfida coniunx
 dona viro mutare velit, spoliisque potentis
 195 imminet Argiae raptoque excellere cultu.
 illa libens (nam regum animos et pondera belli
 hac nutare videt, pariter si providus heros

193 ipse $P\omega$ (ζ , *Sandstroem*)

197 *ni vel nisi* ψ

BOOK 4

part is hidden with a skill newly discovered²⁷ and dying darkens in tawny gold. Around is the sluggish river and Lerna dark blue in steel. But his spacious flanks and broad breast are guarded by a corselet woven of countless iron threads, a thing of fear, no mother's work. From the helmet's coruscating peak rises a Giant. A cypress stands bereft of foliage with point attached, none but he can throw it. To his obedience are given they that fertile Amphigenia nurtures and flat Messene and mountainous Ithome, likewise Thryon and Aepy piled on its hilltop and Helos and Pteleon and Dorion weeping for the Getic bard. Here Thamyris, who trusted to surpass the skilled daughters of Aonia in song, was condemned to silent years. His voice and lyre fell suddenly mute, for who should scorn deities to their face? He knew not of Phoebus' contest and Celaenae famed for the hanging Satyr.²⁸

And now the fate-speaking augur's resolve wilts perforce. To be sure he sees the event, the dire signs, but Atropos herself had put arms into his doubting hand and overwhelmed the god.²⁹ Nor is his wife's treachery lacking, and already his house flares with forbidden gold. This gold the Fates warned would bring destruction to the Argive seer. Herself she knows it (ah, crime!), but the faithless spouse would fain barter her husband for a gift and covets the spoils of powerful Argia, wishful to shine in stolen finery. Cheerfully Argia (for she sees that if the prescient hero take the field with the rest, the minds of kings and the

²⁷ By Hercules when he cauterized the Hydra's heads (Housman, 1203).

²⁸ Marsyas, hung up to be flayed.

²⁹ Apollo, i.e. the gift of prophecy.

THEBAID

- militet) ipsa sacros gremio Polynicis amati
 deposuit nexus haud maesta atque insuper addit:
 200 'non haec apta mihi nitidis ornatibus,' inquit,
 'tempora, nec miserae placeant insignia formae
 te sine: sat dubium coetu solante timorem
 fallere et incultos aris adverrere crines.
 scilicet (infandum!), cum tu claudare minanti
 205 casside ferratusque sones, ego divitis aurum
 Harmoniae dotale geram? dabit aptius isto
 Fors decus, Argolicasque habitu praestabo maritas,
 cum regis coniunx, cum te mihi sospite templa
 votivis implenda choris; nunc induat illa
 210 quae petit et bellante potest gaudere marito.'
 sic Eriphylaeos aurum fatale penates
 irrupit scelerumque ingentia semina movit,
 et grave Tisiphone risit gavisus futuris.
- Taenariis hic celsus equis, quam dispare coetu
 215 Cyllarus ignaro generarat Castore prolem,
 quassat humum; vatem cultu Parnasia monstrant
 vellera: frondenti crinitur cassis oliva
 albaque puniceas interplicat infula cristas.
 arma simul pressasque iugo moderatur habenas.
 220 hinc atque inde morae iaculis, et ferrea curru
 silva tremit; procul ipse gravi metuendus in hasta
 eminet et clipeo victum Pythona coruscant.

199 deposuit nexus ω : exuerat cultus P

203 advertere ω : avert- P (*Eutyches*, GLK 5.482.7)

204 infandum P: heu superi ω

206 aptior isto (ista ω) . . . deus P ω (*Zander*)

219 pressas P ψ : prensas ω

BOOK 4

scales of war sway this way) herself put the accursed chain in the bosom of her beloved Polynices nothing loath, and adds to boot: 'These times suit not bright ornaments for me, nor should I take pleasure in decking unhappy beauty without you. Enough to cheat my doubt and fear with consoling company and sweep my undressed hair at the altars. Should I—abominable thought!—wear rich Harmonia's golden dower while you are cased in threatening helm and clank in steel? Fortune shall give me more timely³⁰ ornament than this and my habit shall outshine Argos' brides when I am a king's consort and with you preserved to me the temples must be filled with votive choirs. For now let her put it on who seeks it and can be merry with her husband at the wars.' So the fatal gold invaded Eriphyle's dwelling and set moving mighty seeds of crime. Tisiphone smiled grimly, rejoicing in the future.

Aloft above Taenarian horses, offspring begot by Cyl-larus in an unequal union unbeknown to Castor, he shakes the ground. Parnassian wool adorns him, marking the prophet. His helmet is wreathed with leafy olive and a white fillet twines in the scarlet plume. He handles at once his arms and the reins pressed down upon the yoke. On either side are slots³¹ for darts and an iron forest quivers in the car. Himself towers far seen with his weighty spear and flashes vanquished Python upon his shield. Apollo's

³⁰ Lit. 'more appropriate.'

³¹ Lit. 'delays.' The meaning is not certain.

huius Apollineae currum comitantur Amyclae,
 quos Pylos et dubiis Malea vitata carinis
 225 plaudentique habiles Caryae resonare Dianae,
 quos Pharis volucrumque parens Cythereia Messe,
 Taygetique phalanx et oloriferi Eurotae
 dura manus. deus ipse viros in pulvere crudo
 Arcas alit nudaeque modos virtutis et iras
 230 ingenerat; vigor inde animis et mortis honorae
 dulce sacrum. gaudent natorum fata parentes
 hortanturque mori; deflent namque omnis ephcbum
 turba, coronato contenta est funere mater.
 frena tenent duplexque inserto missile nodo,
 235 exserti ingentes umeros, chlamys horrida pendet,
 et cono Ledaeus apex. non hi tibi solum,
 Amphiaræ, merent: auget resupina maniplos
 Elis, depressae populus subit incola Pisae,
 qui te flave natant terris Alphee Sicanis,
 240 advena tam longo non umquam infecte profundo.
 curribus innumeris late putria arva lacesunt
 et bellis armenta domant: ea gloria genti
 infando de more et fractis durat ab usque
 axibus Oenomai; strident spumantia morsu
 245 vincula et effossas niveus rigat imber harenas.
 Tu quoque Parrhasias ignara matre catervas

224 Helos *Kohlman* (*vide quae annotavi*)

232 iamque $\text{P}\omega$ (*Damsté*)

³² Pylos has already occurred in 125, where it does not seem to belong. Here too it is out of place. The conjecture *Helos* (in Laconia, distinct from Messenian Helos in 181) is supported by

BOOK 4

Amyclae follows his chariot, and Pylos,³² and Malea shunned by timorous keels, and Caryae skilled to make music to Diana's applause³³ and Pharis and Cythercan Messe, parent of birds, likewise the phalanx of Taygetus and the tough band of swanny Eurotas. The Arcadian god³⁴ himself nurtures the warriors in the raw dust, implanting the fashions and furies of naked valour. Hence vigour to their spirit and the sweet rite of an honourable death. Parents rejoice at their children's fate and urge them to die; for all the multitude weep for a youth, while his mother is content with his wreathed corpse. Reins they hold and two javelins knotted together; their massive shoulders are bare, a rough cloak hangs down and Leda's crest³⁵ is on their helmets. Not they alone, Amphiarus, serve under you. Sloping Elis swells your troops and the folk of low-lying Pisa come forward who swim in yellow Alpheos—arrival in Sicanian lands, never tainted by the long seaway. With chariots beyond count they churn their crumbling fields far and wide and tame horses for war. That glory has endured for the breed from Oenomaus' abominable custom and his broken axles. The foaming bits rattle with the bites and a snowy shower bedews the hollowed earth.

You also, Parthenopaeus, unknown to your mother

a mention after Amyclae in the Homeric catalogue (*Iliad* 2.584) and by the context here. On the other hand the Pylians are in Amphiarus' following in 8.365. Adding to the embarrassment is the absence of a verb (like *nutrit* in 179) to govern *quos*, leading Lachmann to suggest that a line has fallen out after 225.

³³ Diana had a temple there with annual dances in her honour.

³⁴ Mercury, patron of gymnastics.

³⁵ Of swan's feathers.

THEBAID

(a rudis armorum, tantum nova gloria suadet!),
 Parthenopaeae, rapis; saltus tunc forte remotos
 torva parens (neque enim haec iuveni foret ire potestas)
 250 pacabat cornu gelidique aversa Lycae.
 pulchrior haud ulli triste ad discrimen ituro
 vultus et egregiae tanta indulgentia formae;
 nec desunt animi, veniat modo fortior aetas.
 255 quas non ille duces nemorum fluviisque dicata
 numina, quas magno non abstulit igne Napaeae?²⁵⁵
 ipsam, Maenalia puerum cum vidit in umbra,
 Dianam, tenero signantem gramina passu,
 ignovisse ferunt comiti, Dictaeaque tela
 ipsam et Amyclaeas umeris aptasse pharetras.
 260 prosilit audaci Martis percussus amore,
 arma, tubas audire calens et pulvere belli
 flaventem sordere comam captoque referri
 hostis equo: taedet nemorum, titulumque nocentem
 sanguinis humani pudor est nescire sagittas.
 265 igneus ante omnes auro micat, igneus ostro,
 undantemque sinum nodis irrugat Iiberis,
 imbelli parma pictus Calydonia matris
 proelia; trux laeva sonat arcus, et aspera plumis
 terga Cydonea gorytos harundine pulsat
 270 electro pallens et iaspide clarus Eoa.
 cornipedem trepidos suetum praevertere cervos,
 velatum geminae deiectu lyncis et arma
 mirantem gravioris heri, sublimis agebat,
 dulce rubens viridique genas spectabilis aevo.

²⁴⁷ annorum P ω (ζ)

²⁵⁵ abstulit P: impu- ω

³⁶ His mother Atalanta.

BOOK 4

sweep onward Parrhasian squadrons—a novice in arms, alas; so potent the love of untasted glory. Your stern parent, as it fell out, was pacifying distant glades with her bow on the far side of the hill Lycaeus—but for that the youth could not have gone. No fairer face would go forth to grim peril, no peerless form so much favoured. Nor does he want for courage, only let come robust years. What woodland princesses and spirits to rivers dedicate did he not sweep away with burning passion, what Nymphs of the dell? Diana herself, they say, when she saw the lad tracing his tender steps on the grass in Maenalus' shade, forgave her companion,³⁶ and herself fitted Dietaean shafts and Amyclaeon quiver to his shoulders. Forth he dashes, smitten by Mars' audacious ardour, burning to hear arms and trumpets and soil his yellow hair with the dust of battle and return on a foeman's captured horse. He is weary of the woods and ashamed that his arrows know not the guilty glory of human blood. Flaming with gold he flashes foremost, flaring with purple, ereasing the folds of his robe with Iberian³⁷ knots. On his fledgling shield are painted his mother's Calydonian combats.³⁸ At his left side rattles his bold bow, his back is rough with feathers³⁹ and struck by Cydonian shafts in a quiver pale with electrum and bright with eastern jasper. Aloft he rode a charger⁴⁰ wont to out-speed the panicked deer, covered with two lynx hides, now marvelling at the arms of a weightier master. His comely flush and the freshness of youth upon his cheeks drew all

³⁷ Of metal mined in Spain. Whether this refers to a cuirass or a belt is doubtful. ³⁸ The boar hunt.

³⁹ Little pieces of metal making a corselet; cf. 11.543.

⁴⁰ Lit. 'horn-foot,' as often.

THEBAID

- 275 Arcades huic veteres, astris lunaque priores,
 agmina fida datis, nemorum quos stirpe rigenti
 fama satos, cum prima pedum vestigia tellus
 admirata tulit; nondum arva domusque nec urbes,
 conubiisve modus; quercus laurique ferebant
 280 cruda puerperia, ac populos umbrosa creavit
 fraxinus, et feta viridis puer excidit orno.
 hi lucis stupuisse vices noctisque feruntur
 nubila et occiduum longe Titana secuti
 desperasse diem. rarescunt alta colonis
 285 Maenala, Parthenium fugitur nemus, agmina bello
 Rhipaque et Stratie ventosaque donat Enispe.
 non Tegea, non ipsa deo vacat alite felix
 Cyllene templumque Aleae nemorale Minervae
 et rapidus Clitor et qui tibi, Pythie, Ladon
 290 paene socer candensque iugis Lampia nivosis
 et Pheneos nigro Styga mittere credita Diti.
 venit et Idaeis ululatibus aemulus Azan
 Parrhasiique duces, et quae risistis, Amores,
 grata pharetrato Nonacria rura Tonanti,
 295 dives et Orchomenos pecorum et Cynosura ferarum.
 Aepytioidem ardor agros Psophidaque celsam
 vastat et Herculeo vulgatos robore montes,
 monstriferumque Erymanthon et aerisonum Stympthalon.
 Arcades hi, gens una viris, sed dissona cultu
 300 scinditur: hi Paphias myrtos a stirpe recurvant
 et pastorali meditantur proelia trunco,
 his arcus, his tela sudas, hic casside crines

302 hic casside ω: his cassida P

BOOK 4

eyes. To him the Areadians, an old race earlier than stars and moon, give loyal troops. They were born, as legend tells, from the stiff forest trees when the astonished earth first felt the print of feet. Not yet were there fields and houses or cities or marriage rules. Oaks and laurels bore stout offspring, the shady ash created peoples, a vigorous boy dropped from the pregnant rowan. 'Tis said the changes of the light and the darkness of night astounded them and that following the setting Titan from afar they despaired of day. Lofty Maenalus is thinned of husbandmen, the Parthenian forest is deserted, Rhipe and Stratie and windy Enispe give troops for the war. Tegea stands not idle, nor Cyllene herself, happy in her winged god, nor Aleae, forest shrine of Minerva, and swift Clitor and Ladon,⁴¹ almost father of the Pythian's bride, and Lampia, white on her snowy ridges, and Pheneos, believed to send Styx to dusky Dis. Azan came, rivalling the howls of Ida,⁴² and the Parrhasian chiefs and the Nonacrian countryside pleasant to the quiver-bearing Thunderer⁴³ (the Loves laughed), and Orehoimenos rich in cattle and Cynosura in wild beasts. The same impulse denudes Aepytyus' fields and lofty Psophis and mountains famed for Hercules' club—monster-bearing Erymanthus and bronze-sounding Stymphalos.⁴⁴ Arcadians are these, one race of men but divided in their habit. Some bend Paphian myrtles back from the root and practise battles with shepherds' staves, some are armed with bows, some with stakes. One covers his hair

⁴¹ River, father of Daphne.

⁴² I.e. of Cybele's votaries.

⁴³ Where he seduced Callisto disguised as Diana.

⁴⁴ Hercules frightened the monster-birds there with a bronze rattle.

integit, Arcadii morem tenet ille galeri,
 ille Lycaoniae rictu caput asperat ursae.
 305 hos belli coetus iurataque pectora Marti
 milite vicinae nullo iuvere Mycenae;
 funerea tunc namque dapes mediique recursus
 Solis, et hic alii miscebant proelia fratres.

Iamque Atalantaeas implebat nuntius aures
 310 ire ducem bello totamque impellere natum
 Arcadium: tremuere gradus, elapsaque iuxta
 tela; fugit silvas perniciosior alite vento
 saxa per et plenis obstantia flumina ripis,
 qualis erat, correpta sinus et vertice flavum
 315 crinem sparsa Noto; raptis velut aspera natis
 praedatoris equi sequitur vestigia tigris.
 ut stetit adversisque impegit pectora frenis
 (ille ad humum pallens): 'unde hacc furibunda cupido,
 nate, tibi, teneroque unde improba pectore virtus?
 320 tu bellis aptare viros, tu pondera ferre
 Martis et ensiferas inter potes ire catervas?
 quamquam ubinam vires? nuper te pallida vidi,
 dum premis obnixo venabula comminus apro,
 poplite succiduo resupinum ac paene ruentem;
 325 et ni curvato torsissem spicula cornu,
 nunc ubi bella tibi? nil te mea tela iuvabunt
 nec teretes arcus maculis nec discolor atris
 hic, cui fidis, equus; magnis conatibus instas,
 vix Dryadum thalamis Erymanthiadumque furori

308-43 *manu recentiore suppl. in P*

322 *utinam ω (SB) quires Postgate*

45 Callisto, daughter of Lycaon, was turned into a bear.

BOOK 4

with a helmet, another holds to the old-style Arcadian hat, yet another makes his head rugged with the gaping jaws of a Lycaonian bear.⁴⁵ These warlike gatherings, these hearts sworn to Mars were not helped by neighbouring Mycenae with any soldiers. For then was the deadly banquet and the sun's midday retreat, there too other brothers joined battle.⁴⁶ ✓

Now the news had filled Atalanta's ears, that her son was going a captain to war and moving all Arcadia. Her steps tottered, her weapon fell by her side. Swifter than winged wind she flees the forest over rocks and rivers that blocked her way with brimming banks, just as she was, her robe girt up, the yellow hair on her head scattering in the breeze, as an angry tigress bereft of her cubs follows the tracks of the robber horse. Anon she halts and thrusts her bosom against his bridle (he pale and downcast):⁴⁷ 'Whence this mad desire, my son? Whence this unconscionable valour in your youthful breast? Can you train men for war? Can you bear the burdens of Mars and move among sword-bearing squadrons? But where the strength? Only lately I turned pale to see you pressing your hunting spear against a thrusting boar in close combat, forced back upon bent knee and near collapse; and if I had not shot an arrow from my curving bow, where would your war be now? My shafts will not avail you nor the smooth bow nor this piebald horse with the black spots, in whom you trust. You embark on a great enterprise, a boy scarce ripe for the chambers of Dryads and the passion of

⁴⁶ See Atreus in Index. Mycenae was in Argolis, well to the east of Arcadia.

⁴⁷ Readers are left to assume that Atalanta found her son in the 'Greek' camp.

THEBAID

- 330 Nympharum mature puer. sunt omina vera:
 mirabar cur templa mihi tremuisse Dianae
 nuper et inferior vultu dea visa, sacrisque
 exuviae cecidere tholis; hoc segnior arcus
 difficilesque manus et nullo in vulnere certae.
- 335 exspecta dum maior honos, dum firmitus aevum,
 dum roseis venit umbra genis vultusque recedunt
 ore mei; tunc bella tibi ferrumque, quod ardes,
 ipsa dabo et nullo matris revocabere fletu.
 nunc refer arma domum! vos autem hunc ire sinetis,
- 340 Arcades, o saxis nimirum et robore nati?
 plura cupit; fusi circum natusque ducesque
 solantur minuuntque metus, et iam horrida clangunt
 signa tubae. nequit illa pio dimittere natum
 complexu multumque duci commendat Adrasto.
- 345 At parte ex alia Cadmi Mavortia plebes,
 maesta ducis furiis nec molli territa fama,
 quando his vulgatum descendere viribus Argos,
 tardius illa quidem regis causaeque pudore,
 verum bella movet. nulli destringere ferrum
- 350 impetus aut umeros clipeo clausisse paterno
 dulce nec alipedum iuga comere, qualia belli
 gaudia; deiecti trepidas sine mente, sine ira
 promiscere manus; hic aegra in sorte parentem
 unanimum, hic dulces primaevae coniugis annos
- 355 ingemit et gremio miscros accrescere natos.
 bellator nulli caluit deus; ipsa vetusto
 moenia lapsa situ magnaevae Amphionis arces

BOOK 4

Erymanthian Nymphs. Omens tell true. I marvelled why of late Diana's temple seemed to me to tremble and the goddess herself had a look of the underworld⁴⁸ and why spoils fell from her sacred dome. 'Twas this that slackened my bow and made my hands clumsy, unsure in every stroke. Wait till your dignity be greater, your age stouter, till shadow comes to your rosy cheeks and my face leaves yours. Then myself shall give you war and the steel you burn for and no mother's tears shall call you back. For now bring your arms back home. And you Arcadians, surely born of rocks and timber, shall you let him go?' She would say more, but around her in a throng her son and the leaders comfort her and allay her fears. And now the harsh trumpet-signals bray. She cannot let her son leave her fond embrace and much she commends him to king Adrastus.

In another quarter the Martian people of Cadmus, dismayed by the king's madness and alarmed by grievous report—it was bruited abroad that Argos was about to come down in this strength—slowly to be sure for shame of the ruler and the cause but all the same, make ready for war. None was impatient to draw the sword nor were they happy to cover their shoulders with paternal shield or to groom paired horses—war's joys. Downcast, they put forward nervous hands, without commitment, without anger. One grieves for a loving parent in sad case, another for a young wife's beguiling years and the poor offspring growing in her womb. For none did the warrior god wax warm. Even the walls have crumbled with ancient neglect. Amphion's great towers lay bare flanks worn and decayed.

⁴⁸ I.e. of Hecate, her underworld self, as suggested by Håkanson. Lit. 'lower in countenance.'

iam fessum senio nudant latus, et fide sacra
 aequatos caelo surdum atque ignobile muros
 360 firmat opus. tamen et Boeotis urbibus ultrix
 aspirat ferri rabies, nec regis iniqui
 subsidio quantum socia pro gente moventur.
 ille velut pecoris lupo expugnator opimi,
 pectora tabenti sanie gravis hirtaque sactis
 365 ora cruentata deformis hiantia lana,
 decedit stabulis huc illuc turbida, versans
 lumina, si duri comperta clade sequantur
 pastores, magnique fugit non inscius ausi.

Accumulat crebros turbatrix Fama pavores:
 370 hic iam dispersos errare Asopide ripa
 Lernaeos equites, hic te, bacchate Cithaeron,
 ille rapti Teumeson ait noctisque per umbras
 nuntiat excubiis vigiles arsisse Plataeas.
 nam Tyrios sudare lares et sanguine Dircen
 375 irriguam fetusque novos iterumque locutam
 Sphinga petris, cui non et scire licentia passim
 et vidisse fuit? novus his super anxia turbat
 corda metus: sparsis subito correpta canistris
 silvestris regina chori decurrit in aequum
 380 vertice ab Ogygio trifidamque huc tristis et illuc
 lumine sanguineo pinum disiectat et ardens
 erectam attonitis implet clamoribus urbem:
 'omnipotens Nysae pater, cui gentis avitac
 pridem lapsus amor, tu nunc horrente sub Arcto
 385 bellica ferrato rapidus quatis Isnara thyrso
 pampineumque iubes nemus irreptare Lycurgo,

⁴⁹ 'Someone had seen from a distance the watchfire burning in Plataeae, a Boeotian town properly on the alert, and came along

BOOK 4

Mute ignoble toil strengthens the ramparts that the sacred lyre once levelled with heaven. And yet avenging lust for battle breathes also on the cities of Boeotia; they are moved not so much to aid the unjust monarch as on behalf of an allied folk. *He* is like a wolf that has stormed a fat sheepfold; his chest is heavy with rotting gore, the gaping bristly mouth ugly with bloodstained wool; leaving the pens, he turns uneasy glances this way and that to see whether the hardy shepherds have discovered the disaster and follow; conscious of great audacity, he flees.

Bustling Rumour piles scare on scare. One says that Lernaean horsemen are already scattered abroad on the bank of Asopos. Another tells of Cithaeron, haunt of Bacchanals, captured, of Teumesos another, and reports Plataeae, with her sentries watchful through the dark night, afire.⁴⁹ For who, wherever he might be, had not licence to know and be eyewitness to Tyrian household gods sweating, Dirce running blood, strange births, and the Sphinx speaking again among her rocks? Above all this, new terror troubles their anxious hearts: the queen of the woodland choir⁵⁰ is suddenly caught up; scattering the baskets, she runs down from the Ogygian summit into the plain and grimly with bloodshot eyes waves her triple pine to and fro, in her passion filling the startled city with frenzied cries: 'Nysaeon father almighty, you have long since shed your love for your ancestral people. Now under the shivering Bear you run with iron-tipped wand shaking warlike Ismara and command the vine-clad forest to creep

with a report that the Argives had captured the place and set it on fire' (SB¹).

⁵⁰ Leader of the Bacchanals.

THEBAID

aut tumidum Gangen aut claustra novissima Rubrae
 Tethyos Eoasque domos flagrante triumpho
 perfuris, aut Hermi de fontibus aureus exis:
 390 at tua progenies, positis gentilibus armis
 quae tibi festa litant, bellum lacrimasque metumque
 cognatumque nefas, iniusti munera regni,
 pendimus. aeternis potius me, Bacche, pruinis
 trans et Amazoniis ululatum Caucason armis
 395 siste ferens, quam monstra ducum stirpemque profanam
 eloquar. en urges (alium tibi, Bacche, furorem
 iuravi): similes video concurrere tauros;
 idem ambobus honos unusque ab origine sanguis;
 ardua collatis obnixa cornua miscent
 400 frontibus alteraque truces moriuntur in ira.
 tu peior, tu cede, nocens qui solus avita
 gramina communemque petis defendere montem.
 a miseri morum! bellastis sanguine tanto
 et saltum dux alter habet.' sic fata gelatis
 405 vultibus et Baccho iam demigrante quievit.

At trepidus monstro et variis terroribus impar
 longaevis rex vatis opem tenebrasque sagaces
 Tiresiae, qui mos incerta paventibus, aeger
 consulit. ille deos non larga caede iuvenum,
 410 non alacri penna aut verum salientibus extis,
 nec tripode implicito numerisque sequentibus astra,
 turea nec supra volitante altaria fumo
 tam penitus, durae quam Mortis limite manes
 elicitos, patuisse refert; Lcthaeaeque sacra

⁴¹⁰ salientibus P *ante corr.*: spiran -ω

⁵¹ Red Sea = Persian Gulf.

BOOK 4

over Lycurgus; or you rage in blazing triumph by swollen Ganges or the furthest limits of Red Tethys⁵¹ and the lands of morning, or emerge all golden from Hermus' springs.⁵² But we your children, laying aside the weapons of our nation⁵³ that do you festal worship, suffer war and tears and terror and kindred crime, gifts of a wrongful reign. Carry me, Bacchus, and set me among the everlasting frosts beyond Caucasos where Amazonian armies howl, rather than that I should tell of monstrous acts of rulers and a brood unhallowed. Lo, you drive me. Not this the madness I swore to you, Bacchus. I see a pair of bulls clash; both handsome, with one blood of origin. They lock lofty horns butting head to head and fiercely die in mutual wrath. You are the worse; give way, you sinner, you that seek to defend alone hereditary pasture and common hill. Woe on your ways! So much bloodshed in your warring and another chief holds the meadow!' So she spoke, and as Bacchus withdrew, her face froze to rest.

Alarmed by the portent and unequal to the various terrors, sick at heart the king asks counsel and help of the aged seer, the wise blindness of Tiresias, as was the wont of those fearing the unknown. He says the gods do not so thoroughly reveal themselves by lavish slaughter of steers or swift pinnion or entrails leaping to show truth or by riddling tripod or numbers that track the stars, nor yet by smoke flowing over incense-bearing altars, as do spirits summoned from the boundary of cruel death.⁵⁴ He makes

⁵² Hermus was a gold-bearing river.

⁵³ The Bacchic wands (thyrsi).

⁵⁴ The long sentence seems to have plunged off the rails.

Manes elicitos should rather be *manibus elicitis*.

THEBAID

- 415 et mersum Ismeni subter confinia ponto
 miscentis parat ante ducem, circumque bidentum
 visceribus laceris et odori sulphuris aura
 graminibusque novis et longo murmure purgat.
- 420 Silva capax aevi validaque incurva senecta,
 aeternum intonsae frondis, stat pervia nullis
 solibus; haud illam brumae minuere, Notusve
 ius habet aut Getica Boreas impactus ab Ursa.
 subter operta quies, vacuusque silentia servat
 horror et exclusae pallet male lucis imago.
- 425 nec caret umbra deo: nemori Latonia cultrix
 additur; hanc piceae cedrique et robore in omni
 effictam sanctis occultat silva tenebris.
 huius inaspectae luco stridere sagittae
 nocturnique canum gemitus, ubi limina patruī
- 430 effugit inque novae melior redit ora Dianae;
 aut ubi fessa ingis, dulcesque altissima somnos
 lux monet, hic late iaculis circum undique fixis
 effusam pharetra cervicem excepta quiescit.
 extra immane patent, tellus Mavortia, campi,
- 435 fetus ager Cadmo. durus qui vomere primo
 post consanguineas acies sulcosque nocentes
 ausus humum versare et mollia sanguine prata

⁴³² monet ψ : movet ω (431–33 *om.* P)

⁴³⁷ mollia P: putria ω

⁵⁵ By way of preliminary purification. *Miscentis* = *miscentis se* has very few parallels, none classical, and may be fairly held against the author.

⁵⁶ Diana.

BOOK 4

ready rites of Lethe and the ruler immersed below the confines of Ismenos as the river mingles with the sea,⁵⁵ and purifies all around with mangled entrails of sheep and breath of odorous sulphur and fresh herbs and lengthy incantations.

There stands a wood enduring time, bent by robust old age, with boughs forever unshorn, that no suns can penetrate. Winters diminished it not, nor does the South Wind have power over it nor the North hurled down from the Getic Bear. Beneath is hidden quiet; an empty terror keeps the silence and a semblance of the light shut out makes an eerie pallor. Nor does the shade lack its deity; Latonia⁵⁶ frequents it, appendage to the grove. Her image carved in pine and cedar and every timber is hidden in the forest's sacred gloom. Her arrows whistle unseen in the wood and the howling of her dogs is heard by night, when she escapes her uncle's threshold and returns to the countenance of a new and better Diana;⁵⁷ or when she is weary from the mountains and the sun at his zenith counsels sweet slumber, she here plants her darts all around her and with head hung back on her receptive quiver takes her repose. Outside is a vast stretch of plain, the land of Mars, the field that fructified for Cadmus. Hard was he that after the kindred fray and the guilty furrows first dared till the soil with ploughshare and dug up the blood-softened⁵⁸ meadows!

⁵⁷ When she left the underworld for the upper world, Hecate changed her form, becoming the huntress Diana (Artemis) again; cf. Lucan 6.736–38.

⁵⁸ *Putria* may be right; cf. 444 and 1.437, 3.364. In 454 the ground is dry.

THEBAID

eruit! ingentes infelix terra tumultus
 lucis adhuc medio solaque in nocte per umbras
 440 exspirat, nigri cum vana in proelia surgunt
 terrigenae; fugit incepto tremibundus ab arvo
 agricola insanique domum rediere iuveni.

Hic senior vates (Stygiis accommoda quippe
 terra sacris, vivoque placent sola pinguia tabo)
 445 velleris obscuri pecudes armentaque sisti
 atra monet, quaecumque gregum pulcherrima cervix
 ducitur. ingemuit Dirce maestusque Cithaeron,
 et nova clamosae stupuere silentia valles.
 tum fera caeruleis intexit cornua sertis
 450 ipse manu tractans, notaeque in limite silvae
 principio largos novies tellure cavata
 inclinat Bacchi latices et munera verni
 lactis et Actaeos imbres suadumque cruorem
 manibus; aggeritur quantum bibit arida tellus.
 455 trunca dehinc nemora advolvunt, maestusque sacerdos
 tres Hecatae totidemque satis Acheronte nefasto
 virginibus iubet esse focos; tibi, rector Averni,
 quamquam infossus humo superat tamen agger in auras
 pineus; hunc iuxta cumulo minor ara profundae
 460 erigitur Cereri; frontes atque omne cupressus
 intexit plorata latus. iamque ardua ferro
 signati capita et frugum libamine puro

444 vivo P: multo ω

⁵⁹ Håkanson takes *adhuc* with *medio*: 'the sense is that the plain is haunted even in the middle of the day'—forgetting that the southern noon, like midnight, is preeminently a time for uncanny powers to be abroad; see Gow on Theocritus 1.15.

BOOK 4

Even yet at midday⁵⁹ or in the shades of lonely night the unlucky soil breathes out mighty tumult when the black sons of earth rise up to phantom combat. The farmer flees trembling from the field he has begun and the steers go back home in frenzy.

Here the aged seer (for well suited is the ground for Stygian rites, the soil fat with living⁶⁰ gore is to his liking) gives order that sheep dark of fleece and black herds be stationed, all the finest necks that halter leads. Dirce and sad Cithaeron groaned and the echoing valleys marvelled at the sudden silence. Then with his own hands he twined the fierce horns with garlands dark of hue and at the edge of the familiar wood he first tips lavish draughts of Bacchus into the earth hollowed in nine places and gifts of vernal milk and Attic rain⁶¹ and blood persuasive to spirits. As much as the dry earth will drink is poured. Then they roll up tree trunks and the gloomy priest orders three hearths made for Hecate and as many for the virgin daughters of accursed Acheron.⁶² For you, ruler of Avernus, rises into the air a piny mound, though dug into the soil. Next to that is reared an altar of lesser pile to Ceres of the depth.⁶³ In front and on every side lamented cypress twines. And now the cattle collapse into the strokes, their tall heads marked

⁶⁰ Cf. 5.162 *in sanguine vivo*. With *tabo*, decayed blood, *vivo* seems abusive, but one is reluctant to accept the commonplace *multo*. ⁶¹ Honey from Mt Hymettus. ⁶² The Furies,

whose father is Erebus in 11.136 and apparently Pluto in 11.69.

⁶³ Similarly 5.156 *inferna Ceres*, an odd way of referring to Ceres' daughter (Proserpina), who is often called *Iuno inferna* or the like. Normally in such expressions the name is transferred to a counterpart of the real owner, not just a connection.

- in vulnus cecidere greges; tunc innuba Manto
 exceptum pateris praelibat sanguen, et omnes
 465 ter eircum acta pyras saneti de more parentis
 semineces fibras et adhuc spirantia reddit
 viscera, nec rapidas cunctatur frondibus atris
 subieetare faees. atque ipse sonantia flammis
 virgulta et tristes crepuisse ut sensit acervos
 470 Tiresias (illi nam plurimus ardor anhelat
 ante genas impletque cavos vapor igneus orbes)
 exclamat (tremuere rogi et vox terruit ignem):
 'Tartarae sedes et formidabile regnum
 Mortis inexplatae, tuque, o saevissime fratrum,
 475 cui servire dati manes aeternaque sontum
 supplicia atque imi famulatur regia mundi,
 solvite pulsanti loca muta et inane severae
 Persephones vulgusque eava sub nocte repostum
 elicite, et plena redeat Styga portitor almo.
 480 ferte simul gressus, nec simplex manibus esto
 in lucem remeare modus; tu separe coetu
 Elysios, Persei, pios, virgaque potenti
 nubilus Arcas agat; contra per crimina functis,
 qui plures Erebo pluresque e sanguine Cadmi,
 485 angue ter excusso et flagranti praevia taxo,
 Tisiphone, dux pande diem, nec lucis egentes
 Cerberus occurso capitum detorqueat umbras.'
 Dixerat, et pariter senior Phoebeaque virgo
 erexere animos; illi formidine nulla,
 490 quippe in corde deus; solum timor obruit ingeus

472 terruit P: impulit ωΣ

490 timor P: tremor ω

⁶⁴ Pluto (Dis. Hades), brother of Jupiter and Neptune.

BOOK 4

with steel and pure scattering of meal. Then maiden Manto makes first libation of blood received in bowls and moving thrice around all the pyres after the fashion of her venerable parent offers half-dead fibres and entrails still alive, nor delays to put consuming torches to the black leafage. When Tiresias himself perceived the branches crackling in the flames and the sad piles roaring (for fierce heat pants before his face and fiery vapour fills his hollow orbs), he exclaims (the pyres shuddered, his voice terrified the flame):

‘Dwellings of Tartarus, and dread realm of insatiable Death, and you, cruelest of the brothers,⁶⁴ to whom are given the ghosts to serve you and the eternal punishments of the guilty, you whom the palace of the lowest world obeys, open to my knocking the silent places and the void of stern Persephone. Draw out the multitude laid by in hollow night and let the ferryman retrace Styx with a full boat. All step out together; but let the ghosts have more ways than one of returning to the light. Daughter of Perses, separate the pious dwellers in Elysium from the concourse and let the misty Arcadian bring them with his potent rod; whereas for those who died in crime, in Erebus a majority and mostly of Cadmus’ blood,⁶⁵ do you, Tisiphone, lead the way: open up the day, shaking out your snakes three times and marching before them with blazing yew; nor let Cerberus block with his heads and turn aside the shades that crave the light.’

He spoke. The old man and Phocbus’ maiden were all attention. They had no fear, for the god was in their breasts. Only the son of Oedipus is overwhelmed by a

⁶⁵ An extravagant hyperbole.

THEBAID

Oedipodioniden, vatisque horrenda canentis
nunc umeros nunc ille manus et vellera prensat
anxius inceptisque velit desistere sacris.
qualis Gaetulae stabulantem ad confraga silvae
495 venator longo motum clamore leonem
expectat firmans animum et sudantia nisu
tela premens; gelat ora pavor gressusque tremescunt,
quis veniat quantusque, sed horrida signa frementis
accipit et caeca metitur murmura cura.
500 Atque hic Tiresias nondum adventantibus umbris:
'testor,' ait, 'divae, quibus hunc saturavimus ignem
lacvaque convulsae dedimus carchesia terrae,
iam nequeo tolerare moram. cassusne sacerdos
audior? an, rabido iubeat si Thessala cantu,
505 ibitis? et, Scythicis quotiens medicata venenis
Colchis aget, trepido pallebunt Tartara motu?
nostri cura minor? si non attollere bustis
corpora nec plenas antiquis ossibus urnas
egerere et mixtos caelique Erebiq̄ue sub unum
510 funestare deos libet aut exsanguia ferro
ora sequi atque aegras functorum carperc fibras,
ne tenues annos nubemq̄ue hanc frontis opacae
spernite, ne, moneo: et nobis saevire facultas.
scimus enim [et] quidquid dici noscique timetis
515 et turbare Hecaten (ni te, Thymbraee, vererer)
et triplicis mundi sumnum, quem scire nefastum.
illum—sed taceo: prohibet tranquilla senectus.
iamque ego vos—' avide subicit Phoebeia Manto:

505 medicata P: armata ω

514 scimus enim ω: novimus P et secl. SB

mighty dread. In his agitation he grasps now the shoulders, now the hands, now the fillets of the seer as he intones his fearsome chant and would fain abandon the rites commenced. Even as a hunter waits for a lion that long shouting rouses from his den in the rough of a Gaetulian forest, steeling his courage and gripping his weapon that sweats with the effort; fear freezes his face and his steps tremble as he wonders what creature approaches, how big—but he hears the roaring, dread sign, and measures the sound in blind trepidation.

Then Tiresias, since the ghosts were not yet approaching: 'I call you to witness, goddesses, for whom we have drenched this fire and with left hand given our cups to the torn earth, I can brook no further delay. Am I, the priest, heard for nothing? If a Thessalian witch's rabid chant were to command you, will you come? Or when a Colchian drugged with Scythian poisons drives, shall Tartarus turn pale and start in fright? And do you care less for me? If I have no mind to raise bodies from tombs or empty urns filled with ancient bones or profane the gods of Erebus and heaven commingled or pursue bloodless faces with the knife and pluck the sick entrails of the dead, do not, I warn you, do not condemn my thinning years and the cloud upon my darkened brow. I too have means to be cruel. For I know whatever you fear spoken or known. I can harry Hecate, did I not respect you, Lord of Thymbra, him⁶⁶ too, highest of the triple world, whom to know is blasphemy. Him—but I hold my peace: tranquil eld forbids. And now I—.' Eagerly Phocbus' Manto puts in her word: 'You are

⁶⁶ Cf. Lucan 6.744ff. According to the scholiast he is the Demiurge, or creator, of Plato's *Timaeus*.

- 'andiris, genitor, vulgusque exsanguie propinquat.
 520 panditur Elysium chaos, et telluris opertae
 dissilit umbra capax, silvaeque et nigra patescunt
 flumina: liventes Acheron eiecat harenas,
 fumidus atra vadis Phlegethon incendia volvit,
 et Styx discretis interflua manibus obstat.
 525 ipsum pallentem solio circumque ministras
 funestorum operum Eumenidas Stygiaeque severos
 Imonis thalamos et torva cubilia cerno.
 in speculis Mors atra sedet dominoque silentes
 annumerat populos; maior superimminuet ordo.
 530 arbiter hos dura versat Gortynius urna
 vera minis poscens adigitque expromere vitas
 usque retro et tandem poenarum lucra fateri.
 quid tibi monstra Erebi, Scyllas et inane furentes
 Centauros solidoque intorta adamante Gigantum
 535 vincula et angustam centeni Aegaeonis umbram?'
 'Immo,' ait, 'o nostrae regimen viresque senectae,
 ne vulgata mihi, quis enim remeabile saxum
 fallentesque lacus Tityonque alimenta voluerim
 et caligantem longis Ixiona gyris
 540 nesciat? ipse etiam, melior cum sanguis, opertas
 inspexi sedes, Hecate ducente, priusquam
 obruit ora deus totamque in pectora lucem
 detulit. Argolicas magis huc appelle precando
 Thebanasque animas; alias avertere gressus
 545 lacte quater sparsas maestoque excedere lico,
 nata, iube; tum qui vultus habitusque, quis ardor
 sanguinis affusi, gens utra superbiior adsit,
 die agendum nostramque mone per singula noctem.'

527 torva P; maesta ω

531 nimis Pω (*Heinsius*)

BOOK 4

heard, father; the bloodless multitude approaches. The Elysian void is revealed, the capacious darkness of hidden earth bursts asunder, woods and black rivers come to view: Acheron ejects livid sands, smoking Phlegethon rolls dark fires in his waters and interflowing Styx bars separated ghosts. Himself I see, pale upon his throne and around him the Furies, servants of his deadly works, and the stern bower and grim couch of Stygian Juno.⁶⁷ Black Death sits on the lookout and counts the silent peoples for her master; a greater series wait their turn. The Gortynion judge⁶⁸ shakes them in his harsh urn, demanding truth with threats, forces them to set forth their lives back to their beginning and confess at last the punishments they evaded. Why tell you of the monsters of Erebus, the Scyllas and idly raging Centaurs, the Giants' chains twisted in solid adamant, and the cramped shade of hundredfold Aegaeon?

'Nay,' said he, 'guide and strength of my old age, tell me not what all men know. For who but would have heard of the ever-returning rock and the cheating pool and Tityos, food of birds, and Ixion, dizzy on his long circlings? I myself, when my blood ran faster, beheld the hidden dwellings with Hecate as my guide, before the god o'erwhelmed my face and bore all light down into my breast. Rather bring Argive and Theban souls hither with your prayers and bid all others, my daughter, sprinkled four times with milk, turn their steps away and depart the dismal grove. Then tell me, come, their countenances and mien, their appetite for the spilt blood, which of the two peoples makes the prouder show; advise my darkness point by point.'

⁶⁷ Proserpina.

⁶⁸ Minos (Gortynian = Cretan).

- Iussa facit carmenque scrit, quo dissipat umbras,
 550 quo reciet sparsas; qualis, si crimina demas,
 Colchis et Aeaeo simulatrix litore Circe.
 tunc his sacrificum dictis affata parentem:
 'primus sanguineo summittit inertia Cadmus
 ora lacu, iuxtaque virum Cythereia proles
 555 insequitur, geminusque bibit de vertice serpens.
 terrigenae comites illos, gens Martia, cingunt,
 quis aevi mensura dies; manus omnis in armis,
 omnis et in capulo; prohibent obstantque ruuntque
 spirantium rabie, nec tristi incumbere fossae
 560 cura, sed alternum sitis exhaurire cruorem.
 proxima natarum manus est fletique nepotes.
 hic orbam Autoonoën, et anhelam cernimus Ino
 respectantem arcus et ad ubera dulce prementem
 pignus, et oppositis Semelen a ventre lacertis.
 565 Penthea iam fractis genetrix Cadmeia thyrsis
 iamque remissa deo pectusque adaperata cruentum
 insequitur planctu; fugit ille per avia Lethes
 et Stygios super usque lacus, ubi mitior illum
 flet pater et lacerum componit corpus Echion.
 570 tristem nosco Lycum dextramque in terga reflexum
 Aeoliden, umero iactantem funus onusto.
 necdum ille aut habitus aut versae crimina formae

557 his P ω (*Nauke ex Σ*) 559 fossa P: sulco ω (ς)

560 sitis exhaurire P: cuperent hau- $\omega\Sigma$

566 adoperta P ω (ς , *Gronovius*)

69 Lit. 'semblance-making.' Circe changed men into beasts.

70 Cadmus and Haemonia.

BOOK 4

She does as commanded and sows a spell wherewith she disperses the shades and when scattered calls them back; like to the Colchian, but for the crimes, and deceiving⁶⁹ Circe on the shore of Aea. Then in these words she addressed her priestly parent: 'First Cadmus lowers his feeble mouth into the bloody pool and Cytherea's daughter follows next her husband. The two serpents⁷⁰ drink from the head top. Their earthborn companions, the Martian race, surround them, whose lifespan was a day, every hand on weapon, every hand on hilt. They block and bar and rush with the fury of living beings, nor care to bend to the gloomy trench but thirst to drain each other's blood. Next comes a band of daughters and lamented grandchildren. Here we see bereaved Autoñoë and panting Ino as she looks back at the bow⁷¹ and presses her sweet child to her breast, and Semele with arms outstretched to protect her belly. His Cadmean mother follows Pentheus with lamentation, her wand now broken, now released of the god, her breasts open⁷² and bleeding. He flees through Lethe's wilderness even beyond the Stygian lake, where his kindlier⁷³ father Echion weeps him and composes his torn body. Sad Lycus I recognize and the son of Aeolus,⁷⁴ his right hand bent behind his back, tossing a corpse⁷⁵ on his laden shoulder. Nor does Aristaeus' son⁷⁶ change his

⁷¹ Her husband Athamas was in pursuit.

⁷² *Adopta* (covered) has been defended as referring to Agave's return to sanity, but sane or not, mourners do not cover their breasts when beating them.

⁷³ Kindlier than his mother.

⁷⁴ Athamas.

⁷⁵ Learchus, his son.

⁷⁶ Actaeon.

THEBAID

mutat Aristaeo genitus: frons aspera cornu,
tela manu, reicitque canes in vulnus hiantes.

575 ecce autem magna subit invidiosa caterva
Tantalus et tumido percenset funera luctu,
nil deiecta malis; iuvat effugisse deorum
numina et insanae plus iam permittere linguae.⁷

Talia dum patri canit intemerata sacerdos,
580 illius elatis tremefacta assurgere vittis
canities tenuisque impelli sanguine vultus.
nec iam firmanti baculo nec virgine fida
nititur, erectusque solo, 'desiste canendo,
nata,' ait, 'externae satis est mihi lucis, inertes
585 discedunt nebulae, et vultum niger exuit aër.
umbrisne an supero demissus Apolline complet
spiritus? en video quaecumque audita. sed ecce
maerent Argolici deiecto lumine manes!
torvus Abas Proetusque nocens mitisque Phoroneus
590 truncatusque Pelops et saevo pulvere sordens
Oenomaus largis umectant imbribus ora.
auguror hinc Thebis belli meliora. quid autem

⁵⁷⁴ *anne* ungue manus?

⁵⁸⁶ dimissus P: me m- ω (*Dowden*)

⁷⁷ The spirits appear as artists depicted them in the enactment of their earthly tragedies, though *nequid* indicates that these forms are only temporary. Actaeon, changed into a stag, defends himself from the hounds who are about to tear him apart. Sometimes in art he is portrayed in human form, wearing a deerskin and with antlers on his head, and so here if *tela manu* is sound. But this item is irrelevant, and the reader, without a picture in front of him, expects something descriptive of a stag, as *ungue manus*, 'hands

aspect yet or the reproach of his altered form. His brow is rough with horns, a weapon in his hand,⁷⁷ and he repels the hounds agape to tear him. And see! Tantalus' daughter comes, to be envied for her long train, and counts over her bodies⁷⁸ in arrogant mourning, no wise downcast by her woes; she rejoices to have escaped the power of the gods and to give more licence now to her crazy tongue.⁷⁹

As the inviolate priestess thus tells her tale to her father, his white hair stands up in trembling, his fillets rise, blood urges his haggard visage. No longer does he lean on his steadying staff or the faithful maiden, but standing erect from the ground: 'Cease your tale, my daughter,' says he. 'I have light enough from without, the dull mists disperse, and the dark air strips away my face.⁸⁰ Inspiration fills me, whether sent from the shades or from Apollo above. Behold, I see all that I heard. But look, the Argive ghosts are sorrowful with eyes downcast. Grim Abas, guilty⁸¹ Proteus, mild Phoroneus, maimed⁸² Pelops, and Ocnomachus⁸³ soiled with cruel dust bedew their faces with floods of tears. Hence I augur the better of the war for

(rough) with hooves'; cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3.196 *cum pedibusque manus, cum longis bracchia mutat / cruribus*.

⁷⁸ The slaughtered Niobids.

⁷⁹ The punishment could not be repeated.

⁸⁰ Another inversion.

⁸¹ Because of his treatment of Bellerophon (*Iliad* 6.156ff.).

⁸² His father Tantalus butchered him and served him up to the gods for dinner. They put him together again, but a missing shoulder had to be replaced with ivory.

⁸³ Argive sympathizers as ancestors of Adrastus and the royal family of Mycenae, which is sometimes equated with Argos, as in 2.119. *Pelopeus* sometimes = Argive.

hi grege condenso (quantum arma et vulnere monstrant,
 pugnae animae) nobis in sanguine multo
 595 oraque pectoraque et falso clamore levatas
 intendunt sine pace manus? rex, fallor? an hi sunt
 quinquaginta illi? cernis Cthoniumque Chrominque
 Phegeaque et nostra praesignem Maeona lauro.
 ne saevite, duces, nihil hic mortalibus ausum,
 600 credite, consiliis: hos ferrea neverat annos
 Atropos. existis casus: bella horrida nobis,
 atque iterum Tydeus.' dicit, vittaque ligatis
 frondibus instantes abigit monstratque cruorem.
 Stabat inops comitum Cocyti in litore macsto
 605 Laius, immiti quem iam deus ales Averno
 reddiderat, dirumque tuens obliqua nepotem
 (noscit enim vultu) non ille aut sanguinis haustus,
 cetera ceu plebes, aliumve accedit ad imbrem,
 immortale odium spirans. sed prolicet ultro
 610 Aonius vates: 'Tyriae dux inclute Thebes,
 cuius ab interitu non ulla Amphionis arces
 vidit amica dies, o iam satis ulte cruentum
 exitium, et multum placata minoribus umbra,
 quos, miserande, fugis? iacet ille in funere longo,
 615 quem fremis, et iunctae sentit confinia mortis,
 obsitus exhaustos paedore et sanguine vultus
 eiectusque die: sors leto durior omni,
 crede mihi! quaenam immeritum vitare nepotem
 causa tibi? confer vultum et satiare litanti
 620 sanguine venturasque vices et funera belli
 pande, vel infensus vel res miserate tuorum.

⁸⁴ As a prophet.

⁸⁵ Explained by the scholiast as referring to the calamities of

Thebes. But what of this crowding flock? Fighting souls, as their weapons and wounds show, why do they display their faces and breasts bathed in blood and stretch their hands toward us raised with false clamour, truceless? King, am I in error or are these those fifty? Do you see Cthonius and Chromis and Phegeus and Maeon marked out by our laurel?⁸⁴ Be not angry, captains, no venture here of mortal devising, believe it. Iron Atropos had spun these years. You have left life's chances behind you. For us war's horrors, and Tydeus once again.' He speaks and as they press drives them off with boughs by fillet bound and beckons to the blood.

On Cocytus' sad shore stood Laius all by himself—the winged god had already returned him to pitiless Avernus—peering sideways at his fell grandson, whose face he recognized. Breathing deathless hate, he does not approach like the rest of the crowd to drink the blood or other pourings, but the Aonian seer drew him forth: 'Ruler renowned of Tyrian Thebes, since whose death no day has looked kindly on Amphion's citadel, now enough avenged of your bloody taking-off, shade well appeased by your posterity,⁸⁵ whom, piteous one, do you flee? He whom you curse⁸⁶ lies in a long burial and feels death linked in close neighbourhood, his exhausted visage sunk in filth and blood, cast out from the light of day. His lot is harder than any death, believe me. What cause have you to shun your innocent grandson? Come face to face and take your fill of sacrificial blood and set forth happenings to be and war's calamities, whether in anger or pity for your family's fortunes. Then shall I grant

Oedipus and his sons, though the worst for the latter was still to come. ⁸⁶ Oedipus.

THEBAID

tune ego et optata vetitam transmittere Lethen
puppe dabo plæidumque pia tellure reponam
et Stygiis mandabo deis.'

Mulcetur honoris

- 625 muneribus tingitque genas, dein talia reddit:
'eur tibi versanti manes, aequaeve saeerdos,
leetus ego augurio tantisque potissimus umbris
qui ventura loquar? satis est meminisse priorum.
nostrane praeelari (pudeat) econsulta nepotes
630 poseitis? illum, illum sacris adhibete nefastis,
qui laeto fodit ense patrem, qui semet in ortus
vertit et indignae regerit sua pignora matri.
et nunc ille deos Furiarumque atra fatigat
conecilia et nostros rogat haec in proelia manes.
635 quod si adeo plæui deflenda in tempora vates,
dieam equidem, quo me Laethesis, quo torva Megaera
usque sinunt: bellum, innumero venit undique bellum
agmine, Lernacosque trahit fatalis alunnos
Gradivus stimulis; hos terrae monstra deumque
640 tela manent pulehrique obitus et ab igne supremo
sontes lege morae. eerta est victoria Thebis,
ne trepida, nee regna ferox germanus habebit
sed Furiae; geminumque nefas miserosque per enses
(ei mihi!) crudelis vincit pater.' haec ubi fatus
645 labitur et flexa dubios ambage relinquit.

Interea gelidam Nemeen et conscia laudis
Hereuleae dimeta vaga legione tenebant
Inachidae; iam Sidonias avertere praedas,

⁸⁷ With the blood.

you to cross forbidden Lethe in the longed-for boat and place you at peace in pious earth and consign you to the gods of Styx.'

Soothed by the flattering gifts, he moistens his cheeks⁸⁷ and thus returns: 'Priest, my coeval, why as you reviewed the shades choose me for augury, me in all the multitude of ghosts to tell the future? It is enough to remember the past. My splendid grandsons, ask you counsel of me? For shame! Bring *him* to your evil rites, him who stabs his father with joyous sword, who turns himself to his beginnings and thrusts back her child on his undeserving mother. And now he wearies the gods and the dark councils of the Furies and asks my ghost for help towards these battles. But if I am so welcome as a prophet for tearful times, speak I will, so far as Lachesis and grim Magaera permit. War is coming, war from every quarter in countless host, and by fate's decree Gradivus draws on Lerna's children with his goads. Portents of earth await them and weapons of the gods and beauteous death and guilty ordinance delaying the final fire.⁸⁸ Victory for Thebes is certain. Fear not. Neither shall your fierce brother have the realm; the Furies shall have it. Through twin impiety and unhappy swords, alas, your cruel father prevails.' So saying, he sinks and leaves them perplexed at his tortuous riddle.

Meanwhile the sons of Inachus in errant host held chill⁸⁹ Nemea and the thickets that knew Hercules' glory. Already they burn with impatience to carry off Sidonian

⁸⁸ Foreshadowing the deaths of Amphiaraus, Capaneus, and Parthenopaeus (*pulchri obitus*; see SB1), and Creon's denial of burial. ⁸⁹ Because shady.

THEBAID

650 sternere, ferre domos ardent instantque. quis iras
flexerit, unde morae, medius quis euntibus error,
Phoebe, doce: nos rara manent exordia fama.

Marcidus edomito bellum referebat ab Haemo
Liber; ibi armiferos geminae iam sidera brumae
orgia ferre Getas canumque virescere dorso
655 Othryn et Icaria Rhodopen assueverat umbra,
et iam pampineos materna ad moenia currus
promovet; effrenae dextra laevaue sequuntur
lynces, et uda mero lambunt retinacula tigris.
post exsultantes spolia armentalia portant
660 seminecesque lupos scissasque Mimallones ursas.
nec comitatus iners: sunt illic Ira Furorque
et Metus et Virtus et numquam sobrius Ardor
succiduique gradus et castra simillima regi.
isque ubi pulvereae Nemeen effervere nube
665 conspicit et solem radiis ignescere ferri,
necdum compositas belli in certamina Thebas,
concussus visis, quamquam ore et pectore marcet,
aeraque tympanaque et biforem reticere tumultum
imperat, attonitas qui circum plurimus aures,
670 atque ita: 'me globus iste meanque excindere gentem
apparat; ex longo recalet furor; hoc mihi saevum
Argos et indomitae bellum ciet ira novercae.
usque adeone parum cineri data mater iniquo
natalesque rogi quaeque ipse micantia sensi
675 fulgura? reliquias etiam fusaeque sepulcrum
paelicis et residem ferro petit improba Theben.
nectam fraude moras; illum, illum tendite campum,

651 manent ω : mon- P

665 solis . . . ferrum ζ , *Madvig*

670 globus iste P: manus ista ω

676 improba ω : impia P

plunder, to raze and ravage homes. Tell, Phoebus, who turned their wrath aside, whence came delay, what wandering stayed their march. We have only scattered beginnings of the story.

Languorous Liber was bringing back his warfare from conquered Haemus. There through the stars of two winters he had trained the martial Getae to carry his emblems and hoary Othrys' ridge and Rhodope to grow green with Icarian foliage.⁹⁰ And now he brings his vine-clad car to his mother's city. Wild lynxes follow left and right and tigers lick the wine-wet reins. In the rear triumphing Mimallones carry spoils of the herd and half-dead wolves and cloven bears. No lazy retinue is his: Wrath and Madness are there, and Fear and Valour and Ardour never sober and staggering steps and a camp like to its king. When he sees Nemea astir with a dusty cloud and the sun take fire with the steel's rays⁹¹ while Thebes is not yet prepared for clash of battle, he is aghast at the sight. Though faint in speech and heart, he commands the cymbals and drums and double pipes that blare about his deafened ears to be mute, and thus he speaks: 'This host plans to destroy me and my race. From far back their rage heats afresh. Savage Argos and the wrath of my implacable stepmother excite this war against me. My mother given to cruel ashes, the pyre I was born in, the lightnings I myself saw flash—are not these enough? The ruthless goddess attacks with steel even the relics, the tomb of the cremated concubine and an inactive Thebes. By guile I shall weave delay. On to

⁹⁰ Vines.

⁹¹ An audacious inversion even for Statius.

tendite, io comites.' Hyrcanae ad signa iugales
intunuere iubas, dicto prius astitit Argis.

- 680 Tempus erat medii cum solem in culmina mundi
tollit anhela dies, ubi tardus hiantibus arvis
stat vapor atque omnes admittunt aethera luci.
undarum vocat ille deas mediusque silentum
incipit: 'agrestes, fluviorum numina, Nymphae,
685 et nostri pars magna gregis, perferte laborem
quem damus. Argolicos paulum mihi fontibus amnes
stagnaue et errantes obducite pulvere rivos.
praecipuam Nemeen, qua nostra in moenia bellis
nunc iter, ex alto fugiat liquor; adiuvat ipse
690 Phoebus adhuc summo, cesset ni vestra uoluntas,
limite; vim coeptis indulgent astra, meaeque
aestifer Erigones spumat canis. ite volentes,
ite in operta soli; post vos ego gurgite pleno
eliciam, et quae dona meis amplissima sacris
695 vester habebit honos, nocturnaue furta licentum
cornipedum et cupidas Faunorum arcebo rapinas.'

- Dixerat; ast illis tenrior percurrere visus
ora situs, viridisque comis exaruit umor.
protinus Inachios haurit sitis ignea campos:
700 diffugere undae, squalent fontesque lacusque,
et cava ferventi durescunt flumina limo.
aegra solo macies, tenerique in origine culmi
inclinata seges, deceptum margine ripae

⁶⁷⁹ arvis P ω (Watt)

⁶⁹⁷ tenrior ω : -uis P

⁶⁹⁵ exhorruit P ω (ζ)

⁷⁰²⁻⁰³ habent ψ : om. P ω

⁹² Surely more appropriate to Cybele's lions than Bacchus' tigers?

yonder plain, on comrades, on!' The Hyrcanian yoke fellows fluffed out their manes⁹² at the signal, and before the words were out he stood at Argos.⁹³

It was the hour when panting day raises the sun to heaven's midmost summit, when sluggish heat stands in the gaping fields and every grove admits the ether. He calls the goddesses of the waves and in the midst of their silent company begins: 'Nymphs of the wild, river deities, no small part of my following, faithfully perform the task I set. Pray choke with dust for a while the Argive streams at their springs and the meres and the wandering brooks. In Nemea especially, where war now takes its way against my city, let liquid flee from the depth. Phoebus himself aids, still at the height of his road, only let your good will not flag. The stars grant power to my endeavour and the heat-bearing dog of my Erigone foams. Go with a will, go into the covert places of the earth. Later I shall draw you out in full channel and your honour shall have the finest gifts at my worship, and I shall ward off the nighttime tricks of the licentious Hornfeet⁹⁴ and the lustful ravishings of the Fauns.'

He spoke. A thin mould seemed to spread over their faces and the green moisture dried out from their hair. Straightway fiery thirst drains the Inachian fields. The waters disperse, the springs and lakes are encrusted, the riverbeds harden with hot mud. The soil is sick with drought and the grain bends at the base of the tender stalk.

⁹³ *Argis*, replacing the vague *arvis*, gives Bacchus a venue to which he summons the Naiads of the region. 688 implies that he was not at Nemea, where the Argive army had halted.

⁹⁴ Satyrs.

THEBAID

- stat pecus, atque annes quaerunt armenta natatos.
 705 sic ubi se magnis refluus suppressit in antris
 Nilus et Eoae liquentia pabula brumae
 ore premit, fumant desertae gurgite valles
 et patris undosi sonitus exspectat hiulca
 Aegyptos, donec Phariis alimenta rogatus
 710 donet agris magnumque inducat messibus annum.
 Aret Lerna nocens, aret Lyrceus et ingens
 Inachus advolvensque natantia saxa Charadros
 et numquam in ripis audax Erasinus et aequus
 fluctibus Asterion, ille alta per avia notus
 715 audiri et longe pastorum rumpere somnos.
 [sic Hyperionios cum lux effrena per orbem
 rapta ruit Phaëthontis equos, magnumque laborem
 discordes genuere poli, dum pontus et arva
 stellarumque ruunt crines, non annibus undae,
 720 non lucis mansere comae, sed multus ubique
 ignis, ubique faces et longa fluminis instar
 indiget Aegaeon deceptus imagine ripae.]
 una tamen tacitas, sed iussu numinis, undas,
 haec quoque, secreta nutrit Langia sub umbra.
 725 nondum illi raptus dederat lacrimabile nomen
 Archemorus, nec fama deae; tamen avia servat
 (720) et nemus et fluvium; manet ingens gloria Nympham,
 cum tristem Hypsipylen ducibus sudatus Achaeis
 ludus et atra sacrum recolet trieteris Ophelten.
 730 Ergo nec ardentes clipeos vectare nec artos
 thoracum nexus (tantum sitis horrida torret)
 (725) sufficiunt; non ora modo angustisque perusti

716-22 *habet cod. Lipsiensis saec. XI, qui 722 ante 716: om. Pw,*
nisi quod 717 post 723 habet P 731 *torret P: torquet w*

BOOK 4

The flock stands disappointed at the bank's edge, the herds seek in vain for the rivers they once swam. So when ebbing Nile hides himself in his great caverns and holds in his mouth the liquid nurture of an eastern winter,⁹⁵ the valleys smoke forsaken by the flood and gaping Egypt awaits the sounds of her watery father,⁹⁶ until at their prayers he grants sustenance to the Pharian fields and brings on a great harvest year.

Dry is guilty Lerna, dry Lyrcus and mighty Inachus and Charadros rolling rocks in his flood and bold Erasius that never keeps his banks and Asterion equalling sea waves, a familiar sound in the pathless heights, breaking the shepherds' slumbers from afar. Langia alone—but she too by the god's command—feeds silent waters under secret shade. Not yet had reft Archemorus⁹⁷ given the goddess a mournful renown, no fame is hers. Yet in seclusion she keeps wood and stream. Great glory awaits the Nymph when every other year the games⁹⁸ at which Achaea's leaders sweat and the festival of death shall renew the memory of sad Hypsipyle and sacred Opheltes.

Therefore no longer do they have strength to carry hot shields or the tight fabric of corselets; so harsh thirst parches them. Not only are their mouths and constricted

⁹⁵ Ethiopian snows.

⁹⁶ Nile.

⁹⁷ 'Beginner of doom'; cf. 5.739 and Apollodorus 3.6.4, where the name is said to have been given to the dead Opheltes at Amphiarus' prompting.

⁹⁸ Nemean.

- faucibus, interior sed vis quatit: aspera pulsu
 corda, gelant venae et siccis cruor aeger adhaeret
 735 visceribus; tunc sole putris, tunc pulvere tellus
 exhalat calidam nubem. non spumeus imber
 (730) manat equum: siccis illidunt ora lupatis,
 ora catenatas procul exsertantia linguas;
 nec legem dominosve pati, sed perfurit arvis
 740 flammatum pecus. huc illuc impellit Adrastus
 exploratores, si stagna Licymnia restent,
 (735) si quis Amymones superet liquor: omnia caecis
 ignibus hausta sedent, nec spes umentis Olympi,
 ceu flavam Libyen desertaque pulveris Afri
 745 collustrent nullaque umbratam nube Syenen.
 Tandem inter silvas (sic Euhius ipse pararat)
 (740) errantes subitam pulchro in maerore tuentur
 Hypsipylen; illi dependet et ad ubera Opheltes
 non suus, Inachii proles infausta Lycurgi.
 750 quamvis et neglecta comam nec dives amictu,
 regales tamen ore notae, nec mersus acerbis
 (745) exstat honos. tunc haec adeo stupefactus Adrastus:
 'diva potens nemorum (nam te vultusque pudorque
 mortali de stirpe negant), quae laeta sub isto
 755 igne poli non quaeris aquas, succurre propinquis
 gentibus; arquitenens seu te Latonia casto
 (750) de grege transmisit thalamis, seu lapsus ab astris
 non humilis fecundat amor (neque enim ipse deorum
 arbiter Argolidum thalamis novus), aspice maesta

745-50 illi quamvis et . . . dependet P ω (SB²)

⁹⁹ I.e. reduced to sand by the heat of the sun, if the text is sound.

throats burnt up, an inner force convulses them. Their hearts beat roughly, their veins congeal, tainted blood clings to their dry vitals. Then the earth, friable with sun and dust(?),⁹⁹ breathes out hot vapour. No foamy rain flows from the horses. Their mouths champ on dry bits, mouths that thrust bridled tongues far out. They suffer not their masters' rule; inflamed, the animals rage over the land. Adrastus sends scouts this way and that; are the Lycymnian meres¹⁰⁰ still there, does any of Amymone's water survive? All stagnate, drained by hidden fires, nor is there hope of a watery sky. They might as well scour yellow Libya and the sandy deserts of Africa and Syene that no cloud ever shades.

At last as they wander in the forest (so Euhius himself had planned it) suddenly they see Hypsipyle, fair in her sadness. Opheltis, not hers but the ill-starred child of Inachian Lycurgus, hangs at her breast, her hair is dishevelled, her clothing poor; yet on her face are marks of royalty, her dignity shows, not sunk in her misfortune. Then Adrastus in amazement thus addresses her: 'Goddess, Lady of the woods (for your countenance and modesty say you are of no mortal stock), happy in that under this blazing sky you seek not for water, help neighbour peoples. Whether the bow-bearing daughter of Leto sent you from her chaste company to a nuptial chamber or a love of no mean order descended from the stars to make you fruitful (for the lord of the gods himself is no stranger to Argive bedchambers), look upon our unhappy columns. Our pur-

¹⁰⁰ Licymnius was the eponymous hero of Licymna, the citadel of Tiryns. The lakes or swamps will have been in the vicinity.

THEBAID

- 760 agmina. nos ferro meritas excindere Thebas
 mens tulit, imbelli sed nunc sitis aspera fato
 (755) summittitque animos et inertia robora carpit.
 da fessis in rebus opem, seu turbidus amnis,
 seu tibi foeda palus; nihil hac in sorte pudendum,
 765 nil humile est; tu nunc Ventis pluvioque rogaris
 pro Iove, tu refugas vires et pectora bellis
 (760) exanimata reple: sic hoc tibi sidere dextro
 crescat onus. tantum reduces det flectere gressus
 Iuppiter, o quanta belli donabere praeda!
 770 Dircaeos tibi, diva, greges numerumque rependam
 sanguinis et magna lucus signabitur ara.’
 (765) dixit, et orantis media inter anhelitus ardens
 verba rapit, cursuque animae labat arida lingua;
 idem omnes pallorque viros flatusque soluti
 oris habet.
 775 Reddit demisso Lemnia vultu:
 ‘diva quidem vobis, etsi caelestis origo est,
 (770) unde ego? mortales utinam haud transgressa fuisset
 luctibus! altricem mandati cernitis orbam
 pignoris; at nostris an quis sinus, uberaque ulla,
 780 scit deus; et nobis regnum tamen et pater ingens.
 sed quid ego haec, fessosque optatis demoror undis?
 (775) mecum age nunc, si forte vado Langia perennes
 servat aquas; solet et rabidi sub limite Cancri
 semper, et Icarii quamvis iuba fulguret astri,
 785 ire tamen.’ simul haerentem, ne tarda Pclasgis
 dux foret, a! miserum vicino caespite alumnum
 (780) (sic Parcae volvere) locat ponitque negantis

⁷⁷¹ sanguinis et P: plebis et hic ωΣ

⁷⁸³ rabidi Pψ: rapidi ω

⁷⁸⁷ ponitque negantem Pω (Ϛ)

pose was to raze guilty Thebes with the sword, but now harsh thirst humbles our courage in a fate unwarlike, eats away our idle strength. Aid us in our sorry ease, whether you have a muddy river or a foul swamp. In our plight nothing is shameful, nothing is mean. To you we now appeal in lieu of Winds and rainy Jupiter. Do you replenish our fleeing powers and hearts listless for war. So may this burden grow for you under a favouring star. Only let Jupiter grant us to retrace our steps, what spoils of war will our gift make yours! I shall repay you, goddess, with Direaeon flocks and quantity of blood, and here a great altar shall mark the grove.' He spoke and a hot panting grabs his words in mid utterance, his dry tongue falters with the passage of his breath. All his men are seized with a like pallor, their mouths blow helplessly.

The Lemnian answers, her face downcast: 'How should I be a goddess for you, even though my origin be of heaven? Would that I had not transcended mortality by my sorrows! You see the bereaved foster mother of a child entrusted to my care. But heaven knows whether mine have bosom and breast—and yet I had a kingdom and a mighty father. But why do I talk and keep the weary from the waves they crave? Come with me now, let us see whether Langia keeps her perennial waters in their channel. Always she is wont to run, under the path of the raging Crab and though the haekle of the Iearian star¹⁰¹ be blazing.' The poor babe clings to her; and lest she be too slow a guide to the Pelasgi, alas, she places him on the ground nearby (so the Parcae ordained), and when he will not be put aside,

¹⁰¹ Sirius.

THEBAID

floribus aggestis et amico murmure dulces
 solatur lacrimas: qualis Berecynthia mater,
 790 dum parvum circa iubet exsultare Tonantem
 Curetas trepidos; illi certantia plaudunt
 (785) orgia, sed magnis resonat vagitibus Ide.

At puer in gremio vernae telluris et alto
 gramine nunc faciles sternit prokursibus herbas
 795 in vultum nitens, caram modo lactis egeno
 nutricem clangore ciens iterumque renidens
 (790) et teneris meditando verba illuctantia labris
 miratur nemorum strepitus aut obvia carpit
 aut patulo trahit ore diem nemorique malorum
 800 inscius et vitae multum securus inerrat.
 sic tener Odrysia Mavors nive, sic puer ales
 (795) vertice Maenalio, talis per litora reptans
 improbus Ortygiae latus inclinabat Apollo.

Illi per dumos et opaca virentibus umbris
 805 deuia, pars cingunt, pars arcta plebe sequuntur
 praecelerantque ducem. medium subit illa per agmen
 (800) non humili festina modo; iamque amne propinquo
 rauca sonat vallis, saxosumque impulit aures
 murmur: ibi exsultans conclamat ab agmine primus,
 810 sicut erat levibus tollens vexilla manipulis,
 Argus, 'aquae!' longusque uirum super ora cucurrit
 (805) clamor, 'aquae!' sic Ambracii per litora ponti
 nauticus in remis iuvenum monstrante magistro
 fit sonus inque vicem contra percussa reclamat

796 *anne ciet?*²

¹⁰² *Ciet* for *ciens* would much improve the structure, the rare but well attested lengthening of the vowel before the caesura ac-

consoles his sweet tears with bunches of flowers and loving murmurs: like the Berecyntian Mother as she bids the trembling Curetes dance around the tiny Thunderer; they strike their mystic drums in competition, but Ide resounds with his mighty wails.

But the boy in the bosom of the vernal earth, the lush herbage, now butts and levels the pliant grasses with his forward plunges, now calls¹⁰² for his dear nurse, crying loud for milk; and again he smiles and essays words that struggle with his tender lips. He wonders at the forest noises or plucks at what comes his way or with open mouth draws in the day. So he wanders in the wood unknowing of harm, quite careless of his life. Such was tender Mars in the Odryian snow, such the winged boy¹⁰³ on Maenalus' summit, such mischievous Apollo as he crawled along the shore and tilted Ortygia's side.

They make their way through the bushes, the devious places dim with green shades. Some surround the guide, others follow in a mass or push ahead. She goes onward in the middle of the troop, hastening with dignity. Now they are near the stream; the noisy valley sounds and stony plashing strikes their ears. Argus was first in the line. Just as he was, lifting up a standard for the nimble¹⁰⁴ platoons, he raises a joyous shout of 'Water!' And over the warriors' mouths ran the long clamour: 'Water.' So along the shores of the Ambracian sea sounds the cry of the sailors at the oars as the helmsman points (and loud the land returns the

counting for the corruption.

¹⁰³ Mercury is represented with wings on his hat and feet.

¹⁰⁴ Apparently proleptic; they would run when he shouted.

THEBAID

- 815 terra, salutatus cum Leucada pandit Apollo.
incubueret vadis passim discrimine nullo
(810) turba simul primique, nequit discernere mixtos
aequa sitis, frenata suis in curribus intrans
armenta, et pleni dominis armisque feruntur
820 quadripedes; hos turbo rapax, hos lubrica fallunt
saxa, nec implicitos fluvio reverentia reges
(815) proterere aut mersisse vado clamantis amici
ora. fremunt undae, longusque a fontibus annis
diripitur; modo lene virens et gurgite puro
825 perspicuus, nunc sordet aquis egestus ab imis
alveus; inde tori riparum et proruta turbant
(820) gramina; iam crassus caenoque et pulvere torrens,
quamquam expleta sitis, bibitur tamen. agmina bello
decertare putes iustumque in gurgite Martem
830 perfurere aut captam tolli victoribus urbem.
Atque aliquis regum medio circumfluit anni:
(825) 'silvarum, Nemea, longe regina virentum,
lecta Iovis sedes, quantum? non Herculis actis
dura magis, rabidi cum colla comantia monstri
835 angeret et tumidos animam angustaret in artus!
hac saevisse tenus populorum in coepta tuorum
(830) sufficiat; tuque o cunctis insuete domari
solibus, aeternae largitor corniger undae,
laetus cas, quacumque domo gelida ora resolvis
840 immortale tuens; neque enim tibi cana repostas

827 sic Σ: torrens ω: sordens P

833 quantum vel quantum ω: quam tu P (vide SB²)

echo), saluting Apollo¹⁰⁵ when he brings Leucas into view. Everywhere common soldiers and officers plunge indiscriminate into the stream, equal thirst cannot separate the mingled throng. Bridled horses enter in their chariots, chargers full of riders and arms are swept along. Some the whirling current, some the slippery rocks play false. They do not scruple to trample kings caught in the flood or drown the face of a yelling friend. The waves crash and from its source the long river is torn asunder. Once it was a gentle green, transparent in its liquid flow; now its channel is soiled, churned up from the depths, the ridges of the banks and uprooted herbage tumbles it. Now rushing thick with mud and dust, they drink it none the less, though their thirst is slaked. 'Twas as though armies were fighting a pitched battle raging in the flood or victors sacking a taken town.

Thus spoke one of the kings standing in the middle surrounded by the stream: 'Nemea, queen supreme of green glades, chosen seat of Jupiter, where does it end? Even to the deeds of Hercules you were no crueler when he choked the hairy neck of the rabid monster¹⁰⁶ and squeezed his breath into his swollen limbs. Let it suffice you to have fought your people's enterprise thus far. And you,¹⁰⁷ unused to yield to any sun, horned bestower of everlasting water, may you happily flow, whatever the home wherein you let loose your cool mouth in immortal surge. For hoary winter does not return you hidden snows,

¹⁰⁵ See Leucas in Index.

¹⁰⁶ The drought was worse than the Nemean lion, both incidents in a larger frame. *Actis* corresponds to *coepta* in 836.

¹⁰⁷ Here male, with horns like any other river.

THEBAID

- bruma nives raptasque alio de fonte refundit
(835) arcus aquas gravidive indulgent nubila Cauri,
sed tuus et nulli ruis expugnabilis astro.
te nec Apollineus Ladon nec Xanthus uterque
845 Spercheosque minax Centaureusque Lycormas
praestiterint; tu pace mihi, tu nube sub ipsa
(840) armorum festasque super celebrabere mensas
(a Iove primus honos), bellis modo laetus ovantes
accipias fessisque libens iterum hospita pandas
850 flumina defensasque velis agnoscere turmas.'

BOOK 4

nor does the rainbow pour you back waters seized from some other spring or the clouds of gravid Caurus favour you; you are your own and no star can defeat your course. Apollo's Ladon shall not surpass you, nor either Xanthus, nor threatening Spercheus, nor the Centaur's¹⁰⁸ Lycormas. You I shall celebrate in peace, you beneath the very cloud of arms, over festal banquets, honoured next to Jove; only welcome us gladly in our triumph, open again your stream to our weariness in ready hospitality, and graciously recognize the army you have protected.'

¹⁰⁸ Nessus, mortally wounded by Hercules as he carried Deianira across the river Evenus, earlier called Lycormas.

LIBER V

Pulsa sitis fluvio, populataque gurgitis alveum
 agmina linquebant ripas annemque minorem;
 aerior et campum sonipes rapit et pedes arva
 implet ovans. rediere viris animique minaeque
 5 votaue, sanguineis mixtum ceu fontibus ignem
 hausissent belli magnasque in proelia mentes.
 dispositi in turmas rursus legemque severi
 ordinis, ut cuique ante locus ductorque, monentur
 instaurare vias. tellus iam pulvere primo
 10 ereseit, et armorum transmittunt fulgura silvae.
 qualia trans pontum Phariis defensa serenis
 rauca Paraetonio decedunt agmina Nilo,
 cum fera ponit hiems: illae elangore fugaci,
 umbra fretis arvisque, volant, sonat avius aether.
 15 iam Borean imbresque pati, iam nare solutis
 annibus et nudo iuvat aestivare sub Haemo.

Hic rursus simili procerum vallante corona
 dux Talaionides, antiqua ut forte sub orno
 stabat et admoti nixus Polynicis in hastam:
 20 'attamen, o quaecumque es,' ait, 'eui gloria tanta,
 venimus, innumeras Fato debere cohortes,

¹ alvum ω: altum P (Ϝ)

²¹ innumerae Pω (SB¹)

¹³ ponit ω Σ: cogit P

fatum Pω (Ϝ, Garrod)

BOOK 5

Thirst quenched by the river, the army was leaving its ravaged bed and banks—a smaller stream. Brisker now the courser devours the plain and the foot soldier exultant throngs the fields. Spirit and threat and hope return to the warriors, as though they had consumed war-fire mingled in bloody waters and hearts high for battle. Marshalled again into their formations and the stern rule of rank, each with his former place and captain, they are ordered to resume their march. Now earth rises in the first dust and the woods transmit the flash of arms. Even as the noisy swarms sheltered overseas by Pharian calm leave Paraetonian Nile when wild winter subsides; they fly with fleeing clamour, a shadow over sea and land, the pathless ether resounds; now they are fain to suffer North Wind and rains, swim in melted rivers, and pass summer under naked¹ Haemus.

Then once more speaks the leader, Talaus' son, circled by a band of noble peers, as he stands beneath an ancient ash, leaning on the spear of Polynices at his side: 'And yet come tell us, whosoever you be to whom we have brought such glory, the glory of owing countless cohorts to fate,² an

¹ Free of snow.

² I.e. of saving the soldiers' lives.

quem non ipse deum sator aspernetur honorem,
 dic age, quando tuis alacres absistimus undis,
 quae domus aut tellus, animam quibus hauseris astris.
 25 dic quis et ille pater. neque enim tibi numina longe,
 transierit Fortuna licet, maiorque per ora
 sanguis, et afflicto spirat reverentia vultu.'

Ingemit, et paulum fletu cunctata modesto
 Lemnias orsa refert: 'immania vulnera, rector,
 30 integrare iubes, Furias et Lemnon et artis
 arma inserta toris debellatosque pudendo
 ense mares; redit ecce nefas et frigida cordi
 Eumenis. o miserae, quibus hic furor additus! o nox!
 o pater! illa ego nam, pudeat ne forte benignae
 35 hospitibus, illa, duces, raptum quae sola parentem
 ocului. quid longa malis exordia necto?
 et vos arma vocant magnique in corde paratus.
 hoc memorasse sat est: claro generata Thoante
 servitium Hypsipyle vestri fero capta Lycurgi.'

40 Advertere animos, maiorque et honora videri
 parque operi tanto; cunctis tunc noscere casus
 ortus amor, pater ante alios hortatur Adrastus:
 'immo age, dum primi longe edimus agmina vulgi
 (nec facilis Nemea latas evolvere virces,
 45 quippe obtenta comis et ineluctabilis umbra),
 pande nefas laudesque tuas gemitusque tuorum,
 unde hos advenias regno deiecta labores.'

Dulce loqui miseris veteresque reducere questus.
 incipit: 'Aegaeo premitur circumflua Nereo

⁴³ longe damus P ω (SB)

honour which the begetter of the gods himself would not despise, come tell us, as we briskly leave your waters, what is your home and country, under what stars you draw your breath. And say, who is that father? For the gods are not far from you, though Fortune has deserted, high blood is in your aspect, awe breathes in your afflicted face.'

The Lemnian sighs, stays awhile in modest tears, then makes reply: 'Ruler, you bid me freshen monstrous wounds—Furies and Lemnos and weapons brought into narrow beds and men fought down with swords of shame. Ah, to my heart the crime returns, the cold Fury. Alas for them on whom was brought this madness! Ah night! Ah father! For I am she, captains, lest perchance you be ashamed of your kindly hostess, she who alone snatched her parent away and hid him. Why do I weave a long preamble to a tale of woe? And arms summon you and the great enterprise you have at heart. This much it is enough to tell: I am Hypsipyle, child of famous Thoas; a captive, I bear the thralldom of your Lycurgus.'

They paid heed. Greater she seemed, deserving of respect, equal to such a work. Then in all arose a wish to learn the story. First of them all father Adrastus urges her: 'Nay come, while we bring out our leading columns in long array (not ready is Nemea to roll out a broad power, screened as she is by foliage and enmeshed in forest shade), set forth the crime and your merit and the laments of your people, from whence you came to your troubles here, cast out from your realm.'

The unhappy love to talk and bring back old sorrows. She begins: 'Aegean Nereus surrounds the isle of Lemnos,

THEBAID

- 50 Lemnos, ubi ignifera fessus respirat ab Aetna
 Mulciber. ingenti tellurem proximus umbra
 vestit Athos nemorumque obscurat imagine pontum.
 Thraces arant contra, Thracum fatalia nobis
 litora, et inde nefas. florebat dives alumnis
 55 terra, nec illa Samo fama Delove sonanti
 peior et innumeris quas spumifer assilit Aegon.
 dis visum turbare domos, nec pectora culpa
 nostra vacant: nullos Veneri sacravimus ignes,
 nulla deae sedes; movet et caelestia quondam
 60 corda dolor lentoque irrepunt agmine Poenae.
 illa Paphon veterem centumque altaria linquens,
 nec vultu nec crine prior, solvisse iugalem
 ceston et Idalias procul ablegasse volucres
 fertur. erant certe media quae noctis in umbra
 65 divam alios ignes maioraque tela gerentem
 Tartareas inter thalamis volitasse Sorores
 vulgarent, utque implicitis arcana domorum
 anguibus et saeva formidine nupta replisset
 limina nec fidi populum miserata mariti.
 70 protinus a Lemno teneri fugistis Amores:
 mutus Hymen versaeque faces et frigida iusti
 cura tori. nullae redeunt in gaudia noctes,
 nullus in amplexu sopor est, Odia aspera ubique
 et Furor et medio recubat Discordia lecto.
 75 cura viris tumidos adversa Thracas in ora
 eruere et saevam bellando frangere gentem.
 cumque domus contra stantesque in litore nati,
 dulcius Edonias hiemes Arctonque prementem

⁷⁸ prementem P: fr- ω

BOOK 5

where Mulicber³ draws breath weary from fire-burning Aetna. Athos close by clothes the land with his huge shadow and darkens the sea with the image of his forests. Thracians plough opposite, the shores of the Thracians were our doom, thence came the crime. The land was wealthy, flourishing in her children, no less in fame than Samos or sounding Delos or the countless isles on which Aegon dashes his foam. It pleased the gods to set our homes in turmoil, nor were our hearts free of blame; we consecrated no fires to Venus, the goddess had no dwelling among us. Hurt sometimes moves even heavenly hearts and the powers of vengeance creep slowly in. She leaves ancient Paphos and her hundred altars, changed in countenance and hair; they say she loosened her girdle of love and banished afar her Idalian birds. Of a certainty there were some women who put it about how in the mid darkness of night the goddess had flitted through bedchambers bearing other fires and larger weapons in company with the Tartarean Sisters, and how she had filled secret places in our homes with twined snakes and our nuptial thresholds with fierce terror, pitying not her husband's people, faithful though he be. Forthwith, tender Loves, you fled from Lemnos. Hymen fell silent, his torches reversed; chilled was the care of the lawful couch. No nights return for joys, none sleeps in an embrace, everywhere is harsh Hate and Madness, Strife lies in the middle of the bed. The men are set to root out the vaunting Thracians on the facing coast and to break the savage race by war. Their homes front them and their children standing on the shore, but they would rather take Edonian winters and the Bear upon

³ Vulcan.

- excipere, aut tandem tacita post proelia nocte
 80 fractorum subitas torrentum audire ruinas.
 illae autem tristes (nam me tunc libera curis
 virginitas annique tegunt) sub nocte dieque
 assiduis aegrae in lacrimis solantia miscent
 colloquia, aut saevam spectant trans aequora Thracen.
- 85 Sol operum medius summo librabat Olympo
 lucentes, ceu staret, equos; quater axe sereno
 intonuit, quater antra dei fumantis anhelos
 exseruere apices, ventisque absentibus Aegon
 motus et ingenti percussit litora ponto:
- 90 cum subito horrendas aevi matura Polyxo
 tollitur in furias thalamisque insueta relictis
 evolat. insano veluti Teumesia Thyias
 rapta deo, cum sacra vocant Idaeaeque suadet
 buxus et a summis auditus montibus Euhan:
- 95 sic, erecta genas aciemque offusa trementi
 sanguine, desertam rabidis clamoribus urbem
 exagitat clausasque domos et limina pulsans
 concilium vocat; infelix comitatus eunti
 haerebant nati. atque illae non segnius omnes
- 100 erumpunt tectis, summasque ad Pallados arces
 impetus: huc propere stipamur et ordine nullo
 congestae; stricto mox ense silentia iussit
 hortatrix scelerum et medio sic ausa profari:
- 105 "Rem summam instinctu superum meritique doloris,
 o viduae (firmate animos et pellite sexum!)
 Lemniades, sancire paro; si taedet inanes
 aeternum servare domos turpemque iuventae

⁹⁵ effusa P ω (ζ , Barth)

⁹⁶ rabidis ω : rapi- P ψ

¹⁰³ orsa Bentley

their heads or after battle at last in the silent night hear the sudden crash of broken torrents. Their sad wives (as for me, maidenhood free of cares and my years were my protection then) by night and day languish in constant tears, they mingle consoling converse or gaze across the sea at cruel Thrace.

Halfway through his task, the sun was poising his bright horses on Olympus' summit as though standing still. Four times it thundered in a clear sky, four times the cavern of the smoking god⁴ put forth panting crests, Aegon was stirred though winds were absent and struck the shores with a mighty surge, when of a sudden old Polyxo rises into a fearsome frenzy, leaves her chamber against her habit, and darts forth. Like a Teumesian Thyiad seized by the frantic god, when the rites call and Ida's boxwood urges and Euhan is heard from the mountain tops, so, with eyelids upstanding and pupils suffused with quivering blood she rouses the deserted city with her crazy clamours; beating on closed houses and thresholds, she calls an assembly. Her children clung to her as she went, ill-starred companions. All the women promptly burst forth from their dwellings and rush to the citadel of Pallas on the height. Thither we crowd in haste, piled together in confusion. Then drawing a sword, the promptress of crime commanded silence and so from our midst dared to speak:

"Widows of Lemnos, I come at the urging of the High Ones and just indignation to approve a great matter. Steel your courage and drive out your sex. If you are weary of

⁴ Vulcan.

THEBAID

- flore situm et longis steriles in luctibus annos,
 inveni, promitto, viam (nec numina desunt)
 110 qua renovanda Venus: modo par insumite robur
 luctibus. atque adeo primum hoc mihi noscere detur:
 tertia canet hiems: cui conubialia vincla
 aut thalami secretus honos? cui coniuge pectus
 intepuit? cuius vidit Lucina labores,
 115 dicite, vel iustos cuius pulsantia menses
 vota tument? qua pace feras volucresque iugari
 mos datus. heu segnes! potuitne ultricia Graius
 virginibus dare tela pater laetusque dolorum
 sanguine securos iuvenum perfundere somnos:
 120 at nos vulgus iners? quod si propioribus actis
 est opus, ecce animos doceat Rhodopeia coniunx,
 ulta manu thalamos pariterque epulata marito.
 nec vos immunis scelerum securave cogo.
 plena mihi domus atque ingens, en cernite, sudor.
 125 quattuor hos una, decus et solacia patris,
 in gremio, licet amplexu lacrimisque morentur,
 transadigam ferro saniemque et vulnera fratrum
 miscebo patremque super spirantibus addam.
 ecqua tot in caedes animum promittit?"

Agebat

- 130 pluribus; adverso nituerunt vela profundo:
 Lemnia classis erat. rapuit gavisia Polyxo
 fortunam atque iterat: "superisne vocantibus ultro
 desumus? ecce rates! deus hos, deus ultor in iras
 apportat coeptisque favet. nec imago quietis

¹²⁷ sanguenque *Håkanson*

¹²⁸ super ωΣ: simul P *ante corr.*

keeping empty house forever, and the flower of your youth in shameful blight and barren years passed in long lament, I have found, I promise it, a way (and the gods are not wanting) for love's renewal.⁵ Only take strength to match your griefs. And let me know this first: the third winter is white: who had bonds of wedlock or secret grace of the bedchamber? Whose bosom warmed with her mate? Whose pains did Lucina see, tell me, or whose prayers swell, kicking the appointed months? Custom grants that wild beasts and birds be joined under that covenant. Cowards! Could a Grecian father⁶ give weapons of vengeance to virgins and drench young men with blood in unsuspecting sleep, joying in the treachery? Are we a bunch of dollies? But if we need a deed nearer home, see, let the wife of Rhodope⁷ teach us spirit, who avenged her marriage with her hands and feasted along with her spouse. Nor am I that urge you without part in crimes and carefree. My house is full and greatly, see for yourselves, have I laboured. These four together, their father's pride and comfort, in my lap, though they stay me with hugs and tears, shall I run through with steel, mingling the brothers' gore and wounds, and on them add the father while they still breathe. Does any one of you promise a stomach for so many slaughters?"

She was urging more, but in the sea before them shone sails; it was the Lemnian fleet. Delighted, Polyxo seized her luck and once again: "The High Ones call us of themselves. Do we fail them? See, the ships! A god, an avenging god, brings them to our wrath and favours the enterprise.

⁵ As later revealed (137f.), Venus had promised to provide a new stud. ⁶ Danaus. ⁷ Tereus' wife Procne.

THEBAID

- 135 vana meae: nudo astabat Venus ense videri
 elara mihi somnosque super. 'quid perditis aevum?'
 inquit, 'age aversis thalamos purgate maritis.
 ipsa faeces alias melioraque foedera iungam.'
 dixit, et hoc ferrum stratis, hoc, eredite, ferrum
 140 inposuit. quin, o miserae, dum tempus agi rem,
 eonsulite; en validis spumant eversa laeertis
 aequora. Bistonides veniunt fortasse maritae."
 hinc stimuli ingentes, magnusque advolvitur astris
 clamor. Amazonio Seythiam fervere tumultu
 145 lunatumque putes agmen descendere, ubi arma
 indulget pater et saevi movet ostia Belli.
 nec varius fremor aut studia in contraria rapti
 dissensus, ut plebe solet: furor omnibus idem,
 idem animus solare domos iuvenumque senumque
 150 praecipitare eos plenisque affrangere parvos
 uberibus ferroque omnes exire per annos.
 tunc viridi lueo (late iuga eelsa Minervae
 propter opacat humum niger ipse, sed insuper ingens
 mons premit et gemina pereunt caligine soles),
 155 hic sanxere fidem. tu Martia testis Enyo
 atque inferna Ceres, Stygiaeque Acheronte recluso
 ante preces venere deae; sed fallit ubique
 mixta Venus, Venus arma tenet, Venus admovet iras.
 nec de more eruor: natum Charopeia coniunx
 160 obtulit. accingunt sese et mirantia ferro

¹³⁵ nuda (nudo ω) stabat Pω (Garrod)

¹⁴⁰ agi Σ: agit Pω

¹⁵² viridi luco lucus P: -dis late lucus ω (SB)

⁸ Than a dream.

⁹ Mars.

Nor idle was the vision of my sleep: Venus stood beside me with naked sword, plain to see, plainer than slumber:⁸ 'Why are you wasting your lives?' she says, 'Come, purge your chambers of estranged husbands. Myself will give you other torches and better unions.' She spoke, and placed this sword, this sword, believe it, on the coverlet. Nay, unhappy friends, while the time for action serves, take counsel. Look, the seas foam, churned by strong arms. Perchance Bistonian brides are coming." Hence mighty goads; and a great shout rolled starward. 'Twas as though Scythia was afire with Amazonian tumult and the crescent-shielded host descending when their father⁹ allows them arms and opens the gates of cruel War. The uproar is not various, with discordant voices caught up into conflicting factions, as is the way of a populace. The same madness is for all, the same will to make homes desolate, cut short life's threads for old and young, break little ones¹⁰ at the full breast, and carry the sword through every generation. Then in a green grove that broadly shades the ground close to Minerva's high hill, dark itself, but upon it the great mountain presses down and the suns perish in a double murk—here they pledged their faith. Martian Enyo was witness and Ceres of the underworld,¹¹ the Stygian goddesses came before they were invoked, Acheron was opened; but Venus was everywhere, mingling though unseen, Venus holds the weapons, Venus brings the wrath. Nor was the blood as of wont:¹² Charops' wife offered her son. They gird themselves for action and break his wonder-

¹⁰ What little ones? Cf. 114.

¹¹ Proserpina; cf. 4.459f.

¹² It was human.

THEBAID

pectora congestis avidae simul undique dextris
perfringunt, ac dulce nefas in sanguine vivo
coniurant, matremque recens circumvolat umbra.

165 Talia cernenti mihi quantus in ossibus horror,
quisve per ora color! qualis cum cerva cruentis
circumventa lupis, nullum cui pectore molli
robur et in volucris tenuis fiducia cursu,
praecipitat suspensa fugam, iam iamque teneri
credit et elusos audit concurrere morsus.

170 Illi aderant, primis iamque offendere carinae
litoribus, certant saltu contingere terram
praecipites. miseri, quos non aut horrida virtus
Marte sub Odryasio, aut medii inclementia ponti
hauserit! alta etiam superum delubra vaporant
175 promissasque trahunt pecudes: niger omnibus aris
ignis, et in nullis spirat deus integer extis.
tardius umentem noctem deciecit Olympo
Iuppiter et versum mihi, reor, aethera cura
sustinuit, dum Fata vetant, nec longius umquam
180 cessavere novae perfecto sole tenebrae.
sera tamen mundo venerunt astra, sed illis
et Paros et nemorosa Thasos crebraeque relucet
Cyclades; una gravi penitus latet obruta caelo
Lemnos, in hanc tristes nebulae et plaga caeca superne
185 textitur, una vagis Lemnos non agnita nautis.
iam domibus fusi et nemorum per opaca sacrorum
ditibus indulgent epulis vacuantque profundo
aurum immane mero, dum quae per Strymonia pugnae,

161 congestis ψ : -tisque P ω

179 vetant ω : -at P

ing breast with steel, hands stretching greedily from every side at once. In the living blood they swear the delicious crime and the new ghost flits around the mother.

As I saw such things, what shuddering was in my bones, what colour on my face! Like a deer surrounded by bloody wolves, whose soft heart knows no strength, whose meagre trust is in her speed; in terror she flees headlong and each moment thinks herself caught, hearing the snap of the bites she has eluded.

They were come. And now the keels have met the strand's verge and vying in their haste they leap ashore. Wretches, whom neither their grim valour in Odryian warfare nor the separating sea's inclemency has taken off! And they fill lofty shrines of the High Ones with smoke of incense and drag the promised victims. At all the altars the flame is black, in no entrails breathes¹³ the god unflawed. Slower than of wont Jupiter cast night down from dewy Olympus and with gentle care, methinks, held back the turning sky, even as the Fates forbid; nor did new darkness ever tarry longer after the sun's work was done. Yet however late, the stars came to the heavens; but Paros and wooded Thasos and the crowd of Cyclades shine back at them, while Lemnos alone hides deep, enveloped by a heavy sky. Gloomy fogs are woven against her and an overhanging tract of darkness. Lemnos alone is unrecognized by wandering sailors. Now stretched out in their homes and in the shade of sacred groves they indulge in sumptuous banquets and empty great golden goblets of their depth of wine, as they tell at their leisure of fights along the

¹³ Probably from *Aeneid* 4.64 *spirantia consulit exta*, where Servius interprets 'palpitating, as though still alive.'

190 quis Rhodope gelidove labor sudatus in Haemo
 enumerare vacat. nec non, manus impia, nuptae
 serta inter festasque dapes quo maxima cultu
 quaeque iacent. dederat mites Cytherea suprema
 nocte viros longoque brevem post tempore pacem
 nequiquam et miseros perituro afflaverat igni.
 195 conticuere chori, dapibus ludoque licenti
 fit modus et primae decrescunt murmura noctis,
 cum consanguinei mixtus caligine Leti
 rore madens Stygio morituram amplectitur urbem
 Somnus et implacido fundit gravia otia cornu
 200 secernitque viros. vigilant nuptaeque nurusque
 in scelus, atque hilares acuunt fera tela Sorores.
 invasere nefas, cuncto sua regnat Erinys
 pectore. non aliter Scythicos armenta per agros
 Hyrcanae clausere leae, quas exigit ortu
 205 prima fames, avidique implorant ubera nati.
 Quos tibi iam dubito scelerum de mille figuris
 expediam casus. Helymum temeraria Gorge
 evinctum ramis altaque in mole tapetum
 efflantem somno crescentia vina superstans
 210 vulnera disiecta rimatur veste, sed illum
 infelix sopor admota sub morte refugit.
 turbidus incertumque oculis vigilantibus hostem
 occupat amplexu, nec segnius illa tenentis
 pone adigit costas donec sua pectora ferro
 215 tangeret. is demum sceleri modus; ora supinat
 blandis adhuc oculisque tremens et murmure Gorgen
 quaerit et indigno non solvit bracchia collo.
 non ego nunc vulgi quamquam crudelia pandam

²⁰⁶ nam P ω (SB)

Strymon, of sweat and toil on Rhodope or icy Haemus. Amid the garlands and festal fare lie their wives, impious band, each decked in her finest. On their last night Cytherea had made their husbands gentle, vainly granting a brief truce after so long, and touched the unhappy men with a breath of short-lived passion. The dances fall silent, a term is set to the feasting and wanton sport, the sounds of early night die down. Mingled with the darkness of his kinsman Death and dripping with Stygian dew, Sleep enfolds the doomed city, pouring heavy ease from his unforgiving horn, and separates the men. Wives and sons' wives are awake for crime and the Sisters cheerfully sharpen their savage weaponry. They fell to their wicked work; in every heart reigns its Fury. Not otherwise do Hyrcanian lionesses encircle herds in Scythian fields; early hunger drives them forth at dawn and their greedy cubs implore their udders.

Which of crime's thousand shapes I should now relate to you I know not. Audacious Gorge stands over Helymus as wreathed in branches on a great pile of cushions he breathes out his wine that gathers strength in his sleep; she probes in his disordered garments for a place to strike, but his unlucky slumber deserts him at death's approach. Confused with eyes doubtfully awake, he seizes the enemy in an embrace, but she promptly drives from behind into his ribs as he holds her until she touches her own breast with the steel. That finished the crime. He lets his head fall back and still affectionate with quivering eyes and murmur he seeks Gorge nor loosens his arms from her unworthy neck. I shall not now set forth the deaths of the crowd, cruel

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funera, sed propria luctus de stirpe recordor:
 220 quod te, flave Cydon, quod te per colla refusus
 intactum, Crenaeae, comis quibus ubera mecum
 obliquumque a patre genus, fortemque, timebam
 quem desponsa, Gyan vidi lapsare cruentae
 225 vulnere Myrmidones, quodque inter sarta torosque
 barbara ludentem fodiebat Epopea mater.
 flet super aequaevum soror exarmata Lycaste
 Cydimon, heu similes perituro in corpore vultus
 aspiciens floremque genae et quas finxerat auro
 ipsa comas, cum saeva parens iam coniuge fuso
 230 astitit impellitque minis atque inserit ensem.
 ut fera, quae rabiem placido desueta magistro
 tardius arma movet stimulisque et verbere crebro
 in mores negat ire suos, sic illa iacenti
 incidit undantemque sinu collapsa cruorem
 235 excipit et laceros premit in nova vulnera crines.

Ut vero Alcimedem etiamnum in murmure truncos
 ferre patris vultus et egentem sanguinis ensem
 conspexi, riguere comae atque in viscera saevus
 horror iit: meus ille Thoas, mea dira videri
 240 dextra mihi! extemplo thalamis turbata paternis
 inferor. ille quidem dudum (quis magna tuenti
 somnus?) agit versans secum, ctsi lata recessit
 urbe domus, quinam strepitus, quae murmura noctis,
 cur fremibunda quies. trepido scelus ordine pando,
 245 quis dolor, unde animi: "vis nulla arcere furentes;
 hac sequere, o miserande; premunt aderuntque moranti,

¹⁴ As a virgin.

¹⁵ The old man had not much to give.

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though they were, but I recall bereavements in my own family. I saw you fall, blond Cydon, and you, Crenaeus, with your untouched locks flowing down your neck; you were my foster brothers, my father's sons on the side. You too, strong Gyas, my betrothed whom I feared,¹⁴ I saw fall by the stroke of bloody Myrmidone, and how his barbarous mother stabbed Epopeus as he played among the chaplets and couches. Lycaste weeps disarmed over her brother of equal age, Cydimus, watching the face alas so like her own upon his doomed body, and the bloom on his cheek and the locks she had herself twined with gold, when their savage mother, who had already slain her husband, takes stand beside her, urging her with threats and putting the sword in her hands. Like a wild beast that under a gentle master has lost the habit of fury and is slow to show fight, refusing to resume its old ways despite goads and many a lash, so she falls upon him as he lies and collapsing receives his streaming blood in her bosom and presses her torn hair into the fresh wounds.

But when I saw Alcimede carrying her father's severed but still murmuring head and a sword in need of blood,¹⁵ my hair stood stiff and a cruel shudder pierced my vitals. To me he seemed my Thoas and the fell hand seemed mine. Forthwith I hie me distraught to my father's chamber. He was long awake to be sure (what sleep for him that has great charge?), asking himself (though our house lay far back from the city) what the noises, what the sounds in the night, why clamourous the quiet. To him as he trembled I reveal the crime in sequence, what the grief, whence the bold spirit: "They are mad, no force can keep them off. Follow this way, unfortunate. They press, they will be on you if you tarry, and mayhap you will fall with

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et mecum fortasse cades." his motus et artus
 erexit stratis. ferimur per devia vastae
 urbis et ingentem nocturnae caedis acervum
 250 passim, ut quosque sacris crudelis vespera lucis
 straverat, occulta speculamur nube latentes.
 hic impressa toris ora exstantesque reclusis
 pectoribus capulos magnarum et fragmina trunca
 255 hastarum et ferro laceras per corpora vestes,
 crateras pronos epulasque in caede natantes
 cernere erat, iugulisque modo torrentis apertis
 sanguine commixto redeuntem in pocula Bacchum.
 hic iuvenum manus et nullis violabilis armis
 turba senes, positique patrum super ora gementum
 260 semineces pueri trepidas in limine vitae
 singultant animas. gelida non saevius Ossa
 luxuriant Lapitharum epulae, si quando profundo
 Nubigenae caluere mero: vix primus ab ira
 pallor, et impulsis surgunt ad proelia mensis.
 265 Tunc primum sese trepidis sub nocte Thyoneus
 detexit, nato portans extrema Thoanti
 subsidia, et multa subitus cum luce refulsit.
 agnovi: non ille quidem turgentia sertis
 tempora nec flava crinem distinxerat uva:
 270 nubilus indignumque oculis liquentibus imbrem
 alloquitur: "dum Fata dabant tibi, nate, potentem
 Lemnon et externis etiam servare timendam
 gentibus, haud unquam iusto mea cura labori
 destitit: absciderunt tristes crudelia Parcae
 275 stamina, nec dictis, supplex quae plurima fudi
 ante Iovem frustra, lacrimisque avertere luctus

¹⁶ Centaurs.

me." Thus alarmed, he roused himself from the couch. We take our way through byways of the deserted city, hiding in secret darkness, descriing everywhere a huge pile of the night's massacre, as the cruel evening had laid them low in the sacred groves. Here could be seen faces pressed down on couches, sword hilts standing out from opened breasts, broken fragments of large spears and knife-torn clothes among the bodies, mixing bowls overturned, victuals swimming in gore, and Bacchus mixed with blood returning in torrents from severed throats into the wine cups. Here is a company of young men, here a gathering whom no weapons should violate, the old; and half-dead boys, placed on the faces of their moaning parents, sob out their trembling spirits on the threshold of life. In no crueller fashion do the feasts of the Lapithae on chill Ossa run riot when the cloud-born ones¹⁶ have grown warm with deep draughts of wine; scarce comes anger's first pallor and they upset the tables and rise to battle.¹⁷

Then for the first time Thyoneus revealed himself to us in our trepidation, bringing last-minute aid to his son Thoas, and shone out in a sudden blaze of light. I knew him, though he had not bound his swelling temples with garlands nor his hair with yellow grapes. Cloudy, his eyes shedding an unseemly rain, he addresses us: "My son, while I was permitted by the Fates to keep Lemnos for you powerful and feared even by foreign peoples, my care never ceased from this lawful toil. The gloomy Parcae have severed their cruel threads, nor has it fallen to me to avert these woes by words, of which I have poured many in vain,

¹⁷ As though the famous banquet fight between Centaurs and Lapiths was recurrent.

contigit; infandum natae concessit honorem.
 accelerate fugam, tuque, o mea digna propago,
 hac rege, virgo, patrem, gemini qua bracchia muri
 280 litus eunt: illa, qua rere silentia, porta
 stat funesta Venus ferroque accincta furentes
 adiuuat (unde manus, unde haec Mavortia divae
 pectora?). tu lato patrem committe profundo:
 succedam curis." ita fatus in aëra rursus
 285 solvitur et nostrum, visus arcentibus umbris,
 mitis iter longae claravit limite flammac.
 qua data signa sequor; dein curvo robore clausum
 dis pelagi Ventisque et Cycladas Aegaeoni
 amplexo commendo patrem, nec fletibus umquam
 290 sit modus alternis, ni iam dimittat Eoo
 Lucifer astra polo. tunc demum litore rauco
 multa metu reputans et vix confisa Lyaeo
 dividor, ipsa gradu nitente, sed anxia retro
 pectora; nec requies quin et surgentia caelo
 295 flamina et e cunctis prospectem collibus undas.

Exoritur pudibunda dies, caelumque retexens
 aversum Lemno iubar et declinia Titan
 opposita iuga nube refert. patuere furorcs
 nocturni, lucisque novae formidine cunctis
 300 (quamquam inter similes) subitus pudor; impia terrae
 infodiunt scelera aut festinis ignibus urunt.

Iam manus Eumenidum captasque refugcrat arces

280 rere P(^p), Ϛ: rara ω

290 fit Pω (*Gronovius*)

300 habitus PωΣ (*Bentley*)

¹⁸ Venus, given leave to punish the Lemnians.

¹⁹ The Aegean Sea personified.

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suppliant before Jove, and tears. To his daughter¹⁸ he has given a heinous privilege. Hasten your flight both, and do you, maiden, my worthy offspring, guide your father by the way where the arms of the double wall go down to the sea. At that gate where you think all is silence stands baleful Venus and girt with sword encourages the mad-women (whence the goddess' violence, whence this Martian heart?). Entrust your father to the broad deep. I shall take over your ears." So speaking, he dissolves again into air and as the shadows block our vision the kindly god lights up our track with a long strip of flame. I follow the guidance given. Then to the gods of the sea and the Winds and Aegaeon¹⁹ embracing the Cyclades I entrust my father hidden in curved timber. Our mutual tears would have no term, were not Lucifer now dismissing the stars from eastern heaven. Then indeed on the sounding shore, with many a fear in mind and searèe trusting Lyaeus, I separate. With urgent step I go, but my troubled heart looks back; nor do I rest from viewing from every hill the breezes rising in the sky and the waves.

Dawn comes up ashamed and Titan revealing²⁰ the heavens turns his rays from Lemnos, bringing back his chariot aslant behind a cloud. The madness of the night showed plain, and in fear of the new light sudden shame was upon them all, though all were in like case. They bury their impious crimes in earth or burn them in hasty fires.

Now the band of the Furies and Venus full-sated had

²⁰ *Retexens*, properly 'unraveling,' is here used in the sense of *retegens* (which would not have scanned). Håkanson explains the anomaly as due to a probably subconscious reminiscence of *Aeneid* 4.119 *radiisque retexerit* (from *retego*) *orbem*.

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- exsaturata Venus; licuit sentire quid ausae,
 et turbare comas et lumina tingere fletu.
 305 insula dives agris opibusque armisque virisque,
 nota situ et Getico nuper ditata triumpho,
 non maris incursu, non hoste, nec aethere laevo
 perdidit una omnes orbata excisaque mundo
 indigenas: non arva viri, non aequora vertunt,
 310 conticuere domus, cruor altus et oblita crasso
 cuncta rubent tabo, magnaefque in moenibus urbis
 nos tantum et saevi spirant per culmina manes.
 ipsa quoque arcanis tecti in penetralibus alto
 molior igne pyram, sceptrum super armaque patris
 315 inicio et notas regum velamina vestes,
 ac prope maesta rogum confusis crinibus asto
 ense cruentato, fraudemque et inania busta
 plango metu, si forte premam, cassumque parenti
 omen et hac dubios leti precor ire timores.
 320 his mihi pro meritis, ut falsi criminis astu
 parta fides, regna et solio considerare patris
 (supplicium!) datur. anne illis obsessa negarem?
 accessi, saepe ante deos testata fidemque
 immeritasque manus; subeo (pro dira potestas!)
 325 exsanguie imperium et maestam sine culmine Lemnon.
 Iam magis atque magis vigiles dolor angere sensus,
 et gemitus clari, et paulatim invisae Polyxo,
 iam meminisse nefas, iam ponere manibus aras
 concessum et multum cineres iurare sepultos.
 330 sic ubi ductorem trepidae stabulique maritum,

308 fundo ζ 315 velamina P: gesta- ω

316 ignibus P ω (ζ , *Lachmann*)

318 ne ζ premant P ω (*SB*)

fled the captured city. The women could realize what they had dared and disorder their hair and bathe their eyes with weeping. The island, prosperous in land and wealth, in arms and men, known of its site²¹ and lately enriched by a Getic triumph, at one blow, not by invasion of the sea or enemy or hostile atmosphere, lost all its people, orphaned and cut out from the world. Men no longer turn the fields or the waters. Silent the houses, deep the blood, all things stained red with clotted gore. Only we are left in the buildings of the great city and on the rooftops fierce spirits breathe. I too in the secret recesses of our dwelling build a high-flaming pyre and cast thereon my father's sceptre and arms and his well known garments, the dress of kings. In sadness with disordered hair and bloody sword I stand near and fearfully lament the cheat, the empty mound, hoping to cover up;²² and I pray that the omen bring no harm to my parent and that doubting fears of his death be so discharged.²³ For these merits, when the trick of a false crime won credence, it was given me to reign and sit upon my father's throne—punishment! So beset, was I to refuse them? I agreed, but only after calling often on the gods and the truth and my innocence. I take on (ah dire authority!) a bloodless power, a Lemnos sad and headless.

Now more and more grief torments their wakeful senses, lamentations are loud, and little by little they come to hate Polyxo. Now it is permitted to remember the atrocity, now to build altars to the spirits and often swear by the buried dust. So when trembling heifers see thunderstruck

²¹ Everyone knew where it was. ²² *Premant* makes no sense. This idiom expresses something expected or hoped for.

²³ That the false funeral substitute for a real one; see SB¹.

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quem penes et saltus et aduncae gloria gentis,
 Massylo frangi stupuere sub hoste iuvencae,
 it truncum sine honore pecus, regemque peremptum
 ipse ager, ipsi amnes et muta arbusta queruntur.

- 335 Ecce autem aerata dispellens aequora prora
 Pelias intacti late subit hospita ponti
 pinus; agunt Minyae, geminus fragor ardua canet
 per latera: abruptam credas radicibus ire
 Ortygiam aut fractum pelago decurrere montem.
 340 ast ubi suspensis siluerunt aequora tonsis,
 mitior et senibus cyncis et pectine Phoebi
 vox media de puppe venit, maria ipsa carinae
 accedunt. post nosse datum est: Oeagrius illic
 acclinis malo mediis intersonat Orpheus
 345 remigiis tantosque iubet nescire labores.
 illis in Scythicum Borean iter oraque Ponti
 Cyaneis artata moris. nos, Thracia visu
 bella ratae, vario tecta incursare tumultu,
 densarum pecudum aut fugientum more volucrum.
 350 heu ubi nunc Furiae? portus amplexaque litus
 moenia, qua longe pelago despectus aperto,
 scandimus et celsas turres; huc saxa sudesque
 armaque maesta virum atque infectos caedibus enses

331 *adultae* P ω (SB²)

334 *armenta* P ω (SB²)

346 *primi* P Σ : -mm ω (Markland)

347 *maris* P: *vadis* $\omega\Sigma$ (SB²)

350 *furiae* *edd.* (Hill)

²⁴ Lit. 'hooked.' Cattle are hooked because their horns are hooked, as are eagles because of their beaks and talons; cf. 12.212 *uncis alitibus*, Ovid, *Fasti* 6.196 *praepes adunca Iovis*. Statius may well have been thinking of Homer's $\epsilon\lambda\iota\kappa\epsilon\varsigma$ (SB²). As for *adultae*,

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the leader and husband of the stall, to whom belong the pastures and glory of the horned²⁴ folk, broken under a Massylian foe;²⁵ the herd goes maimed, its pride departed; the very land, the very rivers, and the mute trees²⁶ bemoan the slain king.

But see! Dividing the waters with her brazen prow comes the pine of Pelion, guest at large of the virgin²⁷ sea. The Minyae drive her, a double splashing whitens at her tall bows, you might think Ortygia was on the move reft from her roots or that a broken mountain was running over the main. But when the oars were held in the air and the sea fell silent, a voice gentler than aged swans and Phoebus' quill comes from the vessel's midst and the very waters draw near the ship. Later we came to learn: there Oeagrian Orpheus leaning against the mast makes music amid the rowers and bids them forget their heavy toils. Their voyage was to Scythian Boreas and the shores of Pontus narrowed by Cyanean blocks.²⁸ At sight of them we took them for Thracian warfare and ran to our homes in a mingled flurry like thronging cattle or fleeing birds. Alas, where now the Furies? We climb the harbour and the walls around the shore, which give a long view down over the open sea, and lofty towers. Hither in trembling haste they haul rocks and stakes and their husbands' mourning ar-

did not the steers and heifers and calves take pride in their chief bull? ²⁵ A lion.

²⁶ *Armenta*, 'herds' makes an anticlimax; see SB².

²⁷ Argo was recognized as the first ship to sail, but poets are not thereby inhibited from talking of earlier navigations, as Statius does at large in this Book and Valerius Flaccus in 2.108.

²⁸ See SB².

subvectant trepidae; quin et squalentia texta
 355 thoracum et vultu galeas intrare soluto
 non pudet; audaces rubuit mirata catervas
 Pallas, et averso risit Gradivus in Haemo.
 tunc primum ex animis praeceps amentia cessit,
 nec ratis illa salo, sed divum sera per aequor
 360 iustitia et poenae scelerrum adventare videntur.
 iamque aberant terris quantum Gortynia eurrunt
 spicula, caeruleo gravidam cum Iuppiter imbri
 ipsa super nubem ratis armamenta Pelasgae
 sistit agens; inde horror aquis, et raptus ab omni
 365 sole dies unisect tenebras, quis protinus unda
 coucolor; obnixi lacerant cava nubila venti
 diripiuntque fretum, nigris redit umida tellus
 verticibus, totumque Notis certantibus aequor
 pendet et arquato iam iam prope sidera dorso
 370 fraugitur; incertae nec iam prior impetus alio,
 sed labat exstantem rostris modo gurgite in imo,
 nunc caelo Tritona ferens. nec robora prosunt
 semideum heronum, puppemque insana flagellat
 arbor et instabili procumbens pondere curvas
 375 raptat aquas, remique cadunt in pectus inanes.
 nos quoque per rupes murorumque aggere ab omni,
 dum labor ille viris fretaque indignantur et Austros,
 desuper invalidis fluitantia tela lacertis
 (quid non ausa manus?) Telamona et Pelca contra
 380 spargimus, et nostro petitur Tiryntlium aren.
 illi (quippe simul bello pelagoque laborant),
 pars clipeis munire ratem, pars aequora fundo

³⁶¹ terris Pψ: terrae ω, *fort. recte*

³⁷⁶ per turres *Damsté*

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mour and slaughter-tainted swords. They are not ashamed even to don scaly coats of mail and put helmets on their nerveless faces. Pallas blushed in amazement at the bold bands and Gradivus in distant Haemus laughed. Then for the first time headlong frenzy left their minds. Not that ship, they thought, but the gods' tardy justice, the punishment of crime, was approaching over the salt sea. And now they were away from land the length of a Gortynian arrow's flight when Jupiter sends a cloud pregnant with dark rain and sets it just over the rigging of the Pelasgian ship. The waters roughen and the day, snatched from all its sunshine, mingles darkness matched in a trice by the colour of the waves. Thrusting winds lash hollow clouds and tear the deep apart, wet earth comes back to view in the black whirlpools. As the winds battle, the whole sea hangs poised; now its arching back nears the stars and it breaks. The ship falters, her onward drive slackens and she falls, carrying the Triton projecting from her prow now at the bottom of the flood, now in the heavens. Nor avails the strength of the demigod heroes; the crazy mast thrashes the stern and with its unstable weight leans forward to snatch up the billowing waves. The oars fall back empty on the rowers' chests. While the warriors are in these straits and protest sea and winds, we too along the cliffs and from every high point on the walls scatter from above with our feeble arms our wobbling missiles against Telamon and Pelus (what did our violence not dare?) and our bows aim at the Tirynthian. As for them, hard pressed by war and water both, some protect the ship with their shields, others

- egerere; ast alii pugnant, sed inertia motu
 corpora, suspensaeque carent conamine vires.
 385 instamus iactu telorum, et ferrea nimbis
 certat hiems, ustaeque sudes fractique molares
 spiculaque et multa crinitum missile flamma
 nunc pelago, nunc puppe cadunt; dat operta fragorem
 pinus et abiunctis regemunt tabulata cavernis.
 390 talis Hyperborea virides nive verberat agros
 Iuppiter; obruitur campis genus omne ferarum,
 depressaeque cadunt volucres, et messis amaro
 strata gelu, fragor inde iugis, inde annibus irae.
 ut vero elisit nubes Iove tortus ab alto
 395 ignis et ingentes patuere in fulmine nautae,
 deriguere animi, manibusque horrore remissis
 arma aliena cadunt, rediit in pectora sexus.
 cernimus Aeacidas murisque immane minantem
 Ancaeam et longa pellentem cuspide rupes
 400 Iphiton; at toto manifestus in agmine supra est
 Amphitryoniades puppemque alternus utrimque
 ingravat et medias ardet descendere in undas.
 at levis et miseræ nondum mihi notus Iason
 transtra per et remos impressaque terga virorum
 405 nunc magnum Oeniden, nunc ille hortatibus Idan
 et Talaum et cana rorantem aspergine ponti
 Tyndariden iterans gelidique in nube parentis
 vela laborantem Calain subnectere malo
 voce manuque rogat; quatiunt impulsibus illi
 410 nunc freta, nunc muros, sed nec spumantia cedunt

386 ustae ψ : vastae $P\omega$, *Prisc. GLK 2.161.21*

389 ab iunctis $\psi\Sigma$ 400 attonito $P\omega$ (*Menke*)

408 laboranti *Bentley*

BOOK 5

bale the sea from the hold, others fight; but their bodies are clumsy from the motion, their suspended might lacks energy. We urge the harder with discharge of bolts, the iron storm vies with the downpour, burnt stakes and broken millstones and darts and missiles with tresses of abundant flame fall now in the sea, now in the ship, the covered pine resounds and the planks in the hollows down under²⁹ groan in response. So does Jupiter lash green fields with Hyperborean snow; every kind of wild beast on the plain is buried, the birds are caught and fall, the harvest is flattened with noxious ice, there is roaring in the mountains and wrath in the rivers. But when fire flung from Jove aloft smashed the clouds and the huge mariners showed plain in the flash, hearts froze, hands relaxed in a shudder, alien weapons fell, their sex returned to their hearts. We see the sons of Aeacus and Ancaeus direly threatening our walls and Iphitus pushing off the cliffs with his long spear. But Amphitryon's son towers conspicuous in all the band, weighing down the ship now on one side, now on the other, and burns to plunge into the waves. But Jason, known to me, alas, not yet, passes nimbly over benches and oars, footing the backs of the heroes, urging and urging again with voice and hand now Oeneus' great son, now Idas and Talaus and a son of Tyndareus³⁰ as he drips with the sea's white spray and Calais as he struggles in his father's³¹ icy fog to bind the sails to the mast. With their strokes they shake now the sea, now the walls; but the foaming waters

²⁹ The meaning of *abiunctis* is uncertain.

³⁰ Whether Castor or Pollux.

³¹ His father was the North Wind (Boreas, Aquilo).

aequora, et incensae redempt a turribus hastae,
 ipse graves fluctus clavumque audire negantem
 lassat agens Tiphys palletque et plurima mitat
 imperia ac laevas dextrasque obtorquet in undas
 415 proram navifragis avidam concurrere saxis,
 donec ab extremae cuneo ratis Aesone natus
 Palladios oleae, Mopsi gestamina, ramos
 extulit et, soeini turba prohibente, poposcit
 foedera; praecipites vocem involvere procellae.
 420 tunc modus armorum, pariterque exhausta quierant
 flamma, confusoque dies respexit Olympo.
 quinquaginta illi, trabibus de more revinctis,
 eminus abrupto quatunt nova litora saltu,
 magnorum decora alta patrum, iam fronte sereni
 425 noscendique habitu, postquam tumor iraque cessit
 vultibus. arcana sic fama erumpere porta
 caelicolas, si quando domos litusque rubentum
 Aethiopum et mensas amor est iterare minores;
 dant fluvii montesque locum, tum terra superbit
 430 gressibus et paulum respirat caelifer Atlas.

Hic et ab asserto nuper Marathone superbum
 Thesea et Ismarios, Aquilonia pignora, fratres,
 utraque quis rutila stridebant tempora penna,
 cernimus, hic Phoebos non indignante priorem
 435 Admetum et durae similem nihil Orphea Thraecae,
 tunc prolem Calydones satam generumque profundi

⁴²⁵ timor P ω (Bentley)

⁴²⁸ intrare P ω (Schrader (Σ contulit Garrod))

³² Or, reading *timor*, 'fear and rage.'

yield not and the spears return from the turrets they hit. Tiphys himself wearies the massive billows and the helm that will not hear him, grows pale, and with many a change of orders turns the prow, so greedy to collide with wrecker rocks, to waters left and right; until from the vessel's uttermost angle Aeson's son hoisted branches of Palladian olive, Mopsus' wear, and asked for a truce, though his comrade crew forbade. The rushing tempest swallowed his voice. Then came a stay of arms and with it the wearied gales had subsided and from the turmoil of Olympus day looked again. The fifty heroes, their bark duly moored, leap from the sheer height and shake the unknown shore, tall pride of great parents, now calm of brow and of looks to be recognized once swelling rage³² had left their faces. So the sky-dwellers are said to burst forth from their secret gate should it be their wish to visit again the houses and shore and humbler banquets of the red Ethiopians;³³ rivers and mountains give them passage, Earth is proud to feel their tread, and sky-bearer Atlas takes a brief respite. ✓

Here we see Theseus proud of Marathon lately freed,³⁴ and the Ismarian brothers, children of Aquilo, both with red feathers whirring at their temples, here Admetus, whom Phoebus thought it no shame to call his better, and Orpheus, so unlike hard Thrace, and the offspring born of Calydon,³⁵ and the son-in-law of the deep's Nereus.³⁶ The

³³ In Homer (*Iliad* 1.423) the gods visit the Ethiopians and feast with them. 'Red' indicates the eastern Ethiopians, dwelling by the 'Red Sea' (Persian Gulf).

³⁴ By the slaying of the wild bull.

³⁵ Meleager.

³⁶ Peleus.

THEBAID

Nereos. ambiguo visus errore lacessunt
 Oeбалidae gemini; chlamys huic, chlamys ardet et illi,
 ambo hastile gerunt, umeros exsertus uterque,
 440 nudus uterque genas, simili coma fulgurat astro.
 audet iter magnique sequens vestigia mutat
 Herculis et tarda quamvis se mole ferentem
 vix cursu tener aequat Hylas Lernaetaque tollens
 arma sub ingenti gaudet sudare pharetra.

445 Ergo iterum Venus, et tacitis corda aspera flammis
 Lemniadum pertemptat Amor. tunc regia Iuno
 arma habitusque virum pulchraeque insignia gentis
 mentibus insinuat, certatimque ordine cunctae
 hospitibus patuere fores; tunc primus in aris
 450 ignis, et infandis venere obliviam curis;
 tunc epulae felixque sopor noctesque quietae,
 nec superum sine mente, reor, placuere fatentes.
 forsitan et nostrae fatum excusabile culpae
 noscere cura, duces. cineres Furiasque meorum
 455 testor ut externas non sponte aut crimine taedas
 attigerim (scit cura deum), etsi blandus Iason
 virginibus dare vincla novis: sua iura cruentum
 Phasin habent, alios, Colchi, generatis amores.

Iamque exuta gelu tepuerunt sidera longis
 460 solibus, et velox in terga revolvitur annus.
 iam nova progenies partusque in vota soluti,
 et non speratis clamatur Lemnos alumnis.
 nec non ipsa tamen, thalami monumenta coacti,
 enitor geminos, duroque sub hospite mater

³⁷ Castor and Pollux, whose 'earthly father' Tyndareus was Oeбалus' son.

³⁸ Cf. 4.602 *atque iterum Tydeus*.

BOOK 5

twin scions of Oebalus³⁷ challenge the eye with ambiguous error; one wears a glowing cloak, the other the same, both wield a spear, each is barc-shouldered and smooth-faced, each on his hair has a shining star. Young Hylas dares the voyage, following and adapting great Hercules' stride, whom running he scarce matches, slowly though the other moves his bulk; and lifting the arms of Lerna he rejoiced to sweat beneath the huge quiver.

So 'tis Venus again³⁸ and Love tests the fierce hearts of Lemnos' women with silent fires. Then royal Juno puts into their minds the arms and bearing of the heroes, the signs of noble lineage. One after another all doors vie to welcome the strangers. Then fire is on the altars for the first time and the cares that might not be spoken are forgotten. Then come feasts and happy sleep and nights of rest; confessing, they pleased, not, I think, without the will of the High Ones. Mayhap, captains, you would care to know my own transgression; Fate may be its excuse. I swear by the ashes and Furies of my kin, it was not by my will or guilt that I kindled stranger torches³⁹ (the gods care and know), though Jason had charm to capture young maidens. Bloody Phasis has its own laws; other are the loves you Colchians engender.⁴⁰

And now the stars, shedding their chill, grow warm with the long sunshine and the rapid year turns back. Now comes new progeny and births to answer prayer. Lemnos is loud with un hoped-for children. I too with the rest bring forth twins, memorials of a forced bed though they be, and made a mother by my ungentle guest I revive their grand-

³⁹ I.e. married a stranger.

⁴⁰ In imagination Hypsipyle addresses Medea.

THEBAID

465 nomen avi renovo; nec quae fortuna relictis
nosse datur: iam plena quater quinquennia surgunt
si modo Fata sinunt aluitque rogata Lycaste.

Detumuere animi maris, et clementior Auster
vela vocat: ratis ipsa moram portusque quietos
470 odit et adversi tendit retinacula saxi.

inde fugam Minyae, sociosque appellat Iason
efferus, o utinam iam tunc mea litora rectis
praetervectus aquis, cui non sua pignora cordi,
non promissa fides; certe stat fama remotis
475 gentibus: aequorei redierunt vellera Phrxi.

Ut stata lux pelago venturumque aethera sensit
Tiphys et occidui rubuere cubilia Phoebi,
heu iterum gemitus, iterumque novissima nox est.
vix reserata dies, et iam rate celsus Iason

480 ire iubet, primoque feritur verbere pontus.
illos e scopulis et summo vertice montis
spumea porrecti dirimentes terga profundi
prosequimur visu, donec lassavit euntes
lux oculos longumque polo contexere visa est

485 aequor et extremi pressit freta margine caeli.

Fama subit portus vectum trans alta Thoanta
fraterna regnare Chio, mihi crimina nulla
et vacuos arsisse rogos. fremit impia plebes

466 pergunt P ω (Watt: deg- Damsté)

476 ut P ω Σ : *anne iam?*²

480 ferit dux v- pontum (SB)

41 One of them was called Thoas.

42 Lit. 'for the sea.'

43 As when the Lemnian men were about to leave for Thrace.

44 See critical note. *Ferit dux* can only be defended as an ex-

sire's name.⁴¹ What fortune befell them after I left I may not know. Full four times five years are they growing up, if only the Fates allow and Lycaste raised them as I asked.

The violence of the sea settled down and a milder South Wind calls the sails. The ship herself is weary of tarrying in the tranquil haven and strains her cable against the opposing rock. The Minyae long to go and Jason calls on his comrades—the brute; would that he had sailed straight past my shores in the first place, uncaring for his children and pledged word! To be sure his fame stands among distant nations, the fleece of sailor Phrixus has returned.

The day for sailing⁴² is appointed. Tiphys discerned the morrow's weather and setting Phoebus' bedchamber grew red. Once again laments, once again it is the final night.⁴³ Scarce has day broken, and now Jason, standing high on the ship, gives the word to go; the sea is struck by the first lash.⁴⁴ From cliffs and mountaintop we follow them with our gaze as they part the foamy surface of the spreading deep, until the light wearied our travelling eyes, seeming to weave the long sea and the sky into one, and pressed down the waters with heaven's farthest edge.

Rumour comes to the harbour, telling that Thoas has crossed the deep and reigns in his brother's⁴⁵ Chios, that I am innocent, that the burning pyre was empty. The impi-

traordinary lapse on the poet's part. As captain Jason would not be at the oars and at the oars he could not be standing high on the ship. And the rowers would strike the sea together. Add that *dux* after *Iason* is the merest surplusage. The trouble may have started with *feritur* written *ferit*.

⁴⁵ His name was Oenopion, also son of Bacchus and Ariadne. He ruled Chios; sometimes regarded as founder of the city.

THEBAID

490 sontibus accensae stimulis facinusque repossunt.
 quin etiam occultae vulgo increbrescere voces:
 "solane fida suis, nos autem in funera laetae?
 non deus haec fatumque? quid imperat urbe nefanda?"
 talibus exanimis dictis (et triste propinquat
 495 supplicium, nec regna iuvant) vaga litora furtim
 incomitata sequor funestaque moenia linquo,
 qua fuga nota patris. sed non iterum obuius Euhan,
 nam me praedonum manus huc appulsa tacentem
 abripit et vestras famulam transmittit in oras.'

Talia Lernaeis iterat dum regibus exsil
 500 Lemnias et longa solatur damna querela
 immemor absentis (sic di suasistis) alumni,
 ille graves oculos languentiaque ora comanti
 mergit humo fessusque diu puerilibus actis
 labitur in somnos, presa manus haeret in herba.

505 Interea campis, nemoris sacer horror Achaci,
 terrigena exoritur serpens tractuque soluto
 immanem sese vehit ac post terga relinquit.
 livida fax oculis, tumidi stat in ore veneni
 spuma virens, ter lingua vibrat, terna agmina adunci
 510 dentis, et auratae crudelis gloria frontis
 prominet. Inachio sanctum dixere Tonanti
 agricolae, cui cura loci et silvestribus aris
 pauper honos; nunc ille dei circumdare templa

497 latentem *Baehrens*

506 exoritur P: erigitur ω

510 frontis ω : -ti P

46 The purport (widely misunderstood) is: 'Oh, so she is the one and only innocent and we murderesses! Wasn't it fate? And if

ous vulgar make a clamour, fired by the stings of guilt, and demand their crime. Nay, hidden voices begin to thicken in the multitude: "Was she alone loyal to her own and we happy to slay? Was it not all a god and fate? Why does she rule in the wicked city?"⁴⁶ Terrified at such words (a cruel punishment approaches and my royalty is no help) alone I follow the winding shore in secret and leave the accursed city by the known path of my father's flight. But Euhan did not meet me a second time. A band of pirates landing at the spot snatched me away (I made no sound⁴⁷) and took me to your country as a slave.'

So the Lemnian exile told her tale anew to the Lernaean kings, solacing her losses with lengthy plaint, oblivious (so the gods would have it) of her absent charge. *He* sinks his heavy eyes and drooping head on the lush ground and wearied with length of childish doings glides into sleep. His hand stays clutching the grass.

Meanwhile an earthborn serpent arises in the meadow, holy horror of the Achaean wood, dragging his huge form in a loose slide and leaving it behind him. A livid fire is in his eyes, a green foam of swelling venom in his mouth. Threefold his tongue flickers, triple are the rows of his curving fangs, and the cruel splendour on his gilded brow stands forth. The husbandmen called him sacred to the Inachian Thunderer, who had care of the place and poor men's offerings on woodland altars. Now gliding in a wavy circle he surrounds the god's shrine, now he scrapes the

we are such bad lots, what is she doing as our queen? Hypsipyle's innocence would prove that fate was not to blame.

⁴⁷ She preferred to go with the pirates than be found by the Lemnians.

orbe vago labens, miserac nunc robora silvae
 515 atterit et vastas tenuat complexibus ornos;
 saepe super fluvios geminae iacet aggere ripae
 continuus, squamisque incisus adaestuat amnis.
 sed nunc, Ogygii iussis quando omnis anhelat
 terra dei tepidaeque latent in pulvere Nymphae,
 520 saevior anfractu laterum sinuosa retorquens
 terga solo sicciq̄ue nocens furit igne veneni.
 stagna per arentesque lacus fontesque repressos
 volvitur et vacuis fluviorum in vallibus errat,
 incertusque sui liquidum nunc aëra lambit
 525 ore supinato, nunc arva gementia radens
 pronus adhaeret humo, si quid viridantia sudent
 gramina; percussae calidis afflatibus herbae,
 qua tulit ora, cadunt, moriturque ad sibila campus:
 quantus ab Arctois discriminat aethera Plaustris
 530 Anguis et usque Notos alienumque exit in orbem;
 quantus et ille sacri spiris intorta movebat
 cornua Parnasi, donec tibi, Delie, fixus
 vexit harundineam centeno vulnere silvam.

Quis tibi, parve, deus tam magni pondera fati
 535 sorte dedit? tunc hoc vix prima ad limina vitae
 hoste iaces? an ut inde saccr per saecula Grais
 gentibus et tanto dignus morerere sepulcro?
 occidis extremae dstrictus verbere caudae
 ignaro serpente, puer; fugit ilicet artus
 540 somnus, et in solam patuerunt lumina mortem.
 cum tamen attonito moriens vagitus in auras
 excidit et ruptis immittit ore querelis,

⁵¹⁹ tepidae Pω (Ϛ, Koestlin)

⁵²⁴ incensusque siti Schrader

timber of the hapless forest and thins down huge ash trees with his embraces. Often he lies stretched over both rising banks of a river in one line, and the stream froths at the cut of his scales. But now, when all the land is panting by order of the Ogygian god, and the Nymphs lurk warm⁴⁸ in the sand, he waxes angry, twisting his sinuous back with the curve of his flanks upon the ground, raging balefully with the fire of his dry venom. Through the arid meres and lakes and stopped springs he rolls, wandering in the empty river valleys, and uncertain of himself⁴⁹ now licks the liquid air with mouth back-turned, now scrapes the groaning fields clinging bent forward to the soil, hoping for moisture in the green herbage. The grasses fall where he brings his face, smitten by his hot breath, the plain dies at his hiss: large as the Serpent that divides the heavens on from the Arctic Wains and passes out to the South Winds and an alien hemisphere; or as he that moved the horns of sacred Parnassus as he twined them with his coils until you pierced him, Delian, and he bore an arrow forest with a hundred wounds.

What god's allotting, little one, gave you the burden of so great a fate? By *this* enemy do you lie low scarcely at life's first threshold? Or was it to make you die sacred through the ages henceforth to the peoples of Greece, worthily of so grand a tomb? Grazed by the lash of the tail tip, you perish, child, and the snake knows not of it. Sleep fled your limbs straightway and your eyes opened only to death. But when from your shocked lips⁵⁰ a dying wail passed out upon the air and the plaint hushed broken like

⁴⁸ See Håkanson.

⁴⁹ Cf. Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 184.

⁵⁰ Taking *attonito* with *ore*.

qualia non totas peragunt insomnia voces,
 andiit Hypsipyle, facilemque negantia cursum
 545 exanimis genua aegra rapit; iam certa malorum
 mentis ab augurio sparsoque per omnia visu
 lustrat humum quaerens et nota vocabula parvo
 nequiquam ingeminans: nusquam ille, et prata recentes
 amisere notas. viridi piger accubat hostis
 550 collectus gyro spatiosaque iugera complet
 sic etiam, obliqua cervicem expostus in alvo.
 horruit infelix visu longoque profundum
 incendit clamore nemus; nec territus ille,
 sed iacet. Argolicas ululatus flebilis aures
 555 impulit; extemplo monitu ducis advolat ardens
 Arcas eques causamque refert. tunc squamea demum
 torvus ad armorum radios fremitumque virorum
 colla movet: rapit ingenti conamine saxum,
 quo discretus ager, vacuasque impellit in antras
 560 arduus Hippomedon, quo turbine bellica quondam
 librati salimnt portarum in claustra molares.
 cassa ducis virtus: iam mollia colla refusus
 in tergum serpens venientem exhauserat ictum.
 dat sonitum tellus, nemorumque per avia densi
 565 dissultant nexus. 'at non inea vulnera,' clamat
 et trabe fraxinea Capaneus subit obvius, 'unquam
 effugies, seu tu pavidi ferus incola luci,
 sive deis, utinamque deis, concessa voluptas,
 non, si consertum super haec mihi membra Giganta
 570 subveheres.' volat hasta tremens et hiantia monstri
 ora subit linguaeque secat fera vincla trisulcae,

555 impulit ω: -it et P: implet et *coni.* Hill

563 evaserat ⚡

the unfinished utterances of a dream, Hypsipyle heard. In deathly fear she hurries faint knees that will not run easily. Now certain of disaster by her mind's augury and scattering her gaze in all directions, she ranges the ground in search, vainly crying over and over words familiar to the babe. Nowhere is he, and the meadow has lost the recent tracks. The sluggish enemy lies gathered in a green round, filling broad acres even so, his neck exposed aslant on his belly. The wretched woman shuddered at the sight and with scream upon scream stirred the forest to its depth; the snake is not alarmed but merely lies. The lamentable shrieks struck upon the Argives' ears; forthwith at the leader's command the Arcadian knight⁵¹ flies eagerly to the spot and brings back the cause. Then finally at the flash of arms and the shouting of men the grim snake moves his scaly neck. Tall Hippomedon with a mighty effort seizes a rock, a boundary mark, and hurls it into the empty air with a whirl as when poised millstones leap against barred gates in war. Vain the chieftain's prowess; already the serpent had turned back his supple neck, voiding the coming blow. The earth resounds and in the pathless forest close bondings spring asunder. 'But *my* wounds,' cries Capaneus, coming up to confront him with ashen spear, 'you shall never escape, whether you be the savage denizen of an afrighted grove or a pleasure granted to the gods (and to the gods let it be!⁵²), no, not if you brought a Giant against me joined above this body.'⁵³ The spear flies quivering and enters the monster's gaping jaws, severing the cruel fasten-

⁵¹ Parthenopaeus. ⁵² 'Staius loses no opportunity of emphasizing Capaneus' hostility to the gods' (Mozley).

⁵³ The Giants had snakes for legs.

perque iubas stantes capitisque insigne corusci
 emicat, et nigri sanie perfusa cerebri
 figitur alta solo. longus vix tota peregit
 575 membra dolor, rapido celer ille volumine telum
 circumit avulsumque ferens in opaca refugit
 templa dei; hic magno tellurem pondere mensus
 implorantem animam dominis assibilat aris.
 illum et cognatae stagna indignantia Lernaë,
 580 floribus et vernis assuetæ spargere Nymphæ,
 et Nemees reptatus ager, lucosque per omnes
 silvicolæ fracta genuistis harundine Fauni.
 ipse etiam e summa iam tela poposcerat aethra
 Iuppiter et dudum nimbique hiemesque coibant,
 585 ni minor ira deo gravioraque tela mereri
 servatus Capaneus; moti tamen aura cucurrit
 fulminis et summas libavit vertice cristas.
 Iamque pererratis infelix Lemnia campis,
 liber ut angue locus, modico super aggere longe
 590 pallida sanguineis infectas roribus herbas
 prospicit. huc magno cursum rapit effera luctu
 agnoscitque nefas, terræque illisa nocenti
 fulminis in morem non verba in funere primo,
 non lacrimas habet: ingeminat misera oscula tantum
 595 incumbens animæque fugam per membra tepentem
 quaerit hians. non ora loco, non pectora restant,
 rapta cutis, tenvia ossa patent nexusque madentes

574 alta ω : hasta P: acta ζ , *Heinsius*

593 funeris . . . fulmine *Gossage*

⁵⁴ Or perhaps 'not so great' (as it would be when he actually did destroy Capaneus). Not 'the god restrained his wrath.'

ings of his triple tongue, and through the standing crest and the ornament of his darting head it flashes out and sticks deep into the soil, soaked in the discharge of his black brain. Scarce has the pain made its long way through all his body, with a rapid jerk he coils around the weapon and tears it up, then flees with it into the god's dark shrine; there measuring the earth with his great bulk he hisses his beseeching life-breath at his master's altar. Him the indignant swamp of kindred Lerna lamented and the Nymphs that used to strew him with spring flowers, and the fields of Nemea where he crept, and the woodland Fauns with broken reeds in every grove. Jupiter himself had already called for his weapons from highest heaven, and storm clouds and tempests were gathering—but that the god's wrath is not great enough⁵⁴ and Capaneus is spared to deserve a heavier missile. Yet the coursing wind of the stirred thunderbolt tasted the tip of the crest upon his head.⁵⁵

And now the hapless Lemnian wanders through the fields, now that the place is rid of the serpent, and at the top of a small distant knoll she pales to see grass stained with bloody dews. Hither she tears, wild with her heavy grief, and recognizes the tragedy. Dashed to the guilty earth like a thunderbolt, she found no words or tears in the first onset of disaster. In her misery she only bends over the body raining kisses and with open mouth seeks the flight of the warm spirit.⁵⁶ The face no longer remains in place nor the breast, the skin is torn away, the thin bones show and

⁵⁵ Jupiter could change the course of a thunderbolt after its release; cf. 7.201.

⁵⁶ Tries to catch the last breath.

- sanguinis imbre novi, totumque in vulnere corpus.
 ae velut aligerae sedem fetusque parentis
 600 cum piger umbrosa populatus in iliee serpens,
 illa redit querulaeque domus mirata quietem
 stat superimpendens adveetosque horrida maesto
 excutit ore cibos, cum solus in arbore paret
 sanguis et errantes per eapta eubilia plumae.
 605 Ut laeros artus gremio miseranda recepit
 intexitque comis, tandem laxata dolori
 vox invenit iter, gemitusque in verba soluti:
 'o mihi desertae natorum duleis imago,
 Archemore, o rerum et patriae solamen ademptae
 610 servitiique decus, qui te, mea gaudia, sontes
 extinxere dei, modo quem digressa reliqui
 laseivum et prono vexantem gramina eursu?
 heu ubi siderei vultus? ubi verba ligatis
 imperfecta sonis risusque et murmura soli
 615 intellecta mihi? quotiens tibi Lemnon et Argo
 sueta loqui et longa somnum suadere querela!
 sie equidem luctus solabar et ubera parvo
 iam materna dabam, cui nunc venit irritus orbae
 lactis et infelix in vulnera liquitur imber.
 620 noseo deos: o dira mei praesagia somni
 nocturnique metus, et nunquam impune per umbras
 attonitae mihi visa Venus! quos arguo divos?
 ipsa ego te (quid enim timeam moritura fateri?)
 exposui Fatis. quae mentem insania traxit?
 625 tantane me tantae tenuere obliviae curae?

602 stat super ω : iam stupet P603 paret P: cura ω 606 dolore P ω (*Heinsius*)615 argos P ω (*Gronovius*)620 dira ψ : dura P ω

the joints drenched in a rain of fresh blood, the whole body is in the wound. So when a sluggish snake has ravaged the dwelling and young of a winged parent in a shady ilex tree, she returns and wondering at the silence of the twittering home she stands hanging over it; aghast she tosses from her mouth the food she brought, while in the tree is seen only blood and feathers straying about the captured nest.

She took the torn limbs to her bosom, poor soul, and twined them in her hair. At last her voice was loosed to find a passage for her sorrow and her moans dissolved into words: 'Sweet semblance of the children who have forsaken me, Archemorus,⁵⁷ solace of my lost estate and country, pride of my servitude, what guilty gods took your life, my joy, whom but now in parting I left at play, crushing the grasses as you hastened in your forward crawl? Ah, where is your starry face? Where your words unfinished in constricted sounds, and laughs and gurgles that only I could understand? How often would I talk to you of Lemnos and the Argo and lull you to sleep with my long tale of woe! So I would console my sorrow and give the little one a mother's breasts. Now in my bereavement the milky flow comes to me in vain, dropping hapless into your wounds. I recognize the gods. Ah dire presages of my slumber, terrors of the night, and Venus, who never in the darkness appeared to my startled eyes save to my cost! What gods do I accuse? 'Twas I myself—I am to die, so why fear to confess?—who exposed you to the Fates. What madness drew my mind? Could such forgetfulness of such a charge take

⁵⁷ Either the name is premature or Hypsipyle had heard of the prophecy given to Lycurgus (647).

dum patrios casus famaеque exorsa retracto
 ambitiosa meae (pietas haec magna fidesque!),
 exsolvi tibi, Lemne, nefas. ubi letifer anguis?
 630 ferte, duces, meriti si qua est mihi gratia duri,
 si quis honos dictis; aut vos exstinguite ferro,
 ne tristes dominos orbamque inimica revisam
 Eurydicen, quamquam haud illi mea cura dolendo
 cesserit. hocne ferens onus illaetabile matris
 transfundam gremio? quae me prius ima sub umbras
 635 mergat humus? simul haec terraque et sanguine vultum
 sordida magnorum circa vestigia regum
 vertitur et tacite maerentibus imputat undas.

Et iam sacrifici subitus per tecta Lycurgi
 nuntius implerat lacrimis ipsumque domumque,
 640 ipsum adventantem Persei vertice sancto
 montis, ubi averso dederat prosecta Tonanti,
 et caput iratis rediens quassabat ab extis.
 hic sese Argolicis immunem servat ab armis,
 haud animi vacuus, sed templa araeque tenebant.
 645 necdum ctiam responsa dcum monitusque vetusti
 exciderant voxque ex adytis accepta profundis:
 'prima, Lycurge, dabis Dircaeο funera bello.'
 id cavet, et maestus vicini pulvere Martis
 angitur ad lituos periturisque invidet armis.

650 Ecce (fides superum!) laceras comitata Thoantis
 aduchit exsequias, contra subit obvia mater,
 femineos coetus plangentiaque agmina ducens.

⁵⁸ *Vertitur* ('turns' from one to another) and *imputat* are commonly misunderstood; cf. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 6.2 *pedes eius advoluta et uberi fletu rogans dei vestigia*.

hold of me? As in my vanity I rehearsed the story of my country and the tale of my renown (such sense of duty, such fidelity!), I paid you, Lemnos, the crime I owed. Where is the deadly snake? Bring me, chieftains, if you have any gratitude for my grievous service, any favour for my words; or slay me yourselves with the sword so that I may not see my sad masters again and bereaved Eurydice, a thing of hate—though my love and grief yield not to hers. Shall I bear this melancholy burden to pour into his mother's lap? What earth should first sink me in profoundest dark?' Therewith, her face foul with soil and blood, she grovels around the feet of the great kings, and as they grieve, silently claims credit for the waters.⁵⁸

And now a sudden report that ran through the dwelling of Lycurgus as he was at sacrifice filled himself and his house with tears—himself as he approached from the top of Perscus' mountain⁵⁹ where he had offered portions⁶⁰ to the unfriendly Thunderer, shaking his head as he returned from the angry entrails. Here he was keeping himself, taking no part in the Argive war; not that he lacked courage, but temple and altars held him back. Nor yet had the gods' oracle and warnings of old dropped from his mind, the word received from the depth of the shrine: 'Lycurgus, you shall give first death⁶¹ to the Dircaean war.' Of that he is aware; the dust of Mars close by saddens him, he winces at the trumpets, and wishes the doomed army ill.

See! The gods do not deceive. Thoas' daughter comes, bringing with her the mangled remains. To meet her the mother advances leading a gathering of women, a mourn-

⁵⁹ Cf. 3.460.

⁶⁰ *Prosecta*, lit. 'severed portions.'

⁶¹ Hence 'Archemorus.'

at non magnanimo pietas ignava Lycurgo:
 fortior illa malis, lacrimasque insana resorbet
 655 ira patris; longo rapit arva morantia passu
 vociferans: 'illa autem ubinam, cui parva cruoris
 laetave damna mei? vivitne? impellite raptam,
 ferte citi comites; faxo omnis fabula Lemni
 et pater et tumidae generis mendacia sacri
 660 exciderint.' ibat letumque inferre parabat
 ense furens raptō; venienti Oeneius heros
 impiger obiecta proturbat pectora parma,
 ac simul infrendens: 'siste hunc, vesane, furorem,
 quisquis es!' et pariter Capaneus acerque reducto
 665 affuit Hippomedon rectoque Erymanthius ense,
 ac iuvenem multo praestringunt lumine; at inde
 agrestum pro rege manus. quos inter Adrastus
 mitius et sociae veritus commercia vittae
 Amphiaraus ait: 'ne, quaeso! absistite ferro,
 670 unus avum sanguis, neve indulgete furori,
 tuque prior.' sed non sedato pectore Tydeus
 subicit: 'anne ducem servatricemque cohortis
 Inachiae ingratis coram tot milibus audes
 mactare in tumulos (quanti pro funeris ultor!),
 675 cui regnum genitorque Thoas et lucidus Euhan
 stirpis avus? timidone parum, quod gentibus actis
 undique in arma tuis inter rapida agmina pacem
 solus habes? habeasque, et te victoria Graium
 inveniatur tumulis etiamnum haec fata gementem.'
 680 Dixerat, et tandem cunctante modestior ira

654 ille P ω (SB²)

ing host. But great-hearted Lyncurgus' love for his son is up and doing. It takes strength from calamity; a father's furious anger sucks back his tears, and with long strides he despatches the fields that stay him, shouting 'And where is she to whom spilt blood of mine is a trifle or a pleasure? Does she live? Take her, thrust her, comrades, bring her quickly. I shall make her forget all her rigmarole of Lemnos, and her father, and the lie of race divine that she is so proud of.' Snatching up a sword and advancing, he was about to deal death in his rage, when the hero son of Oeneus went into action, pushing back the other's chest with blocking shield and gnashing his teeth: 'Stop this madness, lunatic, whoever you are.' Capaneus likewise was on the spot and fierce Hippomedon and the Erymanthian (sword drawn back the one, levelled the other), dazzling the young man with many a flash. From the other side a band of peasants rally to their king. Between them Adrastus in gentler style and Amphiaraus respecting the commerce of a fillet like his own: 'Not so, I pray. Put away the steel. Our ancestry is one. Indulge not rage. And be you first.' But Tydeus is not pacified. 'Our guide,' he cries, 'saviour of the Inachian host, do you dare slaughter her for a grave before so many thousands of the thankless⁶²—in vengeance for what a mighty death! She that was a queen, whom Thoas begot, whose grandsire was Eulian the shining? Coward, is it not enough that when your countrymen from every quarter have flocked to arms, you only amid the hurrying columns are at peace? Keep it, and let the victory of the Greeks find you still at the graveside bewailing this fatality.'

He spoke. The other's anger pauses now and more mea-

⁶² They would be thankless if they let it happen.

ille refert: 'equidem non vos ad moenia, Thebas
 rebar et hostiles huc advenisse catervas.
 pergite in excidium, socii si tanta voluptas
 sanguinis, imbuite arma domi, atque haec irrita dudum
 685 templa Iovis (quid enim haud licitum?) ferat impius ignis,
 si vilem, tanti premerent cum pectora luctus,
 in famulam ius esse ratus dominoque ducique.
 sed videt haec, videt ille deum regnator, et ausis,
 sera quidem, manet ira tamen.' sic fatus, et arces
 690 respicit.

Atque illic alio certamine belli
 tecta fremunt; volucres equitum praeverterat alas
 Fama recens, geminos alis amplexa tumultus:
 illi ad fata rapi atque illi iam occumbere leto,
 sic meritam, Hypsipylen iterant creduntque nec irae
 695 fit mora, iamque faces et tela penatibus instant;
 vertere regna fremunt raptumque auferre Lycurgum
 cum Iove cumque aris; resonant ululatibus aedes
 femineis, versusque dolor dat terga timori.

Alipedum curru sed enim sublimis Adrastus
 700 secum ante ora virum fremibunda Thoantida portans
 it medius turmis et 'parcite, parcite!' clamat.
 'nil actum saeve, meritis nec tale Lycurgus
 excidium, gratique inventrix fluminis ecce.'

681 thebes P ω (*Håkanson ex cod.*)

699 alipedi Jortin

63 The mountain and Jupiter's temple from which he had just come down. 64 In the city. But *illic* after *arces* is misleading and has caused confusion.

65 One being Lycurgus' confrontation with the 'Greek' leaders

sured is his reply: 'For my part I did not think it was you outside the walls but that Thebes and her hostile troops had come hither. March in to destroy us if allied blood is so much your pleasure, flesh your weapons at home and let impious fire consume this Jove's already unavailing temple—for what is not permitted?—seeing that as master and ruler I thought I had the right to deal with a worthless slave when such sorrow weighed upon my heart. But he sees it, he, the ruler of the gods, and his anger at your deeds, though late, abides.' So he spoke and looked to the heights.⁶³

There⁶⁴ the dwellings are loud with another clash of arms. Recent Rumour had gone ahead of the swift squadrons, embracing twin tumults⁶⁵ with her wings. Some say and say again that Hypsipyle, their benefactress, is being dragged to her doom, others that she is already suffering death. They believe and their anger carries not. Now torches and weapons threaten the palace, they shout to overthrow the monarchy, to seize Lycurgus and carry him off along with Jupiter⁶⁶ and his altars. The dwelling resounds with women's screams and grief turns about, fleeing before terror.

But Adrastus, aloft in his chariot of coursers, carrying Thoas' daughter alongside before the clamorous faces of the men, passes through their midst and cries: 'Enough, enough! No cruelty has been done, Lycurgus has not deserved such deadly usage. And she who found the grateful

outside the city, the other (imminent) in the city itself. The horsemen (*alas*) are the 'Greeks.' So I tentatively interpret, but the wording is unclear and *alas* . . . *alis* has been suspected with reason. ⁶⁶ His statue.

- sie ubi diversis maria evertere procellis
 705 hinc Boreas Eurusque, illine niger imbribus Auster,
 pulsa dies regnantque hiemes, venit aequoris alti
 rex sublimis equis, geminusque ad spumea Triton
 frena natans late pelago dat signa eadenti,
 et iam plana Thetis, montesque et litora crescunt.
 710 Quis superum tanto solatus funera voto
 pensavit laerimas inopinaque gaudia maestae
 rettulit Hypsipylae? tu, gentis conditor, Enhau,
 qui geminos iuvenes Lemni de litore vectos
 intuleras Nemeae mirandaque fata parabas.
 715 eausa viae genetrix, nec inhospita tecta Lyncurgi
 praebuerant aditus; et protinus ille tyranno
 nuntius extinctae miserando vulnere prolis.
 ergo adsunt comites (pro Fors et caeca futuri
 mens hominum!) regique favent; sed Lemnos ad aures
 720 ut primum dictusque Thoas, per tela manusque
 irruerant, matremque avidis complexibus ambo
 diripiunt flentes alternaque pectora mutant.
 illa velut rupes immoto saxea visu
 haeret et expertis non audet credere divis.
 725 ut vero et vultus et signa Argoa relictis
 ensibus atque umeris amborum intextus Iason,
 cesserunt hictus, turbataque munere tanto
 corruit, atque alio maduerunt limina fletu.
 addita signa polo, laetoque ululante tumultu
 730 tergaque et aera dei motas erepuere per auras.

stream—behold!’ So when Boreas and Eurus on one side, Auster with his black rains on the other have upheaved the sea with their diverse blasts, the day is banished and storms rule; then comes the king of the deep aloft on his horses, twofold Triton swimming alongside the foamy bridles gives signal far and wide to the falling waters. And now Thetis is flat, mountains and shores increase.

Which of the High Ones solaced her calamity, balancing her tears with an answer to her great prayer, and brought back unlooked-for joy to sad Hypsipyle? You it was, Euhan, founder of the family, who had brought the two youths⁶⁷ from Leninos’ shore to Nemea, preparing a wondrous destiny. Their mother was the reason for their journey and the hospitable dwelling of Lycurgus had given them entry, when the report reached the king of his offspring piteously killed. So they are there as his companions and (oh chance and men’s minds blind to the future!) support the king. But as soon as Lemnos and Thoas’ name come to their ears, they rush through weapons and hands and, both weeping, tear their mother apart with greedy embraces, taking her to their bosoms in turn. She stays fixed like a stony rock, her eyes unmoving, not daring to trust the gods she has experienced. But when she sees their faces and the signs of Argo on the swords Jason had left behind and Jason’s name inwoven on their shoulders, her sorrows left her, and overcome by so great a boon she collapsed, her eyes bedewed with other tears. Signs too were manifest in heaven, cries of tumultuous joy and the drums and cymbals of the god crashed through the resonant air.

⁶⁷ Thoas and Euneus, sons of Jason and Hypsipyle.

THEBAID

Tunc pius Oeclides, ut prima silentia vulgi
 mollior ira dedit, placidasque accessus ad aures:
 ‘audite, o ductor Nemeae lectique potentes
 Inachidae, quae certus agi manifestat Apollo.
 735 iste quidem Argolicis haud olim indebitus armis
 luctus adest, recto descendunt limite Parcae:
 et sitis interitu fluviorum et letifer anguis
 et puer, heu nostri signatus nomine fati,
 Archemorus, cuncta haec superum demissa suprema
 740 mente fluunt. differte animos festinaque tela
 ponite; mansuris donandus honoribus infans.
 et meruit; det pulchra suis libamina Virtus
 manibus, atque utinam plures innectere pergas,
 Phoebe, moras, semperque novis bellare vetemur
 745 casibus, et semper Thebe funesta recedat.
 at vos magnorum transgressi fata parentum
 felices, longum quibus hinc per saecula nomen,
 dum Lernaea palus et dum pater Inachus ibit,
 dum Nemea tremulas campis iaculabitur umbras,
 750 ne fletu violate sacrum, ne plangite divos:
 nam deus iste, deus, Pyliae nec fata senectae
 maluerit, Phrygiis aut degere longius annis.’
 finierat, caeloque cavam nox induit umbram.

⁷³² accessus ψ : -ssit P ω

⁷⁴² sui Poynton virtus *edd.* (Hill)

Then spoke the pious son of Oecles as soon as the softening anger of the multitude gave silence and tranquil ears allowed approach: 'Hear, ruler of Nemea and sons of Inachus, chosen chiefs, what sure Apollo manifests for us to do. This sorrow is owed to Argive arms from time long past, the Parcae come down in a straight line. The thirst from the perishing of the streams, the death-bearing snake, and the boy marked, alas, by our destiny's name, Archemorus, all these flow down from the supreme will of the High Ones. Hold your anger, lay by your hasty weapons. The child must be accorded lasting honours. And he has deserved them. Let Valour make fair libation to the dead that is her own⁶⁸ and, Phoebus, may you go on to weave more delays and we be barred from war by ever new chances and may deadly Thebes ever further recede.⁶⁹ But you,⁷⁰ fortunate ones, who have passed beyond the destiny of great parents, whom long fame awaits through the ages while Lerna's swamp and father Inachus shall flow, while Nemea shall cast her quivering shadows over the fields, violate not the rite with weeping, bewail not the gods. For a god he is, a god, nor would he rather be fated to a Pyliaid or to live longer than Phrygian years.'⁷¹ He ended, and night wrapped hollow darkness round the sky.

⁶⁸ Valour (*Virtus*) stands for the army, which was indirectly responsible for the child's death (SB²). Or *sui* ('libation of herself') may be right: athletic prowess will herald military performance.

⁶⁹ Amphiaraus (not Adrastus, as Lesueur), seems to be thinking aloud.

⁷⁰ Lycurgus and Eurydice. 'Great parents' are not *their* parents, but illustrious parents in general.

⁷¹ I.e. live longer than Nestor or Priam.

LIBER VI

- Nuntia multivago Danaas perlabitur urbes
Fama gradu, sancire novo sollemnia busto
Inachidas ludumque super, quo Martia bellis
praesudare paret seseque accendere virtus.
5 Graium ex more decus: primus Pisaea per arva
hunc pius Alcides Pelopi †certavit† honorem
pulvereamque fera crinem deterisit oliva;
proxima vipcreo celebratur libera nexu
Phocis, Apollineae bellum puerile pharetrae;
10 mox circum tristes servata Palaemonis aras
nigra superstitione, quotiens animosa resumit
Leucothea gemitus et amica ad litora festa
tempestate venit: planctu conclamat uterque
Isthmos, Echioniac responsant flebile Thebae.
15 et nunc eximii regum, quibus Argos alumnis

⁶ *anne* coeptavit?²

⁸ celebratur P: -avit ω

¹ The Olympian games, founded in legend by Hercules, were the first of the four great Greek athletic festivals. Pelops' tomb was at Olympia and honour was paid to it (Pindar, *Olympians* 1.93 and 10.24), but that the games were founded in his honour seems to be Statius' extrapolation. *Certavit*, for which the translation substitutes *coeptavit*, has been implausibly explained as referring to an

BOOK 6

Rumour travels at large gliding through the Danaan cities with report that the sons of Inachus are founding rites for a new tomb and games to boot, in which martial valour will sweat in preparation for war and set itself alight, a festival according to Greek custom. Pious Alcides first began this honour for Pelops in Pisa's fields¹ and brushed his dusty hair with wild olive.² Next was Phoeis celebrated free of the serpent's bond, the boyhood battle of Apollo's quiver.³ After that came a black cult observed at Palaemon's gloomy altars as often as brave Leucothea renews her lamentations and returns to the friendly shore at festival time; Isthmos on either side is loud with mourning and Eehionian Thebes makes tearful response.⁴ And now the flower of kings, Argos' children linking her with heaven,

otherwise unattested tradition ascribing the foundation to Pelops. *Honorem* has also been taken as an internal accusative: 'vied for glory in the games' (Melville). It would be a very harsh one.

² Victors at Olympia were given crowns of wild olive. Statius makes Hercules take part in the games he founded.

³ The Pythian games at Delphi commemorated Apollo's slaying of the serpent Python.

⁴ The Isthmian games at Corinth commemorated the death of the child Melicertes / Palaemon, whom his Theban mother Ino plunged into the sea along with herself.

THEBAID

- conexum caelo, quorumque ingentia tellus
 Aonis et Tyriae suspirant nomina matres,
 concurrunt nudasque movent in proelia vires.
 ceu primum ausurae trans alta ignota biremes,
 20 seu Tyrrhenam hiemem seu stagna Aegaea lacessant,
 tranquillo prius arma lacu clavumque levesque
 explorant remos atque ipsa pericula discunt;
 at cum experta cohors, tunc pontum irrumperere fretae
 longius ereptasque oculis non quaerere terras.
- 25 Clara laboriferos caelo Tithonia currus
 extulerat vigilesque deae pallentis habenas
 et Nox et cornu fugiebat Somnus inani;
 iam plangore viae, gemitu iam regia mugit
 flebilis, acceptos longe nemora avia frangunt
 30 multiplicantque sonos. sedet ipse exutus honoro
 vittarum nexu genitor squalentiaque ora
 sparsus et incultam ferali pulvere barbam.
 asperior contra planctusque egressa viriles
 exemplo famulas premit hortaturque volentes
 35 orba parens, lacerasque super procumbere nati
 reliquias ardet totiensque avulsa refertur.
 arcet et ipse pater. mox ut maerentia dignis
 vultibus Inachii penetrarunt limina reges,
 ceu nova tunc clades et primo saucius infans
 40 vulnere letalisve irrumperet atria serpens,
 sic alium ex alio quamquam lassata fragorem
 pectora congeminant, integratoque resultant
 accensae clamore fores: sensere Pelasgi
 invidiam et lacrimis excusant crimen obortis.
- 45 Ipse, datum quotiens intercisoque tumultu

³⁵ procumbere ω: prorumpere P

BOOK 6

whose mighty names Aonia's land and Tyrian mothers utter sighing, meet and stir their naked strength to combat.⁵ Even as ships about to venture for the first time across unknown seas, whether they challenge Tyrrhene storm or spreading Aegean, first test rigging and helm and light oars on a calm lake and learn actual perils; but when their crews are trained, then confidently they break far into the main nor does their gaze seek the lost land.

Bright Tithonia had raised her toil-bearing chariot in the sky, Night and Sleep with empty horn were fleeing from the pale goddess' wakeful reins. Now the streets are loud with wailing, now the tearful palace with moans; the pathless forests afar take and break and multiply the sounds. The father himself sits stripped of his honourable fillet, his unkempt head and untended beard scattered with funeral dust. Fronting him the bereaved mother, more violent than he and lamenting more than man, urges her handmaidens by her example, exhorting them though willing, and yearns to plunge upon her child's torn remains, returning as often as she is hauled away. Even the father holds her back. Then, when the Inachian kings entered the mourning threshold with mien to match, as though the tragedy were new and the infant suffering his first wound and the deadly serpent breaking into the hall, their breasts though weary redouble loud blows one after another and the doors reecho kindled with fresh clamour. The Pelasgi feel the reproach and excuse the charge with flow of tears.

Adrastus himself, whenever he has the chance and the

⁵ Origin of the Nemean games.

THEBAID

conticuit stupefacta domus, solatur Adrastus
 alloquiis genitorem ultro, nunc fata recensens
 resque hominum duras et inexorabile pensum,
 nunc aliam prolem mansuraque numine dextro
 50 pignora. nondum orsis modus, et lamenta redibant.
 ille quoque affatus non mollius audit amicos
 quam trucidis Ionii rabies clamantia ponto
 vota virum aut tenues curant vaga fulmina nimbos.

Tristibus interea ramis teneraque cupresso
 55 damnatus flammae torus et puerile feretrum
 textitur: ima virent agresti stramina cultu;
 proxima gramineis operosior area sertis,
 et picturatus morituris floribus agger;
 tertius assurgens Arabum strue tollitur ordo
 60 Eoas complexus opes incanaque glebis
 tura et ab antiquo durantia cinnama Belo.
 summa crepant auro, Tyrioque attollitur ostro
 molle supercilium, teretes hoc undique gemmae
 irradiant, medio Linus intertextus acantho
 65 letiferique canes: opus admirabile semper
 oderat atque oculos flectebat ab omine mater.
 arma etiam et veterum exuvias circumdat avorum
 gloria mixta malis afflictæque ambitus aulae,
 ccu grande exsequiis onus atque immensa ferantur
 70 membra rogo, sed cassa tamen sterilisque dolentes
 fama iuvat, parvique augescunt funere manes.
 inde ingens lacrimis honor et miseranda voluptas,
 muncraque in cineres annis graviora feruntur;
 namque illi et pharetras breviora que tela dicarat

⁷⁰ rogo Pψ: t(h)oro ω

BOOK 6

noise is suspended and the house lapses into stunned silence, unprompted consoles the father with words of comfort. Now he rehearses destinies and the cruelty of man's condition and the inexorable thread, now speaks of other offspring and children who would remain with heaven's blessing. His speech unfinished, the laments return. Lycurgus too is no more mollified by well-meant words than the rage of the fierce Ionian heeds the clamour of men's prayers upon the deep or wandering lightnings thin showers.

Meanwhile a couch doomed to flame, a childish bier, is woven from sad branches of tender cypress. The lowest part is strewn with rustic greenery, next is a space more elaborate with herbal wreaths and a mound decked with flowers soon to die. The third tier rears high with an Arabian heap, comprising eastern wealth and white lumps of incense and cinnamon lasting from ancient Belus. The top rattles with gold, a soft overhang of Tyrian purple rises high, flashing at all points with polished jewels; in the middle among acanthus is woven Linus and the deadly hounds. The mother always hated this splendid work and averted her eyes from the omen. Glory mingling with distress and pride of the afflicted palace places arms too and trappings of ancient forbears around the bier, as though a great load was being borne to burial, a vast body for the pyre; vain and barren fame yet pleases the grieving and the tiny dead grows bigger by his funeral. Thence comes great honour to the tears⁶ and a piteous pleasure. Gifts are borne for burning more weightily than his years; for his father in premature vow had reserved quivers for him and minia-

⁶ As shed for a great loss.

- 75 festinus voti pater insontesque sagittas;
iam tune et nota stabuli de gente probatos
in nomen pascibat equos einctusque sonantes
armaque maiores expectatura lacertos.
[†spes avidi quas non in nomen credula vestes†
- 80 urguebat studio eultusque insignia regni
purpureos sceptrumque minus, cuneta ignibus atris
damnat atrox suaque ipse parens gestamina ferri,
si damnis rabidum queat exsaturare dolorem.]
- Parte alia gnari monitis exercitus instat
- 85 auguris aëriam truncis nemorumque ruina,
montis opus, cumulare pyram, quae crimina caesi
anguis et infausti eremet atra piacula belli.
[his labor aeeisam Nemeen umbrosaue tempe
praccipitare solo lucosque ostendere Phocbo.]
- 90 sternitur extemplo veteres incaedua ferro
silva comas, largae qua non opulentior umbrae
Argolicos inter saltusque educta Lycacos
extulerat super astra caput: stat sacra senectae
numine, nec solos hominum transgressa veterno
- 95 fertur avos, Nymphas etiam mutasse superstes
Faunorumque greges. aderat miserabile luco
excidium: fugere ferae, nidosque tepentes
absiliunt (metus urguet) aves; cadit ardua fagus
Chaoniumque nemus brumaeque illaesa cupressus,
- 100 proeumbunt piceae, flammis alimenta supremis,
ornique iliceacque trabes metuendaque suco
taxus et infandos belli potura cruores
fraxinus atque situ non expugnabile robur.
hinc audax abies et odoro vulnere pinus
- 105 scinditur, aeclinant intonsa cacumina terrae
alnus amica fretis nec inhospita vitibus ulmus.

ture darts and guiltless arrows, and even then was rearing⁷ in his name proven horses of his stable's well-known breed, and clattering belts and shields expecting bigger arms.

Elsewhere at the bidding of the schooled augur the army presses to pile up an airy pyre, like a mountain, with tree trunks and forest wreckage, to burn up the sin of the snake's slaying and dark offerings, of expiation⁸ for their ill-omened war. Straightway a wood whose ancient foliage never knew the axe is felled, than which none richer in lavish shade was raised in the glades of Argolis and Lycaeus to lift its head above the stars. It stood sacred in the majesty of age, said not only to surpass men's ancestors in antiquity but to have seen generations of Nymphs and Fauns come and go. Piteous destruction was at hand for that grove. The beasts fled, the birds flitted from their warm nests—fear drives. Falls the towering beech, the Chaonian forest and the cypress that winter cannot harm, spruces fall, alment for funeral flames, and mountain ashes, and trunks of ilex, and yew of dangerous sap, and ash that will drink blood shed in accursed war, and age-proof robur.⁹ Then the daring fir¹⁰ and the pine with aromatic wound is split, and the alder, friend to seas, and the vine-welcoming elm lean un-

⁷ Lit. 'feeding.' With the belts and shields a different verb (as *parabat*) is understood. ⁸ In atonement for the death of the sacred snake (cf. 5.511–13). But something wider may be adumbrated, as though the war were a crime in itself.

⁹ A species of oak apparently distinct from the 'Chaonian forest.' ¹⁰ Used in shipbuilding.

^{79–83} et 88–89 *absunt in P, damnant edd. plerique*

⁸⁶ *onus Pω (Σ, Weber)*

THEBAID

- dat gemitum tellus: non sic eversa feruntur
 Ismara cum fracto Boreas caput extulit antro,
 non grassante Noto citius nocturna peregit
 110 flamma nemus. linquunt flentes dilecta locorum,
 otia cana, Pales Silvanusque arbiter umbrae
 semideumque pecus, migrantibus aggemit illis
 silva, nec amplexae dimittunt robora Nymphae.
 ut cum possessas avidis victoribus arces
 115 dux raptare dedit, vix signa audita, nec urbem
 invenias; ducunt sternuntque abiguntque feruntque
 immodici, minor ille fragor quo bella gerebant.
 Ianque pari cumulo geminas, hanc tristibus umbris
 ast illam superis, aequus labor auxerat aras,
 120 cum signum hictus cornu grave mugit adunco
 tibia, cui teneros suetum producere manes
 lege Phrygum maesta. Pelopem monstrasse ferebant
 exsequiale sacrum carmenque minoribus umbris
 utile, quo geminis Niobe consumpta pharetris
 125 squalida bisseas Sipyron deduxerat urnas.
 Portant inferias arsuraque fercula primi
 Graiorum, titulisque pios testantur honores
 gentis quisque suae; longo post tempore surgit
 colla super iuvenum (numero dix legerat omni)
 130 ipse fero clamore torus. cinxere Lyncurgum
 Lernaei proceres, geneticem mollior ambit
 turba; nec Hypsipyle raro subit agmine: vallant
 Inachidae memores, sustentant livida nati

¹¹ The comma which I have placed after *locorum* discloses the syntax, with *otia cana* in apposition to *dilecta locorum* = *dilecta loca* (SB²).

shorn tops on the ground. The earth groans. Not so is Ismara overturned and carried off when Boreas lifts his head from his fractured cavern nor does nocturnal fire more swiftly destroy a forest under the South Wind's assault. Pales and Silvanus, lord of shade, and the demigod herd leave the places they love, haunts of ancient peace,¹¹ and as they depart the wood groans in sympathy, while the Nymphs loose not the oaks from their embrace. As when a commander gives a captured town over to greedy victors to plunder, scarce is the signal heard and the city is gone; unrestrained they drag and flatten, drive off, carry off; with less noise they made war.

And now equal toil had raised twin altars of like mass, one to the gloomy shades, the other to the High Ones, when the pipe with curving horn booms low in sign of mourning, the pipe that by Phrygia's sad ordinance was wont to lead out youthful dead. They used to say that Pelops showed this funeral rite and chant to serve children's ghosts; with it in mourning garb Niobe consumed by twin quivers brought her twelve urns to Sipylos.¹²

The Grecian leaders bring their funeral gifts and offerings for burning, each with labels testifying in piety to his family honours. After a long interval there rises on the necks of young men (the leader had chosen them from all the host) amid wild shouting the bier itself. The Lernaean chiefs surround Lycurgus, a gentler company encircles the queen, Hypsipyle too comes well-attended. The children of Inachus remember and guard her, her sons hold up her

¹² Statius' source is unknown. Pelops and Niobe were the children of Tantalus, king of Sipylos in Lydia. Phrygian music was passionate and exciting, used in the worship of Cybele.

- bracchia et inventae concedunt plangere matri.
- 135 Illic infaustos ut primum egressa penates
 Eurydice, nudo vocem de pectore rumpit
 planctuque et longis praefata ululatus infit:
 'non hoc Argolidum coetu circumdata matrum
 speravi te, nate, sequi, nec talia demens
 140 fingebam votis annorum elementa tuorum,
 nil saevum reputans: etenim his in finibus aevi
 unde ego bella tibi Thebasque ignara timerem?
 cui superum nostro committere sanguine pugnas
 dulce? quis hoc armis vovit scelus? at tua nondum,
 145 Cadme, domus, nullus Tyrio grege plangitur infans.
 primitias egomet lacrimarum et caccidis acerbae,
 ante tubas ferrumque, tuli, dum deside cura
 credo sinus fidos altricis et ubera mando.
 quidni ego? narrabat servatum fraude parentem
 150 insontesque manus. en quam ferale putemus
 abiurasse sacrum et Lemni gentilibus unam
 immunem furiis! haec illa (et creditis) ausa,
 haec pietate potens solis abiecit in arvis,
 non regem dominumque, alienos impia partus,
 155 hoc tantum, silvaeque infamis tramite liquit,
 quem non anguis atrox (quid enim hac opus, ei mihi, leti
 mole fuit?), tantum caeli violentior aura

¹⁵² ausae P ω (SB; cf. Σ): alii aliter

¹³ The Decii 'devoted' themselves for Roman victories. Eurydice envisages her son as having been 'devoted' for the success of the 'Greek' arms.

¹⁴ Lit. 'the breasts,' i.e. the suckling of the child. Or perhaps,

bruised arms and allow their newfound mother to lament.

No sooner had Eurydice left her ill-starred abode than speech breaks from her bare breast and with prelude of blows and long-drawn keenings she begins: 'It was not thus, my son, that I hoped to follow you attended by a throng of Argive dames nor so in my foolish prayers did I imagine your earliest years; nothing cruel was in my thoughts. For indeed at your time of life how in my ignorance should I fear war and Thebes for you? Which of the High Ones did it please to commence battle with our blood? Who for warfare¹³ vowed this crime? But your house, Cadmus, is not yet in dole, no infant is mourned among the Tyrian folk. *I* bore the first fruit of tears and untimely death before trumpet and sword, as caring but lazily I believed in a nurse's trusty bosom and handed over my suckling.¹⁴ But why not? She told me how she had saved her father by cunning and kept her hands innocent. Look at her, this woman who we are to think abjured the deadly covenant, alone immune from the madness of her fellow Lemnians; this woman who thus dared (and you believe her¹⁵), this woman, so strong in her devotion, undutifully cast off in a lonely field—I say not king or master but another's child, just that, and left him on a track in an ill-famed wood. No frightful snake—what need, alas, for such a mass of death?—but merely a breeze blowing strong or

as Håkanson thought, an inversion, *mando ubera* (sc. *infanti*) for *uberibus* (sc. *eius*) *mando infantem*.

¹⁵ Sometimes taken as a question. Housman, reading *ausae*, paraphrases: 'and do you believe the story, now that you see what she has dared?' But *ausa* refers to the Lemnian history and *creditis* is sarcastic—Eurydice does not believe a word of it.

THEBAID

- impulsaeque Noto frondes cassusque valeret
 exanimare timor. nec vos incessere luctu
 160 orba habeo; fixum matri immotumque manebat
 hac altrice nefas. atquin et blandus ad illam,
 nate, magis, solam nosse atque audire vocantem
 ignarusque mei. nulla ex te gaudia matri.
 illa tuos questus lacrimososque impia risus
 165 audiit et vocis decerpsit murmura primae.
 illa tibi genetrix semper dum vita manebat,
 nunc ego. sed miserae mihi nec punire potestas
 sic meritam! quid dona, duces, quid inania fertis
 iusta rogis? illam (nil poscunt amplius umbrae),
 170 illam, oro, cineri simul excisacque parenti
 reddite, quaeso, duces, per ego haec primordia belli,
 cui peperit; sic aequa gemant mihi funera matres
 Ogygiae.' sternit crines iteratque precando:
 'reddite, nec vero crudelem avidamque vocate
 175 sanguinis: occumbam pariter, dum vulnere iusto
 exsaturata oculos unum impellamur in ignem.'
 talia vociferans alia de parte gementem
 Hypsipylen (neque enim illa comas nec pectora servat)
 agnovit longe et socium indignata dolorem:
 180 'hoc saltem, o proceres, tuque o, cui pignora nostri
 proturbata tori, prohibete; auferte supremis
 invisam exsequiis. quid se funesta parenti
 miscet et in nostris spectatur et ipsa ruinis?
 cui luget complexa suos?' ait atque repente
 185 concidit abruptisque obmutuit ore querelis.

161 ad P|f. et ω 181-83 *sic fere* P (*sed auferte om., fecisse pro funesta*): ω *apud Hill requiras*

184-85 *om.* P, *dammavit O. Mueller*

leaves shaken by the wind or idle terror might have been enough to cause his end. Nor can I accuse you warriors in my grievous loss; with such a nurse a mother's tragedy stood fixed and immutable. And yet, my child, you were fonder of her, her only you knew and heard when she called, me you ignored, your mother had no joy of you. She, the undutiful, heard your complaints and tearful laughter, she culled the murmurs of your earliest speech. She was your mother always while you lived; I now. But woe is me! I do not even have the power to punish her as she deserves. Captains, why do you bring gifts to the pyre, why these vain rites? Her—the shades demand no more—her, I beg, give back, captains, to the ashes and the parent she has destroyed, I beseech you by these beginnings of war, the war for which I gave birth. So may Ogygian mothers mourn deaths matching mine.' She strews her hair and again in supplication: 'Give her back, nor call me cruel and blood-thirsty. I shall die with her, so I but sate my eyes with the just stroke and we be thrown on the same pyre.' Thus crying, she recognized Hypsipyle from afar lamenting in another place—for she was not sparing hair or breast. Indignant that her grief should be shared: 'This at least forbid, you nobles and you¹⁶ for whose sake the pledge of our marriage bed has been thrust forth. Take that hateful woman away from the funeral rites. Why does she mingle her accursed self with his mother? Why is she too on view in *our* tragedy? For whom does she mourn as she embraces her own?' So she spoke, then suddenly collapsed and breaking off her complaints fell silent. As when a bull calf

¹⁶ Polynices. Understood of Lycurgus, *cui . . . tori* makes no sense. *Nostri* = 'mine and my husband's.'

185b sic ait abruptisque immutuit ore querelis.
 non secus ac primo fraudatum lacte iuvencom,
 cui trepidae vires et solus ab ubere sanguis,
 seu fera seu duras avexit pastor ad aras;
 nunc vallem spoliata parens, nunc flumina questu,
 190 nunc arbusta movet vacuosque interrogat agros;
 tunc piget ire domum, maestoque novissima campo
 exit et oppositas impasta avertitur herbas.

At genitor scēptrique decus cultusque Tonantis
 inicit ipse rogis, tergoque et pectore fusam
 195 caesariem ferro minuit sectisque iacentis
 obnubit tēvia ora comis, ac talia fletu
 verba pio miscens: 'alio tibi, perfide, pacto,
 Iuppiter, hunc crinem voti reus ante dicaram
 si pariter virides nati libare dedisses
 200 ad tua templa genas; sed non ratus ore sacerdos,
 damnataeque preces; ferat haec, quae dignior, umbra.'
 iam face subiecta primis in frondibus ignis
 exclamat; labor insanos arcere parentes.

Stant iussi Danaum atque obtentis eminus armis
 205 prospectu visus interclusere nefasto.
 ditantur flammae; non unquam opulentior illis
 ante cinis: crepitant gemmae, atque immane liquescit
 argentum, et pictis exsudat vestibus aurum;
 nec non Assyriis pinguescunt robora sucis,
 210 pallentique croco strident ardentia mella,
 spumantesque mero paterae verguntur et atri
 sanguinis et rapto gratissima cymbia lactis.

¹⁹⁰ armenta P ω (*Wakefield*; cf. 5.334)

²⁰⁶ illic P ω : illo ψ (*SB*²)

²¹² rapti P ω (*Alton*)

BOOK 6

whose strength is tremulous, his vigour drawn only from the udder, is cheated of his first milk, carried off by a wild beast or a shepherd for the cruel altar; now the robbed mother stirs valley and rivers and trees with her complaint, questioning the empty fields; then she cares not to go home, she is last to leave the sad meadow, and turns away unfed from the grass before her.

But the father with his own hand hurls his sceptre's pride and the Thunderer's emblems on the pyre and clips with steel the hair that falls down his back and breast, covering the tiny face of the dead babe with the severed tresses and mingling with parental tears such words as these: 'Far otherwise, perfidious Jupiter, had I once consecrated these locks to you, due to discharge¹⁷ the vow should you have granted me to offer my son's youthful cheeks along with them at your temple. But your priest's words were not ratified, his prayer was denied. Let this shade take them who deserves them more.' The torch is put, the fire in the lowest branches cries aloud, it is a task to keep back the demented parents.

Danai stand as ordered with levelled shields barring vision afar from unlawful view. The flames are enriched. No ash was ever wealthier than they.¹⁸ Gems crack, silver melts in mass, gold sweats from embroidered fabrics. Logs fatten with Assyrian juices, burning honey hisses with pale saffron, foaming bowls of wine are tipped and cups of black

¹⁷ Lycurgus had vowed to dedicate his hair and his son's beard to Jupiter if his son grew to manhood. *Voti reus* goes with *si . . . dedisses*.

¹⁸ The flames are equated with the ash they produce.

- tunc septem numero turmas (centenus ubique
 surgit eques) versis ducunt insignibus ipsi
 215 Graiugenae reges, lustrantque ex more sinistro
 orbe rogum et stantes inclinant pulvere flammās.
 ter curvos egere sinus, illisaeque telis
 tela sonant, quater horrendum pepulere fragorem
 arma, quater mollem famularum bracchia planctum.
 220 semianimas alter pecudes spirantiaque ignis
 accipit armenta; hic luctus abolere novique
 funeris auspiciū vates, quamquam omnia sentit
 vera, iubet: dextri gyro et vibrantibus hastis
 hac redeunt, raptumque suis libamen ab armis
 225 quisque iacit, seu frena libet seu cingula flammis
 mergere seu iaculum summae seu cassidis umbram.
 [multa gemunt extra raucis concentibus agri,
 et lituis aures circum pulsantur acutis.
 terretur clamore nemus: sic Martia vellunt
 230 signa tubae, nondum ira calet, nec sanguine ferrum
 irrubuit, primus bellorum comitur illo
 vultus, honoris opus. stat adhuc incertus in alta
 nube quibus sese Mavors indulgeat armis.]
 Finis erat, lassusque putres iam Mulciber ibat
 235 in cineres; instant flammis multoque soporant
 imbre rogum, posito donec cum sole labores
 exhausti; seris vix cessit cura tenebris.
 Roscida iam novies caelo dimiserat astra
 Lucifer et totidem Lunae praevenerat ignes
 240 mutato nocturnus equo (nec conscia fallit
 sidera et alterno deprenditur unus in ortu):
 mirum opus accelerasse manus! stat saxea moles,
 templum ingens cineri, rerumque effectus in illa

blood and cups of milk—most grateful to the lost one. Then the Grecian kings in person lead seven squadrons (to each one mount a hundred riders) with insignia reversed. Leftward in due form they circle the pyre and bend the rising flames with their dust. Thrice they wind their ring, weapons clash on weapons, four times shields beat out a fearsome din,¹⁹ four times handmaidens' arms a soft slapping. Another fire receives half-dead sheep and breathing cattle. At this point the prophet bids cancel the mourning and the auspice of strange calamity, though he knows the omens speak true. Rightward they return wheeling with quivering spears and each throws an offering snatched from his arms, be it bridle or belt he chooses to sink in the flames or javelin or the crest that shades his helmet.

It was the end. Already weary Mulciber was subsiding into crumbling ash. They attack the flames and put the pyre to sleep with copious water, till their labours are exhausted along with the setting sun. Hardly does their duty yield to tardy darkness.

Nine times now had Lucifer dismissed the dewy stars from the sky and as often nocturnal on his changed horse had he heralded the lunar fire—nor does he deceive the stars; they know, and in his alternate rising detect him as one.²⁰ 'Twas a marvel how swiftly the work was done.

¹⁹ Before the first round and after each of the three. Then, at the prophet's command (223), they make the circle in reverse.

²⁰ The morning and the evening star, Lucifer (Phosphoros) and Hesperos, being one and the same (the planet Venus).

227-33 *non habent Pω, damnant plerique*

231 *ille O. Mueller*

243 *effectus Pω (Σ)*

- ordo docet casus: fessis hic flumina monstrat
 245 Hypsipyle Danais, hic reptat flebilis infans,
 hic iacet, extremum tumuli circum asperat orbem
 squameus; exspectes morientis ab ore cruenta
 sibila, marmorea sic volvitur anguis in hasta.
 Iamque avidum pugnas visendi vulgus inermes
 250 (fama vocat cunctos) arvis ac moenibus adsunt
 exciti; illi etiam quis belli incognitus horror,
 quos effeta domi, quos prima reliquerat aetas,
 conveniunt: non aut Ephyraeo in litore tanta
 umquam aut Oenomai fremuerunt agmina circo.
 255 Collibus incurvis viridique obsessa corona
 vallis in amplexu nemorum sedet; hispida circum
 stant iuga, et obiectus geminis umbonibus agger
 campum exire vetat, longo quem tramite planum
 gramineae frontes sinuataque caespite vivo
 260 mollia non subitis augent fastigia clivis.
 illic conferti, iam sole rubentibus arvis,
 bellatrix sedere cohors; ibi corpore mixto
 metiri numerum vultusque habitusque suorum
 dulce viris, tantique iuvat fiducia belli.
 265 centum ibi nigrantes, armenti robora, tauros
 lenta mole trahunt; idem numerusque colorque

246 orbis *C. Mueller*

259 frontes *P*: frondes *ω*

21 To take *tumuli* as the boy's tomb makes havoc of the narrative, which has problems enough anyway. In 246f. he seems to be lying on a mound (the *tumulus*?) around which the snake is coiled; but in 247f. the snake is dying, coiled around the spear that kills him, whereas in 5.575–78 he dies inside Jupiter's temple. The torturous file (*Silvae* 4.7.26) was badly needed here.

There stands a mass of stone, a great temple for the ashes, and therein a sculptured series tells the story: here is Hypsipyle showing the stream to the weary Danaï, here crawls the poor babe, here he lies while the circling scaly one rasps the round edge of the knoll.²¹ You might expect bloody hisses from his dying mouth, so coils the snake about the marble spear.

And now comes a multitude eager to see mock battles (Rumour summons them all²²), roused from field and street. Even those who know not the horror of war, whom age exhausted or incipient had left at home,²³ come flocking. Hosts so great never clamoured on Ephyre's shore or Oenomaus' ring.

A valley sits embraced by woods amid a green circle of winding hills. Shaggy ridges stand around and an interposing mound with double bosses forbids the plain's exit. This, a long, level strip, is raised by grassy brows and gentle slopes, curving with living lawn in a smooth incline.²⁴ There assembled, when the fields were already rosy with the sun, the warrior troop took their seats. They were fain to measure the number and faces and bearing of their comrades in the mixed body and were gladdened by confidence in so great an armament. There they drag in slow bulk one hundred black bulls, the strength of the herd;

²² *Cunctis* makes an unlikely homoeoteleuton, which should not have been recognized in my *Homoeoteleuton in Latin Dactylic Poetry* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1996), p. 94. Statius was particularly intolerant of such.

²³ Men of military age would be in the army.

²⁴ The description is hard to make out. With hesitation I take *planum* as referring to the level top of the mound rather than to the plain below. It accommodates spectators, who look down a slope onto the flat where the sports are held (cf. 929).

- matribus et nondum lunatis fronte iuvençis.
 exin magnanimum series antiqua parentum
 invchitur, miris in vultum animata figuris.
 270 primus anhelantem duro Tiryntius angens
 pectoris attritu sua frangit in ossa leonem.
 haud illum impavidi quamvis et in aere suumque
 Inachidae videre decus. pater ordine iuncto
 laevus harundineae recubans super aggere ripae
 275 cernitur emissaeque indulgens Inachus urnae.
 Io post tergum, iam prona dolorque parentis,
 spectat inoeiduis stellatum visibus Argum.
 ast illam melior Phariis erexerat arvis
 Iuppiter atque hospes iam tunc Aurora colebat.
 280 Tantalus inde parens, non qui fallentibus undis
 imminet aut refugae sterilem rapit aëra silvae,
 sed pius et magni vehitur conviva Tonantis.
 parte alia victor curru Neptunia tendit
 lora Pelops, prensatque rotas auriga natantes
 285 Myrtilos et volucri iam iamque relinquitur axe.
 et gravis Acrisius speciesque horrenda Coroebi
 et Danaë culpata sinus et in anne reperto

²⁵ Not, I think, Hercules' bones, which goes less well with *pectoris attritu*.

²⁶ On all fours, as a cow.

²⁷ At the date of the sculpture; narrator's comment. Aurora = the Orient.

²⁸ Given him by the god.

cows too and steers not yet crescent-browed in number and colour the same. Then an ancient line of great-hearted ancestors is borne in, wonderfully figured with living faces. First the Tirynthian, crushing the gasping lion and breaking it into its own bones²⁵ by the harsh friction of his breast. Not without fear did the sons of Inachus see him, though in bronze and their own glory. Father Inachus is next beheld reclining leftward on the mound of his reedy bank and giving free course to the pouring urn. Behind him Io, already prone²⁶ and her father's grief, watches Argus, starred with eyes that never set. But Jupiter in kinder mood had raised her up in the Pharian land and already Aurora was worshipping her guest.²⁷ Then father Tantalus is borne, not he who hangs over the delusive waters or catches at the barren air of retreating branches, but the good Tantalus, dinner guest of the great Thunderer. In another part Pelops in his victorious car stretches Neptune's reins,²⁸ while Myrtilos the charioteer clutches at the wobbling wheels and the swift axle is even now abandoning him.²⁹ There too is stern Acrisius and the fearsome form of Coroebus and Danaë of culprit lap and Amymone,³⁰ sad by

²⁹ Statius appears to be confusing the death of Myrtilos (thrown into the sea by Pelops later on according to the usual account) with that of Oenomaus. The wobbling wheels evidently allude to Myrtilos' sabotage of Oenomaus' chariot. See SB². The language here suggests a relief (cf. 272) rather than a group of sculptures (note *parte alia*).

³⁰ Daughter of Danaus. After arriving in Argos he sent her to look for water. Attacked by a Satyr, she called on Neptune for help. He had his way with her and brought water out of the ground, ending a drought as she had asked him. She gave him a son, Nauplius.

- tristis Amymone, parvoque Alcmena superbit
 Hercule tergemina crinem circumdata luna.
 290 iungunt discordes inimica in foedera dextras
 Belidae fratres, sed vultu mitior astat
 Aegyptus; Danaï manifestum agnoscere ficto
 ore notas pacisque malae noctisque futurae.
 mille dehinc species. tandem satiata Voluptas
 295 praestantesque viros vocat ad sua praemia Virtus.
 Primus sudor equis. dic incluta, Phoebe, regentum
 nomina, dic ipsos; neque enim generosior umquam
 alipedum collata acies, ceu praepete cursu
 conflagant densae volucres aut litore in uno
 300 Aeolus insanis statuat certamina ventis.
 Ducitur ante omnes rutilae manifestus Arion
 igne iubae. Neptunus equo, si certa priorum
 fama, pater; primus teneri laesisse lupatis
 ora et litoreo domitasse in pulvere fertur,
 305 verberibus parcens; etenim insatiatus eundi
 ardor et hiberno par inconstantia ponto.
 saepe per Ionium Libycumque natantibus ire
 interiunctus equis omnesque assuerat in oras
 caeruleum deferre patrem; stupuere relicta
 310 Nubila, certantesque Eurique Notique sequuntur.
 nec minor in terris bella Eurysthea gerentem
 Amphitryoniaden alto per gramina sulco
 duxerat, illi etiam ferus indocilisque teneri.
 mox divum dono regis dignatus Adrasti

293 notas P; nefas ω

303 teneris P ω (*Garrod*)

the river she discovered, and Alcmena, with triple moon³¹ about her hair, takes pride in little Hercules. The brethren sons of Belus join right hands of strife in a covenant of hate; but Aegyptus stands by with gentler mien, while on Danaus' dissembling face the marks of an evil pact³² and the night to come are plain to recognize. Follow a thousand forms. At length Pleasure is satisfied and Valour calls men of mark to her prizes. ✓

First toil is for the horses. Tell, Phoebus, the drivers' famous names, tell the horses themselves. For never met a nobler array of coursers. 'Twas as though a swarm of birds were to compete in rapid career or Aeolus to set up a race for the wild winds on one shore.

Before them all Arion is led, conspicuous by the fire of his ruddy mane. Neptune was the horse's father, if our elders' tale be true. He is said to have been the first to bruise the youngling's mouth with the bit and break him in on the sand of the shore, sparing the lash; for indeed there was no satisfying the horse's passion to be moving and he was as changeful as a winter sea. Often he was wont to go in harness with the swimming steeds through Ionian or Libyan deep, carrying his caerulean father to every coast. Outstripped, the Clouds were amazed, East and South Winds emulously follow. Nor less was he on land, bringing Amphitryon's son through deep-furrowed meadows as he fought Eurystheus' battles; even for him he was wild and unmanageable. Later by gift of the gods he deigned

³¹ In memory of the triple night of Hercules' conception.

³² Of marriage between the fifty sons of Aegyptus and the fifty daughters of Danaus. Aegyptus and Danaus were brothers, sons of Belus. Aegyptus' sons were murdered by Danaus' daughters.

- 315 imperia et multum mediis mansueverat annis.
 tunc rector genero Polynici indulget agendum
 multa monens, ubi fervor equo, qua suetus ab arte
 mulceri, ne saeva manus, ne liber habenis
 impetus. 'urgue alios,' inquit, 'stimulisque minisque;
 320 ille ibit, minus ipse voles.' sic ignea lora
 cum daret et rapido Sol natum imponeret axi,
 gaudentem lacrimans astra insidiosa docebat
 nolentesque teri zonas mediamque polorum
 temperiem: pius ille quidem et formidine cauta,
 325 sed iuvenem durae prohibebant discere Parcae.
 Oebalios sublimis agit, spes proxima palmae,
 Amphiaraus equos; tua furto lapsa propago,
 Cyllare, dum Scythici diversus ad ostia Ponti
 Castor Amyclaeas remo permutat habenas.
 330 ipse habitu niveus, nivei dant colla iugales,
 concolor est albis et cassis et infula cristis.
 quin et Thessalicis felix Admetus ab oris
 vix steriles compescit equas, Centaurica dicunt
 semina: credo, adeo sexum indignantur, et omnis
 335 in vires adducta Venus; noctemque diemque
 assimilant maculis internigrantibus albae:
 tantus uterque color, credi nec degener illo
 de grege, Castaliac stupuit qui sibila cannae
 laetus et audito contempsit Apolline pasci.
 340 ecce et Iasonidae iuvenes, nova gloria matris
 Hypsipyles, subiere iugo, quo vectus uterque,

³³ Betokening his priestly status.

³⁴ Centaurs, who lived in Thessaly, being wild and warlike creatures.

³⁵ Sexual.

to obey king Adrastus; and in the years between he had grown much tamer. On this occasion the ruler lets son-in-law Polynices drive him, with many an admonition: when the horse would get excited, with what art he was wont to be soothed, not to handle him harshly nor yet to let him speed free of the rein. 'Urge others,' he said, 'with goads and threats. *He* will go, and faster than you wish.' So when the Sun gave his child the fiery thongs and placed him in the rapid ear, with tears he taught the happy youth of treacherous stars and zones unwilling to be trodden and the temperate region between the poles; loving was he and cautious in his fear, but the cruel Parcae would not suffer the young man to learn. /

Amphiaraus, next favourite for the palm, drives aloft Oebalian horses, your offspring, Cyllarus, dropped by stealth, while Castor sojourned far away at the mouth of Seythian Pontus, exchanging his Amyclaeon reins for an oar. He himself wears snow white, snowy are the coursers that give their necks to the yoke, his helm and fillet match his white³³ plume. Fortunate Admetus too from the land of Thessaly scarce controls his barren mares—Centaur's seed³⁴ they say and I believe; so do they scorn their sex, turning all their passion³⁵ into strength. They were like night and day, white with black spots, so strong was either colour, worthy to be believed to come from the herd that listened in joyous rapture to the whistling of the Castalian reed,³⁶ despising pasture when they heard Apollo play. And see, the young sons of Jason, new glory of their mother Hypsipyle, come to a chariot on which both

³⁶ Played by Apollo when he served Admetus as shepherd and horsekeeper.

nomen avo gentile Thoas atque omine dictus
 Euneos Argoo. geminis eadem omnia: vultus,
 currus, equi, vestes, par et concordia voti:
 345 vincere vel solo cupiunt a fratre relinqui.
 it Chromis Hippodamusque, alter satus Hercule magno,
 alter ab Oenomao: dubites uter effera presset
 frena magis. Getici pecus hic Diomedis, at ille
 Pisaei iuga patris habet, crudelibus ambo
 350 exuviis diroque imbuti sanguine currus.

Metarum instar erat hinc nudo robore quercus,
 olim omnes exuta comas, hinc saxeus umbo,
 arbiter agricolis; finem iacet inter utrumque
 quale quater iaculo spatium, ter harundine, vineas.
 355 Interea cantu Musarum nobile muleens
 concilium citharacque manus insertus Apollo
 Parnasi summo spectabat ab aethere terras.

* * * * *

orsa deo, nam saepe Iovem Phlegramque suique
 anguis opus fratrumque pius cantarat honores.
 360 tunc aperit quis fulmen agat, quis sidera ducat
 spiritus, unde animi fluviis, quae pabula ventis,
 quo fonte immensum vivat mare, quae via solis
 praecipitet noctem, quae porrigat, imane tellus
 an media et rursus mundo succincta latenti.

344 voti ω: -is P

351 erant Slater *versum ante 358 excidisse vidit Housman*

358 deo P, Housman deum ω 362 vivat ωΣ: bibat P, *unde*

immensum quo fonte bibat mare *Phillimore*

³⁷ Either of the twins being the other's alter ego, a chariot occupied by one contained both (SB²).

rode:³⁷ Thoas—family name from his grandfather—and Euneos,³⁸ called from Argo's omen. Twins, they had everything the same: face, chariot, horses, dress, nor less concord in their prayers; each wishes to win or to be outrun only by his brother. Chromis and Hippodamus run, one born of great Hercules, the other of Oenomaus; you might doubt which of the two pressed wilder reins. One has the animals of Getic Diomedes, the other the team of his Pisaeon father.³⁹ Both chariots displayed cruel trophies and were stained with gruesome gore.

For turning posts there stood at one end a bare oak trunk long stripped of all its foliage, at the other a stone block, the farmers' umpire. Between either mark was a space that might be mastered four times with a javelin, three with an arrow.

Meanwhile Apollo was soothing the noble company of the Muses with his song, and with hands upon his lyre watched the earth from Parnassus' ethereal summit. * * *⁴⁰—for often had he piously sung of Jupiter and Phlegra and the serpent, his own achievement, and the praises of his brothers. Then he expounds who drives the thunderbolt, what spirit leads the stars, where rivers get their boldness, winds their food, from what fountain lives the vast sea, what path the sun takes to shorten night and what to draw it out, whether earth lies at the bottom or in the centre, girt around again by a world unseen. It was

³⁸ 'He of the good ship' (reference to Argo).

³⁹ Oenomaus. ⁴⁰ Reading *deo*, Housman convincingly suggests the loss of a verse such as *caelicolum meritas* (better *primo*?) *non longa sonantia laudes*: 'the god's song was first in praise of the sky-dwellers, not lengthy.'

- 365 finis erat, differt avidas audire Sorores,
 dumque chelyn lauro textumque illustre coronae
 subligat et picto discingit pectora limbo,
 haud procul Herculeam Nemeen clamore reductus
 aspicit atque illic ingens certaminis instar
 370 quadriugi. noscit cunctos, et forte propinqui
 constiterant Admetus et Amphiarus in arvo.
 tunc secum: 'quisnam iste duos, fidissima Phoebi
 nomina, commisit deus in discrimina reges?
 ambo pii carique ambo; nequeam ipse priorem
 375 dicere. Peliacis hic cum famularer in arvis
 (sic Iovis imperia et nigrae volvere Sorores),
 tura dabat famulo nec me sentire minorem
 ausus; at hic tripodum comes et pius artis alumnus
 380 aetheriae. potior meritis tamen ille; sed huius
 extrema iam fila colu. datur ordo senectae
 Admeto serunque mori; tibi nulla supersunt
 gaudia, nam Thebae iuxta et tenebrosa vorago.
 scis miser, et nostrae pridem cecinere volucres.'
 dixit, et os fletu paene inviolabile tinctus
 385 extemplo Nemeen radiante per aëra saltu
 ocior et patrio venit igne suisque sagittis.
 ipse olim in terris, caelo vestigia durant,
 claraque per Zephyros etiamnum scimita lucet.
 Et iam sortitus Prothous versarat aëna

370 propinquo Πω (*Imhof*)

⁴¹ Statius seems to have overlooked the fact that this was no semblance (*instar*) or approximation but an actual race; whereas in 351 *metarum instar* the two objects were not turning posts made for the purpose but only served as such.

over, and he puts off the Sisters eager to listen. While he binds the lyre and the bright fabric of his garland to a laurel bush and ungirds his breast of the embroidered cincture, not far away, drawn by the cheering, he sees Hercules' Nemea and there the vast semblance⁴¹ of a chariot race. He knows them all, and by chance Admetus and Amphiarus stood close together⁴² in the field. Then to himself: 'Who is the god that has joined the two kings, Phoebus' most faithful names, in rivalry? Both are pious, both beloved; I could not say myself which stands first. One, when I was a serf in Pelion's fields (so Jove's commands and the dark Sisters⁴³ would have it), gave incense to his thrall and dared not feel me his inferior; the other is companion of tripods and pious disciple of ethereal skill. Yet the first has preference by his deserts; but the other's thread is at the distaff's end. To Admetus is given old age's course and a late death; for you no joys are left, for Thebes is at hand and the dark chasm. You know it, unhappy one, and our birds have long so sung.' He spoke and almost⁴⁴ his inviolable face was stained with tears. Straightway with a leap that shone through the air he came to Nemea, more swiftly than his father's flame and his own arrows. He himself is already long on land, but his traces linger in the sky and a bright track still gleams through the Zephyrs.

And now Prothous has shaken the lots in a brazen hel-

⁴² Reading *propinqui*. I hardly think that *propinquo in arvo* can be so understood, as argued by Håkanson; that should mean 'in a nearby field,' but near to what? The relevant point is that Apollo saw them together.

⁴³ The Fates, sinister in this context.

⁴⁴ Gods were not supposed to weep (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 2.621f.), but sometimes do, e.g. at 5.270.

- 390 easside, iamque loeus cuique est et liminis ordo.
 terrarum deeora ampla viri, decora aequa iugales,
 divum utrumque genus, stant uno margine elausi,
 spesque audaxque una metus et fidueia pallens.
 nil fixum eordi: pugnant exire paventque,
 395 coneurrit summos animosum frigus in artus.
 qui dominis, idem ardor equis; face lumina surgunt,
 ora sonant morsu, spumisque et sanguine ferrum
 uritur, impulsi nequeunt obsistere postes
 claustraque, eompressae transfumat anhelitus irae.
 400 stare adeo miserum est, pereunt vestigia mille
 ante fugam, absentemque ferit gravis ungula campum.
 eireumstant fidi, nexusque et torta iubarum
 expediunt firmantque animos et plurima monstrant.
 insonuit contra Tyrrhenum murmur, et omnes
 405 exsiluere loeo. quae tantum carbasa ponto,
 quae bello sie tela volant, quae nubila eaelo?
 annibus hibernis minor est, minor impetus igni,
 tardius astra eadunt, glomerati tardius imbres,
 tardius e summo decurrunt flumina monte.
 410 Emissos videre atque agnovere Pelasgi,
 et iam rapti oculis, iam eaeco pulvere mixti
 una in nube latent, vultusque umbrante tumultu
 vix inter sese clamore et nomine noscunt.
 evolvere globum, et spatio quo quisque valebat
 415 diducti; delet suleos iterata priores

⁴⁰³ plura ministrant *Pollack*

⁴⁰⁵ glomerantur *Pω (SB)*

⁴⁵ So *monstrant* must be rendered. In their excitement the grooms shower advice on the animals as though they could understand.

BOOK 6

met and each has his place and starting order. The men, splendid ornaments of the earth, the horses, ornaments no less splendid, both of race divine, stand behind one barrier, and with them hope and audacious fear and anxious confidence. In their hearts nothing is firm-fixed. They fight to go forth and are afraid; courageous chill courses all through their limbs. The horses are as ardent as their masters. Their eyes swell fiery, their mouths loudly champ, foam and blood corrode their bits, the posts and bars cannot withstand their push, the pant of stifled rage smokes through. To stand still is torture; a thousand paces are wasted before the start, the heavy hoof strikes the absent flat. Trusty attendants straighten the tangled patches in their manes, encourage them, give many words of counsel.⁴⁵ Opposite sounded the Tyrrhenian blare and all leapt from their stations. What canvass on sea, what weapons fly so in battle, what clouds in the sky? Not so swift the rush of winter rivers, not so swift the rush of fire. More slowly fall stars, more slowly balled rains,⁴⁶ more slowly run torrents down from a mountaintop.

The Pelasgi saw them as they shot out and recognized; and already, snatched from vision and mingled in blinding dust, they are hidden in a single cloud and as confusion obscures their faces they barely know each other by shout of names. They unroll the pack, separated by intervals matching the strength of each. A second track deletes

⁴⁶ Cf. Livy 1.31.2 *grandinem venti glomeratam in terras agunt*. Attempts to explain *glomerantur* without reference to hail are futile, and I cannot believe that even Statius could have it mean *glomerati cadunt*.

THEBAID

- orbita. nunc avidi prono iuga pectore tangunt,
 nunc pugnante genu et pressis duplicantur habenis.
 colla toris crinita tument, stantesque repectit
 aura iubas, bibit albentes humus arida nimbos.
 420 fit sonus immanisque pedum tenuisque rotarum:
 nulla manu requies, densis insibilat aër
 verberibus; gelida non crebrior exsilit Arcto
 grando, nec Oleniis manant tot cornibus imbres.
 425 Senserat adductis alium praesagus Arion
 stare ducem loris, dirumque expaverat insons
 Oedipodioniden; iam illinc a limine discors
 iratusque oneri solito truculentior ardet.
 Inachidae credunt accensum laudibus; ille
 aurigam fugit, aurigae furiale minatur
 430 efferus, et campo dominum circumspicit omni,
 ante tamen cunctos. sequitur longeque secundus
 Amphiaraus agit, quem Thessalus aequat eundo
 Admetus; iuxta gemini, nunc Euneos ante
 et nunc ante Thoas, cedunt vincuntque, nec unquam
 435 ambitiosa pios collidit gloria fratres.
 postremum discrimen erant Chromis asper et asper
 Hippodamus, non arte rudes, sed mole tenentur
 cornipedum; prior Hippodamus fert ora sequentum,
 fert gemitus multaque umeros incenditur aura.
 440 speravit flexae circum compendia metae
 interius ductis Phocbeius augur habenis

⁴²⁷ solito P: ins- ω

⁴⁷ At the turning posts.

⁴⁸ Passing from the drivers to the horses.

the previous furrows. Now eagerly they touch the yoke with sloping chests, now they bend double⁴⁷ with striving knees and hard-drawn reins. Muscles swell on hair-strewn necks,⁴⁸ the breeze combs back erected manes, the dry ground drinks white showers. There is thunder of hooves, a sharper sound of wheels. Hands have no respite, the air hisses with multitudinous lashes. Not thicker leaps hail from the icy Bear, nor stream so many rains from Olenian horns.⁴⁹

Prescient Arion had sensed that another driver stood pulling the reins and in his innocence had dreaded the fell son of Oedipus. Right from the starting line he was at odds with his burden and angry, more truculent in his ardour than of wont. The children of Inachus think him fired by desire for glory, but it is the driver he flees, the driver he threatens in his wild fury as he looks around for his master all over the field; yet he is ahead of them all.⁵⁰ Amphiarus follows, driving a distant second, with Admetus of Thesaly running neck and neck. Close together come the twins, now Euneos in front, now Thoas; they yield, they lead, nor ever does ambition for glory cause these loving brothers to clash. Last in the race were fierce Chromis and fierce Hippodamus, no novices they, but retarded by their horses' bulk. Hippodamus is ahead and feels the mouths of his pursuers, feels their gasps, his shoulders are hot with their heavy breath. Phoebus' augur hoped to take first place by pulling in his reins as he shaves the curving goal.

⁴⁹ Cf. on 3.25.

⁵⁰ The usual punctuation with period after *omni* was rightly impugned by Håkanson. It puts Amphiarus in the lead (after the lone horse Arion); but he and Admetus were neck and neck.

anticipasse viam; nec non et Thessalus heros
spe propiore calet, dum non cohibente magistro
spargitur in gyros dexterque exerrat Arion.

445 iam prior Oeclides et iam non tertius ibat
Admetus, laxo cum denique ab orbe reductus
aequoreus sonipes premit evaditque parumper
gavisos; subit astra fragor, caelumque tremescit,
omniaque excusso patuere sedilia vulgo.

450 sed nec lora regit nec verbera pallidus audet
Labdacides: lassa veluti ratione magister
in fluctus, in saxa ruit nec iam amplius astra
respicit et victam proiecit casibus artem.

Rursus praecipites in recta ac devia campi
455 obliquant tenduntque vias, iterum axibus axes
inflicti, radiisque rotae; pax nulla fidesque.
bella geri ferro levius, bella horrida, credas;
is furor in laudes. trepidant mortemque minantur,
multaque transversis praestringitur ungula canthis.
460 nec iam sufficiunt stimuli, non verbera; voce
nominibusque cient Pholoën Admetus et Irin
funalemque Thoën, rapidum Danaeius augur
Ascheton increpitans meritumque vocabula Cycnum.
audit et Herculeum Strymon Chromin, Euneon audit
465 igneus Aëtion; tardumque Cydona lacessit
Hippodamus, variumque Thoas rogat ire Podarcen.
solus Echionides errante silentia curru
maesta tenet trepidaque timet se voce fateri.

Vixdum coeptus equis labor, et iam pulvere quarto

446 cum tandem ab $P\omega\Sigma$ (*Hill*: cum vix t- *Watt*)

459 campis $P\omega$ (*SB*²)

465 aethion $P\omega\Sigma$ (*Housman*)

The Thessalian hero too burns with a closer hope as Arion, unchecked by his master, scatters in rings, straying out to the right. Now Oecles' son was ahead and Admetus no longer running third, when finally back from a wide circuit the horse of the sea presses and passes both; short-lived their joy. A roar goes up to the stars, the sky trembles and every seat shows bare as the multitude jumps to its feet. But the scion of Labdacus pales, neither governing the reins nor daring to use his whip. Even as a helmsman whose science is weary rushes on waves, on rocks, nor any more regards the stars; his skill overborne by chance, he has flung it away.

Again headlong over the plain straight or straying they swerve and stretch their courses, axles once more collide with axles, wheels with spokes. No truce, no trust. You would think war was a-waging, cruel war, only without steel;⁵¹ so mad are they for glory. They tremble and they threaten death and many a hoof is scraped by tires⁵² athwart. Goads and lashes are no longer enough, they urge by voice and name. Admetus calls on Pholoë and Iris and trace horse Thoë, the Danaëian augur chides swift Aschetus and Cynus that deserved his name.⁵³ Strymon hears Hercules' son Chromis, fiery Aëtion hears Euneos; Hippodamus taunts slow Cydon, Thoas begs piebald Podarces to take off. Only the scion of Echion keeps gloomy silence in his errant car, fearing to give himself away by a quavering voice.

The horses' ordeal was scarce begun and already they

⁵¹ I take *ferro levius* as equivalent to *ferro minus*.

⁵² *Canthis*, replacing the senseless *campis*.

⁵³ 'Headstrong' and (white) 'Swan.'

- 470 campum ineunt, iamque et tepidis sudoribus artus
 effeti, et crassum rapit eiectatque vaporem
 cornipedum flammata sitis, nec iam integer illis
 impetus, et longi suspendunt ilia flatus.
 hic anceps Fortuna diu decernere primum
 475 ausa venit. ruit, Haemonium dum fervidus instat
 Admetum superare, Thoas, nec pertulit ullam
 frater opem. velit ille quidem, sed Martius ante
 obstitit Hippodamus mediasque immisit habenas.
 mox Chromis Hippodamum metae interioris ad orbem
 480 viribus Herculeis et toto robore patris
 axe tenet preno; luctantur abire iugales
 nequiquam frenosque et colla rigentia tendunt.
 ut Siculas si quando rates tenet aestus et ingens
 Auster agit, medio stant vela tumentia ponto.
 485 tunc ipsum fracto curru deturbat et isset
 ante Chromis; sed Thraces equi ut videre iacentem
 Hippodamum, redit illa fames, iam iamque trementem
 partiti furis, ni frena ipsosque frementes
 oblitus palmae retro Tiryntius heros
 490 torsisset victusque et collandatus abisset.

At tibi promissos iamdudum Phoebus honores,
 Amphiaræ, cupit. tandem ratus apta favori
 tempora pulverei venit in spatia horrida circi,
 cum iam in fine viae, et summum victoria nitat;
 495 anguicomam monstri effigiem, sacvissima visu

⁴⁷⁶ praetulit Πο (Σ, *Baehrens*)

⁵⁴ The first three laps went 'in a flash.'

⁵⁵ *Suspendunt*, lit. 'hold in suspense.'

start the course on a fourth dusty lap.⁵⁴ Their limbs are exhausted with steaming sweat, the flaming thirst of the racers catches and expels thick vapour, their forward rush is no longer total, drawn-out pantings rack⁵⁵ their flanks. Here first came Fortune, long in doubt, with courage to decide. As he eagerly presses to pass Haemonian Admetus, Thoas crashes, nor did his brother bring him any aid; willingly he would, but Martian Hippodamus⁵⁶ blocked his way, driving his car between. Then Chromis at the circuit of the inner goal⁵⁷ clutches Hippodamus' axle and holds it with the strength of Hercules, the whole might of his sire; in vain the horses strive to get away, stretching bridles and straining necks. So it may hap that a tide holds fast Sicilian ships while a mighty South Wind urges them on; the swelling sails stand in mid sea. Then Chromis hurls the driver from the shattered car and would have passed ahead. But when the Thracian horses see Hippodamus lying on the ground, the old hunger returns and in their furies they would have torn him apart trembling there and then, had not the Tirynthian hero, forgetful of the palm, dragged bridles and horses away. He withdrew, a popular loser. λ

But Phoebus this long while has desired for you the honour he promised,⁵⁸ Amphiarans. Thinking the time at last ripe for favour, he enters the rough⁵⁹ spaces of the dusty course, now that the tracks are ending and final victory wavers. The figure of a monster with snaky hair, a

⁵⁶ His father Oenomaus was a son of Mars.

⁵⁷ Cf. *meta ulterior* in Sidonius, *Poems* 23.361.

⁵⁸ As implied in 372–83.

⁵⁹ Churned up by the chariots. Not 'grim' or 'sans pitié.'

ora, movet sive ille Erebo seu finxit in astus
 temporis, innumera certe formidine cultum
 tollit in astra nefas. non illud ianitor atrae
 impavidus Lethes, non ipsae horrore sine alto
 500 Eumenides vidisse queant, turbasset euntes
 Solis equos Martisque iugum. nam flavus Arion
 ut vidit, saliere iubae, atque erectus in armos
 stat sociumque iugi comitesque utrimque laboris
 secum alte suspendit equos. ruit ilicet exsul
 505 Aonius nexusque diu per terga volutus
 exuit: abripitur longe moderamine liber
 currus; at hunc putri praeter tellure iacentem
 Taenarii currus et Thessalus axis et heros
 Lemnius obliqua, quantum vitare dabatur,
 510 transabiere fuga. tandem caligine mersum
 erigit accursu comitum caput aegraque tollit
 membra solo, et socero redit haud speratus Adrasto.

Quis mortis, Thebane, locus, nisi dura negasset
 Tisiphone, quantum poteras dimittere bellum!
 515 te Thebe fraterque palam, te plangeret Argos,
 te Nemea, tibi Lerna comas Larisaque supplex
 poneret, Archemori maior colerere sepulcro.

Tum vero Oeclides, quamquam iam certa sequenti
 praemia, cum vacuus domino praeiret Arion,
 520 ardet adhuc cupiens vel inanem vincere currum.
 dat vires refovetque deus; volat ocior Euro,

⁴⁹⁶ astus P: -u ω: *anne* usus?²

⁶⁰ Amphiaraus, Admetus, and Euneus.

⁶¹ Or 'not as hoped' (= *haud ita speratus*)?

⁶² Like Opheltes, Polynices would have been deified (cf.

dreadful visage, he either moved from Erebus or framed as a device for the nonce; certain it is that he raised this abomination decked with countless terrors into the upper world. The janitor of black Lethe could not look upon it unafraid, nor the Eumenides themselves without deep horror; it would have shocked the horses of the Sun and Mars' team in their courses. When golden Arion saw it, his mane leapt, he rears into his shoulders and stands, suspending from above his yoke-fellow and the partners in their labour on either side along with himself. The Aonian exile straightway plunges and sprawls for a space on his back, till he frees himself from the ties; the chariot, released from guidance, is swept afar. As for him, as he lies on the sandy earth the Taenarian car and the wheels of Thessaly and the Lemnian hero⁶⁰ fly past him, swerving to avoid him as best they could. At last his companions run up, he raises his head, sunk in darkness, and lifts his injured limbs from the ground, and returns unhoped-for⁶¹ to Adrastus his wife's father.

What a chance to die, Theban, had not harsh Tisiphone denied! What a war you could have banished! Thebes and your brother would have mourned you in public, and Argos and Nemea; for you Lerna and Larisa would prayerfully have sacrificed their hair.⁶² Your grave would have had more worship than Archemorus'.

Then Oecles' son, albeit sure of the prize had he followed, since Arion in front was masterless, yet still burns with desire to beat the car, empty though it be. The god gives strength and revival. Swifter than the East Wind he

5.751) and vows made to him throughout Argolis (cf. 193–201, 610, 633f.).

- ceu modo carceribus dimissus in arva solutis,
 verberibusque iubas et terga lacescit habenis
 Ascheton increpitansque levem Cycnumque nivalem.
 525 nunc saltem, dum nemo prior, rapit igneus orbes
 axis, et effusae longe sparguntur harenae.
 dat gemitum tellus et iam tum saeva minatur.
 forsitan et victo prior isset Arione Cycnus,
 sed vetat aequoreus vinci pater: hinc vice iusta
 530 gloria mansit equo, cessit victoria vati.
 huic pretium palmae gemini cratera ferebant
 Herculeum iuvenes: illum Tiryntius olim
 ferre manu sola spumantemque ore supino
 vertere, seu monstri victor scu Marte, solebat.
 535 Centauros habet arte truces aurumque figuris
 terribile: hic mixta Lapitharum caede rotantur
 saxa, faces aliique iterum crateres; ubique
 ingentes morientum irae; tenet ipse firentem
 Hylaeum et torta molitur robora barba.
 540 at tibi Maconio fertur circumflua limbo
 pro meritis, Admete, chlamys repetitaque multo
 murice: Phrixei natat hic contemptor ephesus
 aequoris et picta tralucet caeruleus unda;
 545 in latus ire manus mutaturusque videtur
 bracchia, nec siccum speres in stamine crinem;
 contra autem frustra sedet anxia turre suprema
 Sestias in speculis, moritur prope conscius ignis.

524 Ascheton *om.* P ω (ζ) increpitans caecum P: i-
sc(a)erum ω (ζ)

538 ferentem *Heinsius, fort. recte*

544 manu *Markland*

flies, as though the barriers had just been lifted and he discharged into the open, eliding nimble Asehetos and snowy Cyenus, plying the whip on their manes and the reins on their backs. Now if not before, now when none is ahead, the fiery axle tears along the wheels, the sand is churned and scattered afar. The earth groans and threatens angrily—even then!⁶³ Perhaps Cyenus would have gone ahead and Arion lost, but his father the sea god will not let him lose. So in fair division the horse kept his glory, victory went to the seer. Two young men bore him the palm's reward, Hereules' bowl, that the Tiryinthian used once to bear in one hand and tilt foaming into his upturned mouth, victor over a monster or in war. It has Centaurs fierce by art and gold in shapes of terror. On its surface are hurled stones and torehes and again other bowls⁶⁴ mingling in the slaughter of the Lapithae, everywhere is the mighty wrath of the dying; he himself holds raging Hylaeus, twisting the beard and plying his elub. But for you, Admetus, is brought for your deserts a mantle with flowing Maeonian border, dyed deep with purple over and over. Here swims the youth⁶⁵ who despised Phrixus' sea, gleaming bluish in the coloured water. His hands seem to move sideways, he seems about to alternate his arms, you would think his hair in the thread would not be dry. Opposite sits the maid of Sestos anxious on her towertop, watching in vain; nearby the accomplice flame is dying. These riches Adrastus or-

⁶³ Later it was to swallow him up.

⁶⁴ The bowls of the banqueters in relief.

⁶⁵ Leander, swimming the Hellespont to reach Hero on the European side. Phrixus had once crossed it on the ram with the golden fleece.

has Adrastus opes dono victoribus ire
 imperat; at generum famula solatur Achaea.

- 550 Sollicitat tunc ampla viros ad praemia cursu
 praeceles: agile studium et tenuissima virtus,
 pacis opus, cum sacra vocant, nec inutile bellis
 subsidium, si dextra neget. prior omnibus Idas,
 nuper Olympiacis umbratus tempora ramis,
 555 prosilit; excipiunt plausu Pisaea iuventus
 Eleaeque manus. sequitur Sicyonius Alcon,
 et bis in Isthmiaca victor clamatus harena
 Phaedinus, alipedumque fugam praegressus equorum
 ante Dymas, sed tunc aevo tardante secutus.
 560 multi et, quos varii tacet ignorantia vulgi,
 hinc atque hinc subiere. sed Arcada Parthenopaeum
 appellant densique cient vaga murmura circi.
 nota parens cursu; quis Maenaliae Atalantes
 nesciat egregium decus et vestigia cunctis
 565 indepressa procis? onerat celeberrima natum
 mater, et ipse procul fama iam notus inermes
 narratur cervas pedes inter aperta Lycae
 tollere et emissum cursu deprendere telum.
 tandem expectatus volucris super agmina saltu
 570 emicat et torto chlamydem diffibulat auro.
 effulsere artus, membrorumque omnis aperta est
 laetitia, insignes umeri, nec pectora nudi
 deteriora genis, latuitque in corpore vultus.
 ipse tamen formae laudem aspernatur et arcet

572 nudis P ω (SB)

⁶⁶ As at games like these.

⁶⁷ The reading and interpretation were settled conclusively

ders bestowed upon the victors. His son-in-law he consoles with an Achaean handmaiden.

Then he invites the fleet of foot to ample rewards; a quest of agility, where valour has small part, a work of peace when religion calls,⁶⁶ yet in war an aid not useless, failing the right arm. First of all Idas leaps forth, his temples lately shaded by Olympian branches; the men of Pisa and the bands of Elis greet him with applause. Alcon of Sicyon follows, and Phaedimus, twice hailed victor on Isthmian sand, and Dymas, who once outstripped the flight of wing-foot horses but now follows slowed by age. And many others, whom the ignorance of the motley multitude passes over in silence, come forward from here and there. But wandering murmurs of the packed circus call Arcadian Parthenopaeus by name and summon him. His mother is famous for her running. Who would not know of Maenalian Atalanta's peerless beauty and the prints that no suitor could overtake? The mother's renown burdens the son and already far-famed he is reported as slaying on foot the deer in the open spaces of Lycaeus and intercepting a flying dart as he runs. At last to expectation he dashes out, leaping lightly over the crowds and unpins the twisted gold upon his mantle. His limbs shine, the joy of them is all revealed, his splendid shoulders and chest in his nakedness no less comely than his cheeks; his face was lost to view in his body.⁶⁷ Himself, however, rejects praise of his beauty and keeps admirers at bay. Then, no novice, he con-

for all who will listen by Housman from Plato's *Charmides* (154d): 'If the lad were to take off his clothes, he would be faceless; so entirely beautiful is the shape of him'—from which Statius may well have picked up the idea.

- 575 mirantes; tunc Palladios non inscius haustus
 ineubuit pinguique eutem fuseatur olivo.
 hoc Idas, hoc more Dymas aliique nitescunt.
 sic ubi tranquillo perlueent sidera ponto
 vibraturque fretis caeli stellantis imago,
- 580 omnia clara nitent, sed elarior omnia supra
 Hesperus exercet radios, quantusque per altum
 aethera, caeruleis tantis monstratur in undis.
 proximus et forma nee multum segnior Idas
 eursibus atque aevo iuxta prior; attamen illi
- 585 iam tenuem pingues florem inducere palaestrae,
 deserpitque genis nec se lanugo fatetur
 intonsae sub nube comae. tunc rite citatos
 explorant acuuntque gradus, variasque per artes
 instimulant docto languentia membra tumultu:
- 590 poplite nunc sidunt flexo, nunc lubrica forti
 pectora collidunt plausu, nunc ignea tollunt
 erura brevemque fugam necopino fine reponunt.
- Ut ruit atque aequum summisit regula lumen,
 corripuere leves spatium, campoque refulsit
- 595 nuda cohors: volueres isdem modo tardius arvis
 isse videntur equi; eredas e plebe Cydonum
 Parthorumque fuga totidem exsiluisse sagittas.
 non aliter, celeres Hyrcana per avia eervi
 cum procul impasti fremitum accepere leonis,
- 600 sive putant, rapit attonitos fuga caeca metisque
 congregat, et longum dant cornua mixta fragorem.
 effugit hic oculos rapida puer ocior aura
 Maenalius, quem deinde gradu premit horridus Idas
 inspiratque unero, flatuque et pectoris umbra

⁵⁸¹ exertat *Schrader*

concentrates on Pallas' draughts,⁶⁸ darkening his flesh with rich oil. In like fashion Idas glistens and Dymas and the rest. So when the stars shine in a tranquil sea and the semblance of the spangled sky quivers in the waters, all brightly gleam but brighter than all Hesperus plies his rays, showing as large in the dark-blue waves as in the high heavens. Next to him in beauty and not much slower in speed is Idas, close in age but older; for him, however, the oil of the wrestling ground had already brought a faint down, the growth steals over his cheeks, surreptitious beneath the cloud of his unshorn hair. Then they duly set their steps in motion, testing and sharpening, and by various devices arouse their languid limbs to artificial commotion; now they sink on bended knee, now vigorously slap their slippery chests with flat of hand, now lift ardent legs, laying a brief sprint to rest with a sudden stop.

When the bar fell, offering a level threshold, they nimbly devoured the space, the naked troop shone upon the flat. The swift horses seem to have moved less fast a while ago over the same terrain. You might think that so many arrows had leapt forth from a Cydonian crowd or a flight of Parthians.⁶⁹ Not otherwise when swift stags in the Hyrcanian wilderness hear at a distance the roar of a hungry lion, or think they hear, blind flight sweeps them in panic and fear crowds them together; their mingling horns clash long and loud. The boy of Maenalus flees vision, swifter than the rapid wind. Rough Idas presses upon him, breathing on his shoulder, and strikes his back with his

⁶⁸ The olive being sacred to Minerva.

⁶⁹ Shooting behind them as they retreated.

- 605 terga ferit. post ambiguo discrimine tendunt
Phaedimus atque Dymas, illis celer imminet Alcon.
flavus ab intonso pendebat vertice crinis
Arcados; hoc primis Triviae pascebat ab annis
munus et, Ogygio victor cum Marte redisset,
610 nequiquam patriis audax promiserat aris.
tunc liber nexu lateque in terga solutus
occursu Zephyri retro fugit et simul ipsum
impedit infestoque volans obtenditur Idae.
inde dolum iuvenis fraudique accommoda sensit
615 tempora; iam finem iuxta, dum limina victor
Parthenopaeus init, correpto crine reductum
occupat, et longe primus ferit ostia portae.
Arcades arma fremunt, armis defendere regem,
ni raptum decus et meriti reddantur honores,
620 contendunt totoque parant descendere circo.
sunt et quis Idae placeat dolus. ipse regesta
Parthenopaeus humo vultumque oculosque madentes
obruit, accessit lacrimarum gratia formae.
pectora nunc maerens, nunc ora indigna cruento
625 ungue secat meritamque comam; furit undique clamor
dissonus, ambiguumque senis cunctatur Adrasti
consilium. tandem ipse refert: 'compescite litem,
o pueri! virtus iterum temptanda; sed ite
limite non uno, latus hoc conceditur Idae,
630 tu diversa tene; fraus cursibus omnis abesto.'

605 premit P ω (SB²)

612 fluit Bentley

613 obtenditur ψ ; ost- P ω 617 longe P ψ : -gae ψ

70 The finishing line.

71 'I do not think *longe* means more than that Idas was the indisputable victor' (Håkanson). But

panting and the shadow of his chest. Then Phaedimus and Dymas strain in doubtful rivalry, fast Aleon is on their heels. The Arcadian's blond hair hangs from his unshorn head: he used to tend it from earliest years as a gift for Trivia and had boldly promised it (in vain) to his native altars when he returned victorious from Ogygian warfare. Now, free of bond and flowing at large over his back, it flees behind him as it meets the Zephyr, hindering himself and flying in threatening Idas' face. Hence that young man saw a trick, opportunity for a foul. Already near the finish, as Parthenopaeus is crossing the threshold⁷⁰ victorious, the other seizes his hair and pulls him back, taking his place, and strikes the mouth of the gate with a fine lead.⁷¹

The Arcadians roar 'To arms,' with arms they hasten to defend their king unless the stolen prize and merited honour be restored, and make to come down on all the track. Others approve Idas' trick. Parthenopaeus himself throws back earth, covering his face and wet eyes; the appeal of tears adds to his beauty. In his distress he tears with bloody nails now his chest, now his undeserving face and guilty hair; from all sides rages discordant clamour, and old Adrastus' judgment delays in doubt. At last he speaks: 'Boys, cease your quarrel. Your prowess must be tested a second time. But go not on a single track. This side is given to Idas, do you keep the other. Let there be no cheating in the race.'

perhaps there is a touch of irony: in fact the lead was minimal, but in effect it was as big as you please. *Longae* is often read, to no purpose. Whether *longe* in 617 and/or *Aeneid* 2.711 (cf. R. F. Thomas, *Virgil and the Augustan Reception*, Cambridge, 2001, pp. 214ff.) are relevant I am not sure.

THEBAID

Audierant, dictoque manent. mox numina supplex
 affatu tacito iuvenis Tegeaeus adorat:
 'diva potens nemorum (tibi enim hic, tibi crinis honori
 debitus, eque tuo venit haec iniuria voto),
 635 si bene quid genetrix, si quid venatibus ipse
 promerui, ne, quaeso, sinas hoc omine Thebas
 ire nec Arcadiae tantum meruisse pudorem.'
 auditum manifesta fides: vix campus euntem
 sentit, et exilis plantis intervenit aër,
 640 raraque non fracto vestigia pulvere pendent.
 irrumpit clamore fores, clamore recurrit
 ante ducem prensaque fovet suspiria palma.
 finiti cursus, operumque insignia praesto.
 Arcas equum dono, clipeum gerit improbus Idas,
 645 cetera plebs Lyciis vadit contenta pharetris.
 Tunc vocat, emisso si quis decernere disco
 impiger et vires velit ostentare superbas.
 it iussus Pterelas et aënae lubrica massae
 pondera vix toto curvatus corpore iuxta
 650 deicit; inspectant taciti expenduntque laborem
 Inachidae. mox turba ruunt, duo gentis Achacae,
 tres Ephyreiadae, Pisa satus unus, Acarnan
 septimus; et plures agitabat gloria, ni se
 arduus Hippomedon cavea stimulante tulisset
 655 in medios, lateque ferens sub pectore dextro
 orbem alium: 'hunc potius, iuvenes, qui moenia saxis
 frangere, qui Tyrias deiectum vaditis arces,
 hunc rapite: ast illud cui non iaculabile dextrae

⁷² The hair I vowed to you.

⁷³ His steps are so rapid that the air hardly has time to come in between them.

They heard and obey his word. Then the lad of Tegea silently addresses deity in suppliant prayer: 'Goddess, lady of the forests, for to you, to your honour, this hair is owed and from your vow⁷² comes this disgrace: if my mother, if I myself, have deserved any favour by our hunts, do not allow me, I pray you, to go to Thebes with this omen, nor to earn such shame for Arcady.' Proof manifest that he was heard, the track scarce feels his passage, meagre the air that comes between his feet,⁷³ his steps are poised wide apart over⁷⁴ the dust and do not break it. With a shout he bursts through the doors, with a shout runs back before the chief and grasps the palm and comforts his sighs. The race is over, the badges of achievement ready. The Arcadian is given a horse, shameless Idas bears a shield, the rest of the field depart content with Lycian quivers.

Next he invites any brisk fellow who may wish to try conclusions hurling the disk and show off his proud strength. Pterelas comes at command and bending his whole body barely manages to throw the slippery weight of the bronze mass down close by. The children of Inachus watch in silence and estimate the feat. Then a crowd rushes in, two of Achaean race, three sons of Ephyre, one born of Pisa, the seventh an Acarnanian; and hope of glory was stirring yet more, had not tall Hippomedon betaken himself into their midst, spurred by the spectators. Bearing at his right side another broad round: 'This one rather, men,' he cried, 'you that are on your way to break walls with rocks and cast down the Tyrian towers, take this: as for

⁷⁴ *Pendent* implies that his feet barely touch the ground.

pondus? et arreptum nullo conamine iecit
 660 in latus. absistunt procul attonitique fatentur
 cedere; vix unus Phlegyas acerque Menestheus
 (hos etiam pudor et magni tenere parentes)
 promiserunt manum; concessit cetera pubes
 sponte et adorato rediit in gloria disco.
 665 qualis Bistonius clipeus Mavortis in arvis
 luce mala Pangaea ferit solemque refulgens
 territat incussaque dei grave mugit ab hasta.

Pisaeus Phlegyas opus incohat et simul omnes
 abstulit in se oculos: ea viso corpore virtus
 670 promissa. ac primum terra discumque manumque
 asperat, excusso mox circum pulvere versat,
 quod latus in digitos, mediae quod certius ulnae
 conveniat, non artis egens: hic semper amor
 ludus erat, patriae non tantum ubi laudis obiret
 675 sacra, sed alternis Alpheon utrumque solebat
 metari ripis et, qua latissima distant,
 non unquam merso transmittere flumina disco.
 ergo operum fidens non protinus horrida campi
 iugera, sed caelo dextram metitur, humique
 680 pressus utroque genu collecto sanguine discum
 ipse super sese rotat atque in nubila condit.
 ille citus sublime petit similisque cadenti
 crescit in adversum, tandemque exhaustus ab alto
 tardior ad terram redit atque immergitur arvis.

659 arreptum ψ : abr- P ω

675 utrumque P: utrim- ω

676 metari P: metiri ω

75 *Etiam* (= *etiamnum*).

76 As seen from either bank. Or *utrimque* may be right.

that weight, what arm could not throw it?' and effortless he caught it up and cast it to one side. They stand away awe-struck and confess themselves outmatched. Only Phlegyas and keen Menestheus—shame and great parentage kept them still⁷⁵ in the contest—reluctantly promised their hands. The rest of the young men willingly gave in and returned inglorious, making obeisance to the disk; even as in Bistonian fields the shield of Mars strikes Pangaeus with an evil glare and shining back affrights the sun and deeply booms with the impact of the god's spear.

Phlegyas of Pisa begins the work, drawing all eyes upon himself; such prowess his body's aspect promises. First he roughens the disk and his hand with earth, then shaking off the dirt turns it round and round to see which side suits his fingers, which more surely the middle of his forearm. Skill he does not lack. This sport was ever his passion, not only when he attended the ceremonies of his country's glory—he was wont to measure either Alpheos⁷⁶ on alternate banks and where they are furthest apart to cross the river with a disk that never sank. Therefore confident in his workmanship, he measures to begin with, not the rough⁷⁷ acres of the flat, but his arm with the sky;⁷⁸ crouching on the ground with either knee, he collects his strength and whirls the disk above him and sends it to hide in the clouds. Swiftly it seeks the height and as though falling gathers speed as it goes, till at length exhausted it returns from aloft to earth with less velocity⁷⁹ and plunges into the

⁷⁷ As though the rough ground would slow down the flight of the disk? ⁷⁸ The distance the disk travelled upwards would assess the strength of the thrower's arm.

⁷⁹ In double defiance of the law of gravity.

- 685 sic cedit, attonitis quotiens avellitur astris,
 Solis opaca soror; procul auxiliantia gentes
 aera crepant frustraue timent, at Thessala victrix
 ridet anhelantes audito carmine bigas.
 collaudant Danai, sed non tibi molle tuenti,
 690 Hippomedon, maiorque manus speratur in aequo.
 Atque illi extemplo, cui spes infringere dulce
 immodicas, Fortuna venit. quid numina contra
 tendere fas homini? spatium iam immane parabat,
 iam cervix conversa, et iam latus omne redibat:
 695 excidit ante pedes elapsum pondus et ictus
 destituit frustraue manum demisit inanem.
 ingemuere omnes, rarisque ea visa voluptas.
 inde ad conatus timida subit arte Menestheus
 cautior, et multum te, Maia crete, rogato
 700 molis praegravidae castigat pulvere lapsus.
 illa manu magna et multum felicius exit,
 nec partem exiguam circi transvecta quievit.
 fit sonus, et fixa signatur terra sagitta.
 tertius Hippomedon valida ad certamina tardos
 705 molitur gressus; namque illum corde sub alto
 et casus Phlegyaee monet et fortuna Menesthei.
 erigit assuetum dextrae gestamen, et alte
 sustentans rigidumque latus fortesque lacertos
 consulit ac vasto contorquet turbine, et ipse
 710 prosequitur. fugit horrendo per inania saltu
 iamque procul meminit dextrae servatque tenorem

689 te molle tuente *Guyet*

699 create P: nate ω (*Schrader*)

700 praegravidae ω (*cf. Val. Fl. 8.98*): praevali- P

707 gestamen $\omega\Sigma$: ceerta- P

fields. So falls the dark sister of the Sun when plucked away from the astonished stars; the people beat bronze to aid and idly fear, but the woman of Thessaly, her spell heard, laughs victorious at the panting steeds.⁸⁰ The Danai applaud (with no kindly look from Hippomedon) and a mightier throw is hoped for on the level.

To him forthwith comes Fortune, who loves to shatter hopes too high. How may man strive against the gods? Already he was preparing a mighty distance, already his neck was turned, already all his side was moving back: the weight slipped and fell before his feet, frustrating his effort and letting his hand drop empty. All groaned, and only a few enjoyed the sight. Then Menestheus advances to the attempt with timorous skill. More cautious, with many a prayer to you, son of Maia, he corrects with dirt the lubricity of the ponderous mass. With powerful hand and much better luck it goes forth and comes to rest after traversing no small part of the track. There is noise,⁸¹ and an arrow is fixed to mark the spot. Third, Hippomedon comes with slow, ponderous tread to the trial of strength. Deep in his heart the fate of Phlegyas and the fortune of Menestheus warn him. He raises the load that his hand knows well and holding it high tests his rigid side and powerful arms, then swings it round with a tremendous whirl and himself follows through. The disk flies through the void with a fearsome bound and already far away remembers the hand that sent it and keeps course, passing vanquished

⁸⁰ 'Eclipses of the moon were believed to be caused by Thessalian witches, who were thought to have the power of drawing it down to earth; the steeds are those of the chariot of the moon' (Mozley). ⁸¹ From the crowd.

- discus, nec dubia iunctave Menesthea victum
 transabiit meta: longe super aemula signa
 consedit viridesque umeros et opaca theatri
 715 culmina ceu latae tremefecit mole ruinae:
 quale vaporifera saxum Polyphemus ab Aetna
 lucis egente manu tamen in vestigia puppis
 audita iuxtaque inimicum exegit Ulixen.
 [sic et Aloidae, cum iam calcaret Olympum
 720 desuper Ossa rigens, ipsum glaciale ferebant
 Pelion et trepido sperabant iungere caelo.]
 Tum genitus Talao victori tigrin inancm
 ire iubet, fulvo quae circumfusa nitebat
 margine et extremos auro mansueverat ungues.
 725 Cnosiacos arcus habet et vaga tela Menestheus.
 ‘at tibi,’ ait, ‘Phlegya, casu frustrate sinistro,
 hunc, quondam nostri decus auxiliumque Pelasgi,
 ferre damus, neque enim Hippomedon inviderit, ense.
 nunc opus est animis: infestos tollite caestus
 730 comminus; haec bellis et ferro proxima virtus.’
 Constitit immanis cerni immanisque timeri
 Argolicus Capaneus, ac dum nigrantia plumbo
 tegmina cruda boum non mollior ipse lacertis
 induitur, ‘date tot iuvenum de milibus unum
 735 huc,’ ait, ‘atque utinam potius de stirpe veniret
 aemulus Aonia, quem fas demittere leto,
 nec mea crudelis civili sanguine virtus.’
 obstipuere animi, fecitque silentia terror.
 tandem insperatus nuda de plebe Laconum
 740 prosilit Alcidas: mirantur Dorica regum
 agmina, sed socii fretum Polluce magistro
 norant et sacras inter crevisse palaestras.
 ipse deus posuitque manus et bracchia finxit

Menestheus to no doubtful or adjacent goal; far beyond the rival mark it comes down and with a crash, as of a great mass of falling masonry, sets the green shoulders and shady tops of the theatre a-tremble. Like the rock that Polyphemus propelled from smoky Aetna with sightless hand, yet on the track of the ship (he heard it) and close to his enemy Ulixes.

Then Talaus' son orders an empty tiger be presented to the victor, shining with surrounding tawny edge where the claw tips are tamed with gold. Menestheus gets a Cnosian bow and wandering shafts. 'But to you, Phlegyas,' he says, 'foiled by unlucky chance, I give this sword to wear, once the pride and stay of our Pelasgus, nor will Hippomedon grudge it. Now 'tis time for courage. Raise the fighting gloves face to face. Here is valour at its nearest to battle and steel.'

Argive Capaneus took his stand, monstrous to view, monstrous to fear, and as he puts gloves of rawhide black with lead on his arms, he no softer than they, 'Give me here' he says 'one from so many thousands of warriors—and would that my rival came rather from Aonian race whom it were no sin to send to his death, and my valour might not be cruel with a countryman's blood.' Their minds were numbed and terror made silence. At length, unlooked-for, Alcidas of the naked Laconian folk leaps forth. The hosts of the Dorian kings marvel, but his comrades knew that he relied on his master Pollux and grew up among the sacred wrestling grounds. The god himself placed his hands and moulded his arms, love of his

719-21 *in paucis codd. recc. repertos damnant plerique*

- (materiae suadebat amor); tunc saepe locavit
 745 comminus, et simili stantem miratus in ira
 sustulit exsultans nudumque ad pectora pressit.
 illum indignatur Capaneus ridetque vocantem,
 ut miserans, poscitque alium; tandemque coactus
 restitit, et stimulis iam languida colla tumescunt.
- 750 Fulmineas alte suspensi corpora plantis
 erexere manus; tuto procul ora recessu
 armorum in speculis, aditusque ad vulnera clausi.
 hic, quantum Stygiis Tityos consurgat ab arvis,
 si torvae patiantur aves, tanta undique pandit
 755 membrorum spatia et tantis ferus ossibus exstat.
 hic paulo ante puer, sed enim maturius aevo
 robur, et ingentes spondet tener impetus annos,
 quem vinci haud quisquam saevo neque sanguine tingi
 malit, ut erecto timeant spectacula voto.
- 760 Ut sese permensi oculis et uterque priorem
 speravere locum, non protinus ira nec ictus:
 alternus paulum timor et permixta furori
 consilia; inclinant tantum contraria iactu
 bracchia et explorant caestus hebetantque terendo.
 765 doctior hic differt animum metuensque futuri
 cunctatus vires dispensat: at ille nocendi
 prodigus incautusque sui ruit omnis et ambas
 consumit sine lege manus atque irrita frendit
 insurgens seque ipse premit. sed providus astu
 770 et patria vigil arte Lacon hos reicit ictus,
 hos cavet; interdum nutu capitisque citati

759 et (SB) timeant ψ : -at P ω

material⁸² persuading, then often set him opposite, wondering at him as he stood in wrath like his own, and lifted him up in triumph and pressed him naked to his chest. Capaneus counts him unworthy, laughing at his challenge as though in pity, and demands another opponent. At last perforce he takes his stand, his slackened neck already swelling at the provocation.

Poised tall on their feet they raised hands like thunderbolts. Their faces are held far back watching from their shoulders, all approach to wounds barred. The one displays from every angle the spaces of his limbs, standing fierce with mighty bones, large as Tityos rising from Stygian fields, if the grim birds would let him. The other was a boy not long ago, but his strength is riper than his years and youthful impulse gives promise of a great future. None would wish to see him worsted or cruelly bloodied, so that⁸³ they fear the spectacle in prayerful expectancy.

They measured each other with their eyes, both hoping for the first opening. Not at once came anger or blow. For a space each feared the other and plan mingled with rage. They only spar with opposing arms and test their gloves, dulling them as they rub. The one, a better boxer, delays his impulse, holds back, husbanding his strength and fearing the future. The other, lavish of harm and careless of himself, rushes all out, spending both hands without restraint, rises gnashing his teeth to no purpose, pressing upon himself. But the Laconian, with crafty foresight and watchful with his country's skill, parries the blows or avoids them. Sometimes with a nod of his swift, obedient head he

⁸² The boy's body. ⁸³ With *et* the following subjunctive has to be by attraction to *malit*.

integer obsequio, manibus nunc obvia tela
 discutiens, instat gressu vultuque recedit:
 saepe etiam iniustis collatum viribus hostem
 775 (is vigor ingenio, tanta experientia dextrae est)
 ultro audax animis intratque et obumbrat et alte
 assilit. ut praeceps cumulo salit unda minantes
 in scopulos et fracta redit, sic ille furem
 circumit expugnans; levat ecce diuque minatur
 780 in latus inque oculos, illum rigida arma caventem
 avocat ac manibus necopinum interserit ictum
 callidus et mediam designat vulnere frontem:
 iam cruor, et tepido signantur tempora rivo.
 nescit adhuc Capaneus subitumque per agmina murmur
 785 miratur; verum ut fessam super ora reduxit
 forte manum et summo maculas in vellere vidit,
 non leo, non iaculo tantum indignata recepto
 tigris: agit toto cedentem fervidus arvo
 praecipitatque retro iuvenem atque in terga supinat,
 790 dentibus horrendum stridens, geminatque rotatas
 multiplicatque manus. rapiunt conamina venti,
 pars cadit in caestus; motu Spartanus acuto
 mille cavet lapsas circum cava tempora mortes
 auxilioque pedum, sed non tamen immemor artis
 795 adversus fugit et fugiens tamen ictibus obstat.

Et iam utrumque labor suspiriaque aegra fatigant:
 tardius ille premit, nec iam hic absistere velox,
 defectique ambo genibus pariterque quierunt.
 sic ubi longa vagos lassarunt aequora nautas

⁸⁴ The gloves (*rigida arma*), by anticipation—breathless narrative, with the words tumbling over one another. Alternatively,

BOOK 6

comes unscathed, now disperses the opposing weapons with his hands or advances with his feet while retreating with his face. Often too he engages the foe whose strength is greater than his own (so lively his wit, so practised his hand), boldly attacking him, getting inside, overshadowing, bounding at him in the air. As a wave gathers and leaps in a rush at threatening rocks, then returns broken, so he circles his angry adversary, storming his defence. See, he raises his rigid weapons,⁵⁴ long he threatens, the side, the eyes. As the other guards against them, he distracts him and cunningly slips in a sudden blow between his hands, marking the middle of his brow with a gash; now there is blood, a warm stream stains the temples. Capaneus does not know it yet and wonders at the sudden noise in the crowd, but when he chanced to draw a weary hand back across his face and saw spots on the leather, no lion was ever so indignant at a javelin's stroke, no tiger. In a passion he pushes the retreating youth all over the field, driving him headlong rearward, bending him back; horribly he grinds his teeth, doubling and multiplying his whirling fists. The winds snatch his efforts, part falls against the gloves. With sharp jerks and the help of his feet the Spartan avoids a thousand deaths that fall about his hollow temples; but he remembers his skill and flees facing the foe and fleeing yet counters with blows.

And now both are wearied with toil and distressful panting. The one presses more slowly, the other is no longer nimble to evade. Both fail at the knees and rest alike. So when long seas have tired wandering sailors, at a

an unexpressed object (*manus*) has to be understood with *levat*, which hardly seems possible.

- 800 et signum de puppe datum, posuere parumper
 braccia: vix requies, iam vox eitat altera remos.
 ecce iterum immodice venientem eludit et exit
 sponte ruens mersusque umeris: effunditur ille
 in eaput, assurgentem alio puer improbus ietu
 805 pereulit eventuque impalluit ipse seeundo.
 elamorem Inachidae, quantum non litora, tollunt,
 non nemora. illum ab humo eonantem ut vidit Adrastus
 tollentemque manus et non toleranda parantem:
 'ite, oro, socii, furit, ite, opponite dextras,
 810 festinate, furit, palmanque et praemia ferte!
 non prius, effracto quam misceat ossa eerebro,
 absistet, video; moriturum auferte Lacona.'
 nec mora, prorumpit Tydeus, nec iussa reeusat
 Hippomedon; tunc vix ambo eonatibus ambas
 815 restringunt colibentque manus ac plurima suadent:
 'vineis, abi; pulchrum vitam donare minori.
 noster et hic bellique eomes.' nil frangitur heros,
 ranumque oblatumque manu thoraea repellit
 voeiferans: 'liceat! non has ego pulvere erasso
 820 atque eruore genas, meruit quibus iste favorem
 semivir, infodiam, mittanaque informe sepulcro
 corpus et Oebalio donem lugere magistro?'
 dicit; at hunc soeii tumidum et vicisse negantem
 avertunt, contra laudant insignis alumnum
 825 Taygeti longeque minas risere Laeones.
 Iamdudum variae laudes et conscia virtus
 Tydea magnanimum stimulis ingentibus angunt.

801 citat PψΣ: ciet ω

820 iste favorem ω: ista iuventa P

827 ingentibus Pω: urg- P ante corr.

sign from the poop they drop their arms for a space, but hardly have they rested when a second cry rouses the oars. See, again Alcidas eludes his enemy's furious attack, evading by a deliberate plunge with head in shoulders. Capaneus is thrown head foremost and as he rises the presumptuous lad strikes him another blow and himself turns pale at his success. The sons of Inachus raise a shout, no shore or forest the like. When Adrastus saw him struggling from the ground lifting his hands and purposing the unbearable: 'Go, I beg you, comrades, he is mad; go, oppose your hands, hurry, he is mad! Bring the palm and the prizes. He will not stop till he mingles bone with shattered brain, I see it. Take the Laconian away or he dies.' Promptly Tydeus rushes forward, nor does Hippomedon refuse the order. Then with their joint efforts they manage to fasten his hands behind him and restrain, with much persuasion: 'You win, leave it. 'Tis a fine thing to spare the loser's life. He too is one of ours, a war comrade.' The hero is nowise mollified. He pushes away the branch and the proffered corselet, bellowing: 'Let me go! These cheeks with which the half-man won favour,⁸⁵ shall I not gouge with clotted dirt and blood, shall I not send his maimed body to the grave and give it to his Oebalian master to mourn?' He spoke, but his comrades turn him away swollen with ire and denying that he has won; whereas the Laconians laud the nursling of illustrious Taygetus and at a distance laugh at the threats.

This while have the various achievements of others and his conscious valour tormented great-souled Tydeus with

⁸⁵ Of the crowd. Håkanson (*semiviri foedem*) missed the fact that Pollux was the active partner. But the text remains in doubt.

ille quidem et disco bonus et contendere cursu,
 nec caestu bellare minor, sed corde labores
 830 ante alios erat uncta pale. sic otia Martis
 degere et armiferas laxare assueverat iras
 ingentes contra ille viros Acheloia circum
 litora felicesque deo monstrante palaestras.
 ergo ubi luctandi iuvenes animosa citavit
 835 gloria, terrificos umeris Aetolus amictus
 exiit patriumque suem. levat ardua contra
 membra Cleonaeae stirpis iactator Agylleus,
 Herculea nec mole minor, sic grandibus alte
 insurgens umeris hominem super improbus exit.
 840 sed non ille rigor patriumque in corpore robur:
 luxuriant artus, effusaque sanguine laxo
 membra natant; unde haec audax fiducia tantum
 Oenidae superare parem. quamquam ipse videri
 exiguus, gravia ossa tamen nodisque lacerti
 845 difficiles. numquam hunc animum Natura minori
 corpore nec tantas ausa est includere vires.

Postquam oleo gavis a cutis, petit aequor uterque
 procurso medium atque hausta vestitur harena,
 dum madidos artus alterno pulvere siccant,
 850 collaque demersere umeris et bracchia late
 vara tenent. iam tunc astu deducit in aequum
 callidus et celsum procurvat Agyllea Tydeus,
 summissus tergo et genibus vicinus harenae.
 ille autem, Alpini veluti regina cupressus
 855 verticis urgentes cervicem inclinat ad Austros

⁸⁴² unde P: inde ω ⁸⁴⁹ tum P ω (*Håkanson*)

⁸⁵⁵ urgentes ω : -ti P, *Imhof* ad austros ψ : in a- P ω : ab
 Austro *Imhof*

mighty goads. He was good with the disk and at running, nor less so in the glove fight, but before all other sports he loved oiled wrestling. So was he wont to spend respites from war and relax armed angers against giant opponents around the shores of Achelous and the sports grounds happy in the teacher god.⁸⁶ So when courageous ambition of wrestling summoned the warriors, the Aetolian stripped from his shoulders their fearsome covering, his native boar. Against him Agylleus boasting Cleonaeon stock raises his tall limbs; nor is he less than Hercules in build, so high he rises with his huge shoulders towering unconscionable above mortal measure; but he lacks that rigour, his father's strength of body. His limbs luxuriate, they spread and swim, slack their vigour. Hence Oeneus' son's bold confidence of beating so big an opponent. He himself was small indeed to look upon, but heavy-boned, his muscles tightly knotted. Never did Nature dare enclose such a spirit in a lesser frame nor force so great.

After their skins had rejoiced in oil, both run into the middle of the ground and clothe themselves with handfuls of sand, each drying wet limbs with alternate dust,⁸⁷ and sink their necks in their shoulders and hold their arms curved wide. Already crafty Tydeus artfully brings Agylleus down to level and bends his height forward, stooping his own back, knees close to the sand. Like the cypress, queen of the Alpine summit, that inclines her neck in the

⁸⁶ Achelous; cf. 9.481 *deus*.

⁸⁷ In turn they throw sand at each other, as in Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 9.35f. (Håkanson).

vix sese radice tenens, terraeque propinquat,
 iamdudum aetherias eadem reditura sub auras:
 non secus ingentes artus praecelesus Agylleus
 sponte premit parvumque gemens duplicatur in hostem.
 860 et iam alterna manus frontemque umerosque latusque
 collaque pectoraque et vitantia crura lacessit.
 interdumque diu pendent per mutua fulti
 bracchia, nunc saevi digitorum vincula frangunt.
 non sic ductores gemini gregis horrida tauri
 865 bella movent; medio coniunx stat candida prato
 victorem exspectans, rumpunt obnixa furentes
 pectora, subdit amor stimulos et vulnera sanat:
 fulmineo sic dente sues, sic hispida turpes
 proelia villosis ineunt complexibus ursi.
 870 vis eadem Oenidae; nec sole aut pulvere fessa
 membra labant, riget arta cutis durisque laborum
 castigata toris. contra non integer ille
 flatibus alternis aegroque effetus hiatu
 exiit ingestas fluvio sudoris harenas
 875 ac furtim rapta sustentat pectora terra.
 instat agens Tydeus fictumque in colla minatus
 crura subit; coeptis non evaluere potiri
 frustratae brevitate manus, venit arduus ille
 desuper oppressumque ingentis mole ruinae
 880 condidit. haud aliter collis scrutator Hiberi,
 cum subiit longeque diem vitamque reliquit,
 si tremuit suspensus ager subitumque fragorem
 rupta dedit tellus, latet intus monte soluto

876 fictum ψ : ictum P ψ

urging South Wind, scarce holding herself by the root, and nears the earth, presently to return to the air on high the same as before, not otherwise does towering Agylleus of his own will lower his huge limbs bending double with a groan against his little foe. And now with hands, each in turn, they challenge forehead and shoulder and flank and neck and chest and evading legs. Sometimes they hang a long while supported by each other's arms, now they fiercely break the fingers' grip. Not so savagely do two bulls, chiefs of the herd, make grim warfare, while the fair consort stands in mid meadow expecting the victor; furiously they break straining breasts, love applies his goads and heals their wounds.⁵⁸ Thus boars with lightning tusks, thus ugly bears join bristling conflict with their shaggy embraces. The strength of Oeneus' son is constant,⁵⁹ his limbs do not fail, weary with sun or dust, his skin is tight and rigid, disciplined⁹⁰ by the hard sinews of toil. Whereas the other is not unimpaired; exhausted by breathings out and in, he gapes distressed, shedding the sand heaped on his body with a stream of sweat, and furtively clutches the ground to support his chest. Tydeus is upon him, harrying. Feinting at the neck, he catches at the legs; but to no avail, for his hands are too short to gain their object. His tall adversary comes down on him and crushes him from sight beneath the huge collapsing mass. Like the searcher of an Iberian⁹¹ hill, when he has gone below and left daylight and life afar; if the suspended ground trembles and the ruptured earth comes down with a sudden crash, he hides

⁵⁸ Makes them painless.

⁵⁹ In contrast to his opponent. Not 'so violent is Oinides.'

⁹⁰ I.e. tightened.

⁹¹ Spain was rich in mines.

- obrutus, ac penitus fractum obtritumque cadaver
 885 indignantem animam propriis non reddidit astris.
 acrior hoc Tydeus, animisque et pectore supra est.
 nec mora, cum vinclis onerique elapsus iniquo
 circumit errantem et tergo necopinus inhaeret,
 mox latus et firmo celer implicat ilia nexu;
 890 poplitibus genua inde premens evadere nodos
 nequiquam et lateri dextram insertare parantem
 improbus (horrendum visu!), [ac] mirabile pondus,
 sustulit. Herculeis pressum sic fama lacertis
 terrigenam sudasse Libyn, cum fraude reperta
 895 raptus in excelsum, nec iam spes ulla cadendi,
 nec licet extrema matrem contingere planta.
 fit sonus, et laetos attollunt agmina plausus.
 tunc alte librans inopinum sponte remisit
 obliquumque dedit, procumbentemque secutus
 900 colla simul dextra, pedibus simul inguina vinxit.
 deficit obsessus soloque pudore repugnat.
 tandem pectus humi pronamque extensus in alvum
 sternitur, ac longo maestus post tempore surgit,
 turpia signata linquens vestigia terra.
 905 palmam autem dextra laeva que nitentia dono
 arma ferens Tydeus: 'quid si non sanguinis huius
 partem haud exiguam (scitis) Dircaeus haberet
 campus, ubi haec nuper, Thebarum foedera, plagae—'
 haec simul ostentans quaesitaque praemia laudum
 910 dat sociis, sequitur neglectus Agyllea thorax.

⁸⁹² ac *secl.*, *ita dist-* SB

⁹² Agylleus.

BOOK 6

inside, buried by the fallen mountain, nor does the corpse, utterly smashed and crushed, return his indignant spirit to its proper stars. All the more vigorous for this, Tydeus is on top in spirit and heart. In a trice he has slipped from the bonds, the unconscionable load, and circles the other as he moves uncertain. Suddenly he is clinging to his back, then twines side and groin in a firm hold. Next, squeezing knees between thighs, as he⁹² vainly struggles to escape the knots and thrust his hand in the other's side, irrepressible Tydeus (dreadful to see and wonderful) lifted the weight. So, as the story goes, sweated the Libyan son of earth⁹³ gripped in Hercules' arms, when his trick was discovered and he snatched into the air; no hope now of falling and he cannot touch his mother with the tip of his toe. A roar goes up, the host shouts glad applause. Then, balancing him on high, Tydeus suddenly lets him go and fall sideways; following as he plunges, he simultaneously grasps his neck with his right hand and his groin with his feet. Thus hemmed in, the other grows faint and only shame makes him fight back. Finally he sprawls at length on the ground, prone on his chest and belly. After a long time he rises dejected, leaving ugly traces marking the ground. Tydeus bears the palm in his right hand and the gift of shining arms in his left: 'What if no small part of this blood of mine (you all know it) were not on Dirce's plain, where lately these scars, my pact with Thebes—'showing them⁹⁴ as he spoke; and he gives his comrades the prizes his glory has won. An unprized corselet follows Agylleus.

⁹³ Antaeus. His trick was to draw strength from bodily contact with Earth his mother. ⁹⁴ *Haec* agrees with *foedera = plagas*; cf. 7.541 *bona foedera gesto / pectore in hoc*.

THEBAID

Sunt et qui nudo subeant concurrere ferro:
 iamque aderant instructi armis Epidaurius Agreus
 et nondum Fatis Dircaeus agentibus exsul.
 dux vetat Iasides: 'manet ingens copia leti,
 915 o iuvenes! servate animos avidumque furorem
 sanguinis adversi. tuque o, quem propter avita
 iugera, dilectas cui desolavimus urbes,
 ne, precor, ante aciem ius tantum casibus esse
 fraternisque sinas (abigant hoc numina!) votis.'
 920 sic ait, atque ambos aurata casside ditat.
 tum generum, ne laudis egens, iubet ardua necti
 tempora Thebanumque ingenti voce citari
 uictorem: dirac recinebant omina Parcae.

Ipsam etiam proprio certamina festa labore
 925 dignari et tumulis supremum hunc addere honorem
 hortantur proceres ac, ne victoria desit
 una ducum numero, fundat uel Lyctia cornu
 tela rogant, tenui vel nubila transeat hasta.
 obsequitur gaudens, viridique ex aggere in aequum
 930 stipatus summis iuvenum descendit; at illi
 pone levnes portat pharetras et cornua iussus
 armiger: ingentem iactu transmitters circum
 eminus et dictae dare vulnera destinat orno.

Quis fluere occultis rerum neget omina causis?
 935 Fata patent homini, piget inservare, peritque
 venturi praemissa fides: sic omina casum
 fecimus, et vires hausit Fortuna nocendi.

⁹²² thebarum P ω (Alton)

⁹²³ recinebant P: reti- ω

⁹⁵ He would be proclaimed 'Polynices of Thebes.' The omen may be simply the word 'Theban,' associating Thebes with victory.

BOOK 6

Some too come forward to fight with the naked sword. Already Epidaurian Agreus and the Direaeon exile, whose doom is not yet upon him, stood in arms. The royal seion of Iasus forbids: 'Young sirs, great plenty of death remains. Keep your high hearts and mad greed for adversary blood. And you, on whose account we have left desolate our ancestral aeres and beloved eities, do not, I pray, before the fray let chance and your brother's vows (the gods forbend!) have so much power.' So he spoke and enriches both with a gilded helm. Then he orders that his son-in-law's tall temples be wreathed, lest he go short of glory, and that he be proclaimed victor in stentorian tone: Theban.⁹⁵ The fell Parcae echoed baek the omen.

The leaders urge him also to dignify the festal contests with a feat of his own, adding this final honour to the tomb. And lest one victory be laeking to the number of the chiefs, they ask him to shoot Lyetian arrows from a bow or cross the clouds with a light spear. Happily he complies and from the green mound descends to the level surrounded by the foremost warriors. His armour-bearer at orders carries behind light quivers and bows. He plans to cross the great eireus from a distance with a shot and wound a designated ash tree.

Who would deny that omens flow from the hidden causes of things? The Fates lie open to man, but he cares not to observe and the foreshown assurance of the future is wasted. So of omens we have made chance, and Fortune has drawn power to harm.⁹⁶

But Polynices had not in fact defeated his adversary and that too might be ominous, foreshadowing his duel with Eteocles. See SB². ⁹⁶ Introductory to what follows.

THEBAID

Campum emensa brevi fatalis ab arbore tacta
(horrendum visu!) per quas modo fugerat auras,
940 venit harundo retro versumque a fine tenorem
pertulit, et notae iuxta ruit ora pharetrae.
multa duces errore serunt: hi nubila et altos
occurrisse Notos, adversi roboris ictu
tela repulsa alii. penitus latet exitus ingens
945 monstratumque nefas: uni remeabile bellum
et tristes domino spondebat harundo recursus.

BOOK 6

Quickly measuring the flat, the fateful shaft touched the tree and then (awful to see!) came back through the air through which it had just flown and maintained the reverse course from the target, falling close to the mouth of its familiar quiver. The leaders make much talk astray. Some say clouds and winds on high met the arrow, others that it was repelled by the shock of the fronting wood. Deep lies the mighty outcome, the evil revealed. The shaft promised its master a war from which he alone would return, a sad homecoming.

LIBER VII

- Atque ita cunctantes Tyrii primordia belli
Iuppiter haud aequo respexit corde Pelagos,
concussitque caput motu quo celsa laborant
sidera proclamatque adici cervicibus Atlans.
5 tunc ita velocem Tegees affatus alumnum:
‘i, medium rapido Borean illabere saltu
Bistonias, puer, usque domos axemque nivosi
sideris, Oceano vetitum qua Parrhasis ignem
nubibus hibernis et nostro pascitur imbri.
10 atque ibi seu posita respirat cuspide Mavors,
quamquam invisā quies, seu, quod reor, arma tubasque
insatiatus agit caraeque in sanguine gentis
luxuriat: prope re monitus iramque parentis
ede, nihil parcens. nempe olim accendere iussus
15 Inachias acies atque omne quod Isthmius umbo
distinet et raucae circumtonat ira Malcae:
illi, vix muros limenque egressa iuventus,

¹ atque ea P ω (*Damsté*)

¹² habet P ω (*SB*²: *avet Schrader*)

¹ Arcadian Callisto, i.e. Ursa Major.

² Håkanson favours (*h*)*avet*, but Garrod's objection stands: action is needed to balance inaction, not desire for action.

BOOK 7

With no kindly heart did Jupiter regard the Pelasgi as they thus delayed the outset of the Tyrian war, and shook his head; at that motion the high stars tremble and Atlas cries that the weight is heavier on his shoulders. Then he thus addressed the swift nursling of Tegea: 'Go, boy, and glide with rapid leap to the mid north, as far as the Bistonian dwellings and the axis of the snowy star, where the Parthasian¹ feeds her fire forbidden to Ocean with winter clouds and my rain; and there, whether Mars has laid his spear aside and draws breath, though rest he hates, or, as I think, plies² arms and trumpets insatiate, revelling in the blood of the people he loves, speedily deliver his parent's angry commands and spare naught. Long ago, I believe, he was ordered to kindle Inaehian armies and all that the Isthmian hump holds apart and the wrath of raucous Malea thunders round.³ Their host has scarce passed beyond their boundary walls and they are at worship! One

³ I.e. the entire Peloponnese, but the wording is open to exception. The Isthmus separates two seas but links (rather than separates) the peninsular and the rest of Greece, and the waters surrounding the peninsula are not very happily summed up as 'the wrath of Malea.' Statius tries again in *Achilleid* 1.407f. with no better success.

THEBAID

sacra colunt; credas bello rediisse, tot instant
 plausibus, offensique sedent ad iusta sepulcri.
 20 hieue tuus, Gradive, furor? sonat orbe recusso
 discus et Oebalii coeunt in proelia caestus.
 at si ipsi rabies ferrique insana voluptas
 qua tumet, immeritas cineri dabit impius urbes
 ferrum ignemque ferens, implorantesque Tonantem
 25 sternet humi populos miserumque exhauriet orbem.
 nunc lenis belli nostraque remittitur ira.
 quod ni praecipitat pugnas dictoque iubentis
 ocius impingit Tyriis Danaa agmina muris
 (nil equidem crudele minor), sit mite bonumque
 30 numen et effreni laxentur in otia mores,
 reddat equos enseque mihi, nec sanguinis ultra
 ius erit: aspiciam terras pacemque iubebo
 omnibus; Ogygio sat erit Tritonia bello.'

Dixerat, et Thracum Cyllenius arva subibat;
 35 atque illum Arctoae labentem cardine portae
 tempestas aeterna plagae praetentaque caelo
 agmina nimborum primique Aquilonis hiatus
 in diversa ferunt: crepat aurea grandine multa
 palla, nec Arcadii bene protegit umbra galeri.
 40 hic steriles delubra notat Mavortia silvas
 horrescitque tuens, ubi mille Furoribus illi
 cingitur averso domus immansueta sub Haemo.
 ferrea compago laterum, ferro apta teruntur
 limina, ferratis incumbunt tecta columnis.
 45 lacditur adversum Phoebi iubar, ipsaque sedem

⁴³ apta P (*cf.* 3.16): arta ω

BOOK 7

might suppose they were back from war, so busy are they clapping, sitting at the rites of an offended tomb. In this your rage, Gradivus?⁴ The disk sounds with recoiling circle⁴ and Oebalian gloves meet in combat. But if he himself has the frenzy, the wild delight in battle that he is so proud of, he will ruthlessly give guiltless cities to ash with steel and fire and strew peoples on the ground as they implore the Thunderer and exhaust the hapless world. But now he is mild in warfare and my anger relaxes him. But unless he speeds the fighting and flings the Danaan host against the Tyrian walls quicker than my word of command—I threaten nothing cruel; let him be a gentle, kindly deity, let his wild ways slacken into peace, let him give me back horses and sword, nor any more shall he have power over blood. I shall look upon the earth and order universal peace. Tritonia shall cope with⁵ the Ogygian war.⁷

He spoke and the Cyllenian was nearing the land of Thrace. As he glided down from the Bear's polar gate, he was carried this way and that by the tempest endemic to the region, the racks of rain clouds spread over the sky, and the first gapings of Aquilo's mouth. His golden mantle rattles with pouring hail and the shady Arcadian hat⁶ gives scant cover. Here he marks barren woods, Mars' shrine, and shudders as he looks. There under distant Haemus is the god's ungentle house, girt with a thousand Rages.⁷ The sides are of iron structure, the trodden thresholds are fitted with iron, the roof rests on iron-bound pillars. Phoebus' opposing ray takes hurt, the very light fears the

⁴ As it hits the ground.

⁵ Or 'suffice for.'

⁶ The *petasos*, a felt hat with a broad brim.

⁷ A seemingly careless anticipation of 47ff.

lux timet, et durus contristat sidera fulgor.
 digna loco statio: primis salit Impetus amens
 e foribus caecumque Nefas Iraeque rubentes
 exsanguisque Metus, occultisque ensibus astant
 50 Insidiae geminumque tenens Discordia ferrum.
 innumeris strepit aula Minis, tristissima Virtus
 stat medio, laetusque Furor vultuque cruento
 Mors armata sedet; bellorum solus in aris
 sanguis et incensis qui raptus ab urbibus ignis.
 55 terrarum exuviae circum et fastigia templi
 captae insignibant gentes: caelataque ferro
 fragmina portarum bellatricesque carinae
 et vacui currus protritaque curribus ora,
 paene etiam gemitus: adco vis omnis et omne
 60 vulnus. ubique ipsum, sed non usquam ore remisso
 cernere erat: talem divina Mulciber arte
 ediderat; nondum radiis monstratus adulter
 foeda catenato luerat conubia lecto.

Quaerere templorum regem vix coeperat ales
 65 Maenalius, tremit ecce solum et mugire refractis
 corniger Hebrus aquis; tunc quod pecus utile bello
 vallem infestabat, trepidas spumare per herbas,
 signa adventantis, clausaeque adamante perenni
 dissiluerunt fores. Hyrcano in sanguine pulcher
 70 ipse subit curru, diraque aspergine latos
 mutat agros, spolia a tergo flentesque catervae.
 dant silvae nixque alta locum; regit atra iugales
 sanguinea Bellona manu longaue fatigat
 cuspede. deriguit visu Cyllenia proles

^s Effect of earthquake. Rivers are commonly conceived of as

dwelling and a harsh glare glooms the stars. The guard is worthy of the place. Wild Impulse leaps from the outer gates and blind Evil and ruddy Angers and bloodless Fears. Treachery lurks with hidden swords and Strife holding two-edged steel. The court resounds with countless Threats, Valour most sombre stands in the centre, and joyful Rage and armed Death with bloodstained countenance there sit. On the altars is blood of wars, that only, and fire snatched from burning towns. Trophies from many lands and captured peoples marked the temple's sides and top, and fragments of iron-wrought gates and warship keels and empty chariots and heads by chariots crushed, groans too almost. Every violence truly, every wound. Everywhere himself was to be seen, but nowhere with easy look; thus had Mulciber portrayed him with his divine art. Not yet had he been revealed an adulterer by sunbeams and expiated a shameful union in a chained bed.

Scarce had the winged Maenalian begun to look for the king of the temple when, see, the ground quakes and horned Hebrus bellows as his waters are broken back.⁸ Then the beasts useful in war⁹ that infested the valley foamed in the quivering grasses, sign of his coming, and the closed gates of everlasting adamant flew open. Himself arrives in his car, handsome in Hyrcanian blood, and changes the broad fields with the dire spatter. Spoils and weeping crowds are at his back. Woods and deep snow yield passage. Black Bellona governs the team with bloody hand and harasses them with her long spear. Cyllene's son

bulls or part-bulls. Homer's Scamander bellows *like* a bull (*Iliad* 21.237).

⁹ Horses.

- 75 summisitque genas: ipsi reverentia patri,
 si prope sit, dematque minas nee talia mandet.
 'quod Iovis imperium, magno quid ab aethere portas?'
 oecupat Armipotens, 'neque enim hunc, germane, sub axem
 sponte venis hiemesque meas, eui roseida iuxta
 80 Maenala et aestivi elementior aura Lyeaei.'
 ille refert consulta patris. nec longa moratus,
 sicut anhelabant, iuneto sudore volantes
 Mars impellit equos, resides in proelia Graios
 ipse etiam indignans. vidit pater altus et irae
 85 iam levior tardo fleetebat pondere vultum.
 ut si quando ruit debellatasque relinquit
 Eurus aquas, pax ipsa tumet pontumque iacentem
 exanimis iam volvit hiems: nondum arma earinis
 omnia, nec toto respirant pectore nautae.
- 90 Finicrat pugnas honor exsequialis inermes;
 necdum aberant coetus, eunetisque silentibus heros
 vina solo fundens cinerem placabat Adrastus
 Arehemori: 'da, parve, tuum trieteride multa
 instaurare diem, nec saucius Arcadas aras
 95 malit adire Pelops Eleaque pulset eburna
 templa manu, nec Castaliis altaribus anguis,
 nec sua pinigero magis amatet umbra Lechaeo.
 nos te lugenti, puer, infitiamur Averno,
 maestaque perpetuis sollemnia iungimus astris,
 100 nunc festina cohors. at si Boeotia ferro
 vertere tecta dabis, magnis tunc dignior aris,

82 volentes *coni.* Hill84 ira P ω (*Peyrared*)10 Poetic licence; Pelops' *shoulder* was ivory.

11 I.e. 'may you visit your Nemean festival no less gladly than

froze at the sight and dropped his eyes. The Father himself would be awed were he at hand, would retract his threats nor send such a message. The Lord of Arms speaks first: 'What command of Jove do you bring, what from the great ether? For you come not of your own will, my brother, to this clime, to my blizzards, you that live by dewy Maenalus and the mild breeze of summer Lycaeus.' The other repeats the Father's decree. Mars does not tarry long but drives his flying horses, panting as they are, in continued toil, he too indignant at the battle-torpid Greeks. The Father on high saw and eased his wrath, slowly and ponderously he changes countenance; as when the East Wind plunges, leaving the vanquished waters, the very calm is tunid and the exhausted storm now rolls a flattened sea; ships do not yet have all their rigging and sailors do not breathe freely quite.

The funeral celebration had ended weaponless fights but the assemblage was not yet gone. All were silent while the hero Adrastus poured wine upon the ground, appeasing Archemorus' dust: 'Crant, little one, that we may renew your day at many a triennial. Let not wounded Pelops more desire to approach Arcadian altars or knock with ivory hand¹⁰ at Elean temples, nor the snake glide more willingly to the Castalian shrine, nor its shade swim to pine-clad Lechaëum.¹¹ We, O boy, deny you to Avernus' mourning and link our sad observance to the everlasting stars. Now we are a host in haste, but if you grant us to overturn the Boeotian dwellings with our steel, then shall a

Pelops, Python, and Palaemon visit the other three' (unfortunately, the Pythian was not in *honour* of Python!). *Malit* = *magis velut*.

tunc deus, Inachias nec tantum culta per urbes
numina, captivis etiam iurabere Thebis.⁷

dux ea pro cunctis, eadem sibi quisque vovebat.

- 105 Iam pronis Gradivus equis Ephyraea premebat
litora, qua summas caput Acrocorinthos in auras
tollit et alterna geminum mare protegit umbra.
inde unum dira comitum de plebe Pavorem
quadripedes anteire iubet: non alter anhelos
110 insinuare metus animumque avertere veris
aptior. innumerae monstro vocesque manusque
et facies quamcumque velit; bonus omnia credi
auctor et horrificis lymphare incurisibus urbes.
si geminos soles ruituraque suadeat astra,
115 aut nutare solum aut veteres descendere silvas,
a! miseri vidisse putant. tunc acre novabat
ingenium: falso Nemeaeum pulvere campum
erigit; attoniti tenebrosam a vertice nubem
respexere duces; falso clamore tumultum
120 auget, et arma virum pulsusque imitatur equorum,
terribilemque vagas ululatum spargit in auras.
exsiluere animi, dubiumque in murmure vulgus
pendet: 'ubi iste fragor? ni fallimur aure. sed unde
pulvereo stant astra globo? num Ismenius ultro
125 miles? ita est: veniunt. tanta autem audacia Thebis?
an dubitent, age, dum inferias et busta colamnis?'
haec Pavor attonitis; variosque per agmina vultus

¹¹⁰ animumque . . . veris ω: -moque vires P

¹² Or with P's reading 'steal strength from the mind' (or 'from courage'). But the following lines are about Panic's powers of deception.

great altar add you dignity, then shall you be a god, deity worshipped not only in Inachian cities; in captive Thebes also you shall be invoked.' So prayed the leader on behalf of all, and each the same for himself.

Now Gradivus was treading Ephyre's shore with his thrusting horses, where Aerocorinthos lifts his head into the topmost airs and covers the twin sea with his alternating shadow. Thence he bids Panic, one of his dire crew of companions, go before his steeds. None better suited to instil panting fears and turn the mind from reality.¹² The monster has countless voices and hands and whatever face he pleases; on his authority all things are credible, he can drive cities crazy with his terrifying onslaughts. If he persuades them of two suns or of stars about to plunge or ground wobbling or ancient forests descending, why, the poor souls think they have seen it. Then he bethought him of something new and clever. He raises false dust on the plain of Nemca. The leaders gaze astounded at a dark cloud above their heads. He swells the tumult with false clamour, imitating men's arms and horses' gallop, scattering a fearsome yell upon the wandering winds. Their hearts leapt and the multitude hangs doubtful and murmuring: 'Where this noise?—unless our ears deceive us. But why stand the stars in a ball of dust? Is it the Ismenian army challenging us? So it is. They come. But is Thebes so bold? Well, are they to wait, look you, while we attend to funerals and sepulchres?' Thus Panic speaks¹³ to their bewilderment. He takes on various guises as he goes through

¹³ The questions and answers are the army's, but Panic inspires them.

- induitur: nunc Pisaeis e milibus unus,
 nunc Pylius, nunc ore Lacon, hostesque propinquos
 130 adiurat turmasque metu consternat inani.
 nil falsum trepidis. ut vero amentibus ipse
 incidit et sacrae circum fastigia vallis
 turbine praevectus rapido ter sustulit hastam,
 ter concussit equos, clipeum ter pectore plausit:
 135 arma, arma insani sua quisque ignotaque nullo
 more rapit, mutant galeas alienaque cogunt
 ad iuga cornipedes; ferus omni in pectore saevit
 mortis amor caedisque, nihil flagrantibus obstat:
 praecipitant redimuntque moras. sic litora vento
 140 incipiente fremunt, fugitur cum portus; ubique
 vela fluunt, laxi iactantur ubique rudentes;
 iamque natant remi, natat omnis in acquore summo
 ancora, iam dulcis medii de gurgite ponti
 respicitur tellus comitesque a puppe relictī.
 145 Viderat Inachias rapidum glomerare cohortes
 Bacchus iter; gemuit Tyriam conversus ad urbem,
 altricemque domum et patrios reminiscitur ignes,
 purpureum tristi turbatus pectore vultum:
 non crines, non sarta loco, dextramque reliquit
 150 thyrsus, et intactae ceciderunt cornibus uvae.
 ergo ut erat lacrimis lapsoque inhonoris amictu
 ante Iovem (et tunc forte polum secretus habebat)
 constitit, haud unquam facie conspectus in illa
 (nec causae latuere patrem), supplexque profatur:
 155 'excindisne tuas, divum sator optime, Thebas?
 saeva adeo coniunx? nec te telluris amatae
 deceptique laris miscret cinerumque meorum?

 14 Mars.

15 A favouring wind.

the host, now one of Pisa's thousands, now a Pylia, now a Laconian by the look of him, and swears that the enemy are close, confounding the troops with vain alarm. To the frightened nothing is false. But when he¹⁴ comes upon the maddened army in his own person, when, carried around the heights of the sacred valley in a rapid whirl, he thrice lifts his spear, thrice strikes his steeds, thrice slaps shield against chest, in wild disorder each man snatches arms, arms, whether his own or a stranger's; they change helmets and drive horses into yokes not theirs. Fierce love of death and slaughter rages in every breast and nothing stands in their passion's way; they plunge, making up for their delay. So shores resound as the wind¹⁵ rises and men flee the harbour; everywhere sails are streaming, everywhere loose tackle is tossing, and now oars float, every anchor floats on the water's surface, now from mid sea they gaze back at sweet land and the comrades they have left astern.

Bacchus had seen the Inachian cohorts mass their rapid march. Turning to the Tyrian city he groaned, remembering the home that fostered him and his father's fires,¹⁶ sad at heart, his shining face distraught. His hair and garlands were disordered, the wand left his hand, the grapes fell from his horns untouched. So, as he was, inglorious in tears and dishevelled raiment, he stood before Jupiter, who chanced to be alone in his heavenly dwelling, never before seen in such guise (nor was the reason any secret to his sire), and suppliant speaks: 'Most excellent begetter of the gods, are you razing your Thebes? Is your lady so cruel? Have you no pity for the beloved land, the hearth you

¹⁶ The lightning that destroyed Semele, also indicated in 157 *cinerumque meorum* and 158-60 and 191.

- esto, olim invitum iaculatus nubibus ignem,
 eredimus: en iterum atra refers ineendia terris,
 160 nee Styge iurata, nee paelieis arte rogatus.
 quis modus? an nobis pater iratusque bonusque
 fulmen habes? sed non Danaeia limina talis
 Parrhasiumque nemus Ledaesque ibis Amyelas.
 seilieet e eunetis ego neglectissima natis
 165 progenies. ego nempe tamen qui dulee ferenti
 pondus eram, eui tu dignatus limina vitae
 praereptumque uterum et maternos reddere menses.
 adde quod imbellis rarisque exereita castris
 turba meas aeies, mea tantum proelia norunt,
 170 neetere fronde comas et ad inspirata rotari
 buxa: timent thyrsos nuptarum et proelia matrum.
 unde tubas Martemque pati, qui fervidus ecee
 quanta parat? quid si ille tuos Curetas in arma
 dueat et innoeuis iubeat deeernere peltis?
 175 quin etiam invisos (sie hostis defuit?) Argos
 eligis! o ipsis, genitor, graviora perielis
 iussa: novereales ruimus ditare Mycenae!
 cedo equidem. quo saera tamen ritusque peremptae
 gentis, et in tumulos si quid male feta reliquit
 180 mater, abire iubes? Thraeen silvasque Lycurgi?
 anne triumphatos fugiam captivus ad Indos?
 da sedem profugo. potuit Latonia frater
 saxa (nec invideo) defigere Delon et imis

167 *uterum Barth*: iter P ω

176 *elicis P ω* (ζ , *Markland*)

177 *ruimus ω* : lu- P

17 Home of Callisto.

18 After Semele's death Jupiter carried the fetal Bacchus in his thigh till birth.

tricked, my ashes? So be it, once you hurled fire from the clouds against your will, we believe it. Behold, a second time you bring black conflagration on the earth, though not sworn by Styx nor besought by the art of a paramour. How far will you go? You are my father, angry but kind; for me do you have your thunderbolt? But you will not visit Danaëan thresholds in such fashion nor the Parrhasian forest¹⁷ nor Leda's Amyclae. It seems that of all your sons I am the least esteemed. And yet I am he (am I not?) whom you carried,¹⁸ sweet burden, to whom you deigned restore life's threshold, the womb that was snatched away, and my mother's months. Add that the unwarlike throng, rarely practised in camps, know only *my* armics, *my* battles—to bind their hair with leaves and whirl to the blowing of pipes; they fear the wands of brides and the battles of mothers.¹⁹ How are they to suffer trumpets and Mars? And see what work fiery Mars is preparing. What if he were to lead your Curetes to arms and bid them try the issue with their harmless bucklers? And you choose hated Argos²⁰—was there no other enemy? More grievous, sire, are your commands than the danger itself. Do we fall to make my stepmother's Mycenae rich? For my part I yield. But where are the slaughtered people's sacraments and rites to go and whatever the mother who conceived me to her sorrow left for burial?²¹ Shall I flee to Thrace and Lyeurgus' forests or to the Indians over whom I triumphed to become their prisoner? Give the fugitive a place to dwell. My brother (and I grudge him not) could fix Delos

¹⁹ Reveling Bacchanals.

²⁰ Hated as Juno's favourite.

²¹ Her ashes.

commendare fretis; cara summovit ab arce
 185 hostiles Tritonis aquas; vidi ipse potentem
 gentibus Eois Epaphum dare iura, nec ullas
 Cyllene secreta tubas Minoave curat
 Ida: quid heu tantum nostris offenderis aris?
 hic tibi (quando minor iam nostra potentia) noctes
 190 Herculeae placitusque vagae Nycteidος ardor,
 hic Tyrium genus et nostro felicior igne
 taurus: Agenoreos saltem tutare nepotes.'

Invidiam risit pater, et iam poplite flexum
 sternentemque manus tranquillus ad oscula tollit
 195 inque vicem placida orsa refert: 'non coniugis ista
 consiliis, ut rere, puer, nec saeva roganti
 sic expostus ego: immoto deducimur orbe
 Fatorum; veteres seraeque in proelia causae.
 nam cui tanta quies irarum aut sanguinis usus
 200 parcior humani? videt axis et ista per aevum
 mecum aeterna domus quotiens iam torta reponam
 fulmina, quam rarus terris hic imperet ignis.
 quin etiam invitus magna ulciscendaque passis
 aut Lapithas Marti aut veterem Calydonā Dianae
 205 expugnare dedi: nimia est iactura pigetque

205 mea est Pω: meaque est ψ (*Phillimore*)

22 The floating island, birthplace of Apollo, who stabilized it.

23 In a contest with Neptune Minerva repelled his waters from the Athenian acropolis.

24 Birthplace of Mercury.

25 In Crete. Minos was Jupiter's son.

26 Jupiter's other children are not disturbed in their favourite localities, so why Bacchus in Thebes? *Tubas* = war trumpets.

27 Antiope, mated by Jupiter in the form of a Satyr.

fast, Latona's rock,²² and commend her to the depth of the seas, the Tritonian removed hostile waters from her dear citadel,²³ I myself have seen potent Epaphus ruling the races of the East, neither does hidden Cyllene²⁴ or Minoan Ida²⁵ trouble for trumpets. Why, ah why, are you offended only by *my* altars?²⁶ Here, since my influence now counts for little, you have your nights of Hercules and your chosen love of the wandering daughter of Nycteus,²⁷ here the race of Tyre and the bull more fortunate²⁸ than my fire; at least protect Agenor's progeny.'

The Father smiled at his reproach. Calmly he raised him for a kiss as he knelt with hands outstretched and in turn gave tranquil answer: 'My lad, this is not by my wife's counsels as you suppose nor am I so subject to her fierce demands. Our lot is spun by the changeless wheel of the Fates. Ancient and belated are the causes that lead to the war. For whose anger rests so readily, who more sparing to take human blood? Heaven and these halls, immortal as myself throughout the ages, are my witness how often I put back the thunderbolt already whirling, how seldom this fire gives earth my commands. It was unwillingly even that I gave the Lapiths to Mars²⁹ to destroy or ancient Calydon to Diana, though they had suffered great wrongs that cried for vengeance. The loss is too great and it irks me to shift so

²⁵ Jupiter had better luck with Europa than with Semele. The Thebans were descended from Jupiter through Cadmus and Agenor but not through Cadmus' sister Europa. None the less she seems to be regarded as their ancestor, as in 11.212—14. Cf. 279.

²⁹ According to a late version of the legend, Mars took offence at not being invited to Pirithous' wedding feast, so made the Centaurs drunk, causing their fight with the Lapiths.

THEBAID

tot mutare animas, tot reddere corpora vitae.
 Labdacios vero Pelopisque a stirpe nepotes
 tardum abolere mihi; scis ipse (ut crimina mittam
 Dorica) quam promptae superos incessere Thebae;
 210 te quoque—sed, quoniam vetus excidit ira, silebo.
 non tamen aut patrio respersus sanguine Pentheus,
 aut matrem scelerasse toris aut crimine fratres
 progenuisse reus, lacero tua lustra replevit
 funere: ubi hi fletus, ubi tunc ars tanta precandi?
 215 ast ego non proprio diros impendo dolori
 Oedipodionidas: rogat hoc tellusque polusque
 et pietas et laesa fides Naturaque et ipsi
 Eumenidum mores. sed tu super urbe moveri
 parce tua: non hoc statui sub tempore rebus
 220 occasum Aoniis, veniet suspectior aetas
 ultoresque alii: nunc regia Iuno queretur.⁷
 his ille auditis mentemque habitumque recepit;
 ut, cum sole malo tristisque rosaria pallent
 usta Noto, si clara dies Zephyrique refecit
 225 aura polum, redit omnis honos, emissaque lucent
 germina, et informes ornat sua gloria virgas.
 Nuntius attonitas iamdudum Eteoclis ad aures
 explorata ferens longo docet agmine Graios
 ire duces, nec iam Aoniis procul afore campis;
 230 quacumque ingressi, tremere ac miserescere cunctos
 Thebarum; qui stirpe refert, qui nomine et armis.

²²³ pallent ω : pendent *ex* pund- P

³⁰ Not bodies but souls are returned to life, in new bodies (*Aeneid* 6.751, perhaps misunderstood).

many souls and return so many bodies to life.³⁰ But the progeny of Labdacus and Pelops it is high time for me to abolish from the root. You know yourself (to say nothing of Dorian offencées) how prompt is Thebes to assail the High Ones. You too—but since the old anger is forgotten, I shall be mute.³¹ And yet Pentheus, who was not stained with his father's blood nor guilty of defiling his mother's bed or the erime of begetting brothers, filled your wilds with his lae-erated corpse. Where were these tears then, where such elaborate entreaty? But I do not sacrifice the fell sons of Oedipus to my private wrath. Earth and heaven demand it, and piety and violated faith and Nature and the very morals of the Eumenides. But be not troubled for your city. I have not decreed an end to Aonian history at this time, a more dangerous hour shall come and other avengers.³² For now queen Juno shall complain.' So hearing, Bacehus regained his mind and mien. So rose beds fade,³³ scorched by a harmful sun and an unkind South Wind, but if the day elears and Zephyr's breeze revive, the sky, all the beauty returns, the buds open and gleam, the formless twigs are adorned in their glory.

A messenger has this while past brought sure tidings to Eteocles' stunned ears that Grecian leaders are marehing in lengthy column and will soon be no great distanee from Aonian fields; wherever they enter, all tremble and pity Thebes. He reports who they are by lineage and name and

³¹ Jupiter is about to say 'took vengeance on Pentheus,' but pulls himself up. Then he says it.

³² The Epigoni, sons of the Seven, who captured Thebes in the next generation.

³³ *Pendent* ('droop') could be right, but see Håkanson.

ille metum condens audire exposcit et odit
 narrantem: hinc socios dictis stimulare suasque
 metiri decernit opes. exciverat omnem
 235 Aoniam Euboeamque et Phocidos arua propinquae
 Mars, ita dulce Iovi. longe fugit ordine velox
 tessera: propellunt acies, seseque sub armis
 ostentant; subeunt campo qui proximus urbi
 damnatus bellis patet exspectatque furores.
 240 nondum hostes contra, trepido tamen agmine matres
 conscendunt muros, inde arma nitentia natis
 et formidandos monstrant sub casside patres.
 Turre procul sola nondum concessa videri
 Antigone populis teneras defenditur atra
 245 veste genas; iuxtaque comes quo Laius ibat
 armigero; nunc virgo senem regina veretur.
 quae sic orsa prior: 'spesne obstatura Pelasgis
 haec vexilla, pater? Pelopis descendere totas
 audimus gentes: dic, o precor, exera regum
 250 agmina; nam video quae noster signa Menocceus,
 quae noster regat arma Creon, quam celsus aëna
 Sphinge per ingentes Homoloidas exeat Haemon.'
 sic rudis Antigone, senior cui talia Phorbas:
 'mille sagittiferos gelidae de colle Tanagrae
 255 promovet ecce Dryas; hic, cui nivca arma tridentem
 atque auro rude fulmen habent, Orionis alti
 non falsus virtute nepos: procul, oro, paternum
 omen et innuptae vetus excidat ira Dianae.

236 longe P: -go ω

246 tunc Pω (SB)

248 totas ω: tantas P ante corr.

BOOK 7

arms. The other, hiding his fear, demands to be told and hates the teller. Then he decides to urge on his allies with a speech and to measure his own power. Mars had stirred up all Aonia and Euboea and the fields of neighbouring Phoeis, such was Jupiter's pleasure. The swift signal flies far in its sequence. They march forth their ranks and show themselves in arms. They enter a plain that spreads close to the city, doomed to battles and awaiting war's madness. The enemy does not yet face them, but mothers mount the walls in an anxious throng and thence show their children the shining armour and their fathers, figures of fear under their helms.

Distant on a lonely tower Antigone, whom the people are not yet allowed to see, defends her tender cheeks with a black cloth. Beside her in attendance is Laius' onetime armour-bearer; now the royal maiden reveres him, an old man. She speaks first: 'Father, is there hope that these banners will withstand the Pelasgi? We hear that all Pelops' races are descending upon us. Tell me, I pray, of the foreign kings and their troops. For I see what standards our Menoeceus commands, what arms our Creon, how tall with brazen Sphinx Haemon goes out through the great Homoloid gates.' So in her ignorance Antigone, to whom thus old Phorbas replies:³⁴ 'See, Dryas brings up a thousand archers from old Tanagra's hill. His snow-white shield bears a trident and a rude thunderbolt in gold. He is the grandson (and his valour attests it) of tall Orion. Far, I pray, be the ancestral omen and may virgin Diana forget

³⁴ With the following list of Boeotian places cf. Pliny, *Natural History* 4.25f.

- iungunt se castris regisque in nomen adoptant
 260 Ocalee Medeonque et confertissima lucis
 Nisa Dionaeisque avibus circumsona Thisbe.
 proximus Eurymedon, cui pastoralia Fauni
 arma patris pinuque iubas imitatur equinas,
 terribilis silvis: reor et Mavorte cruento
 265 talis erit. dites pecorum comitantur Erythrae,
 qui Scolon densamque iugis Eteonon iniquis,
 qui breve litus Hyles Atalantaeaque superbi
 Schoenon habent notique colunt vestigia campi;
 fraxineas Macctum vibrant de more sarisas
 270 saevaque difficiles excludere vulnera peltas.
 ecce autem clamore ruunt Neptunia plebes
 Onchesti, quos pinigeris Mycalesos in agris
 Palladiusque Melas Hecataeaeque gurgite nutrit
 Gargaphie, quorumque novis Haliartos aristis
 275 invidet et nimia sata laeta supervenit herba.
 tela rudes trunci, galeae vacua ora leonum,
 arborei dant scuta sinus. hos regis egenos
 Amphion en noster agit (cognoscere pronum,
 virgo), lyra galeam tauroque insignis avito.
 280 macte animo iuvenis! medios parat ire per enses
 nudaque pro caris opponere pectora muris.

262 cui ω: qui P

271 plebes Pω: proles *vel* pubes ψ

³⁵ According to late legend, Orion was born from the urine of Jupiter, Neptune, and Mercury; hence the trident and thunderbolt on his grandson's shield. A great hunter, he gave offence to Diana; as to how, accounts vary.

³⁶ Venus' doves. Thisbe is called 'of many doves' in the Homeric catalogue (*Iliad* 2.502).

her ancient wrath.³⁵ Ocaleë and Medeon and Nisa thick with woods and Thisbe echoing with Dione's birds³⁶ have joined our forces and take service in our king's name. Next is Eurymedon with the pastoral arms of his father Faunus and pine to imitate a horsehair crest, terrible to the woods; such, I think, will he be in bloody combat. Erythrae, rich in flocks, bears company, and they that inhabit Scolos and Eteonos, thick with rugged ridges, and the brief shore of Hyle and the proud dwellers in Atalanta's Schoenos who cultivate the traces of her famous field;³⁷ they brandish ashen pikes after the Macedonian fashion and bucklers scarce able to keep out cruel wounds. But see, the Neptunian folk of Onchestus rush on shouting; they that Mycalesos nurtures in her pine-covered fields and Palladian Melas and Hecate's Gargaphie with her waters and they whose young harvest Haliartos grudges, growing over the flourishing crop with too-abundant grass.³⁸ Their weapons are rude trunks, their helmets the hollow faces of lions, treefolds³⁹ provide their shields. As they lack a king, see, our Amphion⁴⁰ leads them (he is easy to recognize, maiden), his helm conspicuous with lyre and ancestral bull. Bravo, young man! He means to go through the midst of swords and protect the walls he loves with his bare

³⁷ Race track. If Statius gave any thought to the matter, he must have imagined Atalanta as having at some point moved from Boeotia to Arcadia.

³⁸ 'Grassy' in *Iliad* 2.503. But who are 'they'?

³⁹ Bark.

⁴⁰ Son of the musician, who with his brother tied Dirce to a bull, thus avenging her ill-treatment of their mother Antiope. But *avito* clearly indicates Europa's bull (Jupiter), though she had nothing to do with Amphion except as putative ancestor of the Thebans.

THEBAID

vos etiam nostris, Heliconia turba, venitis
 addere rebus opem; tuque, o Permesse, canoris
 et felix Olmie vadis, armastis alumnos
 285 bellorum resides. patriis concentibus audis
 exsultare gregem, quales, cum pallida cedit
 bruma, renidentem deducunt Strymona cycni.
 ite alacres, numquam vestri morientur honores,
 bellaque perpetuo memorabunt carmine Musae.⁷
 290 Dixerat, et paulum virgo interfata loquenti:
 'illi autem, quam iunguntur origine fratres?
 sic certe paria arma viris, sic exit in auras
 cassidis aequus apex; utinam haec concordia nostris!
 cui senior ridens: 'non prima errore videndi
 295 falleris, Antigone: multi hos (nam decipit aetas)
 dixerunt fratres. pater est natusque, sed aevi
 confudere modos: puerum Lapithaona Nymphe
 Dercetis expertem thalami crudumque inaritis
 ignibus ante diem cupido violavit amore
 300 improba conubii; nec longum, et pulcher Alatreus
 editus, ac primae genitorem in flore iuventae
 consequitur traxitque notas et miscuit annos.
 et nunc sic fratres mentito nomine gaudent,
 plus pater: hunc olim iuvat et ventura senectus.
 305 tercentum genitor totidemque in proelia natus
 exercent equites: hi deseruisse feruntur
 exilem Glisanta Coroniamque feracem,
 messe Coroniam, Baccho Glisanta colentes.

284 Olmie Σ ad 282 et 287: hormie P ω

290 loquenti P: doce - ω

298 maritis $\psi\Sigma$: -ti P ω

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breast. You too, Heliconian throng, come to aid our fortunes; and you, Permessus and Olmius, happy in your tuneful waters,⁴¹ have armed your nurslings though they hang back from war. You hear the company exult in their native choirs, like swans escorting bright Strymon when pale winter yields. Go you in good cheer, never shall your praises die and the Muses shall celebrate your wars in perpetual song.'

He spoke and the maiden briefly interposed: 'Those brothers now, what origin unites them? Thus surely their arms match and equal helmet crests rise into the air. Would that mine agreed so well!' The old man smiled: 'You are not the first your eyes deceive, Antigone. Many (for their years mislead) have called them brothers. They are father and son, but they have confounded the fashions of age. The Nymph Dercetis in ardent desire for union shamelessly violated the boy Lapithaon before his time, who knew nothing of the marriage bed, unripe for conjugal flames. 'Twas no long while before fair Alatreus was born; he overtook his father in the flower of youth, took on his traits and mingled the years. And now, thus brothers, they rejoice in the false name, the father more: he takes pleasure also in old age one day to come.'⁴² The father marshals three hundred horse for battle, the son as many. They are said to have left meagre Glisas and fertile Coronia; they cultivate Coronia with the harvest, Glisas with the vine.

⁴¹ Rising on Mt Helicon, these rivers were sacred to the Muses.

⁴² A cryptic saying that has been food for debate. Perhaps the implication is simply that the son was too young for such thoughts.

- sed potius celsos umbrantem hunc aspice late
 310 Hypsea quadriugos; clipei septemplíce tauro
 laeva, ter insuto servantur pectora ferro,
 pectora: nam tergo numquam metus. hasta vetustum
 silvarum decus, emissae cui pervia semper
 armaque corporaque et numquam manus irrita voti.
 315 Asopos genuisse datur, dignusque videri
 tunc pater, abreptis cum torrentissimus exit
 pontibus, aut natae tumidus cum virginis ultor
 flumina concussit generum indignata Tonantem.
 namque ferunt raptam patriis Aeginan ab undis
 320 amplexu latuisse Iovis: furit annis et astris
 infensus bellare parat (nondum ista licebant
 nec superis); stetit audaces effusus in iras,
 conseruitque manuum, nec quem imploraret habebat,
 donec vix tonitru summotus et igne trisulco
 325 cessit. adhuc ripis animosus gurgés anhelis
 fulmineum cinerem magnaëque insignia poenae
 gaudet et Aetnaeos in caelum efflare vapores.
 talem Cadmeo mirabimur Hypsea campo,
 si modo placavit felix Aegina Tonantem.
 330 ducit Itonaeos et Alalcomenaea Minervae
 agmina, quos Midea et quos uvida suggerit Arne,
 Aulida qui Graeanque serunt viridesque Plataeas,
 et sulco Peteona domant, refluumque meatu
 Euripum, qua noster, habent teque, ultima tractu
 335 Anthedon, ubi gramineo de litore Glaucus
 poscentes irrupit aquas, iam crine genisque
 caerulus, et mixtos expavit ab inguine pisces.

³³¹ mide et ω: medon P ex medion (?) (Dubner) vivida P:
 (h)umida ω (Ϝ, Heinsius)

But rather look at Hypseus here as he broadly overshadows his tall team. His left hand is guarded by the sevenfold bullshide of his shield, his breast by triply woven steel—his breast; for he never fears for his back. His spear is an ancient glory of the woods; discharged, it ever breaches arms and bodies, and his hand never fails of his aim. Asopos is given as his father, worthy to seem so when he goes forth at his most torrential, sweeping bridges away, or when in vengeance for his virgin daughter he swelled and churned his stream in wrath against his Thunderer son-in-law.⁴³ For they say Aegina was snatched from her father's water and hid in Jupiter's embrace. The river rages and makes to go to war against the stars (not yet were such acts permitted even to the High Ones). He stood in a fit of bold fury and joined battle with none to ask for aid,⁴⁴ until finally thunder and triple fire dislodged him and he gave way. Even yet the valiant stream with panting banks rejoices to breathe out thunderbolt ash and Aetnaean vapours upon the sky, signs of his great chastisement. Such shall we wonder at Hypseus in the plain of Cadmus, if only happy Aegina has appeased the Thunderer. He leads the men of Itonie and Minerva's Alalcomenaeian columns, whom Midea supplies and grapy Arne, them that sow Aulis and Graea and green Plataeac and that tame Peteon with the furrow and hold Euripus, ebbing and flowing, where Euripus is ours, and you, Anthedon, sited last of all, where Glaucus plunged from the grassy strand into the summoning sea, already cerulean in hair and beard, and was shocked to see the fish

⁴³ Extended use of *gener*, as often.

⁴⁴ He could not appeal to Jupiter, the usual recourse of the wronged.

glandibus et torta Zephyros incidere funda
 cura: Cydoncas anteibunt gaesa sagittas.
 340 tu quoque praeclarum forma, Cephise, dedisses
 Narcissum, sed Thespiacis iam pallet in agris
 trux puer; orbata florem, pater, alluis unda.
 quis tibi Phocbeas acies veteremque revolvat
 Phocida? qui Panopen, qui Daulida, qui Cyparisson,
 345 et valles, Lebadia, tuas et Hyampolin acri
 subnixam scopulo, vel qui Parnason utrumque
 aut Cirrham tauris Anemorianque supinant
 Coryciumque nemus propellentemque Lilacan
 Cephisi glaciale caput, quo suetus anhelam
 350 ferre sitim Python amnemque avertere ponto:
 omnibus intextas cono super aspice laurus
 armaque vel Tityon vel Delon habentia, vel quas
 hic deus innumera laxavit caede pharetras.
 Iphitus asper agit, genitor cui nuper ademptus
 355 Naubolus Hippasides, tuus, o mitissime Lai,
 hospes; adhuc currus securaque lora tenebam,
 cum tua subter equos iacuit convulsa cruentis
 ictibus (o utinam nostro cum sanguine!) cervix.'

Dicenti maducre genae, vultumque per omnem
 360 pallor iit, vocisque repens singultus apertum
 interceptit iter; refovet frigentis amicum
 pectus alumna senis; redit atque exile profatur:
 'o mihi sollicitum decus ac suprema voluptas,
 Antigone! seras tibi demoror improbus umbras,
 365 fors cadem scelera et caedes visurus avitas,
 donec te thalamis habilem integramque resignem:

351 immixtas P ω (ζ , Bentley)353 innumera ψ : -as P ω 354 asper P: acer ω 356 tenebam P: -at ω

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mingling from his groin. Their care is to cut the Zephyrs with bullets and twisted sling; their javelins will outfly Cydonian arrows. You too, Cephisus, would have given fair Narcissus, but already the pitiless boy is pale in Thespieae's fields; his father washes the flower with desolate wave. Who should rehearse for you the troops of Phoebus and ancient Phocis, the men of Panope and Daulis and Cyparissos and your valleys, Lebadia, and Hyampolis, leaning against a jagged crag; or those who with bulls upturn twin Parnassus or Cirrha and Anemoria and the Corycian forest and Lilaea that sends forth the icy fount of Cephisus, whither Python was wont to carry his panting thirst and turn the river from the sea? Behold the laurels twined about every helm and the shields imaging Tityos⁴⁵ or Delos or the quivers that the god emptied here in uncounted slaughter.⁴⁶ Fierce Iphitus leads them, who lately lost his father Naubolus son of Hippasus, your host, most gentle Laius. I still held the chariot and the reins with no thought of harm when your neck lay under the horses mangled by cruel blows. Would that my blood too had flowed there!

As he spoke his cheeks grew moist and a pallor went through all his face, a sudden sobbing interrupted the passage of his voice. His nursling revives the chilled ancient's loving heart. He returns and weakly speaks: 'Antigone, my anxious pride and last pleasure, all too long do I delay for your sake my belated end (perhaps to see the same crimes and ancestral deeds of blood), waiting to give you up ready

⁴⁵ Shot by Apollo.

⁴⁶ Of Niobe's children. 'Here' = in Thebes. The alternative reading *innumeras* is equally hyperbolic.

hoc satis, et fessum vita dimittite, Pareae.
 sed dum labor iners, quanti (nunc eee reviso)
 transabiere duces: Clonin atque in terga eomantes
 370 non ego Abantiadas, non te, saxosa Caryste,
 non humiles Aegaeae atque Capherea dixi.
 et iam acies obtusa negat, eunetique resistunt,
 et tuus armatis iubet ecce silentia frater.⁷

Vix ea turre senex, cum rector ab aggere coepit:
 375 'magnanimi reges, quibus haud parere recusem
 duetor et ipse meas miles defendere Thebas,
 non ego vos stimulare parem (nam liber in arma
 impetus, et meritas ultro iurastis in iras),
 nec laudare satis dignasque rependere grates
 380 sufficiam (referent superi vestraeque subaeto
 hoste manus): urbem socia de gente subistis
 tutari, quam non aliis populator ab oris
 belliger externave satus tellure, sed hostis
 indigena assultat, cui eastrae adversa regenti
 385 hic pater, hic genetrix, hic iunctae stirpe sorores,
 hic erat et frater. eerne en ubique nefandus
 exidium moliris avis: venire volentes
 Aoniae populi, nec sum tibi, saeve, relictus.
 quid velit ista cohors et te sentire decebat:
 390 reddere regna vetant.' sic fatus et omnia rite
 disponit, qui bella gerant, qui moenia servant,
 quas in fronte manus, medio quas robore sistat.
 perspicuas sic luce fores et virgea pastor
 claustra levat, dum terra recens; iubet ordine primo
 395 ire duces, media stipantur plebe maritae;

⁴⁷ The past tense (*erat*) may imply that Polynices is no longer one of the family.

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for wedlock and unharmed. That is enough; and discharge me, Pareac, from the life I am weary of. But while I sink helpless, what mighty leaders (now I see them again, look!) have passed by! I said naught of Clonis and the long-haired sons of Abas, naught of you, rocky Carystos, nor of low-lying Aegae and lofty Caphereus. And now my dull eyes refuse and they all stay still and your brother, see, orders the army silent.'

So the old man on the tower; scarce had he ended when from the platform the ruler begins: 'Great-hearted kings, whom I your leader would not refuse to obey and as a common soldier myself defend my Thebes: I would not make to spur you on, for free is your rush to arms and of your own will you have sworn to fight for my just wrath. Nor could I praise you enough or return you worthy thanks; the High Ones will repay, and your own hands when the enemy is vanquished. You have come hither to protect a city of allied race. No warlike ravager from other shores, no child of a foreign soil, but a native foe assails her, one that rules a hostile camp when his father, his mother, his sisters joined in blood were here, here too his brother.⁴⁷ Behold, villain, wherever you are, plotting destruction to your ancestors! The peoples of Aonia have come of their own free will and I have not been left at your mercy, ruffian. What this army wills, even you should have recognized. They forbid me to return the throne.' So he spoke and duly orders all: who should fight, who keep the walls, what force he puts in the van, what in the centre strength. So the shepherd raises the doors and wattle barriers when the light shines through, while the earth is fresh; he bids the leaders go first, the flock of ewes is packed in the middle; he himself

ipse levat gravidas et humum tractura parentum
ubera, succiduasque apportat matribus agnas.

- Interea Danai noctemque diemque sub armis,
noctem iterum rursusque diem (sic ira ferebat)
400 ingeminant: contempta quies, vix aut sopor illis
aut epulae fecere moram; properatur in hostem
more fugae. nec monstra tenent, quae plurima nectit
prodigiale canens certi fors praevia fati.
quippe serunt diros monitus volucresque feraeque
405 sideraque adversique suis decursibus amnes,
infestumque tonat pater et mala fulgura lucent;
terrificaeque adytis voces clausaeque deorum
sponte fores; nunc sanguineus, nunc saxeus imber,
et subiti manes flentumque occursum avorum.
410 tunc et Apollineae tacuere oracula Cirrhæ,
et non adsuētis pernox ululavit Eleusin
mensibus, et templis Sparte praesaga reclusis
vidit Amyclaeos (facinus!) concurrere fratres.
Arcades insanas latrare Lycaonis umbras
415 nocte ferunt tacita, saevo decurrere campo
Oenomaum sua Pisa refert; Acheloon utroque
deformem cornu vagus infamabat Acarnan.
Perseos effigiem maestam exorantque Mycenae
confusum Iunonis ebur; mugire potentem
420 Inachon agricolae, gemini maris accola narrat
Thebanum toto planxisse Palaemona ponto.

³⁹⁶ iuvat *Imhof* tractura *Pf*; tac- ω ⁴⁰⁵ adv- *cod.*
Paris. saec. X: av- *Pω*, *vulg.* ⁴²⁰ incola *Pω* (*Schrader*)

⁴⁸ As remarked by Eden, *aversi* would indicate flooding, not the common prodigy of reverse flow.

BOOK 7

raises the pregnant ones and the udders of parents like to trail the ground and brings the stumbling lambs to their dams.

Meanwhile the Danaï add night to day under arms, and night again and day again; so their wrath willed it. Rest they despised, hardly did sleep or food make them pause. They hurry to meet the enemy as though in flight. Nor do prodigies detain them, though sure Fate's har-binger chance, prophesying portent-wise, links them in plenty. For birds and beasts give dire warnings, and stars, and rivers turned contrary to their downward courses.⁴⁸ The Father thunders balefully and evil lightnings flash. Terrifying voices come from sanctuaries and temple doors shut on their own. It rains now blood, now stones, ghosts appear suddenly and weeping ancestors confront. Then the oracles of Apollo's Cirrha were silent, Eleusis howled all night out of season, and prophetic Sparta saw the brothers of Amyclae⁴⁹ (oh enormity!) meet in conflict in their opened temple. Arcadians say that Lycaon's mad shade barked in the silence of the night, his Pisa reports Ocnomaus racing over the cruel flat, a wandering Acarnanian slanderously told of Achelous maimed of both his horns.⁵⁰ Mycenae propitiates Perseus' gloomy image and Juno's troubled ivory. Rustics tell of potent Inachus bellowing. A dweller by the double sea⁵¹ says that Theban Palaemon lamented all over the waters. The Pelopean

⁴⁹ Castor and Pollux.

⁵⁰ He had lost only one of them in his fight with Hercules. *Acarnan* is not Tydeus (an Aetolian) or the eponymous hero of Acarnania but an anonymous Acarnanian (SB¹).

⁵¹ I.e. in the Isthmus of Corinth.

haec audit Pelopea phalanx, sed bellieus ardor
consiliis obstat divum prohibetque timeri.

- 425 Iam ripas, Asope, tuas Boeotaque ventum
flumina. non ausae transmittere protinus alae
hostilem fluvium; forte et trepidantibus ingens
descendebat agris, animos sive imbrifer arcus,
seu montana dedit nubes, seu fluminis illa
mens fuit obiectusque vado pater arma vetabat.
430 tunc ferus Hippomedon magno eum fragmine ripae
emetantem deiecit equum, ducibusque relietis
gurgite de medio frenis suspensus et armis,
'ite viri,' clamat, 'sive vos in moenia primus
ducere, sic clausas voveo perfringere Thebas.'
435 praecipitant cuncti fluvio puduitque secutos.
ac velut ignotum si quando armenta per anem
pastor agit, stat triste peeus, procul altera tellus
omnibus et late medius timor: ast ubi ductor
taurus init fecitque vadum, tunc mollior unda,
440 tunc faciles saltus, visaeque accedere ripae.

- Haud procul inde iugum tutisque accommoda castris
arva notant, unde urbem etiam turresque videre <est>
Sidonias; placuit sedes fidi que reeptus
eolle per exeelsum patulo quem subter aperto
445 arva sinu, nullique aliis a montibus instant
despectus; nec longa labor munimina durus
addidit: ipsa loeo mirum natura favebat.
in vallum elatae rupes devexaque fossis
aequa et fortuito ductae quater aggere pinnae;

⁴⁴² videre est ζ : -re ω : -ri P ψ

phalanx hears these things, but warlike ardour opposes the counsels of the gods and forbids that they be feared.

Now they have reached your banks, Asopos, and Boeotian streams. The squadrons dared not ford the hostile river forthwith; as it happened he was coming down in spate through the affrighted fields. Did rainbow or mountain cloud give him courage or was it the stream's own purpose and did the father⁵² interpose his waters forbidding their arms? Then fierce Hippomedon forced his hesitant mount down together with a great piece of bank and leaving the leaders behind cried from mid river holding harness and arms above his head: 'Come, men. Thus do I vow to be first to lead you into the walls and break through closed Thebes.' They all plunge into the current, ashamed to have been behind. So when a herdsman is driving cattle through an unknown river, the herd stand dismayed; to all the other bank seems far away and wide the fear between; But when the leader bull goes in and makes a ford, then the water is gentler, the leaps easy, and the banks seem to draw closer.

Not far from thence they mark a ridge, ground suitable for a safe encampment, from which they can even see the city with her Sidonian towers. The station pleased them, offering secure reception: a hill with spreading top, beneath which an open slope of fields, not overlooked by other heights. Nor did hard toil add long lines of fortification; its own nature favoured the spot to a marvel. Rocks rose to form a rampart, the slopes were as good as ditches, and four merlons were raised by chance mounds. The rest

⁵² Perhaps without special reference, as in 2.217f. *pater* . . . *Inachus* et sim. Or was the fate of Asopos' son Hypseus in mind?

- 450 cetera dant ipsi, donec sol montibus omnis
 crepsit rebusque dedit sopor otia fessis.
 Quis queat attonitas dictis ostendere Thebas?
 urbem in conspectu belli suprema parantis
 territat insomnem nox atra diemque minatur.
 455 discurrunt muris; uil saeptum horrore sub illo,
 nil fidum satis, invalidaeque Amphionis arces.
 rumor ubique alius pluresque annuntiat hostes
 maioresque timor; spectant tentoria contra
 Inachia externosque suis in montibus ignes.
 460 hi precibus questuque deos, hi Martia tela
 belligerosque hortantur equos, hi pectora fletu
 cara premunt miserique rogos et crastina mandant
 funera. si tenuis demisit lumina somnus,
 465 bella gerunt. modo luera morae, modo taedia visae
 attonitis; lucemque timent lucemque precantur.
 it geminum excutiens anguem et bacchatur utrisque
 Tisiphone castris; fratrem huic, fratrem ingerit illi,
 aut utrique patrem: procul ille penatibus imis
 excitus implorat Furias oculosque reposit.
 470 Iam gelidam Phoeben et caligantia primus
 hauserat astra dies, cum iam tuuēt igne futuro
 Oceanus lateque novo Titane reclusum
 aequor anhelantum radiis subsidit equorum:
 ecce truces oculos sordentibus obsita canis
 475 exsanguis Iocasta genas et bracchia planctu
 nigra ferens ramumque oleae cum velleris atri
 nexibus, Emmenidum velut antiquissima, portis
 egreditur magna cum maiestate malorum.

¹⁵¹ derepsit *Heinsius*

¹⁵⁷ alios P: altus ω (*Heinsius*) pluresque Pω: -res ψ

BOOK 7

they themselves supply, until all sun crept from the hills and sleep gave rest to weariness.

Who could portray in words the shock of Thebes? In sight of war like to be the end of them black night terrifies the sleepless city and threatens day. They run about the walls. In that terror nothing is truly guarded and secure, Amphion's towers are feeble. Everywhere is a different rumour and fear announces more and greater enemies. They see the Inachian tents confronting them and stranger fires in their hills. Some call upon the gods with prayer and plaint, others exhort their martial weapons and warhorses, others again tearfully press beloved breasts and sorrowfully commission funeral pyres for the morrow. If a light sleep droop their eyes, they are fighting; dazed as they are, delay seems now a gain, now a weariness; they fear the light and for the light they pray. Tisiphone shakes her twin serpents and runs riot in both armies. She thrusts his brother upon one and his brother upon the other, or their father on both. He afar in the depths of the palace is roused and invokes the Furies and reclaims his eyes.⁵³

Now dawn had swallowed chill Phoebe and the glooming stars. Ocean now swells with coming fire and the wide waters opened up by the new Titan subside with the rays of his panting steeds. See, Jocasta goes forth from the gates in all the majesty of her sorrows. Her fierce eyes are covered with unkempt white hair, her cheeks bloodless, her arms dark with beating. She carries an olive branch with twines of black wool like the eldest of the

⁵³ In order to see the coming carnage.

- hinc atque hinc natae, melior iam sexus, aniles
 480 praecipitantem artus et plus quam possit euntem
 sustentant. venit ante hostes, et pectore nudo
 claustra adversa ferit tremulisque ululatibus orat
 admitti: 'reserate viam! rogat impia belli
 mater; in his aliquod ius execrabile castris
 485 huic utero est.' trepidi visam expavere manipuli
 auditamque magis; remeat iam missus Adrasto
 nuntius: excipiunt iussi mediosque per enses
 dant iter. illa duces ut primum aspexit Achivos
 clamorem horrendum luctu furiata resolvit:
 490 'Argolici proceres, ecquis monstraverit hostem
 quem peperit? quam inveniam, mihi dicite, natum
 sub galea?' venit attonitac Cadmeius heros
 obvius, et raptam lacrimis gaudentibus implet
 solaturque tencens, atque inter singula matrem,
 495 matrem iterat, nunc ipsam urguens, nunc cara sororum
 pectora, cum mixta fletus anus asperat ira:
 'quid molles lacrimas venerandaque nomina fingis,
 rex Argive, mihi? quid colla amplexibus ambis
 invisamque teris ferrato pectore matrem?
 500 tune ille exsilio vagus et miserabilis hospes?
 quem non permoveas? longae tua iussa cohortes
 exspectant, multoque latus praefulgurat ense.
 a miscrae matres! hunc te noctesque diesque
 deflebam? si verba tamen monitusque tuorum
 505 dignaris, dum castra silent suspensaque bellum
 horrescit pietas, genetrix iubeoque rogoque:
 i mecum patriosque deos arsuraque saltem

Furies. On either side her daughters, now the better sex,⁵⁴ support her as she hastens her aged limbs and moves faster than she can. Coming in face of the foe, she strikes the opposing bars with her naked bosom, then begs for admittance with tremulous wails: 'Unbar my way! The impious mother of the war asks it. In this camp this womb has a right—an abominable right.' Seeing her the soldiers trembled in terror, hearing her yet more. A messenger was sent to Adrastus, and now returns. On orders they let her in and give passage through the swords. At first sight of the Achaean leaders, maddened with grief she let loose a dreadful cry: 'Nobles of Argos, will anyone show me the enemy I bore? Under what helmet, tell me, shall I find my son?' The Cadmean hero comes to the distracted woman and takes her, filling her with tears of joy, comforting as he holds her and repeating between this and that 'Mother, mother,' now pressing her to his breast, now his dear sisters. But the aged one embitters her weeping with a dash of anger: 'Argive king, why feign you tender tears and reverend names for me? Why circle my neck with embraces and hug your hated mother with iron-clad breast? Are you the wandering exile, the pitiable guest? Whom would you not stir to compassion? Long columns await your orders, many swords flash at your side. Ah, unhappy mothers! Is this you that I wept for day and night? Yet if you have any respect for the words and counsel of your folk, I who bore you command and beg, while the armies are silent and piety in suspense shudders at war: come with me and at least look upon your country's gods and the dwellings about to

⁵⁴ Contrary to the norm.

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tecta vide, fratremque (quid aufers lumina?), fratrem
 alloquere et regnum iam me sub iudice posce:
 510 aut dabit, aut ferrum causa meliore resumes.
 anne times ne forte doli, et te conscia mater
 decipiam? non sic miseros fas omne penates
 effugit: vix Oedipode ducente timeres.
 nupsi equidem peperique nefas, sed diligo tales
 515 (a dolor!) et vestros etiamnum excuso furores.
 quod si adeo perstas, ultro tibi, saeve, triumphum
 detulimus: religa captas in terga sorores,
 inice vincla mihi: gravis huc utcumque feretur
 et pater. ad vestrum gemitus nunc verto pudorem,
 520 Inachidae, liquistis enim parvosque senesque
 et lacrimas has quisque domi: sua credite matri
 viscera! si vobis hic parvo in tempore carus
 (sitque precor), quid me, oro, decet quidve ista, Pelasgi,
 ubera? ab Hyrcanis hoc Odrysiisve tulissem
 525 regibus, et si qui nostros vicere furores.
 annuite, aut natum complexa superstite bello
 hic moriar.'

Tumidas frangebant dicta cohortes,
 nutantesque virum galeas et sparsa videres
 fletibus arma piis. quales ubi tela virosque
 530 pectoris impulsu rabidi stravere leones,
 protinus ira minor, gaudentque in corpore capto
 securam differre famem: sic flexa Pelasgum
 corda labant, ferrique avidus mansueverat ardor.

Ipse etiam ante oculos nunc matris ad oscula versus,

⁵⁰⁹ posce ω: -es P

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burn and your brother (why do you look away?), speak to your brother and claim the throne with me now as arbiter. Either he will give it or you will pick up the sword again with a better cause. Or are you afraid of some trick, and that I, your mother, may be in it to deceive you? Not so has all morality fled our unhappy house. If Oedipus were leading you, you would scarce have to fear. I married and gave birth to sin, 'tis true, but I love you both as you are (oh the pain!) and even now excuse your madness. But if you persist, we have brought you, cruel one, a triumph unasked: take your sisters prisoner and bind their hands behind them, lay chains on me. Your father too, who irks you, shall be brought here, no matter how. Now, sons of Inachus, I turn my sorrows to your sense of right. For each of you has left little ones and elders and tears like mine at home. Trust a mother with her flesh and blood. If this young man here is dear to you in so short a time, and I pray he is, what, I beg, befits me, what these breasts, Pelasgi? I should have won this boon from Hyrcanian or Odrysian kings and from those, if such there be, whose madness outdid ours. Consent, or I shall die here with my son in my arms and the war shall survive me.'

Her words soften the proud troops. You might see warriors' helmets nodding and arms scattered with pious tears. As when raging lions by impact of their breasts have strewn men and weapons on the ground, their anger all at once diminishes and they are happy to defer their hunger sure of satisfaction on a captured body: so the hearts of the Pelasgi were turned and waver, their eager passion for battle grew milder.

He himself before their eyes turns to kiss his mother,

- 535 nunc rudis Ismenes, nunc flebiliora precantis
 Antigones, variaque animum turbante procella
 exciderat regnum: cupit ire, et mitis Adrastus
 non vetat; hic iustae Tydeus memor occupat irae:
 'me potius, socii, qui fidum Eteoclea nuper
 540 expertus, nec frater eram, me opponite regi,
 cuius adhuc pacem egregiam et bona foedera gesto
 pectore in hoc. ubi tunc fidei pacisque sequestra
 mater eras, pulchris cum me nox vestra morata est
 hospitium? nempe haec trahis ad commercia natum.
 545 duc illum in campum, vestro qui sanguine pinguis
 spirat adhuc pinguisque meo. tu porro sequeris,
 heu nimium mitis nimiumque oblite tuorum?
 scilicet infestae cum te circum undique dextrae
 nudabunt enses, haec flebit et arma quiescent?
 550 tene ille, heu demens, semel intra moenia clausum
 possessumque odiis Argiva in castra remittet?
 ante haec excusso frondescet lancea ferro,
 Inachus ante retro nosterque Achelous abibit.
 sed mite alloquium et saevis pax quaeritur armis:
 555 haec quoque castra patent, necdum meruere timeri.
 an suspectus ego? abscedo et mea vulnera dono.
 intret: et hic genetrix cadem mediaeque sorores.
 finge autem pactis evictum excedere regnis,
 nempe iterum reddes?' rursus mutata trahuntur
 560 agmina consiliis: subito ceu turbine caeli

⁵⁵ *Rudis* ('pure' Lasueur). Mozley's 'plain of speech' is echoed by Melville ('blunt Ismene'). But in 253 *rudis Antigone* is 'artless Antigone.'

⁵⁶ Probably with a double meaning: 'Your friends' (such as myself) and 'your kin' (Eteocles, i.e. his treacherous character).

now innocent⁵⁵ Ismene, now Antigone as she entreated with yet more copious tears. A various tempest confused his mind and the throne was forgotten. He desires to go, and gentle Adrastus does not gainsay. Here Tydeus, mindful of just wrath, forestalls: 'Me rather, comrades, that lately sampled Eteocles' good faith (and I was not his brother!), set *me* to face the king, whose remarkable peace and honest covenant I still bear on this breast. Where were you then, mother, broker of peace and faith, when your people's night detained me with such splendid hospitality? Such is the commerce, I suppose, to which you drag your son. Lead him to the field that still steams fat with your Theban blood and fat with mine. And you, will you follow? You are too gentle, too little mindful of your folk.⁵⁶ When all around you hostile hands bare swords, will she weep, forsooth, and the weapons rest? Will he, O fool, send you back to the Argive camp once you are shut inside the walls and in the power of his hate? Sooner shall this lance shake off its iron and grow leaves, sooner shall Inachus and our Achelous flow backwards. But gentle converse and peace to fierce arms is what they seek: well, this camp too is open and has not yet deserved to be feared. Or am *I* suspect? I leave, and waive my wounds. Let him come in. Here too are mother and sisters to mediate, the same. But suppose him worsted, suppose he vacates the covenanted throne: will you give it back again?'⁵⁷ Once more the army changes, swayed by his counsel; as with a sudden revolu-

⁵⁷ I.e. 'even if Eteocles goes peacefully, the situation will only repeat itself when it is your turn to retire. Best resolve it once for all.'

obvius adversum Boreae Notus abstulit aequor.
 arma iterum furiaeque placent; fera tempus Erinys
 arripit et primae molitur semina pugnae.

- Errabant geminae Dircaea ad flumina tigres,
 565 mite iugum, belli quondam vastator Eoi
 currus, Erythraeis sed nuper victor ab oris
 Liber in Aonios meritas dimiserat agros.
 illas turba dei seniorque ex more sacerdos
 sanguinis oblitus atque Indum gramen olentes
 570 palmite maturo variisque ornare corymbis
 curat et alterno maculas interligat ostro.
 iamque ipsi colles, ipsa has (quis credat?) amabant
 armenta, atque ausae circum mugire iuvencae;
 quippe nihil grassata fames: manus obvia pascit,
 575 exceptantque cibos fusoque horrenda supinant
 ora mero, vaga rure quies; si quando benigno
 urbem iniere gradu, domus omnis et omnia sacris
 templa calent, ipsumque fides intrasse Lyaeum.
 has ubi vipereo tactas ter utramque flagello
 580 Eumenis in furias animumque redire priorem
 impulit, erumpunt non agnoscentibus agris.
 ceu duo diverso pariter si fulmina caelo
 rupta cadant longumque trahant per nubila crinem:
 non aliter cursu rapidae atque immane frementes
 585 transiliunt campos aurigamque impete vasto,
 Amphiaracë, tuum (nec defuit omen, eriles
 forte is primus equos stagna ad vicina trahebat)

⁵⁸¹ argis P ex antris, ω (Σ, Bentley)

tion in the sky South Wind meets North Wind and takes the adverse sea. Once again arms and madness are in favour. The fierce Erinys seizes her moment and sets in place the seeds of battle's beginning.

Two tigresses were straying by Dirce's waters, a gentle pair, once the ravaging chariot of eastern warfare, but lately Liber, victor from Erythraean shores, had discharged them for retirement in Aonian fields. The god's votaries and aged priest care of wont to adorn them, forgetful of bloodshed and fragrant of Indian herbage, with ripe vine shoots and varied clusters, interlacing their markings⁵⁸ with bands of purple. And now the very hills, the very herds (who would believe it?) loved them and heifers dared to low around them. For no hunger made them murderous; hands come to feed them, and they take their victuals, wine is poured and they bend back their fearsome heads. Quietly they roam over the countryside and if ever they enter a town with kindly tread, every house and all the temples warm with sacrifice, Lyaeus himself is believed to have come in. The Fury touched each of them thrice with her snaky whip and drove them to return to their mad mood of yore. They break out and the fields know them not; as though two thunderbolts bursting together from the distant sky were falling, dragging their long hair through the clouds. Not otherwise with rapid rush and hideous roar they bound across the plain and with a vast spring seize upon your charioteer, Amphiaraus. Nor lacked an omen, for he first chanced to be leading his master's horses to the nearby pool.⁵⁹ Then they attack

⁵⁸ Cf. 2.129.

⁵⁹ Foreshadowing that Amphiaraus would be first of the Seven to die.

corripunt; mox Taenarium (qui proximus) Idan
 Aetolumque Acamanta premunt: fuga torva per agros
 590 cornipedum, visa donec flammatus Aconteus
 strage virum, cui sueta feras prosternere virtus
 (Arcas erat), densis iam fida ad moenia versas
 insequitur telis, multumque hostile resumens
 ter, quater adducto per terga, per ilia telo
 595 transigit. illae autem longo cum limite fusi
 sanguinis ad portas utrimque exstantia ducunt
 spicula semianimes, gemituque imitante querelas
 saucia dilectis acclinant pectora muris.
 600 templa putes urbemque rapi facibusque nefandis
 Sidonios ardere lares, sic clamor apertis
 exoritur muris; mallent cunabula magni
 Herculis aut Semeles thalamum aut penetrale ruisse
 Harmoniae. cultor Baccheus Acontea Phegeus
 iam vacuum telis geminoque in sanguine ovanem
 605 comminus ense petit; subeunt Tegeaea iuventus
 auxilio tardi: iam supra sacra ferarum
 corpora maerenti iuvenis iacet ultio Baccho.

Rumpitur et Graium subito per castra tumultu
 concilium; fugit exsertos Iocasta per hostes
 610 iam non ausa preces; natas ipsamque repellunt
 qui modo tam mites, et praeceps tempore Tydeus
 utitur: 'ite age, nunc pacem sperate fidemque!

602 tumulum *Gronovius*

609 exertos P: externos *ω*: erectos *Watt*

⁶⁰ There is a hiatus in the narrative, whether by the poet's fault or through the loss of a passage telling us how the fighting moved

Taenarian Idas, who came next, and Aetolian Acamas. Grim was the flight of the horses through the fields, until Aconteus, whose valour was wont to lay wild beasts low (he was an Arcadian), inflamed at the sight of slaughtered men, pursues them as they turn toward their trusty walls with showers of darts and picking up spear after spear drives weapons three times and four through their backs and flanks. With a long trail of streaming blood they bring bolts standing out on either side to the gates, but half alive, and uttering groans that sounded human lean their wounded breasts against the walls they love. You might think that temples and city were being sacked and Sidonian homes aflame with wicked torches, such clamour rises from the opened walls. They had rather the cradle of great Hercules or Semele's bower or Harmonia's inner chamber had collapsed. Bacchus' worshipper Phegeus attacks Aconteus, now out of weapons and triumphing in the couple's blood, with sword face to face. The men of Tegea come to his rescue, but they are too slow. Already the young man lies on the sacred bodies of the beasts, avenging Bacchus' sorrow. ✓

The council of the Greeks is interrupted by a sudden tumult in the camp.⁶⁰ Jocasta flees through manifest enemies, no longer daring to entreat. They, lately so gentle, thrust her and her daughters away and Tydeus is quick to use his opportunity: 'Go then, hope now for peace and

from the gates of Thebes (606f.) to the Argive camp now under assault. Moreover in 612–14 Tydeus implies that Eteocles knew of Jocasta's mission and that the attack was a violation of good faith; in 613 he calls it an atrocity (*nefas*); cf. 505f. The reader has been told nothing of this, only of Jocasta's setting out (474ff.) (SB²).

num saltem differre nefas potuitve morari,
 dum genetrix dimissa redit?' sic fatus aperto
 615 ense vocat socios. saevus iam clamor et irae
 hinc atque inde calent; nullo venit ordine bellum,
 confusique duces vulgo, et neglecta regentum
 imperia; una equites mixti peditumque catervae
 et rapidi currus; premit indigesta ruentes
 620 copia, nec sese vacat ostentare nec hostem
 noscere. sic subitis Thebana Argivaque pubes
 conflixere globis; retro vexilla tubaeque
 post tergum et litui bellum invenere secuti.
 tantus ab exiguo crudescit sanguine Mavors!
 625 ventus uti primas struit intra nubila vires,
 lenis adhuc, frondesque et aperta cacumina gestat,
 mox rapuit nemus et montes patefecit opacos.

Nunc age, Pieriae, non vos longinqua, sorores,
 consulimus, vestras acies vestramque referte
 630 Aoniam; vidistis enim, dum Marte propinquo
 horrent Tyrrhenos Heliconia plectra tumultus.

Sidonium Pterclan sonipes male fidus in armis
 rumpentem frenos diversa per agmina raptat
 iam liber, sic fessa manus. venit hasta per armos
 635 Tydeos et laevum iuveni transverberat inguen
 labentemque affigit equo. fugit ille perempto

624 ab exiguo ω : in ambi- P

625 intra P: inter ω

634 armos ω : ambos P *ante corr.*

61 As specified in 585–607. 62 Cf. *OED* diversus 7. But in 612–23 the fighting is described as a confused melee.

63 The scholiast explains *rumpentem* as 'pulling back, so that he might be thought (*crederetur*) to be breaking the reins by

good faith! Could he not at least defer the villainy and wait until we let his mother go and she returned?' So saying he draws his sword and summons his comrades. Fierce now the clamour, anger grows hot on either side. The war comes in confusion. Officers are mingled with men, commanders' orders neglected. Horse and foot and swift chariots are mixed up, an indiscriminate horde presses upon them as they run, there is no time to show oneself or to recognize an enemy. Thus the men of Thebes and Argos clash in sudden groupings. Standards and trumpets are in the rear and clarions follow the fighting to find it. So great a battle rages high from so little blood!⁶¹ As when the wind builds up early strength within the clouds; gentle still, it carries leaves and open treetops, but then sweeps the forest away and lays bare the shaded hills.

Come now, Pierian sisters, we ask you not of distant doings, tell us of your own warfare, your Aonia. For you saw it, as Helicon's quills shuddered at Tyrrhenian bray, close to the battle.

Sidonian Pterelas' steed betraycd him in the fray, carrying him through the enemy host⁶² as he made to break the reins,⁶³ now out of his control, so weary the driver's hand. Tydeus' spear runs through the horse's⁶⁴ shoulders and transfixes the young man's left groin, nailing him to his mount as he falls. The animal flees, pinned to his slain mas-

excessive effort'—which does not go very well with weary hands. What follows too is not easy to decipher.

⁶⁴ *Ambos* or *armos*? Hill chooses the former, leaving much in doubt. With *armos* the spear can (with some effort) be routed as entering the horse's right shoulder, just missing the rider, and running through at a downward angle till it emerges in his left groin.

consertus domino, nec iam arma aut frena tenentem
portat adhuc: ceu nondum anima defectus utraque
cum sua Centaurus moriens in terga recumbit.

640 certat opus ferri: sternunt alterna furentes
Hippomedon Sybarin, Pylium Periphanta Menoeceus,
Parthenopaeus Ityn: Sybaris iacet ense cruento,
cuspidē trux Periphas, Itys insidiante sagitta.
Caeneos Inachii ferro Mavortius Haemon
645 colla rapit, cui dividuum trans corpus hiantes
truncum oculi quaerunt, animus caput; arma iacentis
iam rapiebat Abas: cornu deprensus Achiva
dimisit moriens clipeum hostilemque suumque.

Quis tibi Baccheos, Eunaee, relinquere cultus,
650 quis lucos, vetitus quibus emansisse sacerdos,
suasit et assuetum Bromio mutare furorem?
quem terrere queas? clipei penetrabile textum
pallentes hederæ Nysaeaeque sarta coronant,
655 crine latent umeri, crescunt lanugine malae,
et rubet imbellis Tyrio subtemine thorax,
bracchiaque in manicis et pictae vincula plantae
carbasseique sinus, et fibula rasilis auro
Taenariam fulva mordebat iaspide pallam,
660 quam super a tergo velox gorytos et arcus
pendentesque sonant aurata lynce pharetrae.
it lymphante deo media inter milia longum

646 iacentis Pψ: -ti ω

65 For the madness of war. One is tempted to translate *Bromii*, 'the madness of Bromius to which you are accustomed,' but this is probably a Statian twist.

ter, and bears him on though no longer holding shield or reins, as a Centaur not yet failing of both his lives sinks dying on his own back. The work of rival steel goes forward. They rage by turns: Sybaris is brought down by Hippomedon, Pylia Periphas by Menoeceus, Itys by Parthenopaeus; Sybaris falls by bloody sword, fierce Periphas by spear, Itys by treacherous arrow. Mavortian Haemon sweeps off the neck of Inachian Caeneus with his blade; across the body's division the gaping eyes seek the trunk, the spirit seeks the head. Abas was already seizing his arms as he lay, but caught by an Achaean shaft he dropped in death his enemy's shield and his own.

Who persuaded you, Eunaeus, to leave Bacchus' worship and the groves away from which his priest must not pass a night and to change a madness used to Bromius?⁶⁵ Whom could you frighten? Nysaeen garlands of pale ivy wreath the penetrable texture of your shield and a white ribbon binds your vine-wood javelin, your shoulders are hidden by your hair, your cheeks grow with down, your unwarlike corselet blushes with Tyrian thread, your arms are sleeved, the sandals on your feet embroidered,⁶⁶ you are swathed in linen, and a smooth golden clasp bites your Tacnarian⁶⁷ cloak with a tawny jasper while up at the back of it clatter a swift bow case⁶⁸ and a bow and hanging quiver of gold-figured lynx hide. Frenzied by the god, he moves among the thousands crying and crying:

⁶⁶ *Pictae* by hypallage (*picta sunt tibi vincula plantae*).

⁶⁷ Laconian purples were well known.

⁶⁸ Containing a bow that shot swift arrows. But *gorytos* is usually a quiver, as in 4.269 and 9.730.

THEBAID

- vociferans: 'prohibete manus, haec omine dextro
 moenia Cirrhaea monstravit Apollo iuvenca;
 665 parcite, in haec ultro scopuli venere volentes.
 gens sacrata sumus: gener huic est Iuppiter urbi
 Gradivusque socer; Bacchum haud mentimur alumnum
 et magnum Alciden.' iactanti talia frustra
 turbidus aëria Capaneus occurrit in hasta.
 670 qualis ubi primam leo mane cubilibus atris
 erexit rabiem et saevo speculatur ab antro
 aut cervum aut nondum bellantem fronte iuvenum,
 it fremitu gaudens; licet arma gregesque lacesant
 venantum, praedam videt et sua vulnera nescit:
 675 sic tum congressu Capaneus gavisus iniquo
 librabat magna venturam mole cupressum.
 ante tamen, 'quid femineis ululatibus,' inquit,
 'terrificas, moriture, viros? utinam ipse veniret
 cui furis! haec Tyriis cane matribus!' et simul hastam
 680 expulit; illa volans, ceu vis non ulla moretur
 obvia, vix sonuit clipeo et iam terga reliquit.
 arma fluunt, longisque crepat singultibus aurum,
 eruptusque sinus vicit cruor. occidis andax,
 occidis Aonii puer altera cura Lyaei.
 685 marcida te fractis planxerunt Ismara thyrsis,
 te Tínoles, te Nysa ferax Theseaque Naxos
 et Thebana metu iuratus in orgia Ganges.
 Nec segnem Argolicae sensere Eteoclea turmae,

683 vitiat *Haupt*

69 The Delphic oracle told Cadmus to follow the first cow he saw on leaving the shrine and build a city at the spot where she lay down.

‘Hands off! With fair omen Apollo showed these walls with his Cirrhaean heifer.⁶⁹ Spare them; willing rocks came of themselves to make them. We are a hallowed race. Jupiter is son-in-law to this city, Cradivus father-in-law.⁷⁰ Bacchus we call our nursling, nor lie, and great Alcides.’ As he thus idly boasts, stormy Capaneus confronts him with his sky-scraping spear. As a lion rouses his first fury at daybreak in his dark lair and spies from his grim cavern a stag or a steer with brow not yet for fighting; off he goes joyously roaring, though arms and bands of hunters challenge, sees his prey and knows not of his wounds: so then Capaneus rejoicing in the unequal encounter poises the mighty weight of his cypress for its journey. But before the cast he cries: ‘Why do you scare men, doomed wight, with your womanish howls? Would that he whom your madness serves might come himself! Sing your song to Tyrian mothers!’ With the words he flung his spear. It flew as though no opposing force might stay it, scarce sounding on the shield before it left the back. His arms drop, the gold rattles with his lengthy sobs, blood breaks out, surpassing his bosom.⁷¹ You die, bold lad, you die, second love of Aonian Lyaeus.⁷² Drooping Ismara mourned you with broken wands, and Timolus and fertile Nysa and Thescus’ Naxos and Ganges, pledged by terror to Theban mysteries.

The Argive squadrons found Eteocles no sluggard, but

⁷⁰ Through Semele and Harmonia respectively.

⁷¹ I.e. of a deeper red than the cuirass (656) over which it flows (Håkanson).

⁷² The first was a boy, Ampelos (‘Vine’); cf. Ovid, *Fasti* 3.409–14. So Housman (after Jortin). Otherwise understood of the tigers (cf. 607 *maerenti* . . . *Baccho*) or of Phegeus (603, which makes no mention of his death); but *cura* is not *dolor*.

- pareior ad eives Polynieis inhorruit ensis.
 690 eminent ante alios iam formidantibus arva
 Amphiaraus equis ac multo pulvere vertit
 campum indignantem: famulo decus addit inane
 maestus et extremos obitus illustrat Apollo.
 ille etiam clipeum galeaque ineendit honoro
 695 sidere; nec tarde fratri, Gradive, dedisti
 ne qua manus vatem, ne quid mortalia bello
 laedere tela queant: sanctum et venerabile Diti
 funus eat. talis medios aufertur in hostes
 eertus et ipse necis, vires fidueia leti
 700 suggerit; inde viro maioraque membra diesque
 latior et numquam tanta experientia caeli,
 si vacet: avertit morti contermina Virtus.
 ardet inexpleto saevi Mavortis amore
 et fruitur dextra atque anima flagrante superbit.
 705 hicne hominum casus lenire et demere Fatis
 iura frequens? quantum subito diversus ab illo
 qui tripodas laurusque sequi, qui doctus in omni
 nube salutato voluerem eognoscere Phoebos!
 innumeram ferro plebem, ceu letifer annus
 710 aut iubar adversi grave sideris, immolat umbris
 ipse suis: iaeulo Phlegyan iaculoque superbum
 Phylea, falcato Clonin et Chremetaona curru
 comminus hunc stantem metit, hunc a poplite sectum,
 cuspede non missa Chromin Iphinoumque Sagenque
 715 intonsunque Gyan sacrumque Lycorea Phoebos
 (invitus: iam fraxinem demiserat hastae
 robur et excussis apparuit infula eristis),

⁷³ Editors read *lactior* ignoring *latior* in P. But the heavens expanded because the prophet's eye took in more of them (or would

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Polynices' blade was more sparing and shuddered to be used against his countrymen. Prominent above the rest is Amphiaraus, though his horses already fear the ground, and turns up the indignant plain in copious dust. Grieving Apollo gives hollow glory to his servant, shedding a splendour on his final passing, firing his shield too and helmet with starry lustre. Nor were you slow, Gradivus, to grant your brother that no hand, no mortal weapon, have power to harm the prophet in the fray; let his death go hallowed, for Dis to reverence. Such is he borne into the midst of the enemy, certain himself of doom; assurance of death gives him strength. Hence his limbs are larger, the daylight wider,⁷³ never before so ample his survey of heaven—if he but had the time. Valour, close neighbour to death, distracts him. He burns with insatiate love of savage war, revels in his right hand, pride in his fiery soul. Is this he that so often softened human affliction and took their prerogative from the Fates? How different of a sudden from the follower of tripod and laurel, skilled to salute Phoebus and recognize the bird in every cloud! Like a season of plague or the grievous ray of a hostile star, with his steel he immolates a numberless multitude to his own shade. With javelin he slays Phlegyas, with javelin proud Phyleus, with scythed chariot mows down Clonis and Chremetaon (one standing to face him, the other severed from the knee), Chromis with a spear thrust and Iphinous and Sages and unshorn Gyas and Lycoreus sacred to Phoebus (him unwilling; he had already plunged the strength of his ashen spear when the crest was shaken off and the fillet came to

have done if he had had time to observe); see SB². *Tanta* rather than *tanti* is in Statius' manner.

- Alcathoum saxo, cui circum stagna Carysti
 et domus et coniunx et amantes litora nati.
 720 vixerat ille diu pauper scrutator aquarum,
 decepit tellus; moriens hiemesque Notosque
 laudat et experti meliora pericula ponti.
- Aspicit has longe iamdudum Asopius Hypseus
 palantum strages ardetque avertere pugnam,
 725 quamquam haud ipse minus curru Tirynthia fundens
 robor; sed viso praesens minor augure sanguis:
 illum armis animisque cupit. prohibebat iniquo
 agmine consertum cunei latus; inde superbus
 exseruit patriis electum missile ripis,
 730 ac prius: 'Aonidum dives largitor aquarum,
 clare Giganteis etiamnum, Asope, favillis,
 da numen dextrae: rogat hoc natusque tuique
 quercus alumna vadi; fas et me spernere Phoebum,
 si tibi collatus divum sator. omnia mergam
 735 fontibus arma tuis tristesque sine augure vittas.'
 audierat genitor: vetat indulgere volentem
 Phoebus, et aurigam iactus detorquet in Hersen.
 ille ruit: deus ipse vagis succedit habenis,
 Lernaem falso simulans Haliaemona vultu.
 740 tunc vero ardenti non ulla obsistere temptant
 signa, ruunt solo terrore, et vulnera citra
 mors trepidis ignava venit, dubiumque tuenti
 presserit infestos onus impuleritne iugales.
 sic ubi nubiferum montis latus aut nova ventis

⁷⁴ Destroyed by Jupiter's thunderbolts; cf. 324-27.

⁷⁵ The spear.

⁷⁶ The god's massive body in the chariot (750f.) and the speed

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view), Alcathous with a stone, who had home and wife and shore-loving children by the pools of Carystos. Long had he lived a poor searcher of the waters; land tricked him, and in death he praises storms and winds and the kinder perils of the sea he knew.

This while past Asopian Hypseus views from afar the carnage of his scattered comrades and is eager to deflect the battle, although himself in no less measure routing Tiryinthian forces with his chariot. But when he saw the augur, he thought little of bloodshed to hand; him he desires with weapon and will. A serried wedge of enemy warriors barred his way. Then proudly he took out a missile culled from his father's banks, and first: 'Rich donor of Aonian streams, Asopos, famous yet for ashes as of Giants,⁷⁴ give deity to my right hand. Your son asks this and the oak⁷⁵ nursling of your stream. I too may despise Phoebus if the Father of the gods was matched with you. I shall sink all the arms in your waters and the fillets sad without their augur.' His father heard and would fain have given him his wish, but Phoebus forbids and turns the cast upon the charioteer Horses, who plunges; the god himself takes over the straying reins, simulating Lernaean Haliaemon with false countenance. Then indeed no standards try to cheek his ardent course, they fall from mere fright and a coward's death without a wound comes to the tremblers. An onlooker might wonder whether the horses onrushing were burdened by their load or urged on.⁷⁶ So when a cloudy mountainside is loosened by the winds of a new

of the horses would seem contradictory—was Apollo a load or a driving force? For *infestis* cf. Livy 25.18.13 *infestis equis concurrerunt*.

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- 745 solvit hiems aut victa situ non pertulit aetas,
 desilit horrendus campo timor, arva virosque
 limite non uno longaevaeque robora secum
 praecipitans, tandemque exhaustus turbine fesso
 aut vallem cavat aut medios intercipit amnes.
- 750 non secus ingentique viro magnoque gravatus
 temo deo nunc hoc, nunc illo in sanguine fervet.
 ipse sedens telis pariterque ministrat habenis
 Delius, ipse docet iactus adversaque flectit
 spicula fortunamque hastis venientibus aufert.
- 755 sternuntur terra Melaneus pedes, Antiphus alto
 nil defensus equo, genitusque Heliconide Nympha
 Aëtion, caesoque infamis fratre Polites,
 conatusque toris vittatam attingere Manto
 Lampus: in hunc sacras Phoebus dedit ipse sagittas.
- 760 et iam cornipedes trepidi ad moribunda reflantes
 corpora rimantur terras, omnisque per artus
 sulcus et incisus altum rubet orbita membris.
 hos iam ignorantes terit impius axis, at illi
 vulnere semineces (nec devitare facultas)
- 765 venturum super ora vident; iam lubrica tabo
 frena, nec insisti madidus dat temo, rotaeque
 sanguine difficiles, et tardior ungula fossis
 visceribus: tunc ipse furens in morte relicta
 spicula et e mediis exstantes ossibus hastas
- 770 avellit, strident animae currumque sequuntur.
 Tandem se famulo summum confessus Apollo
 'utere luce tua longamque,' ait, 'indue famam,
 dum tibi me iunctum Mors irrevocata veretur.
 vincimur: immites scis nulla revolvere Parcas

⁷⁶⁰ trepidi ac P: -da ac ω (Hill)

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winter or its age fordone by decay can no longer give support, it leaps down upon the plain, a horrific terror, sweeping with it fields and men and ancient timber in more swathes than one; and at last exhausted in its weary rush either hollows out a valley or blocks rivers in mid flow: not otherwise does the car, weighed down by huge warrior and great god, grow hot in blood now here now there. The Delian himself sits ministering at once with weapons and reins, himself instructs the casts and turns enemy darts aside, robbing the spears of fortune as they come. Melaneus on foot is stretched on the ground, as is Antiphus, whom his tall horse does not defend, and Aëtion, born of the Nymph Heliconis, and Polites, ill-famed for a brother's killing, and Lampus, who tried to lie with fillet-bearing Manto; against him Phoebus himself gave sacred arrows.⁷⁷ And now the horses snort in alarm at dying bodies and sniff the ground; every furrow runs through limbs, every wheel track reddens deep with severed members. Some already unconscious the impious axle grinds, others half-dead from their wounds see it coming over their faces and have no power to evade. Now the harness is slippery with gore and the pole too wet for treading, the wheels are clogged with blood and the hooves slowed by trampled entrails. Then he himself madly plucks out darts left in the dead and spears sticking out of bones; the ghosts screech and pursue the chariot.

At length Apollo for the last time acknowledges himself to his servant: 'Use the light you have and take on length of renown while irrevocable death fears me in your company. We are overborne. You know that the merciless Parcae

⁷⁷ Special arrows, not part of the chariot stock? Cf. 752f.

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- 775 stamina; vade diu populis promissa voluptas
 Elysiis, certe non perpressure Creontis
 imperia aut vetito nudus iaciture sepulcro.
 ille refert contra, et paulum respirat ab armis:
 'olim te, Cirrhaee pater, peritura sedentem
- 780 ad iuga (quis tantus miseris honor?) axe trementi
 sensimus; instantes quonam usque morabere manes?
 audio iam rapidae cursum Stygis atraque Ditis
 flumina tergeminosque mali custodis hiatus.
 accipe commissum capiti decus, accipe laurus,
- 785 quas Erebo deferre nefas. nunc voce suprema,
 si qua recessuro debetur gratia vati,
 deceptum tibi, Phoebe, larem poenasque nefandae
 coniugis et pulchrum nati commendo furorem.'
 desiluit maerens lacrimasque avertit Apollo:
- 790 tunc vero ingemuit currusque orbique iugales.
 non aliter caeco nocturni turbine Cauri
 scit peritura ratis, cum iam damnata sororis
 igne Therapnaei fugerunt carbasa fratres.
- Iamque recessurae paulatim horrescere terrae
- 795 summaque terga quati graviorque effervere pulvis
 coeperat; inferno mugit iam murmure campus.
 bella putant trepidi bellique hunc esse fragorem
 hortanturque gradus; alius tremor arma virosque
 mirantesque inclinat equos. iam frondea nutant
- 800 culmina, iam muri, ripisque Ismenos apertis
 effugit; exciderunt irae, nutantia figunt
 tela solo, dubiasque vagi nituntur in hastas

⁷⁸ Apollo knows the future.

⁷⁹ Alcmaeon. Amphiaraus too sees the future.

never wind back their threads. Go, delight long promised to the people of Elysium. At least you will not suffer Creon's command and lie naked and forbidden burial.⁷⁸ He answers, taking breath awhile from fighting: 'Long have I felt you by the swaying axle, Cirrhaean father, as you sit at the doomed yoke (wherefore such honour to the unfortunate?). How long shall you delay the death at hand? Already I hear the flow of swift Styx, the black rivers of Dis, the triple gape of the evil guardian. Take the laurels committed to adorn my head, which 'twere sacrilege to bring to Erebus, take them. Now with my final utterance, if any grace be due to your departing prophet, Phoebus, I commend to you my cheated hearth and the punishment of my wicked wife and the noble madness of my son.'⁷⁹ Apollo leapt down grieving and turned away his tears. Then did the chariot and the orphaned team make moan. Not otherwise does a ship at night in a northwester's blind turmoil know that she will perish when the brethren of Therapnae have fled sails doomed by their sister's fire.⁸⁰

And now the earth began gradually to shiver prior to giving way. The surface quakes and denser dust boils up. Now the plain rumbles with subterranean din. Alarmed the warriors think it is battle, that this is the noise of battle, and urge their steps; a different tremor bends arms and men and marvelling horses. Now the leafy summits nod, now the walls, and Ismenos flees through opening banks. Wrath is forgotten, they fix their nodding weapons in the ground or wandering lean on their unsteady spears as they

⁸⁰ Helen's star was considered baneful to shipping, those of her brothers benign; cf. *Silvae* 3.2.8–12 and Pliny, *Natural History* 2.101.

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comminus inque vicem viso pallore recedunt.
sic ubi navales miscet super aequora pugnas
805 contempto Bellona mari, si forte benigna
tempestas, sibi quisque cavent, ensesque recondit
mors alia, et socii pacem fecere timores.
talis erat campo belli fluitantis imago.
sive laborantes concepto flamine terrae
810 ventorum rabiem et clausum eiecere furorem,
exedit seu putre solum carpsitque terendo
unda latens, sive hac volventis machina caeli
incubuit, sive omne fretum Neptunia movit
cuspis et extremas gravius mare torsit in oras,
815 seu vati datus ille fragor, seu terra minata est
fratribus: ecce alte praeceps humus ore profundo
dissilit, inque vicem timuerunt sidera et umbrae.
illum ingens haurit specus et transire parantes
mergit equos; non arma manu, non frena remisit:
820 sicut erat, rectos defert in Tartara currus,
respexitque cadens caelum, campumque coire
ingemuit, donec levior distantia rursus
miscuit arva tremor lucemque exclusit Averno.

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come face to face and both draw back seeing each other's pallor. So when Bellona mingles naval battles on the waters, contemning the sea, if a kindly⁸¹ storm arises, each looks to himself and a different death sheathes their swords and shared fears make peace. Such was the picture of wavering war upon the plain. Did the earth in labour with wind in her womb expel a raging blast, a prisoned fury? Or did hidden water erode the crumbling soil and sap it by abrasion? Or did the fabric of the rolling sky bear down this way? Or did Neptune's spear move all the sea and hurl a heavier ocean upon the fringing coasts? Or was that commotion for the prophet's sake? Or did earth threaten the brothers? See, the ground becomes a precipice, springing asunder in a deep chasm, stars and shades fear in turn. Him a huge cavern swallows, sinking the horses as they are about to cross. He did not let the arms go from his hand or the reins. As he was, he brought the chariot upright down to Tartarus and falling looked back at the sky and groaned to see the plain meet, until a fainter tremor mingled again the sundered fields and shut off the daylight from Avernus.

⁸¹ Because it interrupts the fighting.

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