Beginning of Doom

Statius *Thebaid* 5.499-753: Introduction, Text, Commentary

**Proefschrift**

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Cover illustration: Opheltes’ death on an Attic sarcophagus, ca. 160 AD (see Appendix B h)
Silver Latin literature currently experiences a golden age. Flavian epic in particular is more popular than ever before. Translations, monographs, articles spring up like mushrooms; conferences, symposia, workshops are organised all over the globe. The modern interest in Statius – and his contemporaries Valerius Flaccus and Silius Italicus – can be explained, at least partially, from developments in literary studies in general, such as the vigorous interest in intertextuality in the wake of French structuralism, the postmodern interest in metapoetic self-consciousness, and the rethinking of the classical canon – although Statius, of course, has been a canonical author for many centuries. The greatest incentive, however, must be the sheer quality of his poetry.

Things have been different. In 1955 Pieter Jan Enk could write: ‘Over de dichters van het zogenaamde zilveren tijdperk is het oordeel in vele opzichten nog steeds onbillijk. Ten eerste hierdoor, dat zeer weinig Latinisten ze nauwkeurig lezen, en ten tweede, dat velen zich van vooroordeelen moeilijk kunnen losmaken. [...] Wat Statius betreft praten velen liever na, die de Thebais “ein totes Produkt” noemt, dan dat zij naar onze grote landgenoot Hugo de Groot, naar Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, naar Leo of Mackail luisteren. In 1930 brak ik in mijn inaugurele rede een lans voor Statius, thans kan ik de verdediging van deze dichter aan mijn leerlingen Dr. Mulder en Dr. ten Kate overlaten.’

Although he published little on Statius himself, Statian scholarship is indebted to Enk and the University of Groningen. As Enk himself subtly reminds us, he made no small contribution to Statian scholarship via his pupils: Herman Heuvel and Heine Mulder wrote commentaries on *Thebaid* books 1 and 2 respectively, while Rijkel ten Kate’s dissertation, under the delightful title *Quomodo heroes in Statii Thebaide demonstrantur quaeritur*, discusses the protagonists of Statius’ poem and their literary backgrounds. In a fine twist of fate, Rijkel ten Kate also taught my supervisor, Ruurd Nauta, at the Willem Lodewijk Gymnasium in Groningen. My dissertation thus carries the burden of a distinguished Groningen tradition.

Not being a son of Boreas myself, it was Hans Smolenaars at the University of Amsterdam who first aroused my interest in Statius. After spending some time working on Statius as his assistant in 2005, I soon found myself writing an MA thesis under his guidance, on Furies in Flavian epic. Our Epicurean conversations about Statius, *inter alios*, have contributed much to my apprehension and appreciation of this fascinating poet.

The present dissertation originates from my MSt thesis, supervised by Bob Cowan and submitted in Oxford in 2008, which offered a commentary on *Thebaid* 5.499-541. Following my interest in fictional snakes, I had come to share Garrod’s opinion that the story of Opheltes is ‘one of the prettiest of the *Thebaid* legends’. A glance at the *indices locorum* of the then new monographs by Charles McNelis and Randall Ganiban, however, suggested that Statius’ story of Opheltes, which reaches its climax in the second half of book 5, had been comparatively neglected and perhaps undervalued. Most critical energy, it seemed, had been invested

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1 Enk 1955: 11-2. For the aesthetic judgements of Schanz, Hugo Grotius et alii see Ten Kate 1955: 4-8.
2 Commentaries on Statius’ *Thebaid*, including those in preparation, are listed in the bibliography.
3 On Ten Kate’s commitment to school education see his obituary in *Trouw*, 6 February 2008.
4 Garrod 1906: 276.
in the first half of book 5, Hypsipyle’s embedded narrative about the Lemnian massacre – perfectly understandable in light of the modern interest in gender, narratology and metapoetics. But the episode that follows is no less fascinating: the striking correspondences with Adrastus’ narrative in book 1, Statius’ engagement with Euripides’ Hypsipyle, the symbolic significance of Opheltes’ death for the coming Theban War – to mention only some of the most conspicuous issues. After Hendrik Fortgens’ *commentarius exegeticus* on Opheltes’ funeral (*Thebaid* 6.1-295), Riccardo Mauri’s *saggio di commento* on Hypsipyle’s Lemnian narrative (*Thebaid* 5.1-498), and Ruth Parkes’ excellent commentary on book 4, a commentary on *Thebaid* 5.499-753, I thought, might be a welcome addition to Statian scholarship.

I am most grateful to the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (ICOG) for enabling me to write that commentary. I do not wish to elaborate on its principles, but given the recent interest in – and problematisation of – the commentary as a scholarly genre, let me briefly state its aims. In the first place, my notes intend to help readers understand the text, shedding light on textual difficulties, mythological obscurities, metrical oddities, etc. As readers familiar with the poet’s contorted style – notes on that too – will know, sometimes Statius’ palimpsestic poetry can only be fully appreciated through the lens of other texts: my commentary also aims to lay bare and interpret such intertextual relations. Finally, I have tried to connect the words on the surface with the deeper concerns of the poem as a whole.

Since the passage should not be read in isolation, the commentary is preceded by an introduction, which addresses not only the second half of book 5, but the whole Opheltes episode, which could roughly be defined as the Nemean episode (*Thebaid* 4.646-7.104) minus Hypsipyle’s embedded narrative and the games. The first chapter traces the development of the story of Opheltes throughout classical literature, from the first attestation of his name in Linear B to Roman times. The second is devoted to Statius’ engagement with Euripides’ *Hypsipyle*, which underlies Statius’ entire Nemean episode. Chapter three discusses the intertextual connections between Statius’ story of Opheltes and the story of Linus and Coroebus in book 1, which leads us to Callimachus, who figures prominently in recent Statian scholarship – and in chapter 4. The fifth chapter modifies the dominant Callimachean interpretation of Statius’ Nemean episode, which harbours some unquestionably epic elements as well. Nemea, I argue, is Statius’ paradise lost, and the violent disruption of its pastoral world has both poetic and political significance. Chapter six argues that the Opheltes episode can be read as *mise en abyme*, mirroring the epic’s central themes of premature death, maternal bereavement, and the frenzy of (more than) civil war. The brief seventh chapter is about the topography of Nemea, for I believe that Statius has mapped fictional events on a factual landscape.

Writing a commentary, in my experience, entails that the text under consideration becomes πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον, the measure of all things. In my world the *Thebaid*, lines 5.499-753 in particular, is the pivotal poem of classical literature, and Statius the central poet around whom all others revolve like planets around the sun, describing circles and ellipses at various distances. And speaking of circles: I have been accused of ‘panophobia’. I can only hope that I am not as as lunatic as Charles Kinbote in Nabokov’s *Pale Fire*. Surely my disser-

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5 See Most 1999; Gibson and Kraus 2002. I should like to thank Gail Trimble and Matthew Hosty for inviting me to their Commentary Workshop on Greek and Latin epic (Oxford, 23 March 2014), and all other participants, esp. Stephen Heyworth, for their helpful suggestions.

tation does not offer the final word on Statius’ Opheltes episode. Yet it is my hope that the ideas and comparanda which I have committed to paper, sometimes with hesitation, will foster further research and make a small contribution to our understanding of this marvellous poem.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge debts. In the first place, I thank my supervisor Ruurd Nauta for his acuity, his precious time and energy, and – to quote an anonymous colleague – his ‘intimidating’ learning and erudition; the man himself, I should perhaps emphasise, is anything but intimidating, and I am grateful for his confidence, friendliness and incentive to finish, even though commentaries are never finished. I thank my second supervisor Helen Lovatt for reading the whole thing and correcting my English. She has also contributed to my research by (co)founding the Flavian Epic Network, which has enabled me to present work in progress to expert audiences in Nottingham, Edinburgh, London and Delphi. I have also presented bits and pieces of my dissertation in Amsterdam, Athens, Groningen, Münster, Oxford, and on every occasion profited from suggestions, corrections, discussions. OIKOS often provided platforms and brought people together. I cannot name all colleagues, friends, and family who in their different ways – direct and indirect, material and immaterial, professional and personal – have helped me to bring this project to completion, but I must mention, again, Hans Smolenaars, who never ceased to support and scrutinise my work. Marco van der Schuur, Michiel van der Keur, Mark Heerink and Pieter van den Broek provided fine Flavian fellowship domi forisque. I thank the Classics Department in the University of Leiden for welcoming me in their midst. The Nerdenklup (sic) in Amsterdam reminded me that, whatever else, Greek and Latin poetry is fun. Without the unfailing support of Alex, Sanne and my parents, especially during the last strenuous months of revising and finalising the manuscript, the combined burdens of familial and professional life would have weighed me down. Finally, I thank Anne, who always fovet anxia curas / coniugis hortaturque simul flectitque labores, and parvulus Koen, who provided excellent notes on lines 5.502-4 and 613-4, and whose vox prima, to my relief, was not Statius, qui patrem ne luderet cum eo prohibebat for too long.

Vive, precor.

Groningen and Amsterdam
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TEXT

P. Papinii Statii Thebaidos liber V, 499-753

COMMENTARY

499-504: Opheltes falls asleep
505-533: description of the serpent
534-543: the death of Opheltes
544-554: Hypsipyle finds the serpent
554-578: the killing of the serpent
579-582: lament for the serpent
583-587: Jupiter and Capaneus
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INTRODUCTION
1. The story of Opheltes

sic et in anguiferae ludentem gramine Lernae
rescisum squamis auidus bibit ignis Ophelten

— Statius Siluae 2.1.181-2

1.1. An aetiological myth

The story of Opheltes is an aetiological myth that explains the origins of the Nemean Games, founded in 573 BC1 as the last of the four Panhellenic Games.2 At least since Bacchylides (see §1.3.2), the story of Opheltes is connected with that of the Seven against Thebes. On their way to Thebes, so the standard version of the story goes,3 the Seven arrive in Nemea, where they meet Hypsipyle nursing a baby boy. The Seven are looking for water, and Hypsipyle places her nursling — in most versions his name is Opheltes — on the ground in order to guide them to a spring as fast as possible. In their absence, the child is killed by a serpent. The Argive seer Amphiaraurus, one of the Seven, interprets the child’s death as an ill omen for the expedition against Thebes, (re)names him Archemorus (‘beginning of doom’), and orders funeral games to be held in his honour: the Nemean Games.

This story not only explains the establishment of the Nemean Games, it also explains why the judges wore black mourning garments and, perhaps, why the victorious athletes were crowned with wild celery; according to one of the mythographers, Hyginus, the child dies in a bed of wild celery.4 The importance of Zeus in Nemea is reflected in the role of Opheltes’ father: in most versions, including Euripides and Statius, he is a priest of Zeus.

In handbooks and encyclopaediae, one often reads that the Nemean Games were founded by Hercules, after he had managed to kill the Nemean lion. The connection between Hercules and the Nemean Games, however, is of much later date. Possibly it was Callimachus who first made Hercules the founder of the Nemean Games in his Victoria Berenices (see §1.3.6). However that may be, the alternative Herculean αἴτιον came into being much later than the story of Opheltes.5 To be sure, the myth of Hercules and the Nemean lion is quite ancient itself — it is already mentioned by Hesiod (Th. 327-33) — but Hercules’ first labour does not normally lead to the foundation of the Nemean Games. Excavations confirm that

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1 The year 573 BC is based on Hieronymus’ Chronicle; see Miller 2004: 30-1 with n. 25.
2 After the Olympian (776 BC), the Pythian (586 BC), and the Isthmian Games (582 BC). In Theb. 6.1-18 Statius connects the Nemean Games with these other Panhellenic Games. The aetiological stories of the Pythia (Apollo killing Python; cf. 5.531-3n.) and the Isthmia (Ino-Leucothea and Melicertes-Palaemon; see §6.2) also figure in the Thebaid. Perhaps Roman interest in these αἴτια was stimulated by the establishment of Augustus’ Augustalia vel Sebasta, Nero’s Neronia, and Domitian’s Capitoline and Alban Games, in which Statius himself competed (see Nauta 2002: 328-35, Newlands 2012: 22-3 with references).
3 The ‘standard version’ of the story, in my definition, is the essential plot that all the mythographical sources (see §1.4 and App. A) have in common. To what extent the mythographers reflect the Cyclic Thebaid is discussed in §1.5.
4 The detail is problematic; see §1.4.2.
5 Cf. Pache 2004: 105 with n. 34; Miller 2004: 34 with n. 33.
Hercules was not an important cult figure in Nemea. The point needs stressing, for the misconception seems to be persistent.

Two marginal testimonia connect the establishment of the Nemean Games with the death of Pronax, father of Lycurgus and brother of Adrastus. Simon interprets these testimonia as indications that the history of the Nemean Games goes back further than 573 BC.

1.2. Probing prehistory

Before his name was attached to the Nemean Games, in the elusive centuries before 573 BC, Opheltes-Archemorus might have been a chthonic deity, ‘a figure of old religion’ associated with death and fertility, with ‘grave and granary’. That, at least, is what Farnell proposed in 1916. Several elements of the myth seem to point in that direction. The name Opheltes derives from ὄφελες, which makes him ‘the giver of increase’, suggesting fertility. The alternative derivation from ὅφεις (‘snake’) is linguistically problematic, as Fortgens rightly observes, although I am inclined to believe that as a folk etymology it may well have played a role in the genesis of the serpentine myth. The child’s alternative name, Archemorus, derives from ἄρχεις and μόρος (‘doom’), which leads Farnell to claim that the name ‘has at least an allusion to death and the lower world’. Opheltes’ chthonic aspect would also explain his association with the serpent, earth-animal par excellence, and with wild celery, ‘a symbol of death according to the ancient interpretation’. The plant could also be related to fertility, I would add, as it grows only in running water. Farnell draws the conclusion that Opheltes, like the child-hero Palaemon whose name is connected with the Isthmian Games, ‘is the child-son of the earth-mother who dies in the heat of the year’. Similarly, in his Handbook of Greek Religion.

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6 Miller 2004: 34 ‘the only archaeological evidence of the myth [of Hercules and the Nemean lion], discovered at Nemea, consists of small bronze lion’s head attachments and a gold foil relief representation of Herakles’ face with the lion’s skin tied under his chin’.
7 Examples include Nagy 1986: 74 n. 15 where the story of Opheltes is called ‘a supplement to the myth of Herakles and the Nemean Lion’; Brown 1994: 32; Vessey 1973: 191 n. 1 ‘Hercules had also instituted games at Nemea’; Pavan on 6.368 ‘Erocle uccisore del leone nemeo e tradizionalmente considerato fondatore dei giochi nemei’; McNelis 2004: 271 ‘Traditionally, there were two foundings of the games: the first by Hercules [...] and the second by Adrastus in honour of the child Opheltes’. The misconception dates back to (late) antiquity, cf. e.g. Σ Pind. Nem. hypoth. a (= App. A d) τοῦ ἄγνων τῶν Νημείων τοῖς μὲν ὑς Ἡρακλείδος τεκνοδαί φασίν ἐπὶ τῷ τῶν δέκτης ανασέει (for more scholia that claim Hercules as founder see Brown 1994: 37 n. 37).
8 Ael. Var. 4.5 καὶ οἱ ἐπὶ Θῆβαις Πρωνακτι καὶ ἐκεῖνοι χάρτας ἀπόδοσαν διὰ τὰρ ἀυτοῦ ἀπολογμένον τοῦ Πρω-


9 Simon 1979: 31 argues that in 573 BC there may have been some ‘Erneuerung’ that gave the Nemean Games ‘panhellenische Bedeutung’; cf. Puhlhorn in LIMC s.v. Archemoros 473.
11 Dann 2006: 7-8 offers different explanations for “bringer of increase”: ‘With the coming of a child, there is the joy at the birth for the “increase” it brings to the oikos and also hope for family continuance’; and ‘[w]hen Polyneices and his companions met up with Opheltes and his nurse, there was a glimmer of hope that relief might come to their parched throats. Here Opheltes symbolizes hope and prosperity, hence his name “bringer of increase”’. Unfortunately, Dann’s analysis is replete with painful mistakes: from Hyginus ludosque puero funebres instituerunt, qui quinto quoque anno fiunt, for instance, she deduces that Opheltes died at the age of five!
12 Fortgens 1934: 9-10.
13 Farnell loc. cit. The speaking name Archemorus is discussed in §6.3 below.
14 Farnell loc. cit. For the association of wild celery with death see Pache 2004: 95 n. 2, Coleman on Ecl. 6.68 with references.
16 Farnell loc. cit.
Mythology Rose writes that ‘[t]he great stress laid upon the funeral rites of this baby, the association with the serpent, and the fact that it is his nurse, not his mother, who is prominent in the story, all suggest that he is originally a child-god of the Cretan type, no human infant at all’.\(^{17}\) Along these lines, then, they reach the conclusion that the Nemean Games originate from an ancient fertility cult, in which the annual birth and death of Opheltes represent, in ritualised form, the seasons of nature.

What Farnell and Rose did not – and could not – know, is that the name Opheltes was quite common in Mycenaean times. It is attested four times in Linear B, in two different forms: o-pe-ta (i.e. Ὀφέλτας) and o-pe-re-ta (i.e. Ὀφέλεστας);\(^{18}\) in the latter form the name also occurs twice in the \textit{Iliad} (8.274 and 21.210 Ὀφέλεστας). The tablets from Knossos, Pylos and Thebes suggest that Opheltes was a common name for mortals in the Mycenaean period.\(^{19}\) If Opheltes was once a common name, that might also explain why we find several other figures with the name Opheltes scattered throughout classical literature;\(^{20}\) apparently the name was not felt to be exclusive.

The Mycenaean tablets, then, seem to undermine the ideas of Farnell and Rose. Perhaps the Nemean Games originate from the funeral games for a mortal princeling after all?\(^{21}\) In the absence of more information, however, I am reluctant to completely dismiss their ideas; certainly I would not go as far as Wagenvoort, who claims that ‘[i]t is an established fact that these [Nemean] games developed from funeral games’.\(^{22}\) In the end, all we know is that the Nemean Games originate from some ritual of mourning; the exact nature of that ritual must remain the subject of speculation.\(^{23}\)

\(^{17}\) Rose 1928: 191, not reckoning with the possibility that the wet-nurse might be a relatively late addition to the myth (see §§1.3, 1.5).

\(^{18}\) See Chantraine 1999 s.v. ὀφέλλος.

\(^{19}\) KN B 799.6 o-pe-ta VIR (a man belonging to a ke-do-si-ja, perhaps some occupational group); PY An 209.3 o-pe-re-ta VIR 1 (a man belonging to a group of Corinthian ta-te-re – whatever that may be); PY Cn 655.14 ma-ro-pi o-pe-re-ta we-da-ne-wo OVIS’ 86 (this man has something to do with sheep – probably a shepherd); TH Wu 56.51 {9}-pe-re-ta (on a nodule that also features a goat-ideograph). I am most grateful to Dr. Frits Waanders (Universiteit van Amsterdam) for this information.

\(^{20}\) (a) Lycophron \textit{Alexandra} 373 Ὀφέλτα καὶ μῦρας κυράδιων Ἰάμβας. According to John Tzetzes \textit{ad loc.} the poet refers to two mountains in Euboea, named after Opheltes and Zarax respectively. The reference is sometimes included in discussions of Opheltes-Archemorus (e.g. Roscher and \textit{LIMC} s.v. Archemoros). Since ‘our’ Opheltes has nothing to do with Euboea, however, I believe that Lycophron (known to Statius, S. 5.3.157) refers to a completely different character – perhaps the son of Amphion and Niobe mentioned by Lact. Plac. on Stat. \textit{Theb.} 3.198? (b) In Vergil’s \textit{Aeneid}, the father of Euryalus is named Opheltes (9.201 non ita me genitor, bellis adsuetus Opheltes). Hardie \textit{ad loc.} nicely suggests that the association of names was inspired by Homer (II. 6.20 Δέησον 3’ Εὐράλεος καὶ Ὀφέλτου Ζάμαμε). (c) In Ovid’s \textit{Metamorphoses}, one of the sailors that take Dionysus on board of their ship is called Opheltes (3.605 sociorum primus Opheltes). As Anderson observes, Ovid capitalises on the poetic possibilities of the focalisation: in contrast with the Homeric hymn, where the pirates that capture Dionysus are anonymous, Ovid’s story is told by one of the sailors, Acoetes, which justifies the many names. (d) In the third book of Valerius’ \textit{Argonautica}, Opheltes is one of the Dolonian warriors killed in the battle at Cyzicus (3.198 Nissaenum Telamon et Ophelthen una sonantem). Further examples are Sil.17.426 and Paus. 9.5.16.

\(^{21}\) Simon 1979: 31 believes that the myth has ‘ein historischer Kern’, which she locates in the second millennium BC, comparing the stone \textit{peribolos} of Opheltes’ \textit{heroon} to the circle graves in Mycenae. Roman \textit{munera} (gladiatorial games) are also rooted in funeral celebrations (see Lovatt 2005: 11 with references).

\(^{22}\) Wagenvoort 1971: 138 (my italics).

\(^{23}\) If Lucan is to be believed, the Psylli in North Africa used to test the legitimacy of their babies by exposing them to venomous snakes (Luc. 8.898-908, cf. Sil. 1.411-3; see Golden 2014: 252), but in the case of Opheltes nothing points in that direction. The same goes for the old suggestion that the Nemean Games originate from a
1.3. Statius’ predecessors

In order to understand and appreciate Statius’ version, it is important to have an idea of earlier treatments. This section will trace the story of Opheltes-Archemorus throughout classical literature, from his first appearance in Bacchylides to the imperial period.\(^{24}\) We shall see that, centuries before Statius, the story was already intertwined with the story of the Seven against Thebes and with the story – or rather stories – of Hypsipyle. I will present the material in chronological order, with the exception of the Cyclic Thebaid, which will be discussed in a separate section (§1.5), since attempts to reconstruct this lost epic are necessarily based on later treatments and the mythographical sources (§1.4). The Lemnian massacre, which Statius has incorporated into his Nemean episode (5.49-498), will not be part of my discussion. The following survey is of course indebted to earlier discussions; it is different, however, in that it focusses on the literary aspect rather than the archaeological (Miller), the visual (Simon), or the religious (Pache).

1.3.1. Simonides

Archemorus makes his first appearance in (extant) classical literature in the late sixth or early fifth century.\(^{25}\) We have a fragment of Simonides (ca. 556-468 BC) which according to Athenaeus is about Archemorus (fr. 553 PMG = Ath. 9.396e; transl. Pache 2004: 96):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{iostefánov γλυκείαν έδάμασαν} \\
\text{ψυχάν ἀποπνέοντα γαλαθηνόν τέμος.}
\end{align*}
\]

‘They wept for the tender baby of the violet-crowned [mother] as it breathed out its sweet soul.’

The adjective γαλαθηνόν (literally ‘milk-sucking’), which Pache renders as ‘tender’, seems to suggest that the child is a nursling. If Simonides has in mind a wet-nurse, would it be possible that he has in mind Hypsipyle?\(^{26}\) Also noteworthy is the present tense of the participle (ἀποπνέοντα), which suggests that the plural subject of ἔδαμασαν – perhaps his parents, perhaps the Seven, perhaps also his wet-nurse – are present when the child breathes his final breath. Pache’s argument that the phrase ψυχάν ἀποπνέοντα suggests strangulation I do not find convincing.\(^{27}\)

1.3.2. Bacchylides

More substantial is the following passage from an epinician ode written by Simonides’ nephew Bacchylides (ca. 518-450 BC) to celebrate the victory of Automedes of Phlius in the Nemean Games (9.10-7; transl. Pache 2004: 97 and JS):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{sinister ritual in which children were sacrificed: Deane 1830: 211 ‘it means nothing more than that human} \\
\text{victims were immolated at this shrine of Ophel [the serpent-solar deity]’ (his italics); cf. Sil. 4.763-822).}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{24}\) For an overview of the Seven against Thebes in classical literature, see e.g. Brown 1994: 1-4.

\(^{25}\) To my knowledge, the first Statian scholar to note the possible relevance of Simonides and Bacchylides is Garrod 1906: 276-7 in his review of Legras’ seminal monograph.

\(^{26}\) Contra Doffey 1992: 192 ‘Toutefois une constatation s’impose: dans la lyrique chorale, les poètes qui ont traité la légende d’Opheltès ne font jamais allusion à une nourrice’.

\(^{27}\) Pache 2004: 96, comparing Pind. Nem. 1.47 ψυχάς ἀπέπνευσεν (the snakes throttled by baby Hercules), but in e.g. Il. 4.524 and 13.654 ἰμαν ἀποπνεύσωσεν and Pind. Isth. 7.34 εἰς αὐτόν ἀπέπνευσας ἀλικάσαι nobody is strangled. Ogden 2013: 55 is also sceptical of Pache’s idea (‘speculatively’).
κείτε ψαλικάσιδες ἡμίδεοι πολύ-
τιστον Ἀργείων κριτοι
ἀδηλησαν ἐπ’ Ἀρχιδάφην, τὸν ἕανθοδερκης
πέφν’ τᾶσατεροντα δράκων ὑπέρπολος,
σάμα μέλλοντος φόνον.
Ω μοίρα πολυματές· οὔ νιν
πάσα Οὐκελίδας πάλιν
στείχειν εἰς εὐανθρωπος ἁγιωτάς
‘There, the demigods with the red shields,
the choicest of the Argives, were the first
to compete in the athletic games in honor of Arkhemoros,
who was killed [while sleeping? picking flowers?] by a monstrous yellow-eyed serpent
a sign of the ruin to come.
O powerful fate! Oecles’ son
did not persuade them to go
back to the streets thronged with good men.

In these lines the essentials of the story are all present: the child is killed by a monstrous serpent; the name Archemorus is interpreted as an ill omen for the expedition against Thebes; the Argives found the Nemean Games in honour of the child. As Pache rightly points out, the word σάμα operates on several levels: ‘the “sign” intended for Amphiaraus [9.16 Οὐκελίδας] and the Seven against Thebes; the “tomb” of Baby Arkhemoros upon which the Seven institute the Nemean Games; and the “sign of the ruin to come”, which also functions as a gloss on Archemoros’ new name’. 28

It is tempting to connect Bacchylides’ σάμα with Iliad 4.381, where it is said that the expedition of the Seven against Thebes took place in spite of certain παραίσια σήματα from Zeus. Thus Brown writes that the παραίσια σήματα are ‘easily connected to the story of the ominous death of a child’. 29 According to another scholar, Homer alludes to the drought that afflicted the Argives. 30 Unfortunately, however, a close reading of the Iliadic passage hardly supports these interpretations: Agamemnon, addressing Diomedes, tells how his father Tydeus and Polynices once visited Mycenae to recruit soldiers for their expedition against Thebes; initially Mycenae was inclined to meet their request, but then Zeus’ omnia changed their minds. In all likelihood, then, Agamemnon refers to some παραίσια σήματα from Zeus in Mycenae, not to the drought or the death of Opheltes in Nemea.

Back to Bacchylides. Unfortunately, the word ἀσαγεροντα in line 13 does not make any sense. Most editors accept Neil’s conjecture ἀωτεύοντα, which is problematic itself: if we follow Hesychius and Kenyon, it refers to picking flowers; according to Jebb, however, it is a variant of ἀωτέω (‘to sleep’). 31 The first interpretation would accord nicely with Euripides, where the infant Opheltes is also picking flowers (Hyps. fr. 754; see §1.4.2); the second interpretation would accord nicely with Statius, where Opheltes is also killed whilst sleeping (5.502-4, 539-40). Yet we should be careful in projecting later versions on earlier ones. In

28 Pache 2004: 98. On the speaking name Archemorus see §6.3.
Statius, Opheltes seems to be picking flowers too, but the role of flowers and wild celery in the story of Opheltes is problematic (see §1.4.2).

It is sometimes assumed that Bacchylides has in mind the child Opheltes, and that the poet refers to Amphiaraurus’ renaming of the child Archemorus. But the name Opheltes does not occur in Bacchylides, nor is there any indication that Amphiaraurus (re)names the child. Originally Archemorus and Opheltes seem to have been two distinct figures (cf. §1.3.3), and we should not take for granted that, when Bacchylides composed his ninth epinician, the two stories had already merged together.

However that may be, it is clear that in Bacchylides’ days already the story of Archemorus was intertwined with the story of the Seven against Thebes: the interpretation of the child’s death as bad omen for the expedition against Thebes forges the two stories together. Bacchylides’ oblique language suggests that the poet from Ceos was not the first to combine the two stories. Indeed, references in Pindar suggest that, for him too, the Nemean Games had a connection with the Seven against Thebes, although he nowhere mentions Opheltes-Archemorus. Hence it is probable that the story was part of the lost Cyclic Thebaid (see §1.5). In any case, the aetiological myth was firmly established in the days of Bacchylides, some generations after the founding of the Nemean Games in 573 BC.

1.3.3. Aeschylus

After Simonides and Bacchylides, it seems to have been Aeschylus (ca. 525-456 BC) who first brought Archemorus on stage, in his play Nemea. Unfortunately, we have little information (TrGF vol. iii fr. 149 Radt; transl. JS):

> τὰ Νέμεα φασὶν ἄγεσθαι ἐπὶ Οφέλτης τῶν Εὐφῆτος καὶ Κρεοῦσης παιδί [...] ἄλλοι δὲ, ὡν ἐστι καὶ Ἀισχύλος, ἐπ’ Ἀρχεμόρων τῶν Νεμείας παιδί.

‘They say that the Nemean Games are held in honour of Opheltes, the son of Euphetes and Creusa [...] Others, however, including Aeschylus, [that they are held] in honour of Archemorus, the son of Nemea.’

This testimony suggests that, originally, Opheltes and Archemorus were two distinct figures, and that there were two different αἰτία to explain the origins of the Nemean Games: the first connects the founding of the Nemean Games with the death of Opheltes, the second with the death of Archemorus. The first child, Opheltes, is of mortal stock: his parents Euphetes and Creusa may be identified with the king and queen of Nemea, named Lycurgus and Eurydice in most other versions. The second version, Aeschylus’ version, attributes the founding of the Nemean Games to Archemorus ‘the son of Nemea’. This Nemea is probably a local eponymous nymph; somewhat later the same hypothesis informs us that she is a daughter of Selene.

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32 In his review of Legras 1905, Garrod 1906: 276 regrets that the author does not discuss Simonides and Bacchylides: ‘Does, e.g., Theb. 4.792 o φετές carpen support the interpretation of ἀωτεύοντα (Bacch. 9.13) as “gathering flowers”?’
33 Pache 2004: 96 claims that Bacchylides 9 is ‘[t]he first undisputable mention of Opheltes’, and continues to speak of Opheltes in discussing Bacchylides (96-9).
35 Amphiaraurus’ attempt to persuade the Seven to go back (lines 15-7), possibly an element taken from the Cyclic Thebaid, may underlie the seer’s wish for infinite mora in Statius (cf. 5.740-5n.).
37 Cf. Brown 1994: 63 ‘The two names suggest two babies rather than one baby with alternative names’.
Punzi has argued that there was an alternative branch in the literary tradition, in which not the Seven, but Hypsipyle’s sons Euneus and Thoas kill the serpent and found the Nemean Games. Aeschylus’ lost play, he claims, represents that tradition. But there is nothing in the aforementioned testimony to support his claim. Punzi’s idea is also problematic because it presupposes that Hypsipyle played a role in Aeschylus’ drama, whereas her involvement in the story of Opheltes seems to be a Euripidean innovation (see §1.3.4 and §2). It has been suggested that Aeschylus’ Nemea was part of a Lemnian trilogy: Lemniae-Hypsipyle-Nemea (i.e. Lemnian massacre, Hypsipyle and Jason, Hypsipyle’s reunion with her sons in Nemea), but that is speculation. It is equally possible, for instance, that Aeschylus’ Nemea formed part of a Theban trilogy in which Hypsipyle played no role whatsoever. It has even been suggested that Nemea was a satyr-play, after the trilogy Argeiai-Eleusinioi-Epigoni, ‘with Archemoros’ death either ignored [...] or balanced out by the newly-founded games’. In my humble opinion, the death of a child is hardly the subject for a satyr-play.

1.3.4 Euripides
Some time between 412 and 406 BC Euripides wrote his Hypsipyle, which came to be the standard version of the story of Opheltes. Statius, too, essentially follows Euripides, although sometimes he rejects his Euripidean model in favour of the epic tradition. Statius’ complex use of Euripides’ tragedy will be discussed in the following chapter (§2; cf. Soerink 2014); for the moment, it suffices to examine Euripides’ role in the literary development of the story.

Euripides’ crucial contribution is that he combines the story of Opheltes with the story of Hypsipyle. After the Lemnian massacre, according to Euripides, Hypsipyle was captured by pirates and sold into slavery; thus she became wet-nurse to Opheltes in Nemea. Admittedly, we cannot completely exclude the possibility that Hypsipyle figured in earlier versions already (cf. §§1.3.1, 1.3.3, 1.5), but the communis opinio is that the conflation of the two stories is a Euripidean innovation. Perhaps Hypsipyle’s involvement has a political background, as the play creates mythological ties between Lemnos, Nemea and Athens. However that may be, Euripides’ play is important for the development of the story of Opheltes, in that she seldom figures in literature, but she is found in several visual representations.38

38 Σ Pind. Nem. hypoth. c (= App. A f) οὐσαιάση αὐτῷ ἅμας τῆς Σελήνης καὶ Δής. Given the importance of Zeus in Nemea, the nymph’s father does not surprise. But why Selene? Perhaps there is some connection with the curious story that the Nemean lion fell from the moon (cf. Callim. Aet. fr. 56 with Harder’s note)? Pausanias 2.15.3 makes Nemea a daughter of Asopus and Metope (cf. Σ Pind. O. 6.144e).
39 Perhaps Nemea is the female voice that speaks Bacchylides 12 (see Brown 1994: 62 with n. 33). Pace Brown 1994: 62 Stat. Theb. 4.727 (not 728) manet ingens gloria nympham is about the nymph Langia, not about Nemea (see Parkes ad loc.). In 4.832 one of the Seven invokes Nemea as siluarum, Nemea, longe regina uirentum: there is personification in regina, but the following lecta lius sedes makes clear that the speaker thinks of the place rather than the nymph (cf. Harder on Callim. Aet. fr. 54.1 Νεμέα ‘deliberately ambiguous’).
40 Mostly in connection with Hercules and the Nemean lion (see Parkes on 4.832-7,fracchia’s entry in LIMC s.v. Nemea nr. 1-12). The nymph also occurs in some visual representations of Opheltes (see App. B a, c, h and LIMC s.v. Nemea nr. 13, 14 and 15); Fracchia connects the Sotades painter’s cup with Aeschylus’ play.
43 See Gantz 1980: 158-9, in the category ‘less probable groups’.
44 Doffey 1992: 192 connects the introduction of Hypsipyle as wet-nurse to Opheltes with pseudo-Apollodorus 1.9.13-4, where Hypsipyle is said to be a cousin of Lycurgus. But in the fragments this genealogy is nowhere mentioned, and Euripides explains Hypsipyle’s presence in Nemea via the pirates that sold her into slavery.
it is the first version in which the various narrative strands – Opheltes, the Seven and Hypsipyle – all come together.

1.3.5. Antimachus

Not much later than Euripides’ *Hypsipyle*, Antimachus of Colophon (*floruit* ca. 400 BC) wrote an epic on the Seven against Thebes, of which fragments survive. Did Antimachus’ *Thebaid* include the story of Opheltes? The answer, I think, is positive. Admittedly, the remaining fragments do not mention the Opheltes or Archimorus, but the two stories – the story of Opheltes and the story of the Seven against Thebes – are intertwined at least since Bacchylides, who mentions the death of Archimorus as omen for the Argives’ expedition (see §1.3.2). Even if Antimachus did not know Euripides’ *Hypsipyle*, then, which also combines the two stories, it is likely that his *Thebaid* included the ominous death of Archimorus. Secondly, as Matthews points out in his commentary, the presence of the games – of which a number of fragments survive – cannot be explained otherwise. The sheer length of Antimachus’ *Thebaid* also suggests that the poem was rather inclusive: ‘Antimachus fuit cyclicus poeta’, Porphyry writes; ‘hic adgressus est materiam, quam sic extendit, ut uiginti quattuor uolumina implerit, antequam septem duces usque ad Thebas perduceret’. If it took Antimachus 24 books to bring the Seven to Thebes, we may assume with some confidence that the death and funeral of Opheltes were among the stories included, especially since Antimachus seems to be rather fond of aetiological stories.

The presence of Opheltes’ death and funeral in Antimachus’ epic is also suggested by Propertius 2.34. In this poem Propertius dissuades his friend Lynceus from composing epic and tragedy, urging him to write poetry on a smaller scale, in the tradition of Philitas and Callimachus (31-2), not tragedy like Aeschylus (41) or epic like Homer and Antimachus (45). To illustrate the epic genre that Lynceus should reject, Propertius mentions, *exempli gratia*, various scenes from the epic story of the Seven against Thebes (2.34.36-40 ed. Fedeli 2005):

\[\text{\textit{qualis et Adrasti fuerit uocalis Arion}},^{49}\]
\[\text{\textit{tristis ad Archemori funera uictor equus}:}\]
\[\text{\textit{†non amphiareae}\textsuperscript{50} prosint tibi fata quadrigae aut Capanei magno grata ruina Ioui.}\]

Five lines later, Propertius mentions the poet from Colophon by name (45 *Antimachus*), which strongly suggests that the examples are taken from his *Thebaid*. In the words of Fedeli: ‘la successiva menzione, in compagnia di Omero, di Antimaco, invita piuttosto a pensare a una serie di argomenti che appartengono al bagaglio di quel poeta, autore di una *Tebaide* e una

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45 See Matthews 1996.
47 Porphyry on Hor. Ars 146.
48 Fantuzzi in *Der neue Pauly* s.v. Antimachus of Colophon notes his ‘predilection for glosses and aetiologies’.
50 Dominicy 2007 proposes *non aut Amphiarei*, an attractive conjecture that was published just too late to be included in Heyworth’s 2007 edition.
versial, not those who regarded Homer among epic poets by Hellenistic commentators.

There is no clear source for material, Antimachus’ ‘videlicet the matter’.

56. The emperor Hadrian wrote poetry in imitation of Antimachus, whom he ranked above Homer: apparently Antimachus was read in imperial Rome, even though Hadrian had an idiosyncratic literary taste. Although we might never be able to adduce firm proof, I heartily agree with Ribbeck that it is ‘selbstverständlich’ that Statius was familiar with Antimachus’ Thebaid.

1.3.6. Callimachus

Antimachus’ poem perhaps inspired the obscure Hellenistic poet Menelaus Aegaeus, who wrote an epic Thebaid in 11 books (SH 551-5). More important, for our purposes, is that Opheltes also figures in the third book of Callimachus’ (floruit 280-40 BC) Aetia, in the Victoria Berenices (frr. 54-60j Harder). In the first fragment the name Opheltes serves as a learned reference to the Nemean Games: Εὕφητηιάδα[αο παρ’ ήριον οὖν ὠν ε] Ὀφέλτων (fr. 54.7 Harder).

Thus Propertius 2.34 not only confirms that Antimachus’ Thebaid was read in Rome, it also supports the idea that it included Archemorion funera.

The relationship between Statius and Antimachus is notoriously controversial, not least because of the mysterious scholium adduced by Caspar Barth (‘dicunt poetam ista omnia e Graeco poeta Antimacho deduxisse’). In principle, Ahl is right when he states that ‘there really is not enough evidence to decide the matter’. The onus probandi, however, rests with those who claim that Statius did not know Antimachus. As Dewar rightly points out, ‘it seems incredible that Statius should not have known and in some way used Antimachus, who was ranked second after Homer among epic poets by Hellenistic commentators and whose work must have largely replaced the Cyclic Thebaid’. Indeed, it is hard to imagine that Statius, a bilingual poeta doctus born and bred in Naples, whose father lectured on the most obscure Greek poetry, and whose profound knowledge of Greek literature, from Homer to Callimachus, appears from almost every line he wrote, should not know Antimachus’ canonical epic.

We may note that the emperor Hadrian wrote poetry in imitation of Antimachus, whom he ranked above Homer: apparently Antimachus was read in imperial Rome, even though Hadrian had an idiosyncratic literary taste. Although we might never be able to adduce firm proof, I heartily agree with Ribbeck that it is ‘selbstverständlich’ that Statius was familiar with Antimachus’ Thebaid.

57. Ahl 1986: 2815 n. 21. Ahl also points to the ideological underpinnings of the debate: those who regarded Statius as a bad poet, as a slavish imitator incapable of originality, tended to believe that his Thebaid was entirely dependent upon Antimachus (e.g. Duff 1964: 383 ‘Statius’s main source for material, Antimachus’, Greene 1963: 100 ‘Statius modelled his Thebaid on a huge poem of Antimachus’), whereas those who wished to liberate Statius from that judgement tended to claim the opposite (e.g. Vessey 1973: 69). After all, Antimachus has a rather bad press (cf. Cic. Brutus 191; Cat. 95b.10 tumidius; Callimachus condemns Antimachus’ Lyde as πάχα γράμμα, fr. 398 Pf.). The positiveness of Newlands 2012: 46 is startling: ‘Undoubtedly [Statius] was concerned to establish a clear distance from the 24-book Thebaid of Antimachus of Colophon’. Lovatt 2005: 12 n. 13 also adopts Vessey’s idea that Statius did not use Antimachus; Statius’ possible engagement with Antimachus (and the Cyclic Thebaid) might undermine her idea of Statius playing off Vergil and Homer – although Lovatt would be the first to concede that interpretations are reconstructions rather than reconstructions.

For Antimachus and the epic canon see Matthews (1996) 20; cf. Quint. Inst. 10.1.52.

58. Cf. SH 551 Μενέλαος, Ἀχιλλος, ἰπποτικός ἐγραφα θρησκεια ἐν βιβλίοις καὶ ἄλλα. 

59. For Antimachus and the epic canon see Matthews (1996) 20; cf. Quint. Inst. 10.1.52.

60. Cf. SH 551 Μενέλαος, Ἀχιλλος, ἰπποτικός ἐγραφα θρησκεια ἐν βιβλίοις καὶ ἄλλα.
‘near the tomb of Opheltes the son of Euphetes’). The Lille Papyrus, datable to the late third century BC, adds an interlinear scholion: Ανορθωσήμους ἐκαλεῖτο (fr. 60d 54.7 Harder = SH 255.7 ‘he was called Archemorus’). Callimachus, always in favour of obscure mythical variants, makes Opheltes the son of Euphetes, not Lycurgus as in Euripides’ Hypsipyle (cf. §1.4.1). But what matters is the very reference to Opheltes at the beginning of the poem. As Harder observes, ‘the indication is slightly confusing as it reminds the reader of a myth which might be told in the Victory of Berenice, but, as it turns out in the sequel, the expectations thus raised will not be fulfilled and the poem will focus on another story related to the Nemean Games’.

Our expectations are indeed shattered. Celebrating a victory of Berenice’s chariot in the Nemean Games, Callimachus’ poem does not tell the story of Opheltes, but the story of Hercules and the Nemean lion, dwelling on Hercules’ visit to the local farmer Molorcus and his mice-infested cottage, where the hero is entertained before his fight with the lion. The Victoria Berenices clearly makes some aetiological connection between Hercules’ first labour and the Nemean Games, but the details remain obscure. Hercules seems to be responsible for the introduction of the wild celery, with which victorious athletes in the Nemean Games were crowned (fr. 54i.2 I στέφοσθι and 60c apiacea corona; cf. §1.4.2). But does Callimachus also attribute the very founding of the Nemean Games to Hercules? And how does he reconcile his Herculean ἀτίτοινος with the old story of Opheltes? The surviving fragments do not mention the founding of the Nemean Games, so we must rely on later testimonia, in particular pseudo-Probus (on Verg. Geo. 3.19 = fr. 60c Harder), whose testimonium is key in reconstructing the Victoria Berenices. There seem to be three scenarios.

(a) When Hercules arrives at Nemea, the Nemean Games exist already, founded by the Seven against Thebes in honour of Opheltes; Hercules’ labour leads to some sort of ‘refounding’ or ‘refiguration’ of the Nemean Games. This scenario finds support in two Pindaric hypotheses which claim that Hercules dedicated the Nemean Games to Zeus. It is worth noting that, according to Pindar, Adrastus founded them in honour of Phoebus, not Zeus (Nem. 9.9 ἢ τε Φοίβῳ Ἠρικον Ἀδραστος). In this scenario, the Victoria Berenices would complement the aetiological story of Opheltes, explaining the importance of Zeus in the Nemean Games as well as the wreath of wild celery.

(b) Alternatively, Callimachus attributes the very founding of the Nemean Games to Hercules, ‘overwriting’ the traditional aetiological story of Opheltes. In that case it is not Hercules, but the Seven against Thebes who ‘refound’ or ‘refigure’ the Nemean Games after the death of Opheltes. This scenario is strongly suggested by pseudo-Probus (on Geo. 3.19): inde Nemea instituta sunt: postea Archemori manibus sunt renouata a septem uiris, qui

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61 Harder on fr. 54.7 ‘The Nemean Games are indicated in a similar way as here in the Victoria Sosibii fr. 384.25 f. (Sosibius acquired a wreath) παρὰ παισὶ ... / ... τοῦ Μοῦρανω τῶν γάλα Ἰπσιπύλου (i.e. Opheltes, who was fed by Hypsipyle from Myrina on Lemnos) and Ep. 69.4 Ebert εὐτερίδος σήμα παρ’ Ἀρχεμοῦρος (late 3rd cent. BC)’. Myrina seems a learned reference to Lemnos; Hypsipyle is nowhere else connected with Myrina specifically. The phrase γάλα Ἰπσιπύλου recalls Simonides (see §1.3.1 above).

62 Harder on fr. 54.7.

63 Scenarios (a) and (b) are implicit in Harder’s note on Callim. Aet. fr. 60c.9 inde Nemea instituta sunt.

64 Σ Pind. Nem. hypoth. d (= App. A g) ὠςτιαν δὲ [i.e. after the founding of the Nemean Games by the Seven against Thebes] νικήσας Ἡρακλῆς καταγωνισάμας τῶν Νεμεαίων λέωντα ἐπιμελήθη τοῦ ἁγίου τα πολλά ἀνορθωσάμας, καὶ Διὸς εἶναι ἱερὸν ἐνομοδέτησαν, ὅ ὁ δὲ στέφανος ἐκ ἕλαιον πλέκεται σιλλών, καὶ Σ Pind. Nem. hypoth. e (= App. A h) ὠςτιαν δὲ νικήσας Ἡρακλῆς καταγωνισάμας τῶν Νεμεαίων λέωντα ἐπιμελήθη τοῦ ἁγίου τα πολλά ἀνορθωσάμας, καὶ Διὸς εἶναι ἱερὸν ἐνομοδέτησαν.
Thebas petebant (fr. 60c.10-11 Harder); and it is corroborated by three other ancient testimonia. 65 Perhaps the Seven’s refounding of the Nemean Games was part of Athena’s prophecy towards the end of the Victoria Berenices.

(c) Finally, Doffey has argued that Callimachus’ Hercules does not found or refound the Nemean Games at all. In her view, Hercules’ first labour merely provides the aἵτιον for the crown of wild celery, via Athena’s prophecy. 66 She stresses that the extant fragments nowhere mention Hercules’ establishment of the Nemean Games, and concludes that ‘[i]la tradition ancienne voyait donc dans l’exploit d’Héraclès un antécédent aux exploits agonistiques des athlètes à Némée, par contre elle ne lui attribuait pas la fondation même des concours’. 67

Scenario (b) has the strongest support in the ancient testimonia, not least pseudo-Probus. Certainly, it fits the mythical chronology better than scenario (a): although mythical time is slippery, it seems clear that Hercules’ first labour took place earlier than the expedition of the Seven against Thebes. 68 Yet scenario (c) is most attractive. The surviving fragments of the Victoria Berenices do not mention Hercules as (re)founding hero of the Nemean Games, but there is a prophecy that looks to the future. It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that Callimachus’ Hercules provides the aἵτιον for the apiacea corona, and that the actual founding of the games in honour of Opheltes is foretold in the prophecy of Athena. On the other hand, if Callimachus’ Hercules does not found the Nemean Games, how do we account for pseudo-Probus and others claiming that he does? 69 Surely, in the lost final part of the Victoria Berenices Callimachus somehow reconciles Hercules and Opheltes, but how exactly he weaves the two stories together must remain speculation.

Statius’ engagement with Callimachus will be discussed later (§4). Given the difficulties in reconstructing Callimachus, however, we may point out that the Thebaid also points to scenario (c): when the Seven arrive in Nemea, Hercules’ first labour and his visit to Molochus have already taken place, but the Nemean Games are still to be founded. 70 Alternatively, if scenario (b) is correct and Callimachus makes Hercules the founder of the Nemean Games, then Statius’ version pointedly ‘undoes’ Callimachus’ aἵτιον, following the

65 (1) Lact. Plac. on Stat. Theb. 4.159-60 ergo cum Hercules ad occidendum leonem isset ab Eurystheo missus, a Molorcho susceptus hospitio est, cuius filium leo interfecerat, didicitque ab eo quemadmodum aduersus ferum coiret. quo superato ludos instituit, quos a loco Nemea appellauit. (2) Nigid. Fig. fr. 93 Swoboda plerique Nemene gymnico ludos ab hoc arbitrantur leone institutos. (3) Σ Pind. Nem. 10.49b οἱ γὰρ ἐπὶ ἔπι Θῆσας ἀνενεώσατο τὰ Νήμεα. See also Doffey 1992: 187.
68 Valerius Flaccus places Hercules’ first labour before the expedition of the Argonauts (8.125-6), which itself is traditionally situated at the very beginning of the Heroic Age (cf. Cat. 64). In Statius’ Thebaid, the Seven also arrive in Nemea after Hercules’ first labour.
70 Cf. esp. 4.159-64, 6.270-1; moreover, Hercules has already been deified, as appears from 4.147, 158, 162. It is made abundantly clear that the Nemean Games are founded now for the first time (6.15 nunc), after the Olympian, Pythian and Isthmian Games. Contra Delarue (2000: 123) ‘Callimaque évoquait la première fondation des Jeux Néméens par Hercule, Stace raconte la seconde, par les Sept’.
traditional version that attributes the founding of the Nemean Games to the Seven against Thebes.

1.3.7. Ennius

Among the many plays of Ennius (239-169 BC), there is one with the title Nemea. It has been suggested that Ennius’ Nemea was modelled on Aeschylus’ play of the same title.\(^71\) Alternatively, Ennius might have modelled his play on Euripides’ Hypsipyle.\(^72\) In that case, however, the title must refer not to the nymph Nemea (who does not figure in Euripides’ Hypsipyle), but to the place Nemea (or perhaps the Nemean Games),\(^73\) which according to Jocelyn is not very plausible.\(^74\)

Two small fragments survive: teneor consaepta, undique uenor (fr. 252 Joc. = 305 W.) and pecudi dare uiuam marito (fr. 253 Joc. = 304 W.). The first ‘must have been spoken by a woman whose liberty of movement had been restricted’.\(^75\) If the play is modelled on Euripides, that woman must be Hypsipyle.\(^76\) The second fragment is puzzling; three interpretations have been proposed. (a) Warmington (mis)translates ‘To give her alive to a bull as her mate’, suggesting that ‘it might refer to Europa and Zeus’.\(^77\) But is pecudi likely to refer to a bull? (b) Przychocki has attractively suggested that the words reproduce the oracle that Adrastus should marry his daughter(s) to a boar (and a lion).\(^78\) Jocelyn rejects this interpretation, because pecus ‘normally refer[s] to domesticated animals’;\(^79\) in oracular language, however, that might be possible. His second objection that ‘marito would suggest that the animal already has a consort’ I do not find convincing either, as the word can easily be understood proleptically (‘to give her alive to an animal to be her husband’). The interpretation remains problematic, however, for what is the point of uiuam? (c) Finally, according to Punzi, the fragment refers to Hypsipyle’s punishment, but I do not quite understand what sort of punishment he has in mind – perhaps for the better.\(^80\)

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\(^71\) Ribbeck (see Punzi 1910: 185 n. 1); Warmington 1988: 329 ‘its title suggest that the model was Aeschylus’; Scaffai 2002: 151.

\(^72\) Przychocki (see Jocelyn 1969: 387 with n. 3); Bond 1963: 95; Punzi 1910: 185 rhetorically claims that ‘[o]gnuno vede come dal lore insieme risulti il contenuto euripideo’.

\(^73\) Warmington (1988: 329) understands the title Nemea as ‘“the Vale”, “grove” or “town Nemea” – otherwise Nonius and Priscianus would have written Nemeis’. This makes little sense, since the local nymph is called Nema, not Nemeis (see §1.3.3 above).

\(^74\) Jocelyn 1969: 387-8 ‘Ennius’ play perhaps referred to the institution of the Nemean games [...] but it is scarcely credible that the title should have done so. One would naturally expect the title to be the name of the daughter of Asopus, in honour of whose son Archemoros [...] the Nemean games were instituted.’

\(^75\) Jocelyn 1969: 387. Nonius, our source, explains uenor as circumuenior, but he ‘may merely be using a word with some affinity of sound to gloss the passive use of uenari “hunt” (Jocelyn ad loc.).

\(^76\) Cf. Punzi 1910: 185 ‘il primo sono parole d’Issipile’; Warmington 1988: 331 n. b ‘These words may be from a speech by Hypsipyle in flight after the death of little Opheltes’.

\(^77\) Warmington 1988: 331.


\(^79\) Note however OLD s.v. pecus‘ 2 (app.) An animal (opp. to a human being), e.g. Aen. 1.743 unde hominum genus et pecudes.

\(^80\) Punzi 1910: 185 ‘Il primo sono parole d’Issipile, nell’altro si allude alla sua pena’. One could imagine something along the lines of Mart. 1.5 (iunctam Pasiphaen Dictaeo credite tauro), as Ruurd Nauta suggests to me.
1.3.8. Ponticus

According to Propertius (1.7; cf. 1.9), his fellow poet Ponticus, a friend of Ovid (Tr. 4.10.47), is working on a Thebaid, an epic project which he pointedly contrasts with elegiac love poetry: *dum tibi Cadmeae dicuntur, Pontice, Thebae / armaque fraternalia tristia militiae ... nos, ut consuemus, nostros agitamus amores* (1.7.1-2, 5). Whether Ponticus was really writing a Thebaid and, if so, whether he completed the poem, we do not know. The Seven against Thebes often represent the epic genre, rejected by the *poetae noui*, perhaps under the influence of Anti-Machus’ enormous epic. So perhaps Propertius means little more than that Ponticus was writing epic. However, the very fact that the Seven against Thebes had become trite subject-matter suggests that Ponticus was not the first Latin poet to compose a Thebaid.

1.3.9. Stele from Saittai

Although this section lists Statius’ predecessors, I cannot resist the temptation to include a funeral inscription from Saittai (Lydia), which was found on a marble stele built into a house in the village of İcikler in 1976 and published three years later. The inscription compares the dead five-year-old Glaucon to Astyanax and Archemorus (transl. JS):

> πενταέτη Γλαύκωνα νόμῳ φθιμένων ἐγέραν 
> ἱδίοι και τοιχίνους ἁλαστον πένθος ἔχοντες 
> Ἀρχεμόρου προτέροι καὶ Ἀστυάνακτος ἐκείνου 
> μάλλον ἀνειάσαντα βροτοὺς αἰωνίῳ ἄτῃ.

Five-year-old Glaucon was honoured according to the law of the dead by his uncles and his parents with insufferable grief; more than Archemorus of old or the famous Astyanax he caused mortals grief with everlasting doom.

The inscription, datable to 182 or 183 AD, shows that the story of Opheltes was still widely known in the imperial period.

1.4. Mustering myth: Hyginus’ version

The story of Opheltes is also summarised by various mythographical authors, which I have collected in Appendix A. The mythographers are problematic, because we usually do not know when they wrote and which version(s) they had in mind. Since they often contradict the Euripidean version, however, it is reasonable to suppose that the mythographical evidence reflects, at least partially, the traditional epic version of the myth: the Cyclic Thebaid or Anti-Machus’ epic. As representatives of the epic tradition, the mythographers will figure in the next section (see §1.5) as well as the next chapter, where it will be argued that Statius sometimes rejects his primary model, Euripides’ Hysipyle, in favour of the old epic tradition (§2.6). For the moment, we will confine ourselves to one of the mythographers in particular, namely Hyginus, who provides the following synopsis of the myth in his Fabulae (74.1-3):

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81 Cf. Parkes 2012: xxix with n. 58.
82 See Vessey 1973: 47 with n. 4 and cf. e.g. Prop. 2.1.21, Man. 3.14-5, Mart. 14.1.11-2.
83 Parkes on 4.652-79 mentions (in passing) ‘now lost Latin Thebaid’ (plural): apparently she also believes that we lost more than Ponticus’ epic alone.
84 Bakır-Barthel & Müller 1979: 188-90 nr. 47.
85 See also Bond 1963: 147-9.
86 On the mythographers in general see Cameron 2004.
87 For mythographers representing epic tradition cf. e.g. Lovatt 2005: 12.
Several elements in Hyginus’ version come as a surprise: the child and his father are named Ophites and Lycus; Hyginus mentions an oracle warning that Opheltes should not be placed on the ground; and the Nemean crown of wild celery is connected with Opheltes’ *locus mortis*. In the remainder of this section, we will examine these three elements a little further.

### 1.4.1. Names

In most versions of the story, the child’s name is Opheltes or Archemorus (or both), and his parents’ names are Lycurgus and Eurydice, as in Euripides’ *Hypsipyle*. However, as we have seen (§1.3.6), in Callimachus’ *Aetia* his father is called Euphetes,\(^{88}\) a name also found in the Pindaric hypothesis that mentions Aeschylus’ *Nemea*, where his parents are called Euphetes and Creusa.\(^{89}\) The scholion on Clement of Alexandria’s *Protrepticus* – where the Christian author exhorts the Greeks to stop participating in games for pagan heroes – also makes Opheltes the son of Euphetes, although his mother’s name, Eurydice, is in accordance with the Euripidean version.\(^{90}\) In any case, it seems that the alternative name Euphetes has deep roots in the earlier tradition.

Curiously, in Hyginus’ *Fabulae* Opheltes and Lycurgus are called Ophites and Lycus. One cannot escape the impression that Ophites is not an alternative name, but a scribal error, perhaps to be explained from the preceding Ophites in 72.4 (a different character in a different fabula) or an association with ὁφίς (‘snake’).\(^{91}\) The same holds, I would argue, for his father’s name Lycus. In an article titled ‘Mythische Kurznamen’ Maass has suggested that Lycus is an abbreviated form of Lycurgus.\(^{92}\) But I am inclined to believe that Lyci regis is also a corruption. In medieval manuscripts, we frequently find the abbreviation *rg* (in combination with various abbreviation marks) for the inflected forms of *rex* (regis, regi, etc.) or forms of *regnum*.\(^{93}\) It is possible that the copyist mistook the last letters of the name Lycurgi for such an abbreviation, especially since the *i*, sometimes written in superscript, is easily confused with an abbreviation mark. In a simplified schema: Lycurg > Lycu rg > Lyci regis. If my

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88 See Harder on fr. 54.7 Ἐὐφηνηῖδίαο.
89 See §1.3.3. Pseudo-Apollodorus mentions Amphithea as an alternative name for Eurydice: Ἀμφιθέας μὲν οὖν περὶ Νεμέαν κατοίκησε, γῆνας δὲ Εἰρέιδεαν, οἷς δὲ εἰςοι φασίν Ἀμφιθέας, ἐγίνεσθαι Ορφέθην τῶν ὄστεων κλήσεται Ἀρχέμορον (1.9.14).
90 See Appendix A b.
91 The latter suggestion I owe to Ruurd Nauta.
92 Maass 1888: 614.
93 See Cappelli 1929.
hypothesis is correct, the second mention of Lycus later in caput 74 (cf. 273) are ‘corrections’ resulting from this error.94

1.4.2. Wild celery
The Nemean Games belong to the so-called ‘stephanitic games’. While at Olympia victorious athletes were crowned with olive, at Delphi with laurel and at the Isthmus with pine,95 in Nemea they would receive a crown made of wild celery or parsley (σέλινον, apium).96 As we have seen (§1.3.6), Callimachus’ *Victoria Berenices* provides an αἵτινον for this crown in connection with Hercules’ first labour. But Hyginus offers another explanation: in Nemea victorious athletes are crowned with an apiaca corona because Opheltes died in a bed of altissimum apium. This aetiological element is frequently mentioned in summaries of the myth,97 but in fact Hyginus is alone in connecting the crown of wild celery with Opheltes’ *locus mortis*.98 We should not take for granted, therefore, that this was an ancient aetiological element of the story of Opheltes.

There are reasons to believe that the crown of wild celery is a fairly late addition to the myth. One of the Pindaric hypotheses claims that the Nemean Games originally had wreaths of olive, which were replaced with wreaths of wild celery in order to honour the dead of the Persian wars.99 In visual representations of Opheltes’ death, all produced after the Persian wars, there is no celery to be seen.100 In Euripides’ *Hypsipyle*, and perhaps in Bacchylides already (see §1.3.2), Opheltes is picking flowers, an ominous activity that foreshadows his death101 (fr. 754 = Plut. Mor. 93d):

\[
\text{†picking† one quarry of flowers after another with joyful spirit, his child’s mind unsatisfied.}
\]

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94 Jacopus Micyllus admitted that he found the Beneventan script of the manuscript on which he based his 1535 edition extremely difficult to read (see Cameron 2004: 35), so there is even a possibility that the error is his. Unfortunately, the manuscript is lost, and the two extant fragments do not contain chapter 74 (see Boriad 1997: xiii ff.).
95 Or wild celery; see Harder on Callim. Aet. fr. 54i.5-9.
96 See Miller 2004: 12 with pictures of the plant. Ausonius manages to compress all information into one elegiac distich, Ecl. 12.3-4 sacra Iouis Phoebique Palaemonis Archemorique / serta quibus pinus, malus, oliua, apium. Visiting the archaeological site of Nemea in June 2010, I had the pleasure of meeting a German student wearing a wild wreath of non-wild celery.
97 E.g. Fedeli on Prop. 2.34.37-8, Dann 2006: 3 ‘The child is always set down in a bed of foliage’ (my italics).
98 The αἵτινο is also mentioned by Servius Danielis on Verg. Ecl. 6.68: ‘et volunt quidam hoc coronae genus ad indicium mortis electum; aut quod humiliis herba inmaturum de Archemoro luctum ostendat; aut quod supra hanc herbam reponent puer a serpente extinctus sit’ (my italics); but Servius Danielis may rely on Hyginus.
100 The Apulian amphora from Ruvo depicts an old woman crowning Opheltes’ corpse with a garland, which is not quite the same; moreover, the garland cannot be identified as wild celery (see App. B d). The plant σέλινον is depicted on coins of the Sicilian city of Selinus; see Frazer on Paus. 2.15.2 with references.
101 Cf. Persephone picking flowers before being abducted by Hades in *h.Cer. 4*-5 and Ov. *Met.* 5.385-94, Helen before being abducted by Hermes in Eur. *Hel.* 244-5. The association of blooming meadows and death is also apparent from the ἄσφαδελφοι λειμῶνα in Homer’s underworld (Od. 11.539, 573). Cf. also Hylas in Prop. 1.20.39-40. Moreover, flowers themselves can be symbolic of the frailty of life, cf. e.g. Aen. 11.68-9.
But these flowers are not specified as wild celery. The herb makes its first appearance in Callimachus’ Aetia (see §1.3.6). It is possible that Callimachus invented the Herculean action for the wreath of wild celery himself, perhaps inspired by Pindar’s third Olympian, where the olive wreath of the Olympic Games is explained from Hercules bringing the olive from the Hyperboreans. In any case, Callimachus connects the crown of celery with Hercules rather than with Opheltes. The closest parallel for Hyginus’ statement that Hypsipyle placed her nursling in altissimum apium is Pausanias (second century AD), who writes that Hypsipyle put Opheltes ‘in the grass’ (2.15.2 ἐξ τὰυν πῶς): although he does not mention celery, the fact that he writes ‘in the grass’ rather than ‘on the ground’ may suggest that he has in mind Hyginus’ version, or the version Hyginus has in mind.

In Statius’ Thebaid there is no mention of wild celery. Hypsipyle places her nursling uicino caespite (4.786), the crawling baby is plucking at everything in his way (4.792 obulia carpit; cf. 4.794 gramine, herbas), and when he falls asleep his hand is clutching some grass or plant (5.504 prensa manus haeret in herba). Probably we are to imagine that, as in Euripides, Statius’ Opheltes is picking flowers. Flowers figure prominently in Statius’ version elsewhere: in an attempt to console her Nursling when she puts him on the ground, Hypsipyle gives Opheltes ‘bunches of flowers’ (4.788 floribus aggestis), and in book 6 flowers and wreaths adorn Opheltes’ funeral pyre (6.56-8 imas uirent agresti stramina cultu; / proxima gramineis operosior area sertis, / et picturatus morituris floribus agger). But nothing suggests celery in particular. Yet I believe that Statius is aware of the oracle mentioned by Hyginus: in Siluae 2.1 he mentions Opheltes’ death in gramine Lernae (2.1.181) and in Siluae 5.3 he uses the exact same phrase to denote the Nemean crown (5.3.142)! In all likelihood, then, our poeta doctus appeals to our knowledge of the aetiological myth and deliberately suppresses the name of the plant.

1.4.3. Oracles

Another element in Hyginus’ synopsis that deserves our attention is the oracle: responsum erat, ne in terra puerum deponeret, antequam posset ambulare. Like the altissimum apium, this oracle is frequently mentioned in modern handbooks and encyclopedias. We should not take for granted, however, that it was an ancient element of the myth. Hyginus, writing in the Augustan period or later, is actually the first to mention it. One wonders why Lycurgus consulted the oracle in the first place. Miller writes that Lycurgus and Eurydice ... ‘... longed for an heir to the throne. After many years of frustration a baby boy was born and the happy couple gave him the name Opheltes. Lykourgos sent to Delphi to ask how he might insure [sic] the health and happiness of his baby, and the Pythian

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102 See Callim. Aet. fr. 60c.8 Harder (= pseudo-Probus on Verg. Geo. 3.19-20) sumptaue apiacea corona qua ornantur qui Nemea uincunt; fr. 54i.2 Harder ἀετιοφος probably refers to the wreath of wild celery too.

103 Cf. Brown 1994: 181 ‘The Thebaid makes no specific mention of it [sc. the parsley crown], although Statius alludes to its origin in describing the grassy meadow in which Hypsipyle leaves the baby’.


105 Mottram ad loc. suggests that gramineis ... sertis allude to the crown of wild celery in the Nemean Games.

106 Cf. his suppression of names in the story of Linus and Coroebus (see §3.1).

107 E.g. Ambühl in Der Neue Pauly s.v. Opheltes: ‘als seine Amme [...] ihn trotz eines warmenden Orakelspruchs unbewacht auf der Erde liegen läßt’ (my italics); Pühlhorn LIMC s.v. Archemorus 472, Frazer on Paus. 2.15.2.

108 The date of Hyginus’ Fabulae is problematic, see Boriaud pp. vii-xiii.
oracle responded that he was not to allow the baby to touch the ground until he had learned to walk'.

But this is modern fiction on the part of Miller. The ancient sources do not mention the royal couple longing for an heir, let alone their 'many years of frustration'! In fact, it is not even clear whether the oracle should be located in Delphi.

In Hyginus’ version Hypsipyle is aware of the oracle, for she is afraid to place her nursling on the ground (illa timens puerum in terram deponere). Despite the oracle, she places the child on the ground – or perhaps she places Opheltes on the *apium altissimum* in a deliberate attempt to prevent Opheltes from touching the ground.

In Statius’ version there is an oracle too, but it is completely different from the oracle mentioned in Hyginus: Statius’ oracle prophesied that Lycurgus would give the first *funera* to the Theban war (see 5.645-7n. *prima, Lycurge, dabis Dircaeo funera bello* ).

Hyginus’ oracle that Opheltes must not be placed on the ground, is nowhere mentioned. Yet Statius may allude to it, when he writes that Hypsipyle places her nursling *uicino caespite* (4.786). The question is relevant, as it has a bearing on our evaluation of Hypsipyle’s behaviour. If the oracle that Opheltes should not be placed on the ground was a traditional element of the myth, and if Statius’ *uicino caespite* alludes to it, then Hypsipyle would indeed be a most negligent nurse. If, on the other hand, the oracle plays no role in Statius, our verdict will be milder.

### 1.5. The Cyclic Thebaid

Like the *Thebaid* of Antimachus of Colophon (see §1.3.5), the Cyclic *Thebaid* is lost; no more than twenty odd lines have survived the ages, even though it was often ascribed to Homer.

Perhaps Antimachus’ epic on the Seven against Thebes pushed the old Cyclic *Thebaid* to the background. Yet Pausanias (second century AD) still knew the old epic and had read at least substantial parts of it.

It is perfectly possible, then, that Statius knew not only Antimachus’ epic, but also the Cyclic *Thebaid*. As I have argued above (§1.3.5), the story of Opheltes was probably included in Antimachus’ *Thebaid*. Was it also part of the Cyclic *Thebaid*, as

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110 Similarly Ogden 2013: 54, who writes that Lycurgus and Eurydice had a ‘precious late-born son, Opheltes. Lycurgus asked Delphi how best to protect his son and was told that he should not be put down on the ground before he could walk’ (my italics). Cf. 5.646n.
111 Cf. Frazer on Paus. 2.15.2 ‘Mindful of her orders the nurse set down the child on the bed of celery and not on the ground’.
112 As Ganiban 2013: 252 notes, Statius’ oracle ‘is not attested elsewhere and may be Statius’ invention’.
113 Parkes ad loc. mentions Hyginus, but does not consider the possibility that Statius alludes to the oracle. She does rightly observe that the phrase connects Opheltes with Linus (cf. §3).
114 Cf. Ganiban 2013: 253 ‘Such a prophecy would have clearly incriminated Hypsipyle’. Scaffai 2002: 243 n. 64 suggests that Statius has deliberately excluded the oracle mentioned by Hyginus ‘per non aggravare la responsabilità di Ipsipile’.
117 Contra Vessey 1970c: 426, who claims that it is unlikely that Statius ‘used – or in fact had even read – the “Cyclic” *Thebaid*’ (cf. Vessey 1973: 69); Burkert 1981: 30 ‘All this [cyclic] poetry fell victim to the devastating judgment of the Alexandrian critics: ἐξαντλησε τὸ πόημα κυκλικόν. Henceforth people of good taste were well advised to disregard them – as did Statius, the author of the Latin *Thebaid*.’
Pühlhorn and Ambühl claim. That is a difficult question, but there are indications that the answer is indeed positive. As we have seen above (§1.3.2), the oblique way in which Bacchylides refers to the death of Opheltes as bad omen for the Argives’ expedition suggests that in his days the story of Opheltes and the story of the Seven against Thebes had become closely intertwined. Perhaps Bacchylides expected his audience to remember the Cyclic Thebaid? We should bear in mind, of course, that 573 BC is the terminus post quem for the development of the aitian that makes Opheltes the foundational figure of the official Nemean Games, but the story of his death and the games in his honour may well be more ancient. In this section it will be argued not only that the Cyclic Thebaid included the death of Opheltes, but also that Statius makes use of the old epic version, although his engagement with the old epic tradition may be mediated by Antimachus or some other epic Thebaid. In §2.6 it will be argued that Statius sometimes rejects his Euripidean model in favour of the old epic tradition.

The word πολυδίψοιον in the opening line of the Cyclic Thebaid – Ἀργος ἄειδε ἤτα πολυδίψοιον ἐνεών ἄνακτες – seems an indication that the epic included the drought in the Argolid, although the word could also be interpreted differently. Whatever the exact meaning of πολυδίψοιον, the words διψάσαντες and δίδει σῳζεῖντες in the Pindaric hypotheses confirm that the drought was a traditional element of the story, and certainly not an invention on the part of Statius. There are indications that there also was a drought in Antimachus’ version. In Euripides, there is no drought: Amphiaraurus asks Hypsipyle for running water for a sacrifice, not for water to quench their thirst (Hyps. fr. 752h.29-32). That the drought is an old element of the myth is also suggested by Pausanias: in his description of Argos he mentions an altar of Zeus Hyetios (‘Zeus god of rain’) where the Seven swore an oath that they would either capture Thebes or die. I believe that Statius alludes to this in 4.765-6 (Adrastus addressing Hypsipyle) tu nunc uentis pluuioque rogaris / pro Ioue – a line that

120 Recently Hulls 2014: 199-201 has also made a case for Statius’ engagement with the Cyclic Thebaid.
121 The word (which also occurs in Il. 4.171 καὶ κεν ἔλεγχοτας πολυδίψοιον Ἀργός ὕσσιμον) may be etymologically akin with δίδε ‘thirst’ (Frisk s.v. δίδε ‘metrisch für *poli-δίδε’) So Legras 1905: 71; Vessey 1970: 48 with n. 49; Brown 1994: 62 ‘hinting at the early presence of the drought motif’; Augoustakis 2010: 35 ‘thirsty Argos’. For a survey of different interpretations see Bernabé 1996: 20-1 and more comprehensively Wathelet 2002: 102-4 (cf. also Piérart’s contribution to the same volume). According to Strabo (6.6.7) πολυδίψοιον means πολυπόθηντος (‘much-desired’); others see an allusion to the Danaids, comparing Hes. fr. 128 M-W Ἀργος ἄουδον Δαναιός ἔσωσε Αργός ἐνυδόρον (vel Δαναος ποίησεν εύδόρον): Marinatos suggests ‘abounding in Dipsioï-daemons’, after Mycenaean di-pi-si-jof-i.
123 As Aricò (1960: 57 with n. 8) and Götting (1969: 27 n. 39) rightly point out, Statius did not borrow this element from Euripides, in whose version the Seven are looking for sacrificial water, not water to quench their thirst. In the other mythographical sources – Apollodorus (ἐξήνων ὧδα), Schol. Clem. (ζητοῦσες δὴ ὑδείσωσθαι) and Hyginus (aquam quaerentes) – it is not clear for what purpose the Seven need water. That it is Bacchus who (very atypically, see Brown 1994: 17-8) causes the drought, in order to delay the expedition against ‘his’ Thebes, may well be a Statian innovation (cf. Götting 1969: 27, Brown 1994: 18, Ganibain 2013: 253).
124 See Matthews on fr. 29 (= fr. 30 Wyss) ἐξέσε τοι ἀντοιχείαν Ἰαμηλίῳ Ἀργοῖς καὶ ἄνω Ἡθῶν Πολυάργου Τοῦτος Ἀργα ... ἐνδίκος σαντες: ‘the context...is possibly the occasion when the Argive army...was afflicted with drought’; cf. Brown 1994: 18 n. 98.
125 See Paus. 2.19.9 ἐπὶ τούτων ἤστιν Ἀπόλλων Ἀργαῖοι καὶ ἅμα καὶ Ἡθῶν Τοῦτος Δίας, ἐνδίκος οἱ συσπείδοντες Πολυαργοί τὸν Ἐθήνα καθέων ἀποδαναιδίας συνιώσαν, ὅπις τὰς Ἐθήνας γένηται σφιείν ἐλεύθερον.
126 Parkes ad loc. is silent on Pausanias.
seems to call attention to Statius’ combinatorial imitation of Euripides’ *Hypsipyle* and the pre-Euripidean epic tradition (cf. §2.7).

There is also archaeological evidence that suggests that the Cyclic *Thebaid* had a Nemean episode. In Olympia an archaic bronze shield band (dateable to ca. 575-550 BC) has been found, which depicts a confrontation between two warriors armed with helmets, shields and swords. The two figures are flanked by more warriors, who attempt to restrain them, and between the two protagonists, in the middle, stands a man intervening. Three names are inscribed: the central figure is Adrastus, the name of the man on the left is probably Amphiaras, and the name of the man on the right is probably Lycurgus.\(^{127}\) As Simon has convincingly argued, the scene shows Adrastus intervening in a quarrel between Amphiaras (with the rest of the Seven) and Lycurgus (with his Nemeans).\(^{128}\)

This scene is most important, as it shows that Statius did not invent the violent confrontation between the Seven and Lycurgus (*Theb*.5.650-90) himself. In 1961 already, Aricò suggested that this passage looks back to the old epic tradition; he based the idea on Hyginus, who writes that *Adrastus et ceteri* ... *Lycergus* (see §1.4.1) *pro Hypsipyle deprecati sunt* (*Fab*. 74.3).\(^{129}\) The shield band proves that the quarrel between the Seven and Lycurgus and Adrastus’ intervention are indeed ancient elements of the myth. And again this is confirmed by Pausanias, who informs us that almost the exact same scene was depicted on the ancient throne of Amyclae: Ἄδραστος δὲ καὶ Τυδεὺς Αμφιάραον καὶ Λυκοῦργον τὸν Πρώνακτος μάχης καταπαύσαν (3.18.12 ‘Adrastus and Tydeus are staying the fight between Amphiaras and Lycurgus the son of Pronax’). We also have a Laconian cup which, possibly, depicts the confrontation, with Parthenopaeus amongst the warriors that attempt to separate the two combatants.\(^{130}\) In all likelihood, then, the confrontation was part of the Cyclic *Thebaid* – or at least the pre-Euripidean tradition.

In Statius’ *Thebaid*, the background of their fight in the Cyclic *Thebaid?* Bethe has suggested that Amphiaras has killed Lycurgus’ father Pronax, and that Lycurgus wants to take revenge, but there is nothing to support this idea: the same holds for Schefold’s suggestion that Lycurgus is angry with Amphiaras because the seer delays the expedition or refuses to take part in it.\(^{131}\) The most probable explanation, as Simon has also argued, is that the fight between Lycurgus and Amphiaras is the result of the death of Opheltes. Perhaps, Simon suggests, Lycurgus blames the death of his son on Amphiaras, because it was Amphiaras who asked his nurse – Hypsipyle or someone else (see below) – for water, and thus indirectly caused his death.\(^{132}\) Thus the shield band from Olympia strongly suggests that Opheltes’ death was part of the old Cyclic *Thebaid* already – or at least the pre-Euripidean tradition.

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127 On the left we read [A]mph[i]ar[e]o[s]; on the right we read ...korgos (?); see Simon 1979: 31 with n. 5 and fig. 1; Pache 2004: 129 with fig. 32 and 33.

128 See Simon 1979; *contra* Kenyeres 2001: 12-4, 25 n. 32 who argues that there is no woman or child depicted, that we cannot be sure that the scene takes place in Nemea, and that Lycurgus could be any member of the expedition against Thebes. Unfortunately I have not been able to consult Brillante 1983.


131 See Simon 1979: 32. Note that in Statius’ version, it is Lycurgus, not Amphiaras, who refuses to take part in the expedition against Thebes.

132 Simon 1979: 33 ‘Die archaischen Darstellungen hängen mit der alten epischen Thebais zusammen, in der wahrscheinlich Lykurgos dem Amphiaras die Schuld am Tod des Archemoros gegeben hatte. Wie es Euripides
Of course there are also differences. In Statius’ *Thebaid* Amphiaraurus does not fight but intervene, while Tydeus and Parthenopaeus do not intervene but fight. These differences can easily be explained from Statius’ characterisation of these heroes: Amphiaraurus is a peaceful seer, who reluctantly takes part in the expedition, while Tydeus and young Parthenopaeus are hot-headed warriors eager for battle. Nevertheless, the near bloodshed in Statius’ *Nemea* looks back – perhaps through Antimachus – to an old version of the story. In the next chapter, we will see how Statius first creates the expectation that he will follow Euripides’ *Hypsipyle*, and then rejects his Euripidean model in favour of the epic confrontation between Lycurgus and the Seven (§2.6.4).

What about Hypsipyle? Neither the Olympian shield band nor the throne of Amyclae depicts Hypsipyle. That seems to confirm the *communis opinio* that Hypsipyle’s involvement is a Euripidean innovation (cf. §§1.3.4 and 2). In the Cyclic poem, it might have been Adrastus, not Hypsipyle, who guides the Seven to the one remaining spring in Nemea, which would also explain why Pausanias mentions a Nemean spring called Adrasteia (2.15.3). On the other hand, one could argue that the mythographical evidence suggests that she played a role in the Cyclic *Thebaid* already. With one exception (Σ Pind. *Nem.* hypoth. b = App. A e), the mythographers do not mention Hypsipyle’s reunion with her sons, which suggests that they do not have in mind Euripides’ drama. But they do mention Hypsipyle. If the mythographers reflect the Cyclic poem (which is of course a disputable assumption), then Hypsipyle may have been present in the Cyclic *Thebaid* already. Simon adds the argument that there are links between the story of the Seven against Thebes and the story of the Argonauts, such as Amphiaraurus’ participation in the funeral games for Pelias. These arguments, however, are not compelling, and I am inclined to believe that Hypsipyle’s role as wet-nurse of Opheltes is indeed a Euripidean innovation. And it is to Euripides that we should now turn our attention.


134 Punzi 1910: 180. His conclusion that ‘il solo, l’unico protagonista era Adrasto, il quale salvava l’esercito menandolo, per favore degli dei, alla sorgente’ overstates the case.

135 According to Brown 1994: 64 the reunion is not mentioned because these mythographers are interested primarily in the events ‘from the perspective of the Seven against Thebes narrative’ – for which the reunion scene is not extremely relevant.

2. Statius and Euripides*

Though admirable in all, [Statius] principally excels in the mournful and pathetic. He is the same among the Romans, as Euripides among the Greeks.

— Lewis (1773: xv)

2.1. Introduction: Euripides’ Hypsipyle

Statius’ Thebaid reworks several tragedies, such as Aeschylus’ Septem contra Thebas, Sophocles’ Oedipus rex, and Euripides’ Phoenissae – not to mention Seneca’s tragedies. On a different level, too, the epic is profoundly tragic, its disturbing poetic universe more like Seneca’s inescapable world of nefas than the teleological world of Vergilian epic.\(^{138}\) The Nemean episode (4.646-7.104) takes its plot from Euripides’ Hypsipyle (cf. §1.3.4). Previous research on the intertextual connections between Statius’ Nemean episode and Euripides’ Hypsipyle has been dominated by the question of whether or not Statius used the play; this chapter aims to explore how he used it. We shall see that Statius essentially follows Euripides, but also works with the epic tradition. Before we turn our attention to Statius’ engagement with Euripides, it may be useful to briefly introduce the play.

Of all fragmentary Greek plays, Euripides’ Hypsipyle (ca. 412–406 BC) is the least fragmentary,\(^{139}\) thanks to a spectacular discovery of Grenfell and Hunt in Oxyrhynchus in 1906, romantically described in one of their reports.\(^{140}\) The papyrus (P. Oxy. VI 852, 1908), produced in the reign of Domitian (81–96 AD), contains three complete columns of 60 lines each and numerous smaller fragments. It covers substantial parts of the first half of the play; the second half is less well-preserved. On the basis of stichometric line numbering it has been calculated that the play counted ca. 1750 lines (30 columns). The papyrus also has para-graphoi indicating changes of speakers, sometimes even indicating the dramatis personae by name. In combination with other evidence, especially the mythographers, the papyrus has enabled scholars to reconstruct the play with some precision.

After two Dutch editions – Van Herwerden (1909) and Italie (1923) – it was Bond (1963) who produced the first English edition with commentary. Bond’s reconstruction was improved by Cockle (1987): on the basis of a technical re-examination of the papyri, involving microscopic analysis of fibre structures and worm cut patterns, he made 46 new joins. His reconstruction underlies the most recent editions of the Hypsipyle by Collard and Cropp (Aris and Phillips 1995, 2004; Loeb 2008) and Kannicht (TrGF 2004). The following discussion is based on the most recent edition (Loeb 2008), although I have often consulted Cockle’s and Bond’s valuable editions.

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\(^{*}\) In slightly different form, this chapter has been published as Soerink 2014.

\(^{138}\) On Statius and Greek tragedy see Heslin 2008, Smolenaars 2008, Hulls 2014: 202-12, and Marinis’ contribution to Brill’s Companion to Statius (forthcoming); in the same volume, Augoustakis will discuss Statius and Seneca.

\(^{139}\) Collard-Cropp 2008: 255.

Although the reconstruction of the play is not without problems, the main events are clear.\textsuperscript{141} As the title indicates, its heroine is Hypsipyle, daughter of Thoas and granddaughter of Dionysus. In the Euripidean version, her background is as follows (fr. 759a): when the Argonauts visited Lemnos, Hypsipyle bore twin sons to Jason, Euneus and Thoas, whom Jason took with him to Colchis. After the Argonauts had left, the Lemnian women massacred the male inhabitants of the island. Since Hypsipyle had refused to kill her father, she had to flee. Seized by pirates, she was sold into slavery to Lycurgus, priest of Zeus in Nemea, where she became wet-nurse to Opheltes, infant son of Lycurgus and Eurydice. In the meantime, Jason died, and Euneus and Thoas were raised by Orpheus in Thrace. There they were reunited with their grandfather Thoas and returned with him to Lemnos. When they found their mother missing, they set out to find her.

In the prologue, Euneus and Thoas arrive in Nemea, at the exact moment when the Seven march through Nemea on their way to Thebes. Hypsipyle, lingering before the palace with her nursling Opheltes in her arms, admits the two young men to the house, without recognising them as her sons. Then Amphiaras makes his appearance. He needs fresh water for a sacrifice, and Hypsipyle guides him to a spring. There Opheltes is killed by a serpent. When she returns to the house, Opheltes’ mother Eurydice wants to punish Hypsipyle with death. But Amphiaras persuades Eurydice to accept the situation: he interprets Opheltes’ death as an omen for the Argive expedition and names him Archemorus (‘beginner of doom’).\textsuperscript{142} He also orders funeral games to be held in his honour: the first Nemean Games. Euneus and Thoas participate in the games, which somehow leads to their recognition and to the joyful reunion of Hypsipyle with her sons. At the end of the play Dionysus appears as \textit{deus ex machina}, probably to sanction the reunion, and to order their return to Lemnos.

2.2. Status quaestionis

Although there are some striking differences, the events in Statius’ Nemean episode are essentially the same: the Seven meet Hypsipyle; she guides them to a spring; Opheltes is killed by a serpent; there is a confrontation with one of Opheltes’ parents; Amphiarus interprets the child’s fate as a portent for the expedition against Thebes and calls him Archemorus; games are celebrated in his honour; and Hypsipyle is happily reunited with her sons. The first question that poses itself, then, is whether or not Statius has used Euripides’ play in composing his Nemean episode.

Before the publication of the papyrus in 1908, there was some debate on this question, although most 19th-century scholars were inclined to believe that Statius had indeed modelled his episode on Euripides.\textsuperscript{143} Thus Ribbeck wrote that ‘[a]uch für die Episode, welche die Argiverhelden mit Hypsipyle erleben [...] hat Statius eine Tragödie, die gleichnamige des Euripides benutzt, deren Bruchstücke noch denselben Gang der Handlung erkennen lassen’;\textsuperscript{144} and Eissfeldt even claimed that ‘die Fabel dieses Stückes [...] zeigt \textit{nic}ht die \textit{ge}ringste \textit{Abweichung} von der Darstellung in der \textit{Thebais}’.\textsuperscript{145} These judgements, however, were based

\textsuperscript{142} On the speaking name Archemorus see §6.3.
\textsuperscript{143} See Reussner 1921: 37.
\textsuperscript{144} Ribbeck 1892: 229.
\textsuperscript{145} Eissfeldt 1904: 421, my italics.
and one cannot escape the impression that these scholars did not even consider the possibility of Flavian poets like Statius being original.

Surprisingly perhaps, after the papyrus had been published, scholarly opinion was more divided than before. According to some scholars, including Norden, the papyrological evidence proved that Statius had indeed imitated Euripides. Fortgens, in his commentary on 6.1-295, also claims that Statius had Euripides’ Hypsipyle ‘ante oculos’, suggesting that Statius is rather dependent on Euripides. Others, like Taccone and Kroll, laid emphasis on the differences and denied that Statius had used the Euripidean play. We should bear in mind, however, that most of these scholars were not primarily interested in Statius, but in the recently discovered Hypsipyle: the debate was really about the question whether or not it was legitimate to use Statius’ Thebaid in reconstructing the play, as Hartung had attempted in the 19th century.

The first scholar that studied the relationship between Statius and Euripides rather than the relationship between Euripides and Statius, so to speak, was Reussner in his 1921 dissertation De Statio et Euripide. Reussner called attention to several similarities on both the macro- and the micro-level, although he was careful to point out some differences as well. His conclusion was that Statius had indeed used Euripides: ‘Itaque cum totius narrationis institutione tum singulis locis cum Euripide congruentibus probari mihi videtur in libris IV et V componendis huius poetae Hypsipy lam Statium manu habuisse’.

The parallels have been examined in detail by Aricò (1961) and Vessey (1970). Interestingly, they reached diametrically opposed conclusions. Like Reussner, Aricò argues that Statius indeed used Euripides: ‘I confronti istituiti dimostrano, crediamo senza possibilità di dubbio, la reale entità dei debiti di Stazio nei riguardi del dramma euripideo’, although he stressed that Statius did not slavishly follow his model and also made use of other sources: ‘si rileva che, per i particolari mitici in cui si allontana da Euripide, Stazio ci fornisce delle versioni che in massima parte si ritrovano in altre fonti, letterarie o figurate. E nello stesso tempo risulta ancora una volta confermato il carattere tutto particolare dell’atteggiamento di Stazio di fronte ai suoi modelli: atteggiameto che è attivo e non passivo, ed implica uno sforzo di elaborazione, di scelta, di fusione, di aggiornamento delle varie versioni mitiche, in coerenza con le varie esigenze della sua poesia’.

Vessey, on the other hand, is very sceptical: ‘A careful analysis of these supposed parallels,’ he writes in his 1970 article, ‘cannot inspire one with any feeling of certainty that Statius made use of the Euripidean drama. The freedom with which he adapted material from

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147 Norden also pointed to the relevance of Callimachus; see Reussner 1921: 37-8.
149 See Reussner 1921: 37-8; cf. Aricò 1961: 56 n. 3.
150 Cf. Götting 1969: 26 n. 35 ‘Die Editoren der euripideischen Hypsipyle sind aber verständlicherweise vor allem daran interessiert, Parallelen, die den griechischen Text stützen, anzuführen und nicht die Quellen und Vorbilder der statianischen Darstellung zu untersuchen’.
151 Hartung 1844: 430-442.
152 Reussner 1921: 37-44.
153 Reussner 1921: 44.
the *Phoenissae* and the *Supplices* is a warning. It is of course true that with so much of the *Hypsipyle* unknown to us it would be rash to go as far as Kroll in totally dismissing the play as one of Statius’ sources. But it is equally clear that it is dangerous to place any reliance on the *Thebaid* as a key to reconstructing the *Hypsipyle*. An interrelation between the two works has not yet been satisfactorily proved, and the question must not be begged.\(^{156}\)

More recently, Brown has made some observations on Statius’ use of Euripides’ *Hypsipyle* in her 1994 dissertation *Into the Woods*,\(^ {157}\) although her chapter on Statius and Euripides is in fact largely devoted to other questions, such as the possible trilogy *Hypsipyle–Phoenissae–Antiope*. Where appropriate, her observations are incorporated in the following discussion.

Vessey’s refusal to see verbal echoes of Euripides in Statius is perhaps the result of his eagerness to liberate Statius from the image of ‘slavish imitator’. Yet he does Statius an injustice when he claims that ‘[i]t is clear enough that the use which an epic writer could make of tragedy is limited’.\(^ {158}\) For even if the parallels carry little conviction, Statius’ engagement with the *Hypsipyle* shows clearly in terms of plot, characterisation and *mise en scène* – if we may use that term with respect to epic narrative. For one thing, it would be very difficult to explain the presence of the reunion scene (5.710-30) without Euripides. Personally, like other modern scholars,\(^ {159}\) I am convinced that Statius knew and used Euripides’ *Hypsipyle*. In the light of Statius’ extensive use of other Greek tragedies, there is no reason to suppose that the poet – born and bred in bilingual Naples\(^ {160}\) as the son of an expert on Greek literature\(^ {161}\) – did not know the play. In fact, we know that the play was popular in Roman times: there is evidence for performances,\(^ {162}\) and there are visual representations that attest to its popularity (see Appendix B), including a wall-painting from Herculaneum which, potentially, Statius may have seen with his own eyes.

### 2.3. Framing Euripides

Statius has incorporated the plot of Euripides’ *Hypsipyle* into his epic narrative. Structurally, his model for the conflation of epic and tragedy is the Dido episode in Vergil’s *Aeneid*, Hypsipyle’s embedded narrative in *Thebaid* 5 corresponding with Aeneas’ in *Aeneid* 2 and 3.\(^ {163}\) As Vergilian scholars have long observed, Vergil repeatedly flags the tragic nature of his

\(^{156}\) Vessey 1970a: 51.


\(^{158}\) Vessey 1970a: 48. For the underpinnings of the debate cf. Ahl 1986: 2815 with n. 21; his meta-scholarly remarks on the debate Statius/Antimachus can also be applied to the debate Statius/Euripides.


\(^{160}\) Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 15.33 *quasi Graecam urbem.*

\(^{161}\) On Statius’ father see McNelis 2002.

\(^{162}\) Euripides’ *Hypsipyle* was performed in the presence of Juba II of Mauretania, either in Mauretania or – more likely perhaps – during his long residence at the court of Augustus in Italy. An Oxyrhynchus papyrus mentions the *Hypsipyle* in a list of choral odes for which a choral flautist, Epagathus, provided the flute accompaniment. Moreover, we know that Archemorus was the subject of encomia, and that Hypsipyle and Archemorus were the subject of pantomime (Lucian *On dance* 44). See Cockle 1987: 41-2. As to the pantomime, one wonders, with Ogden 2013: 57, whether the serpent also appeared on stage, and, if so, in what form.

Dido episode: the bay of Carthage is called *scaena* (*Aen.* 1.162), which programmatically heralds that the events in Carthage will unfold in dramatic fashion; Venus is wearing buskins (*Aen.* 1.337 *coturno*); the Carthaginians are building a theatre (*Aen.* 1.427-9); and in book 4 Dido is famously compared to Pentheus and Orestes on stage (*Aen.* 4.469-73) – to mention some of the most conspicuous examples.  

When the Seven reach Nemea – and when Statius’ narrative enters the realm of Euripidean tragedy – we find something similar, as Brown has argued. In the second half of *Thebaid* 4, at the beginning of the Nemean episode, Bacchus makes his appearance, in order to delay the expedition against ‘his’ Thebes. The role of Bacchus may well be a Statian innovation. Why does Statius assign such an important role to Bacchus in book 4? The most obvious answer to that question is that Bacchus enables Statius to connect the story of the Seven with the story of Hypsipyle, since the god is mythologically connected with both Thebes and Hypsipyle. Indeed, Bacchus’ intervention has an impact on both: it delays the expedition against ‘his’ city and it leads to the reunion of his granddaughter with her sons. But Bacchus’ appearance in *Thebaid* 4 has metapoetical significance as well. In the words of Brown, ‘Bacchus’ prologue-like speech strongly suggests that, generically, the narrative will be re-directed towards tragedy’. After all, Bacchus is the patron god of tragedy. Thus his intervention in book 4 can be seen to have the same function as the bay of Carthage (*scaena*) or Venus’ buskins in the *Aeneid*: they signal, metapoetically, that the following episode will be tragic in nature.

Brown goes on to argue that Bacchus’ appearance in *Thebaid* 4 contains specific allusions to Euripides’ *Bacchae*. Admittedly, there are elements in Statius’ text that may trigger associations with Dionysus’ appearance at the beginning of that play. What Brown fails to observe, however, is that Bacchus also figures prominently in the opening scene of Statius’ principal model, Euripides’ *Hypsipyle*: Dionysus figures prominently in Hypsipyle’s prologue speech, the very first word of the play being ‘Dionysus’ (fr. 752).

\[Διόνυσος, \, δε \, ἔφεσι \\ νεφρῶν \\ δοραῖς \\ καθαπτός \, εἵ \\
πικαίνε διὰ Παρνασσόν κάτα \\
πορφυρά χορέουν παρθένοις σύν δελφίνι \\ ...\]

‘Dionysus, who girded with thyrstuses and fawnskins leaps in the torch-lit dance across Parnassus with the girls of Delphi ...’

And the next fragment (fr. 752a) shows the continued importance of Dionysus in the rest of the prologue. The appearance of Bacchus at the beginning of Statius’ Nemean episode, then, could also be seen as an epic version the Dionysiac beginning of Euripides’ *Hypsipyle*.

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At the end of book 5, Bacchus makes a second appearance. When Hypsipyle has been reunited with her sons, Bacchus makes the heavens resound with maenadic cries, drums and cymbals (5.729-30):

\[
\text{addita signa polo laetoque ululante tumultu tergaque et aera dei motas crepuere per auras}
\]

Before the Hypsipyle papyrus had been published (1908), Legras already wrote that Bacchus’ celestial signs are reminiscent of the finale of a Euripidean tragedy. And indeed, the papyrus shows that in Euripides’ *Hypsipyle*, immediately after the reunion scene, Dionysus appears as *deus ex machina*. If Bacchus’ appearance in book 4 can be related to Euripides’ prologue, then these lines can be seen as Statius’ epic version of Bacchus’ appearance at the end of the *Hypsipyle*. At this point in Statius’ narrative, one could say, the plot of Euripides’ drama is complete. Like Euripides’ *Hypsipyle*, Statius’ Nemean episode frames the events surrounding Hypsipyle with two manifestations of the god Dionysus. This ‘Bacchic frame’ is reinforced by verbal echoes, as 5.729-30 constitutes an inverted echo of his entrance in book 4, where the god orders the music to be silent (4.668-9).

Some important events of Euripides’ play, however, do not take place within this ‘tragic frame’, but are postponed or transposed. In the first place, the scene in which Amphiaraus interprets Opheltes’ death as an ill omen for the Argive expedition and names him Archemorus, is postponed to the very end of the book (5.731-53), after the ‘epiphany’ of Dionysus. The scene is most important, as it provides the link between the events in Nemea – the digressive *medius ... error* (4.650) – and the larger plot of the *Thebaid*; its placement immediately after the completion of the Euripidean plot, underscores precisely that function. The scene also makes a smooth transition to book 6, which is devoted to the funeral of Opheltes and the celebration of the first Nemean Games. The games were probably reported by a messenger in Euripides’ *Hypsipyle* (see §2.4 below), but Statius transposes them to book 6: traditional epic themes, they have no place within his ‘tragic frame’. In book 6, in the context of Opheltes’ funeral, we also encounter Eurydice. As a result of Statius’ decision to favour the traditional epic confrontation between Lycurgus and the Seven over the Euripidean *agōn* between Hypsipyle and Opheltes’ mother (see §2.6.4 below), Eurydice scarcely figures in book 5. In the following book, however, the Euripidean mother appears after all, calling for Hypsipyle’s death (6.167-71) and adding her voice to the chorus of bereaved women that populate the *Thebaid*. Adrastus’ *consolatio* to Opheltes’ father (6.46-50), Reussner has

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172 Bacchus also figures in Hypsipyle’s Lemnian narrative, where he appears to save Hypsipyle and Thoas (5.265-86). His appearance in book 4 also has a counterpart in 7.145-226, which frames the Nemean episode as a whole, while it also contacts with 5.275-7, creating a parallel between Lemnians and Thebans (see Göttig 1969: 27-8, 128; cf. Scaffai 2002: 155).

173 Legras 1905: 72 n. 1.

174 The appearance of Dionysus is guaranteed by the speaker notation διονυσ at about line 1673; see Cockle 1987: 125 fr. 64 iii.41, Cropp 2008: 316-7.

175 For the details see 5.729-30 nn.

176 On the speaking name Archemorus see §6.3.

177 Brown 1994: 80 observes that ‘Eurydice’s extravagant grief contrasts with the relative coherence and articulacy of the tragic mother [in Euripides]’.
suggested,\textsuperscript{178} may also take its inspiration from Euripides’ play, where Amphiaras soothes Eurydice (fr. 757.122-8).\textsuperscript{179}

2.4. Reunion scene

Statius’ reunion scene (5.710-28), which leads to Bacchus’ celestial signs discussed above (§2.3), is most remarkable. Whereas Euripides’ play is directed from the very beginning towards the joyful reunion of Hypsipyle with her sons, in Statius’ \textit{Thebaid} it comes as a surprise – for Statius’ audience as well as for Hypsipyle, who had abandoned all hope that Bacchus would come to her rescue. Although Hypsipyle has mentioned her sons twice before (4.779-80 and 5.463-7), Euneus and Thoas have not played any role in the narrative so far. We did not even know they were in town! The scene, then, comes as a complete surprise – unless one is familiar with the \textit{Hypsipyle}.

Undoubtedly, as critics have long observed,\textsuperscript{180} the reunion takes its inspiration from Euripides. Of the corresponding scene in the play one substantial fragment of 55 complete lines survives (fr. 759a): in this fragment Amphiaras makes his farewell and departs for Thebes, after which Hypsipyle and Euneus – Thoas is \textit{mutus} – exchange some of their earlier experiences. This fragment must have followed the actual \textit{ἀναγνώρισις}, which unfortunately cannot be reconstructed with certainty. In all likelihood, however, the recognition follows from the participation of Euneus and Thoas in the Nemean Games,\textsuperscript{181} as the Vatican Mythographer suggests:\textsuperscript{182}

\begin{quote}
\textit{quibus ludis Hypsipyles duo filii, quos ex Iasone habuit, intererant, quos fugiens reliquit in Lemno. qui et ipsi matrem quaerentes currendo vicerunt. quorum nomina praeco cum pronuntiasset [Iasonis et Hypsipyles filios esse] mater eos cognovit. quam agnitas exorato rege mox Lemnum reduxerunt.}
\end{quote}

The \textit{praeco} (‘herald’) must be a messenger, who narrates the first celebration of the Nemean Games on stage. When he proclaims Euneus and Thoas as victors, that somehow leads to the recognition.\textsuperscript{183} Euripides’ herald, I suggest, may be an allusion to the competition for \textit{κήρυκες} (‘heralds’) which was part of the Nemean Games; the winner was given not only a wreath, but also the privilege of announcing the winners.\textsuperscript{184}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{178} Reussner 1921: 43-4; cf. Augoustakis 2010: 58 n. 60 ‘Statius’ Adrastus replays the Euripidean Amphiaras’ consolation to Eurydice [...]’; the Flavian poet, however, transfers the pair lamentation-consolation to men’.
\textsuperscript{179} Aricò 1961: 66 agrees that the passage may have provided Statius with the idea of introducing a \textit{consolatio}, although he stresses that such \textit{consolationes} were a favourite \textit{topos} in classical literature, and that Statius’ phrasing owes more to Vergil than to Euripides.
\textsuperscript{180} Legras 1905: 71-2, 155 n. 3.
\textsuperscript{181} First argued by Friedrich 1934: 300-3.
\textsuperscript{184} See Miller 2004: 16.
\end{flushright}
Now let us have a look at the reunion scene in Statius’ *Thebaid* (5.710-30). The passage begins with an expository question: ‘Which of the gods solaced Hypsipyle’s calamity […] and brought back unexpected joy to sad Hypsipyle?’ Although such questions are a frequent narratorial device (see 710-2n.), one cannot escape the impression that Statius is playing with the expectations of his audience, as if he were asking ‘Do you know what happens next?’ The answer, namely Bacchus, reminds us of the god’s presence in Nemea, which we might have forgotten in the course of book 5. Then, with pluperfects, Statius rapidly summarises the play’s prologue, in which Hypsipyle welcomes Euneus and Thoas into the royal palace of Nemea (*Hyps. fr. 752d-e*). Statius clearly expects his audience to be familiar with Euripides; he even suppresses the names Euneus and Thoas.

After this ‘synopsis’ of the Euripidean prologue, we are given the recognition scene itself. Since Statius has transposed the Nemean Games to book 6 (see §2.3), the Euripidean scenario in which the recognition somehow follows from the participation of Euneus and Thoas in the games, is not possible in the *Thebaid*. What is Statius’ solution? I quote the relevant lines in full (5.716-22):

> ... et protinus ille tyranno
> nuntius extinctae miserando uulnere prolis.
> ergo adsunt comites (pro Fors et caeca futuri
> mens hominum!) regique fauent; sed Lemnos ad aures
> ut primum dictusque Thoas, per tela manusque
> irruerunt, matremque auidis complexibus ambo
> diripiant flentes alternaque pectora mutant.

The narrative is dense, so let us first establish what happens. Euneus and Thoas are in the palace of Nemea at the moment that news of Opheltes’ death arrives. When Lycuragus seeks to avenge his son and kill Hypsipyle, the two youths follow him and support him (5.718-9 *adsunt comites … regique fauent*). We are invited to imagine Hypsipyle’s sons shouting for the execution of their own mother, dramatic irony in the Euripidean fashion. However, in the tumultuous confrontation between the Seven and Lycuragus *cum suis*, Euneus and Thoas overhear two names that make them realise that the woman under threat is, in fact, their mother: ‘Lemnos’ (the island) and ‘Thoas’ (Hypsipyle’s father). These names have indeed been spoken: Lycuragus refers to Lemnos when he threatens Hypsipyle (5.658-60 *faxo omnis fabula Lemni / et pater et tumidae generis mendacia sacri / exciderint*), and Tydeus in his taunting reply mentions the names of Hypsipyle’s father and grandfather (5.675-6 *genitorque Thoas et lucidus Euhan / stirpis aus*).

The word *nuntius* looks back intratextually to the earlier scene in which the news of Opheltes’ death arrives in the palace of Nemea (5.717 *nuntius* echoing 5.638-9 *et iam sacrifici subitus per tecta Lycurgi / nuntius implerat lacrimis ipsumque domumque*). At the same time, it also seems to be an allusion to the messenger’s (*nuntius*) speech in Euripides’ *Hypsipyle*,

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186 Cf. Georgacopoulou 2005: 129 ‘Stace préfère présenter les deux frères dans un catalogue épique et non dans la scène de le reconnaissance qui le précède’. They also figure in 6.133-4, 464-6, 476. Newlands (2012: 42 n. 172) erroneously claims that Euneus ‘is not even given a name in Statius’ epic’. See further 5.713n.
which leads to the reunion of mother and sons. The word thus recalls the Euripidean model to highlight how Statius’ epic narrative deviates from its tragic model.

Unfortunately, Euripides’ recognition scene does not survive. We have only one fragment: περίβαλλ’, ὃ τέκνον, ὠλένας (fr. 765a ‘Throw your arms around me, my child!’), which we may connect with 5.721-2. Hence some aspects of Statius’ engagement with the Hypsipyle in this passage may elude us. What we do know, however, is that Statius brings about the recognition differently, in accordance with the traditional epic confrontation between Lycurgus and the Seven (see below §2.6.4); we also know that Statius consciously rushes through the events; the reunion scene comes almost as an afterthought. For the story of the Seven against Thebes, of course, the characters of Euneus and Thoas are of little importance, and his nimble narration of the reunion scene seems to acknowledge precisely that. Statius’ audience, familiar with Euripides, would smile at his compression of his literary model – a smile that would be reinforced, perhaps, by associations with the genre of comedy, where a recognition scene often ‘solves the complications and brings the comedy to its happy conclusion’.187

2.5. Hypsipyle as epic poet

Nugent, Gibson and others have called attention to Statius’ characterisation of Hypsipyle as poet figure: she narrates the story of the Lemnian massacre as a skilled epic poet, and she even voices her poetic ambitions.189 We are reminded of Apollonius Rhodius, where Hypsipyle also narrates her (fraudulent) story (1.793-833), and of Heroïdes 6, although Ovid endows her with an elegiac, not an epic voice.190 Valerius Flaccus casts the Lemnian massacre in a third-person narrative, but his Hypsipyle does weave her story into a cloak (Val. 2.408-17), a well-known metaphor for poetic composition;191 perhaps Statius even alludes to Valerius’ cloak when his Hypsipyle begins her narrative with the phrase quid longa malis exordia necto? (5.36).192

It is important to stress, however, that Hypsipyle is already something of an epic poet in Euripides.193 In fr. 752f, which covers the end of the prologue and the beginning of the parodos, the Chorus of local Nemean women address Hypsipyle and ask why she is lingering

187 Cf. Legras 1905: 155 n. 3 ‘il est vraisemblable que les Romains aimaient les scènes de reconnaissance, si nombreuses dans leur ancien théâtre’. Lactantius Placidus comments on 5.718-9 that ‘eleganter more comoediae contigit agnitio filiorum’ (my italics), and on 5.728 he adduces a parallel from Terence (‘quae paulo ante luctu flebat, nunc gaudio. alio ergo fletu scilicet gaudio. Terentius <Adelph. 409>: “lacrimo gaudio”’). The emphasis on θαῦμα and fate (5.714 mirandaque fata, 718 pro fors) is also typical of such scenes in comedy.
189 See Nugent 1996; Gibson 2004, and 5.626-7n.
190 Cf. Augustakas 2010: 32 ‘the middle of the Thebaid is transformed into an extensive Herois, borrowing a well-known script from Ovid upon which Hypsipyle embroiders her personal, post-Ovidian story’, 45-7.
191 Ganiban 2007: 91 n. 74 suggests that Valerius’ cloak ‘might also have suggested to Statius the potential of having Hypsipyle herself narrate the Lemnian massacre’. For weaving as a poetic metaphor see e.g. Brown 1994: 103, McNelis 2007: 38 with references and cf. e.g. Callim. Aet. fr. 26.5 Harder μὴ δού χριστόμενον, Aen. 8.625 clipei non enarrabile textum.
193 Cf. Ganiban 2007: 76 n. 17 ‘The Euripidean tragedy makes it certain […] that Hypsipyle herself had a habit of telling tales about the Argonauts, though we cannot be sure that such a tale made up part of the Hypsipyle itself.’
at the doorway of the house. They suggest several possibilities. Are you sweeping the entrance, they ask, or sprinkling water on the ground, or ... (fr. 752f.19-29)

... ἠ τὰν Ἀργον τὰν διὰ σοῦ στόματος αἰεὶ αἰλήσμοιν παντηρόντερον ἀδείς, ἢ τὸ χρυσόμαλλον ἱερὸν δέρον ὁ περὶ δρόφος ὑσίω ὁμμα διάκοντος φωστεῖ, μναμοσύνα δὲ σοι τὰς ἀγχαλίοιο Λήμνου, τὰν Αἰγαίος ἐλλήσιοι κιμακτύτος ἀρεὶ;

‘... are you singing now of Argo, that fifty-oared vessel that your voice is always celebrating, or the sacred golden fleece which the eye of the serpent, coiled around the boughs of the tree, keeps under guard? And does your memory dwell on Lemnos lying by the sea, which the Aegean encircles and beats with echoing waves?’

The Argo, the golden fleece, the Colchian serpent, Lemnos – apparently Hypsipyle is fond of telling the story of the Argonauts; the word αἰεὶ (‘always’) suggests that the Chorus have heard the story more than once.194 The vocabulary evokes the epic genre: note the verb ἀδείς and the compound adjectives χρυσόμαλλον and ἀγχαλίοιο with their dactylic ring. These lines confirm the impression of the preceding prologue, in which Hypsipyle – after invoking Dionysus (see §2.3 above) – tells not only her personal history, but also about the expedition of the Argonauts (fr. 752a.10 Λήμνου, 752b.5 Συμπληγάδων). And at the end of the prologue, when Euneus and Thoas have entered the house, she sings to her nursling Opheltes ‘not the Lemnian songs, relieving the labour of weft-thread and web-stretching shuttle, that the Muse desires me to sing’ – an excellent praeiterito (fr. 752f.9-11; cf. 5.616n.). Note that the weaving is also present in Euripides already: as Newlands has recently suggested, ‘[w]ith the metaphor of weaving deployed by Hypsipyle [in Theb. 5.36], Statius acknowledges his debt to his tragic model as well as to Valerius’,195 while at the same time it connects Hypsipyle’s narrative with Bacchus’ delay of the Argive expedition (4.677 nectum ... moras).

In the following fragment (fr. 752g) Hypsipyle is indeed singing of the Argonauts; she is not interested in the approaching Argives, to which the Chorus want her to turn attention. In the first lines of fr. 752h, immediately before the entrance of Amphiaras, Hypsipyle again mentions her Muse, Calliope, as an epic poet might do (fr. 752h.5-9). In short, Euripides portrays Hypsipyle not merely as a poet figure, but as an epic poet figure, singing time and time again of Lemnos and the Argonauts.

When Statius makes Hypsipyle an epic poet figure, who takes control of the narrative for some 450 hexameters with the narration of the Lemnian massacre and the Argonauts’ visit to Lemnos (5.49-498), he is capitalising on the epic potential of his tragic heroine: in Euripides’ tragedy Hypsipyle’s epic voice is stifled by the limitations of the tragic genre, but in Statius’ Thebaid her epic voice can speak freely: Statius has transformed the rara exordia – to

194 Cf. Theb. 5.499 iterat, 615-6 quotiens tibi Lemnon et Argo / sueta loqui, 626 retracto, where see notes.
abuse Statius’ phrase (4.651) – that he found in Euripides’ play, into a fully fledged mini-epic.  

2.6. Back to epic

‘What is common in varying narrations of a myth’, Vessey once wrote, ‘is unlikely to be of great interest, but when an author decides to innovate and to use a version divergent from all or most other accounts, it may well be worth considering what factors led him to do so’.  

With that in mind, I now turn to the differences between Statius and Euripides. It is my hope to show that Statius has adapted the Hypsipyle to his own poetic agenda, and often follows the epic tradition – the Cyclic or Antimachean Thebaid (see §§1.3.5 and 1.5) – rather than Euripides.  

At one point, I will argue, he even deliberately creates the expectation that he will follow Euripides in order to reject his tragic model in favour of the old epic version (4). It will become clear that Euripides, rather than Statius, is the odd one out: the Greek tragedian deviates from the traditional epic version mostly for reasons of dramatic πρᾶξις. It has been said that Statius has diminished the role of Euripides’ Amphaiaraus and that he has distributed the actions of the seer over various Argive heroes.  

Actually, it is the other way around: Euripides has attributed the actions of the Seven to Amphaiaraus alone, for the simple reason that he had only three protagonists at his disposal.

2.6.1. Asking for water

In Euripides’ play, the priest Amphaiaraus addresses Hypsipyle as he is looking for fresh water to make a sacrifice. In Statius’ Thebaid, by contrast, the Seven are looking for water because they are suffering from thirst, and it is Adrastus, not Amphaiaraus, who addresses Hypsipyle and asks for water (4.752-71). Since the thirst plagues all Argive troops, Aricò has pointed out, it is natural that not their priest, but their chief commander addresses Hypsipyle. That makes sense. Another consideration, I would suggest, might be that Amphaiaraus was on board of the Argo: perhaps Hypsipyle would recognise him as one of the Argonauts that visited Lemnos?  

Most importantly, I believe, Statius’ version looks back to the Cyclic poem, in which the Argives are also suffering from thirst, and in which it may have been Adrastus who led the Argives to the spring (see §1.5). Perhaps Adrastus discovered the spring after appealing to Zeus Hyetios (cf. Paus. 2.19.8)? In that case, Statius’ (Euripidean) Hypsipyle would in some sense take the place of (Cyclic) Zeus. Perhaps Statius alludes to the appeal of the thirst-stricken Seven to Zeus when his Adrastus says to Hypsipyle: tu nunc uentis pluuioque rogaris / pro Ioue (4.765-6): Hypsipyle takes the place of Zeus in quenching their thirst.

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196 Dominik 1994: 56 cautions that ‘even though an examination of the fragments of Euripides’ Hypsipyle reveals that the Hypsipyle story assumes an important rôle in the poetic tradition concerning the Seven, it is equally wrong to suggest that this tale [the Lemnian tale JS] is included in the Thebaid merely for this reason’. Indeed, Hypsipyle’s story is well integrated in the main narrative, see e.g. Götting 1969.

197 Vessey 1973: 68-9

198 Following in the footsteps of Aricò 1961.


2.6.2. Leaving the child
In Euripides’ play, Hypsipyle takes her nursling with her when she guides Amphiaraus to the spring, where the child is killed by the serpent. In Statius, by contrast, Hypsipyle places Opheltes on the ground ‘lest she be too slow a guide’ (4.785-6). Again Statius follows the epic tradition. Pseudo-Apollodorus also writes that Hypsipyle places the child on the ground before guiding them to the spring (3.6.4 αὐτοὶς ἠγήσατο τῆς ἐπὶ κρήνην ὕδων Ἑψιπύλη, νύπτων παιδα ἄντα Οφέλτην ἀπολίπωσα; cf. Σ Clem. Alex. Protr. ἢ δὲ ἀποδείμην τὸ παιδίον ἀπῆλξεν αὐτοῖς ἱδρεύσασθαι βουλομένη). There is also an Apulian amphora (ca. 350 BC) depicting Hypsipyle hurrying towards the dying child (see App. B c). It is not difficult to explain Euripides’ innovation vis-à-vis the epic tradition: Opheltes simply had to die off-stage.

2.6.3. Killing the serpent
In Euripides it is Amphiaraus who kills the Nemean serpent with his arrows (fr. 757.101-8; see 5.534-43n.). In Statius’ epic, however, the Seven confront the serpent collectively: after Hippomedon has hurled an enormous rock, it is Capaneus who kills the serpent with his spear (5.556-78). It has been observed that, since the serpent is sacred to Jupiter (another Statian innovation), the pious Amphiaraus is not the best candidate to kill the Jovian creature, whereas it perfectly suits superum contemptor Capaneus to assault Jupiter,202 even indirectly and unknowingly, in a scene that foreshadows his assault on Jupiter in the finale of book 10. Again, that makes sense. However, we should realise that in the epic tradition, the serpent is also attacked by more than one warrior. That, at least, is suggested by the mythographical evidence. Pseudo-Apollodorus, for instance, writes that the serpent was killed by οἱ μετὰ Άδραστον (3.6.4), and Hyginus writes that draconem Adrastus et ceteri occiderunt (Fab. 74).203 And if we examine the visual representations of the myth, we find that the serpent is usually attacked by more than one warrior; the Apulian volute crater from Ruvo, for instance, depicts the serpent, coiled around a tree, being attacked by three warriors with sword, spear and rock (see App. B c). In all likelihood, then, Statius does not so much deviate from Euripides, as Euripides deviates from the epic tradition.

2.6.4. An epic ἀγών
I would like to conclude this section with arguably the finest example of Statius’ engagement with Euripides, at the beginning of the passage that relates the violent confrontation between Lycurgus and the Seven (5.650-90). In §1.5 it has been argued that confrontation between Lycurgus and the Seven and the intervention of Adrastus and Amphiaraus (5.667-71) looks back to the Cyclic Thebaid – or at least the pre-Euripidean tradition. In this section we will examine how Statius toys with the expectations of his audience, first creating the expectation that he will follow Euripides, then rejecting the Euripidean scenario in favour of the epic tradition.

When Euripides’ Eurydice hears that her son Opheltes is dead, she calls for vengeance. The Hypsipyle has a long ἀγών scene in which Eurydice accuses Hypsipyle of intentionally

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killing Opheltes, while Hypsipyle pleads not guilty. In Statius, by contrast, when Hypsipyle appears with the mangled remains of Opheltes, it is not Eurydice, but Opheltes’ father Lycurgus who seeks vengeance. He enters the scene and, mad with grief, almost kills Hypsipyle, who is defended by Tydeus, Capaneus, Hippomedon and Parthenopaeus (5.650-66). When Lycurgus is threatened by the Seven, a group of Nemean peasants rally to support their king (5.666-7 at inde / agrestum pro rege manus). Adrastus and Amphiarus arrive just in time to separate the two parties and prevent bloodshed (5.667-90).

For a moment, however, Statius creates the impression that he will follow Euripides; he plays with the intertextual expectations of his audience, as he does elsewhere. Let us have a look at the beginning of the passage (5.650-5):

\textit{ecce – fides superum! – laceras comitata Thoantis}
\textit{aduehit exsequias, contra subit obuia mater,}
\textit{femineos coetus plangentiaque agmina ducens.}
\textit{at non magnanimo pietas ignaua Lycurgo:}
\textit{fortior ille malis, lacrimasque insana resorbet ira patris ...}

We are invited to visualise (\textit{ecce}) Hypsipyle, Thoas’ daughter, carrying the mangled corpse of Opheltes. From the opposite direction (\textit{contra, obuia}) comes Eurydice, accompanied by mourning women, reminiscent of Euripides’ chorus of Nemean women. The situation, then, is exactly the same as in Euripides’ \textit{Hypsipyle}. Naturally, we expect Statius to follow his dramatic model, that is, we expect mother and nurse to re-enact their Euripidean \textit{agōn} scene. But at that moment, unexpectedly, Lycurgus makes his appearance and Eurydice recedes into the background; her emotional reaction is postponed to the following book (6.135-92).

The words with which Statius introduces Lycurgus are noteworthy: \textit{at non magnanimo pietas ignaua Lycurgo}. It is tempting to read these words as an intertextual comment on Euripides’ Lycurgus, as if Statius were asking: ‘Why did you not show your \textit{pietas} towards your son in Euripides’ \textit{Hypsipyle}?!’ The answer to that question, perhaps, is in the word \textit{magnanimo}, epic epithet par excellence (see 5.653n.), which characterises Lycurgus as epic hero. In Euripides’ drama there may be no place for him, but in Statius’ epic he takes control. His immediate reaction – to avenge his son and kill Hypsipyle – comes close to what Quinn has called the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[204] Fr. 754b.2-3, 757 passim
\item[205] Fr. 752d.10 (Hypsipyle speaking) ἀδεσπότης μ[έν] ο[[ν]δ[υ]]ς ἀρσενίων κο[ρε][ι]. The preceding lines make clear that the line does not refer to Lemnos. Cockle 1987: 40, 141 thinks that Lycurgus’ appearance ‘is almost certainly necessary for the action of the play’.
\item[206] Cf. Johnson 1994: 34-5 on the \textit{Achilleid}: ‘the expectations of this audience (whom we must learn to resemble temporarily if we want to enjoy this poem) are that they will be deliciously frustrated and brilliantly baffled in what they do expect, that they will never get exactly what they want because they will be given much more than they knew they wanted [...] every new new scene [will] have its own \textit{coup de théâtre} [...] Not only will every narrative sequence have its own unexpectedness, but also every verse will have its surprise’. A fine example in the \textit{Thebaid} is the beginning of Hypsipyle’s narrative: in the light of the intertextual models – Odysseus’ encounter with Nausicaa, Aeneas’ encounter with Dido – one might expect the travelling hero to narrate his adventures; instead, it is the female benefactress who takes control of the narrative. See Ganiban 2007: 72.
\end{footnotes}
‘heroic impulse’. The emphasis on *ira* in 5.655 (cf. 680, 689, 694 and 733) also marks the ‘epic turn’ in Statius’ narrative.

It has been said that Statius ‘epicises’ his Euripidean model. Reussner already noted the difference, explaining it in terms of genre: a violent confrontation between two armies is appropriate in epic, whereas in a theatre it would not even be possible to stage such a scene. Brown, too, thinks along these lines: ‘Statius replaces the dramatic debate between mother and nurse with the confrontation of epic warriors. Lycurgus threatens Hypsipyle with all the fury of an epic warrior in combat’. As we have seen in the previous chapter (§1.5), however, the violent confrontation of epic warriors is no Statian innovation: it looks back to the pre-Euripidean tradition, possibly to the Cyclic *Thebaid*. Another factor, I would like to add, is that Statius’ Hypsipyle, unlike her Euripidean predecessor, immediately accepts the responsibility for Opheltes’ death (5.620-37), which precludes an *agon* about the question of guilt as in Euripides.

### 2.7. Conclusion

Statius has incorporated the plot of Euripides’ *Hypsipyle* in his epic *Thebaid*. Bacchus’ appearance in book 4 marks the ‘tragic turn’ in Statius’ narrative, while the celestial signs that sanction the reunion of Hypsipyle and her sons correspond with Dionysus’ appearance *ex machina* at the end of the play. Hypsipyle’s Lemnian narrative, which takes up most of *Thebaid* 5, capitalises on Hypsipyle’s potential as epic poet figure in the Greek tragedy. Since the games are postponed to book 6, the reunion of Hypsipyle and her sons is brought about in a non-Euripidean way: Euneus and Thoas overhear the names ‘Lemnos’ and ‘Thoas’ during the violent confrontation between Lycurgus and the Seven. As we have seen in §1.5, this confrontation looks back to the epic tradition, possibly the Cyclic *Thebaid*. Statius toys with our expectations, though, as he first creates the impression that we will be given an *agon* between Hypsipyle and Eurydice, as in the *Hypsipyle*. Other elements in Statius’ episode, such as the drought and the fight with the serpent, also follow the pre-Euripidean tradition rather than the *Hypsipyle*.

That Statius combines Euripides with (an) older version(s) need not come as a complete surprise. At the end of book 4 the poet reminds us of the pre-Euripidean tradition when Adrastus addresses Hypsipyle: *tu nunc uentis pluuioque rogaris / pro Ioue* (4.765-6 ‘It is you whom we now petition in place of the winds and rainy Jupiter’; transl. Parkes). As we have seen in §1.5, the line calls attention to Statius’ combinatorial imitation of both the Euripidean version (in which Amphiaraurus asks Hypsipyle for sacrificial water), and the old version (in which the Seven ask Jupiter to put an end to the drought): Statius combines the Euripidean

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208 Quinn 1968: 1-22. Kenyeres 2001: 24 connects Lycurgus’ *pietas* towards his son with the general importance of father-son relationships in the epic genre – she mentions Hector/Astyanax, Laertes/Odysseus/Telemachus, Anchises/Aeneas – and suggests that ‘Statius places the close bond between Lycurgus and Opheltes in contrast to Oedipus and his sons’.

209 Reussner 1921: 42; cf. Scaffai 2002: 247. A fine example of epicising a tragic model is Jocasta in book 7, who after her speech to her son Polynices (7.497-519) also addresses the Argive troops (7.519-27).


211 Statius’ Hypsipyle supplicates the Seven in the hope of being killed, whereas Euripides’ Hypsipyle supplicates Amphiaraurus in the hope of not being killed (fr. 757.57-62). Like her Euripidean predecessor, Statius’ Hypsipyle supports her plea with reference to the favour she has bestowed upon the Seven (fr. 757.60 σην ... χαριν and 5.629 meriti si qua est mihi gratia) – an allusion that highlights the difference.
heroine with the epic drought. Our investigations have shown that the Nemean episode is indeed an artful synthesis of Euripidean and pre-Euripidean elements.
3. Linus intertextus

‘Du liebes Kind, komm, geh mit mir!
Gar schöne Spiele spiel’ ich mit dir;
Manch’ bunte Blumen sind am dem Strand,
Meine Mutter hat manch gülden Gewand.’

— J.W. von Goethe Der Erlkönig 9-12

3.1. Introduction

As has often been observed, there are striking parallels between the story of Opheltes and the so-called story of Linus and Coroebus in the first book of the Thebaid (1.557-672), which the Argive king Adrastus tells to Polynices and Tydeus in order to explain the origins of the festival of Apollo. After Apollo had slain the monster Python in Delphi, Adrastus relates, he came to Argos to seek expiation from king Crotopus. The god raped the king’s daughter (Psamathe), who secretly gave birth to a son (Linus). Fearing her father’s wrath, she entrusted the infant to a shepherd. However, whilst sleeping in a green meadow, Linus was torn to pieces by savage dogs. Stricken with grief, Psamathe confessed everything to her father – who punished his daughter with death. In revenge, Apollo unleashed a serpentine creature from the underworld (Poine), a monster that terrorised Argos and devoured its children. The young hero Coroebus killed Apollo’s monster. Again the god took revenge, this time through a parching plague that took many Argive lives. When it was revealed that, in order to stop the plague, those responsible for the death of Poine must be sacrificed, Coroebus went to Delphi and voluntarily offered his life to Apollo. The god was touched, granted the youth his life and put an end to the plague.

Adrastus’ narrative prompts many questions, the central question being how the story of Linus and Coroebus relates to the Thebaid as a whole. Certainly it invites reflection upon the status of virtues such as pietas and clementia in Statius’ bleak universe, and upon the troubled relationship between gods and humans. Coroebus’ visit to Delphi, for instance, can be related to the self-sacrifice of Menoeceus in book 10 as well as the Argive women at the ara clementiae in book 12. The child Linus, entrusted to a shepherd, is also reminiscent of the infant Oedipus, while Poine in many ways parallels the Theban Sphinx. In forging such
connections between the mythical histories of Argos and Thebes, Adrastus’ narrative also suggests that the two cities are similarly doomed. Since the story of Linus and Coroebus has received quite some critical attention, I will here confine myself to its intratextual relation with the story of Opheltes in the Nemean episode.

One incidental similarity between the two stories is that both Coroebus and Opheltes are names of minor characters in Vergil’s Aeneid, but there are more profound similarities to be found. And Statius emphatically invites his audience to ponder these similarities, as Linus is depicted on the shroud that covers Opheltes’ remains, ‘the Thebaid’s most conspicuous example of Statian self-reference’ (6.64-6):

\[
\text{medio Linus intertextus acantho letiferique canes: opus admirabile semper oderat atque oculos flectebat ab omne mater}
\]

As the word \textit{omine} makes clear, the death of Linus, at least retrospectively in the eyes of Opheltes’ mother, anticipates the death of Opheltes. Another indication that the stories are connected, Brown rightly points out, is the location of Psamathe’s rape: on the banks of the Nemean river (1.575 \textit{Nemeai ad fluminis undam}). Statius’ invocation of Apollo at the beginning of the Nemean episode (4.649-51) could also be seen as an indication that the Nemean episode is in touch with Adrastus’ narrative, in which Apollo is the central character. Finally, we may note that Coroebus is amongst the imagines in the procession that precedes the games in honour of Opheltes (6.286 \textit{speciesque horrenda Coroebi}).

That the two stories have much in common needs little argument: ‘Two babies die in the wilds through bestial violence, bringing suffering to their mothers and heralding the deaths of many others’. In addition to these essential similarities, we find many structural

then by a plague; a fatal encounter at a crossroads and the destruction of two children (609).’ The connection between Poine and the Sphinx is underscored by numerous verbal parallels between 1.597-626 and the description of the Sphinx in 2.496-526. For a comprehensive intertextual analysis of the latter passage see Smolenaaars 2004.

Recent discussions of the story of Linus and Coroebus are Hill 1989: 113-5, Dominik 1994: 63-70 (with bibliography in n. 92); Ganiban 2007: 9-23 (with more bibliography in n. 48) and McNelis 2007: 25-49.

Coroebus is the Trojan hero and lover of Cassandra in Aen. 2.402-52, who plays a prominent role in Berlioz’s opera \textit{Les Troyens}, and whom Baebius Italicus inserts in his \textit{Ilius latina} (249 with Scaffai). Opheltes is the name of Euryalus’ father in Aen. 9.201 \textit{bellis adsuetus Opheltes}, who appears again in Sidonius Apollinaris Carm. 5.164-6: \textit{qui uigor in pedibus! frustra sibi natus Ofelte / Sicaniam tribuit palmam, plantasque superbas / haud ita per siccam Nemeen citus extulit Arcas.} The lines have troubled editors, since \textit{Nemeen} and Arcas (Parthenopaeus) suggest that \textit{Ofelte} refers to ‘our’ Opheltes. However, as Anderson (1927) has shown, Sidonius Apollinaris does not have in mind Statius’ Opheltes, but the Vergilian Opheltes, and \textit{natus Ofelte} refers to Euryalus in the footrace in Aeneid 5. For literature on Sidonius Apollinaris and Statius see Parkes 2012: xxxv.


Brown 1994: 183; cf. 5.516-7n. In a different context Newlands 2012: 53 claims that ‘[t]he pollution of the spring [Langia in Nemea] also carries connotations of rape (4.823-4)’.

Apollo figures prominently in the story of Linus and Coroebus and in the hymn that concludes the first book (1.696-720), but after that he recedes into the background. Hence Delarue’s erroneous remark (on 4.651 \textit{Phoebe, doce}) that Apollo is ‘[u]n dieu non encore nommé’. The narrator again invokes Apollo at the beginning of the chariot race, 6.296-7.

On the \textit{pompa} in 6.268-95 see Lovatt 2007.

and verbal parallels. Before we turn to the question of how we should interpret the juxtaposition of the two stories, we will first survey these correspondences.

3.2. Correspondences

The Nemean serpent corresponds with Python (1.562-9). Even readers that have somehow failed to notice the numerous echoes of Python in Statius’ description of Jupiter’s serpent are explicitly reminded of Python in the simile that rounds off that passage (5.531-3). At the same time, however, in killing the child Opheltes, the Nemean serpent plays the role of the frenzied dogs that are responsible for Linus’ death (1.589 dira canum rabies); these dogs are also depicted on Opheltes’ shroud (6.65 letiferique canes), where the adjective letiferique unmistakably recalls the Nemean serpent (5.628 and 737 letifer anguis). And in the third place, the Nemean serpent is related to the paedophagous monster Poine that devours the children of Argos, tearing them from their nurses’ bosoms (1.603 abripere altricum gremiis). Admittedly, the nurses are inspired by Callimachus, but the word altricum also creates a significant connection with altrix Hypsipyle and her nursling Opheltes. Moreover, when Coroebus confronts the monster, she has just captured two little children (1.609-10 lateri duo corpora paruum / dependent); this image is ominously echoed in 4.748-50, where Statius describes Opheltes at Hypsipyle’s bosom. Like Python and the Nemean serpent, Poine is born from the earth, from the inferno (1.597-8 monstrum infandis Acherontie sub imo / conceptum Eumenidum thalamis). Poine’s origins emphatically associate her with Tisiphone, and just like the Fury she has a serpent rising from her head (1.599-600 aeternum stridens a uerti surgit / et ferruginean frontem discriminat anguis). Van den Broek suggests that this feature also links Poine with the Nemean serpent, 5.529-30 discriminat ... anguis echoing 1.600 discriminat anguis. In short, the Nemean serpent echoes all destructive creatures that figure in the story of Linus and Coroebus.

Opheltes corresponds with Linus. Both children are entrusted to the care of a surrogate parent: Linus to an anonymous shepherd, Opheltes to Hypsipyle. Both the shepherd and the wet-nurse fail to protect their charge, and both children are killed by beasts whilst sleeping on

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224 Most parallels have been listed by Vessey 1973: 104-5 and Brown 1994: 182-4; cf. also Ganiban 2013: 256.
225 Both are green, an unusual colour for epic serpents (1.711 uiridis Python, 5.549 uiridi), both are earthborn (1.563 terrigenam Pythona, 5.506 terrigena), both have threefold tongues (1.565 ore trisulco, 5.509 ter lingua uibrat, 571 linguaeque ... trisulcae), both are sinuous (1.562 sinuosa volumina, 5.520-1 sinuosa ... terga), both are poisonous (1.566 ueneno, 5.508 uenenti), etc. See also my notes on 506, 514-5, 516-7 and 517.
227 The adjective occurs three more times in the Thebaid: in 1.707 and 7.709 in the combination letiferasque domos, with reference to pestilence (after Verg. Aen. 3.139, see Smolenars on 7.709; cf. also S. 1.4.109 letferas ... pestes), in 8.2 letiferasque donos with reference to the underworld. Thus the adjective also indirectly links the dogs that kill Linus and the Nemean serpent that kills Opheltes with Apollo’s plague and with the inferno.
228 Cf. Aet. fr. 26.14 Harder μητέρας εξεκύκλωσεν, διουσφιάζων δὲ τηθήμας (‘emptied mothers (?)’, and nurses were relieved of their burdens’) with Harder’s note; see McNelis 2007: 34-5.
229 SB mistranslates altricum as ‘mothers’.
230 Brown 1994: 172 suggests that these two children allude to Eteocles and Polynices.
231 The text of 4.748-50 is disputed (see Parkes ad loc.), but I think the verb dependet should be maintained.
232 Vessey 1973: 103 notes the connection between Poine and Tisiphone. In 1.627 Poine is called ultrix, which also links her to altrix Tisiphone.
233 Van den Broek 2007: 60, where it is also suggested that molares (5.561) echoes the millstone thrown at Poine’s corpse (1.622); it is also possible, however, to understand asprosques molares as ‘ipsius monstri dentes’ (see Heuvel on 1.622).
the ground. Vessey rightly compares the locations of their deaths, in both cases an idyllic pastoral environment:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{non tibi digna, puer, generis cunabula tanti} \\
&\text{gramineos dedit herba toros et uimine querno} \\
&\text{texta domus (1.582-4)} \\
&\text{at puer in gremio uernae telluris et alto} \\
&\text{gramine nunc faciles sternit procursibus herbas} \\
&\text{in uultum nitens (4.793-5)}
\end{align*}
\]

The Callimachean apostrophe of Linus, we may add, is echoed in the apostrophe of Opheltes (see 5.534-5n.). Another striking parallel is that both children, shortly before their death, ‘drink in the daylight with open mouth’. In addition, there are several more subtle parallels that bind the two children to each other, such as the word *sidereus*. The aftermaths of their deaths are also similar: the death of Linus leads, directly or indirectly, to more innocent victims when Apollo sends the monster Poine, while the death of Opheltes anticipates the many victims of the Theban War (see §6.3). In that light, the name of the monster Poine is most significant: as Jupiter has made clear in his speech earlier in book 1, the devastating war between Argos and Thebes is a *poena* (1.216 *exigar in poenas*, 245-6 *hanc etiam poenis inessere gentem / decretum*). And Tisiphone’s intervention at Oedipus’ request is framed as *poena* too (1.80-1 *tu saltem debita uindex / huc ades et toto in poenam ordire nepotes*). Thus the many children that Poine slaughters in Argos parallel the many people (including several *mortes immatutae*) that fall victim to Jupiter’s and Tisiphone’s *poena*, Apollo’s wrath corresponding with the wrath of Jupiter and Tisiphone. It is also instructive to compare the reactions to the children’s deaths. When Psamathe learns that Linus is dead, she bursts into lament, as does Hypsipyle when she finds Opheltes (and later Eurydice). The words in which Statius describes how the two women learn of the children’s deaths are strikingly similar: *hic uero attonitas ut nuntius aures / matris adit* (1.590-1) immediately after Linus’ death, is echoed in 5.541-4 *cum tamen attonito moriens uagitus in auras / excidit ... audiit Hypsipyle immediately after Opheltes’ death.* And both Psamathe and Hypsipyle wish for death (1.595 *cupientem occumbere leto*, 5.628-35). And although the two situations are very different, the reactions of Crotopus and Lycurgus are similar in that both men respond with violent anger: Crotopus kills his daughter Psamathe, Lycurgus intends to kill Hypsipyle.

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236 1.588 *patulo caelum ore trahentem*, ominously echoed in 4.799 *patulo trahit ore diem*.
238 As Ganiban 2007: 9 n. 47 points out, lines 1.596-7 do not make clear why exactly Apollo sends the monster Poine: to avenge the death of his son Linus, the death of Psamathe, or both?
239 Cf. Vessey 1973: 104. Statius does not name the monster Poine, but he hints at her name in 1.578 *poenae metuens*. We may safely assume that Statius’ audience was familiar with the myth from other sources – Callimachus in the first place – and was thus able to see Statius’ wordplay with Poine and *poena*.
240 The word *nuntius* also recurs, when Statius describes how news of his death arrives in the palace 5.639 (cf. 717) *nuntius implerat lacrimis ipsunque domumque*, which also echoes 1.592-3 *ipsa ulro saeuis plangoribus amens / tecta replet*.
241 The phrase *occumbere leto* is also applied to Hypsipyle in 5.693.
Both stories are aetiological. The story of Linus and Coroebus involves both the founding of the Pythian Games – although Adrastus, unlike Ovid, does not mention them explicitly\textsuperscript{242} – and the religious festival in honour of Apollo that Argos is celebrating when Polynices and Tydeus arrive; and the story of Opheltes, as we have seen (§1.1), explains the origins of the Nemean Games. In the words of McNelis: ‘The death of the children are similar in that aetia concerning the foundation of major Greek games – the Pythian games in Linus’ case, the Nemean in Opheltes’ – are connected to their deaths’.\textsuperscript{243}

3.3. Statius on killing serpents

As we will see (§6.3), Opheltes’ fate foreshadows and symbolises the slaughter of the coming Theban War (Tisiphone’s and Jupiter’s poena), while Linus’ fate leads to numerous innocent Argive children being devoured by the paedophagous monster Poine. Thus the story of Linus clearly anticipates the story of Opheltes. Van den Broek notes that the two stories also mark two important moments in the development of the narrative: ‘[t]he significance of their deaths is the foreboding of a development in the war. After book 1 the preparations for the war commence, and Opheltes is the first victim of the war’.\textsuperscript{244} In the words of Dominik: ‘The passing of Linus is of paramount significance, for his death anticipates the demise of the infant Opheltes in the main narrative (5.538-42); just as the babe Linus is the first to suffer death undeservedly in a seemingly endless chain of tragic events, so the infant Opheltes is the first innocent victim of a long and costly war caused by the enmity that is aroused between two brothers’.\textsuperscript{245} Although I am reluctant to embrace Dominik’s straightforward political reading of the Thebaid, I do share his idea that the fates of Linus and Opheltes symbolise the suffering that is at the heart of the poem.

As I will argue later (§6.5), the Nemean serpent symbolically represents Thebes and its concomitant powers of destruction. The fact that the serpent is sacred to Jupiter, in my view, accords with the destructive role of Jupiter in the Thebaid: it is Jupiter himself who wills the destruction of both Argos and Thebes to punish mankind (1.214-47) – even though in the course of the epic the pater omnipotens (1.248) seems to lose control over the situation.\textsuperscript{246} Like Apollo in the story of Linus and Coroebus, the supreme god works in cooperation with the powers of hell, Poine and Tisiphone.\textsuperscript{247} Given the ‘troublesome alliance between heaven and hell’,\textsuperscript{248} it makes perfect sense that the chthonic Nemean serpent is

\textsuperscript{242} But Statius reminds us that Apollo’s defeat of Python is the aetion of the Pythian Games in 6.8-9.
\textsuperscript{243} McNelis 2007: 94.
\textsuperscript{244} Van den Broek 2007: 77-8, following Vessey 1973: 105 ‘The death of both infants is mentioned at the beginning of important sections of the epic; Linus appears when the doom of Argos enters its first stage with the arrival of Polynices and Tydeus. The baby Opheltes [...] dies just before the Argive army sets out on its final march to destruction’; cf. Kenyeres 2001: 94.
\textsuperscript{245} Dominik 1994: 66.
\textsuperscript{246} Cf. McNelis 2007: 36 ‘... a central theme of the Thebaid, namely that the Olympians use hell to destroy Thebes, but in so doing, they lose control over the cosmos’ (cf. 130). Crucial is the moment when Tisiphone diverts Eteocles’ prayers to Dis (11.207-9); cf. McNelis 2007: 150.
\textsuperscript{247} Jupiter’s infernal strategies are clear, as he sends Mercury to bring back Laius’ shade from the underworld (1.292-302 and book 2), which recalls Tisiphone and Tantalus in Seneca’s Thyestes as well as Juno and Allecto in Aeneid 7. The striking word descendo in 1.225 (cf. katabasis), I would suggest, may also hint at Jupiter’s use of the underworld
\textsuperscript{248} I borrow the phrase from McNelis 2007: 46-7.
sacred to celestial Jupiter. As Apollo employs Poine to punish Argos, so Jupiter’s scheme to destroy Argos and Thebes will be accomplished by chthonic forces too.

The complex nature of the Nemean serpent – related to heaven and hell at the same time – appears also from its various intratextual relations with the story of Linus and Coroebus. In Adrastus’ narrative we encounter two serpentine monsters, Python and Poine, and two monster-slayers, Apollo and Coroebus. It thus offers two ‘models’ of dragon-slaying, which are both taken up in the Nemean episode. The first model is Apollo killing Python: a cosmogonic victory of light over darkness, of order over chaos. As McNelis puts it, ‘Apollo’s tussle with Python is a paradigmatic example of the duel between heavenly and earthly divinities over control of the universe’. Not much later, however, the same celestial Apollo unleashes the chthonic monster Poine from the underworld to avenge the death of Linus and/or Psamathe. The disturbing conclusion must be that Apollo, like Jupiter, also works together with the powers of hell. When he sets the serpentine Poine against Argos, in some sense he ‘undoes’ his triumph over the serpent Python. As a result, when Coroebus kills Poine (the second model of dragon-slaying), this victory is highly ambiguous: it is a heroic exploit that liberates Argos from the monster, but at the same time it is a sacrilegious act that provokes the anger of Apollo. Certainly Coroebus’ triumph does not bring calm and peace to the troubled city of Argos, as it leads to the plague that takes even more lives.

As we have seen (§3.2), the Nemean serpent has elements of both Python and Poine, which supports its being chthonic and celestial at the same time. Consequently, its death at the hands of Capaneus is also highly ambiguous. As Hutchinson puts it, ‘[t]he contrast between the snakes destroyed by and sacred to divinity leads us into disturbing connections with the whole story of Coroebus’. On the one hand, to kill the Nemean serpent is to attack Jupiter: not accidentally, it is superum contemptor Capaneus who kills the serpent sacred to Jupiter, an indirect assault on Jupiter. Admittedly, Capanes does not know that the creature belongs to Jupiter, but he wishes it to be sacred (see 5.568n.). On the other hand, Statius’ Capaneus himself suggests another scenario, in which the defeat of the Nemean serpent could be interpreted as a victory over dark chthonic forces: when he is about to kill the monster, Capanes casts himself in the role of Jupiter and Hercules fighting against the Giants (see 5.569-70n.) – another cosmogonic narrative about celestial powers defeating chthonic forces. As Philip Hardie, in a different context, has recently put it: Statius ‘does not even

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250 Delarue 2000: 123 also links ‘la folie criminelle du dieu [Apollon]’ with ‘la colère de Jupiter’ in the main narrative.

251 Cf. 6.495-512 where Apollo also employs a monster from hell, strikingly similar to Poine, to upturn Polynices’ chariot (Dominik 1994: 64). McNelis 2007: 27 discusses how Statius shatters our ‘expectation of order created by the employment of a representative myth of the fight between Olympian and chthonic deities’.

252 As Ganiban 2007: 14-5 shows, Coroebus killing Poine recalls both Hercules killing Cacus and Aeneas killing Turnus, which intertextually reflects the problematic status of his heroic action.

253 1.627-8 saeuet in miseros ... Delius insurgit strongly suggests that the plague is even worse than Poine.

254 Cf. Scaffai 2002: 249 also notes the ‘contraddizione’ inherent in Capanes’ Herculean yet sacrilegious exploit (‘impresa “erculea”, che si confuga però come un sacrilegio meritevole della punizione divina’).


256 Apollo pairs the two stories in his song (6.358-8 Iouem Phlegramque suique / anguis opus).
keeps up the pretence of a separation of celestial and chthonic powers’. In the *Thebaid*, disturbingly, fighting Heaven and fighting Hell are not far apart.

### 3.4. Opheltes and Linus’ poetics

When Statius associates Opheltes with Linus, Brown has shown, he also brings Linus’ rich poetic background to bear on Opheltes. Originally, there were two different mythical figures with the name Linus: the son of Apollo and Psamathe, and a famous Theban poet of the same name. In the course of classical literature, however, these two figures – one Argive and one Theban – were confused and conflated. In Hellenistic and Roman literature the name Linus is especially associated with Callimachean poetics.

As Ribbeck has noticed in 1892 already, Adrastus’ embedded narrative takes its inspiration *inter alia* from the first book of Callimachus’ *Aetia*, where the myth of Linus and Coroebus is the αἴτιον that explains the religious ‘festival of the lambs’ in Argos, which involves the killing of dogs – the dogs that killed Linus (frr. 25e–31b Harder). The Callimachean aspects of Adrastus’ story have been discussed extensively by McNelis. If Opheltes recalls Linus, then, he also recalls Callimachus. It is even possible that Statius’ Opheltes owes something to Callimachus’ Linus directly; the apostrophe of Opheltes, for instance, may be inspired by the apostrophe of Linus in *Aetia* 1 (see 5.534-5n.).

As we have seen (§1.3.6), the story of Opheltes itself also has a connection with Callimachus’ *Aetia*, as the *Victoria Berenices* at the beginning of *Aetia* 3 also concerns an αἴτιον of the Nemean Games – although Callimachus does not, in fact, tell the story of Opheltes. Given the close intratextual correspondence between the two episodes in the *Thebaid*, it is tempting to believe that there were correspondences between the two αἴτια in Callimachus’ poem as well, especially in light of their similar placement: Linus at the beginning (*Aetia* 1, *Thebaid* 1), Opheltes in the middle (*Aetia* 3, *Thebaid* 4-6). An intriguing passage, in that respect, is Vergil’s sixth *Eclogue*, where Silenus famously sings how Linus hands Hesiod’s reeds to Gallus (*Ecl.* 6.67-71):

> ut Linus haec illi diuino carmine pastor<br>floribus atque apio crinis ornatus amaro<br>dixerit: ‘hos tibi dant calamos (en accipe) Musae,<br>Ascraeo quos ante seni, quibus ille solebat

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257 Hardie 2012: 204.

258 Note how Statius/Adrastus describes Coroebus killing Poine: 1.615-6 *tandem sua monstra profundo / reddit habere ioui*. Of course ‘nether Jove’ refers to Dis, yet one cannot escape the impression that the phrasing also hints at celestial Jupiter’s infernal aspect. Vessey 1973: 104 also sees a connection.


260 See e.g. Fedeli on Prop. 2.13a.3-8, Brown 1994: 176, Gibson on S. 5.5.55.


264 So Ribbeck 1892: 229.

265 This may have been part of Athena’s prophecy; cf. Harder on 54i ‘There is not mention of the foundation of the games, but we cannot exclude that this was mentioned in the lost part’. See further §1.3.6.

266 McNelis 2007: 159 suggests that the split flame in *Thebaid* 12 looks back to *Aetia* 4.
cantando rigidas deducere montibus ornos.

Linus is presented as a shepherd (*pastor*), which binds him to the genre of pastoral poetry.\(^{267}\) Interestingly, his hair is decorated ‘with flowers and wild celery’ (*floribus atque apio*): wild celery may be a plant used for symposiastic garlands, with a precedent in Theocritus,\(^{268}\) but it also carries associations with Opheltes and the Nemean Games (see §1.4.2).\(^{269}\) ‘Virgil’s Linus wears the garland which commemorates Opheltes’ death’, as Brown puts it.\(^{270}\) In that light, *floribus* is also intriguing. One could argue that the flowers are simply an Alexandrian touch – flowers figure prominently in Hellenistic art and literature\(^{271}\) – but Opheltes is fond of flowers as well (see §1.4.2). Is it possible that Vergil’s *floribus atque apio* nods to an intratextual connection between Linus and Opheltes in Callimachus’ *Aetia*? Or perhaps in Gallus? A connection which Statius then recreates in his *Thebaid*? That might also explain why the two children are mentioned in close proximity of each other in Ovid’s *Ibis*.\(^{272}\)

However that may be, the name Linus – both the poet and the child – carries associations with Callimachus and pastoral poetry. We find the mythical poet, son of Apollo, as representative of Alexandrian poetics in Vergil’s fourth *Eclogue* (4.55-7) and in *Propertius* (2.13.8 *Inachio* ... *Lino*), where the adjective ‘Inachian’ (i.e. ‘Argive’; see 5.511n.) not only suggests conflation of the two figures, but also points to Callimachus.\(^{273}\) Vergil and Propertius look back to Theocritus, where we find Linus as the old teacher of the young Hercules: γράμματα μὲν τὸν παιδα γέρων Λίνος ἐξεδίδαξεν, / ώρα Ἀπόλλωνος μελεθοῦσις ἀγχυπνος ἤρως (Id. 24.105-6). The adjective ἀγχυπνος surely associates Linus with Hellenistic poetics, while μελεθοῦσις may pun on μέλος.\(^{274}\)

Linus’ first appearance in classical literature, on Homer’s shield of Achilles, curiously supports these Callimachean associations: τοῖς δ’ ἐν μέσοις παῖς φόρμιγγι λιτεία / ἰμερὸν κυθάρις, Λυμὸν δ’ ὑπὸ καλὸν ἀείδο / λεπταλέγῃ φωνῇ (I. 18.569-71). In retrospect, the words παῖς and λεπταλέγ (cf. Callim. *Aet.* 1.6 and 24 Harder παῖς ἄτε and Μοῦσαν ... λεπταλέφη) suggest that ‘singing the fair Linus’ is a most Callimachean poetic activity.\(^{275}\) Unfortunately, Homer’s Linus remains an elusive figure,\(^{276}\) but we do know that in later Greek literature Linus is especially associated with lamentation, as appears best from the tragic exclamation ἀμὴνος.\(^{277}\)

Herodotus heard the Greek Linus-song in Egypt, where – so he writes – Linus is called Maneros: ‘The Egyptians told me that Maneros was the only son of their first king, who died

\(^{267}\) The background of Linus’ being a shepherd is obscure; cf. Servius *ad loc.* ‘quaeritur cur pastor dixit: nisi forte, quod se poeta sub pastoris persona inducit’. Perhaps there is a link with the Argive child of the same name, whom Psamathe entrusted to a shepherd? We probably need Gallus to fully understand the passage.

\(^{268}\) See Clausen on *Ecl.* 6.68, N-H on Hor. *Carm.* 1.36.16, cf. Theocr. 3.23.

\(^{269}\) Servius Danielis, at least, was reminded of Opheltes; see Brown 1994: 181; Coleman *ad loc.*

\(^{270}\) Brown 1994: 182.

\(^{271}\) See Brown 1994: 185 n. 89.

\(^{272}\) Ov. *Ib.* 480-3 quiique Crotopiadien diripuere Linum. / neue uenenato leuius feriarias ab angue / ... / quam puer *Hypsipyles*. The paponymic *Crotopiadien* ‘grandson of Crotopus’ is taken directly from Callim. *Aet.* fr. 25f

\(^{273}\) Harder τὸν σε Κροτωπιάδον.

\(^{274}\) Fedeli *ad loc.*; McNelis 2007: 37 with n. 51.

\(^{275}\) See Brown 1994: 178.


\(^{277}\) See Brown 1994: 176-7 with further references.


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prematurely, and this dirge was sung by the Egyptians in his honour’. Thus the name Linus carries associations with premature death and lamentation as well. That Maneros (Linus) is ‘the only son’ is also noteworthy, as Opheltes’ death also deprives Nemea of its heir.

In short, when Statius associates Opheltes with Linus, he also associates the Nemean princeling with Linus’ poetic background: lamentation, pastoral poetry, and Callimachean poetics. And it is to the Callimachean aspects of Statius’ Nemean episode that we should now turn our attention.

278 Hdt. 2.79.3.
4. Statius and Callimachus

‘Statius is unusual, possibly even unique, in standing with the Augustans in his appreciation of Callimachus’

— Thomas (1983: 103)

4.1. Introduction

In chapter 6 it will be argued that the Opheltes episode can be read as a microcosm of the Thebaid as a whole. In most interpretations of the poem, however, the Nemean episode is considered in stark contrast with the rest of the poem. Vessey, for instance, writes that Nemea is an ‘isolated world’ and that ‘[t]he whole Nemean episode has elements of fantasy and unreality’; in his view, ‘the world into which the Argives have strayed is one totally separated from their own. The serpent is a suitable denizen of this fabulous world, where temporarily the Argive army finds an escape from the nightmarish realities that exist outside it’.279

More recently, Charles McNelis – following in the footsteps of Joanne Brown and François Delarue280 – has defined the ‘otherness’ of Statius’ Nemea in Callimachean terms. In the Thebaid, he argues, there is a strong tension between, on the one hand, the martial epic poetics that propels the narrative forwards to the fraternas acies that are its theme and telos, and, on the other hand, the Callimachean poetics that diverts and delays this epic narrative.281 The martial epic programme of the Thebaid is expressed in Harmonia’s necklace, which is given an ecphrasis in 2.269-96 (cf. §6.5), which is inter alios produced by the Telchines, who figure prominently in Callimachus’ Aetia prologue as representatives of the grand epic poetry that Callimachus rejects.282 The tension between ‘epic’ and ‘Callimachean’ poetics in Statius’ Thebaid looks back especially to Ovid’s Metamorphoses, which famously presents itself as an epic (1.4 perpetuum carmen) in Callimachean style (1.4 deducite).283 That the Thebaid works with Callimachean principles need not come as a surprise, since the poet himself speaks of his epic in Callimachean terms: multa cruciata lima (S. 4.7.24), mihi bissenos multum uigilata per annos (12.811).284 That Statius was familiar with Callimachus is confirmed by Siluae 5.3, where he memorises that his father was ‘skilled to expound the songs of Battus’ son’ (5.3.156-7 tu pandere doctus / carmina Battidiad).

In McNelis’ interpretation of the Thebaid, Nemea is closely associated with Callimachean poetics: Nemea is an essentially Callimachean locus, which ‘deflects the narrative away from martial themes’.285 And thus the Nemean episode goes against the grain of the teleological epic narrative that is directed towards the destruction of Thebes. McNelis

281 McNelis’ dissertation was supervised by Newlands, who has made similar arguments with respect to the Siluae. ‘All [Statius’] works are characterised by a generic tension between epic and Callimachean principles’ (Newlands 2012: 46).
282 Following Feeney 1991: 363-4, who points to the symbolic importance of Harmonia’s necklace as emblem of Statius’ poetic world.
283 See McNelis 2007: 16 with references.
284 See Nauta 2006: 35.
repeatedly claims that Nemea, unlike the other cities of the poem, is a place of peace and quiet, and that Statius’ concentration on the small child Opheltes ‘pushes heroic narrative to the background’. Mc Nelis expands on ideas of Delarue, who similarly argues that in the Nemean episode ‘tou...407, 7.1, 139);293 the whole Nemean episode is characterised as \textit{medius} ... \textit{error} (4.650), ‘a metapoetic observation on its digressive nature’,294 which also recalls the \textit{errores} that delayed the teleological missions of Odysseus and Aeneas.295 The Nemean \textit{mora}, I would suggest, also looks back to Valerius’ \textit{Argonautica}, where the time spent on Lemnos is characterised as \textit{mora} that delays the epic progression of the Argonauts’ expedition to Colchis.296 The \textit{Thebaid} incorporates Valerius’ Lemnian \textit{mora} via Hypsipyle’s embedded narrative. Although \textit{mora} is clearly an epic feature, Delarue and Mc Nelis argue that, in the \textit{Thebaid}, \textit{mora} is systematically associated with Calli-

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item 286 Mc Nelis 2007: 92.
\item 287 Delarue 2000: 135.
\item 291 See further Parkes 2012: xvii-xx. Most striking are the self-conscious ‘comments’ on the Nemean episode \textit{qua delay}, e.g. cf. 4.503 \textit{iam nequeo tolerare moram}, 4.781 \textit{sed quid ego haec fessosque optatis demoror undis?}
\item 292 Parkes 2012: xxii; cf. Delarue 2000: 134 ‘\textit{Error} des Argiens, mais aussi \textit{error} du poète qui s’aventure dans des terres inconnues pour les lecteurs de l’épopée latine […] L’errance des Argiens ... déroute le lecteur tout autant que les guerriers’. The word \textit{error} is echoed in 4.746-7 \textit{inter siluas ... errantes}, which verbally links the ‘wandering’ of the narrative and the ‘wandering’ of the Argives.
\item 293 Göttting 1969: 53, Brown 1994: 9-10, also allowing the idea of ‘mistake in the middle’. Another example of deliberately ambiguous use of the word is Ov. \textit{Met.} 3.155 \textit{errans}. Cf. also S. 5.3.148 \textit{tardus Ulixes}.
\item 294 Cf. e.g. Val 2.356 \textit{moras}, 377 \textit{cunctantibus}, 407 \textit{moras}; in 2.392 \textit{arma uiros sparsosque in litore remos} the echo of the \textit{incipit} of the \textit{Aeneid} signals the return to the epic expedition of the Argonauts after their Lemnian \textit{mora} (Nauta 2013: 246). On the Argonauts’ expedition as a figuration of the Argives’ expedition see Vessey 1973: 89 n. 1, 184-6.
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\end{footnotesize}
machean poetics. In the words of Delarue: ‘Stace casse le mouvement dramatique, alors que Callimaque le désamorce’. In their view, the whole Nemean episode, which delays the progression of the Seven and the epic narrative, is essentially Callimachean.

McNelis lays much emphasis on the relation between Statius’ Nemean episode and the *Victoria Berenices* at the beginning of *Aetia* 3. Like the story of Linus and Coroebus in *Thebaid* 1, he argues, which is also a Callimachean *afrōs* that delays the epic narrative of the Seven against Thebes (see §3), the Nemean episode is closely associated with Callimachus: ‘Statius brings the Argive march to a halt by patently drawing upon the aetiological account of the Nemean games offered by Callimachus’, and ‘Callimachus himself had told about the funeral of Archemorus and the subsequent founding of the Nemean games’.298

What McNelis fails to acknowledge, is that the story of Opheltes scarcely plays a role in *Aetia* 3. As we have seen, the Alexandrian poet’s concern is with Hercules rather than with Opheltes (see §1.3.6),299 which makes the claim that Statius’ story of Opheltes is ‘a Callimachean action for the Nemean games’300 highly problematic. The story of Opheltes takes its inspiration primarily from Euripides, not Callimachus, which makes the episode ‘tragic’ rather than ‘Callimachean’. We may also note that in Statius’ version Opheltes’ father is called Lycurgus as in Euripides, not Euphetes as in Callimachus (cf. §1.4.1), and that Statius suppresses the element of wild celery, which plays such an important role in the *Victoria Berenices* (cf. §1.4.2). McNelis however persists that ‘Callimachus [...] is the Greek author upon whom Statius draws for this action’, and that it is the *Victoria Berenices* that ‘brings to mind the second action for the games’.301 In his eagerness to make Nemea as Callimachean as possible, he also plays down the more epic elements of Statius’ Nemea: Hypsipyle’s narrative about the Lemnian massacre, the Nemean serpent and its death at the hands of Capaneus, the near bloodshed in Nemea town – hardly the stuff of Callimacheanism. To these objections I shall return in the next chapter, in which it will be argued that the Nemean episode is not so much Callimachean, but rather displays the destruction of Nemea’s pastoral – Callimachean if you like – world, as Nemea is swept along in the epic’s narrative of civil war.

4.2. Callimachean Nemea

Yet it cannot be denied that Statius’ Nemea is in various ways associated with Callimachean poetics. The most explicit passage, as Brown, Delarue and McNelis have shown,302 is the Nemean section in the catalogue of troops in book 4, where Nemea – like Herculean Tiryns (4.146-58) – provides soldiers to Hippomedon, who also rides a Nemean horse (4.136 *sonipes Nemeaeus*) (4.159-64):

\[
\text{dat Nemea comites, et quas in proelia uires}
\]

297 Delarue 2000: 139.
299 McNelis 2007: 87 n. 30 admits that ‘[i]t is difficult to see what (if anything other than mentioning him) Callimachus did with Opheltes in the *Victoria Berenices*. But perhaps Statius approached the action, like Callimachus, by emphasizing the small at the expense of the grand. After all, the *Victoria Berenices*, as it survives, is about catching a mouse, not killing a lion.’
300 McNelis 2007: 12; cf. 128 with n. 9.
301 McNelis 2007: 91 and 92.
These lines are an unmistakable reference to the *Victoria Berenices*, to Hercules’ visit to the mice-infested cottage (*casae*) of humble (*paruo ... aruo*) Molorchus in *Aetia* 3. As Delarue points out, “[l]e renvoi à Callimaque est quasi explicite (*gloria nota casae*). Il invite le lecteur à associer son nom à celui de Némée”. McNelis adds that the epithet *Cleonaei* constitutes a verbal allusion to Callimachus. Indeed, this passage strongly supports the idea of Nemea as a Callimachean locus. Glancing forward to §5, however, we may note that the passage also alludes to the famous proem of *Georgics* 3 (cf. 3.19 *lucosque Molorchi*), where Vergil also rejects Callimachean themes (3.3–8); the Calabrian snake that appears later in *Georgics* 3 is an important subtext for Statius’ Opheltes episode (see §5.4).

Before we further examine the Callimachean aspects of the Nemean episode itself, it may be worth examining three other passages – not mentioned by Delarue or McNelis – from the first triad of the *Thebaid*, where we also find references to Nemea laden with poetic significance.

(1) Nemea is first mentioned in the first book, in Statius’ description of the storm that hits Polynices whilst wandering as an exile from Thebes to Argos. The storm affects not only Oedipus’ son, but also the landscape of Greece (1.355-60):

\[
iam \text{Nemea, iam Taenariis contermina lucis Arcadiae capita alta madent; ruit agmine magno Inachus et gelidas surgens Erasinus in undas. puluerulenta prius calcandaque flumina nullae aggeribus tenuere morae, stagnaque refusa est funditus et ueteri spumauit Lerna ueneno.}
\]

Nemea figures prominently amongst the places harassed by the storm. Significantly, Nemea is closely associated with Arcadia, homeland of Parthenopaeus and associated with pastoral –

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303 Cf. S. 3.1.29 *pauperis ... Molorci*, 4.6.51 *parci ... Molorci*. In our episode, Statius also evokes the humble life of the Nemean population (5.513 *pauper*).
306 Delarue 2000: 124 erroneously claims that Nemea is first mentioned in 4.159, and McNelis does not take into the account the earlier references to Nemea either.
307 In using the term ‘triad’ I do not mean to suggest that the *Thebaid* is neatly structured in four blocks of three books each. In my view, it is best to discern four movements: beginnings (1-3) – Nemea (4-6) – war (7-11) – aftermath (12); but the transitions are fluid. See Parkes 2012: xxv n. 39 with references.
309 On Opheltes and Parthenopaeus see §6.3. Although one could argue that it was Sannazaro who invented poetic Arcadia, Coleman in his extensive note on *Ecl.* 7.4 *Arcades ambo* argues that, in Vergil already, Arcadia is not just the Peloponnesian region, ‘but a truly ideal pastoral world, based to be sure upon elements in the various traditions regarding the actual Arcadia and its inhabitants, yet ultimately detached from any specific reality and enjoying an independent existence of its own’. Even if Arcadia, for Statius and his contemporaries, was not in the first place the ‘geistliche Landschaft’ of pastoral poetry, the name surely carried associations with shepherds and uncorrupted primitivism, which would support my reading of Nemea as ‘paradise lost’ (§5).
although at the same time it is not far from the woods that give access to the underworld.\textsuperscript{310} The storm produces swollen rivers, familiar symbols for epic poetry.\textsuperscript{311} Not accidentally, Statius singles out three Argive streams (Inachus, Erasinus and Lerna), an invitation to apply the image of the river in spate to the coming Argive expedition. Notably, no natural boundaries (\textit{morae}) can keep the currents in check, as in the poem no \textit{morae} can prevent the Argives from reaching Thebes. Interestingly, the rivers used to be \textit{puluerulenta} and \textit{calcanda}, which immediately brings to mind the dried-up rivers of Nemea in book 4.\textsuperscript{312} As McNelis observes with respect to the drought in Nemea: ‘Given that the similes of a raging river [...] symbolize the commencement of martial themes, the parching dryness here may be viewed metaphorically, as a counter to that poetic agenda’.\textsuperscript{313} The image of a dyke (\textit{agger}) blocking the river’s current, I would suggest, has a parallel in the Nemean serpent blocking the current of the Nemean river (5.516-7n.), while Lerna foaming with venom may foreshadow the Nemean serpent with its foaming venom (5.508-9n.).

(2) The second mention of Nemea comes in the second book. When Tydeus travels from Argos to Thebes to claim the throne of Thebes on Polynices’ behalf, he happens to pass along Lerna and Nemea (2.375-9):

\begin{quote}
iample emensus iter siluis ac litore durum,  
qua Lernae palus, ambustaque sontibus alte  
intepet Hydra uadis, et qua uix carmine raro  
longa sonat Nemea nondum pastoribus ausis,  
qua latus Eoos Ephyres etc.
\end{quote}

Like Lerna, where the scorched Hydra is hiding in its waters, Nemea has recently been visited by Hercules: the epic hero \textit{par excellence} has killed the Nemean lion.\textsuperscript{314} As a result, the Nemean shepherds are still afraid to sing. The phrase \textit{carmine raro} is significant: on a literal level, their song is ‘rare’ because they do not sing as much as they used to; on a different level, however, the adjective \textit{rarus} may evoke the Callimachean type of song, with which shepherds are traditionally associated. The word also figures in the invocation at the beginning of the Nemean episode, where the poet calls upon Apollo (4.649-51):

\begin{quote}
\textit{quis iras}  
\textit{flexerit, unde morae, medius quis euntibus error,}  
\textit{Phoebe, doce: nos \textit{rara} manent exordia famae.}
\end{quote}

As Brown has argued, the words \textit{rara ... exordia} allude to weaving and hence Callimachean poetics, \textit{rara} conveying the sense of $\lambda$\textita{πτος},\textsuperscript{315} while Apollo is also often associated with

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{310} In a footnote \textit{ad loc.} SB criticises Statius’ ‘geographical license’. In my view, the proximity of the underworld should be understood symbolically rather than literally: in the \textit{Thebaid} the world of pastoral peace and the world of infernal horror are not far apart.
\textsuperscript{311} See Brown 1994: 19-20, 5.516-7n. with references.
\textsuperscript{312} The same three streams are mentioned in 4.711-2 (see Parkes \textit{ad loc.}); cf. also 5.518-28, where we find both dust and the motif of \textit{calcarea} dried-up river valleys.
\textsuperscript{314} The Nemean lion was Hercules’ first labour, one of the first events of the Heroic Age; Valerius’ Argonautic Hercules has already slain the Nemean lion, the Erymanthian boar and the Hydra of Lerna (2.495-6). Statius’ juxtaposition of Lernaean serpent and Nemean lion is significant, as it prepares the ground for the Seven’s confrontation with the Nemean serpent (see §4.4).
\end{footnotes}
Callimacheanism. The line thus suggests that the following Nemean episode will somehow be Callimachean. Thus the phrase carmine raro can also be understood metapoetically as an allusion to Nemea’s Callimacheanism. The following line continues the metapoetic overtoness with nondum ... ausis, which clearly echoes nondum ... ausim in the epic’s proem (1.17-8). In short, Nemea is presented as a place of poetic Callimachean shepherds, terrified at the appearance of Hercules. Naturally, all this looks back to Callimachus’ Victoria Berenices (see §1.3.6).

(3) In the third book Nemea is mentioned again – and again as a place startled by epic. In book 1 Nemea was affected by the storm, in book 2 we were reminded of Hercules disturbing pastoral Nemea, and in book 3 Statius mentions Nemea as one of the places that are affected by Mars’ preparations for war (3.420-4a):

\[\text{et iam noctiuagis inter deus armifer umbras}
\text{desuper Arcadiae fines Nemeaeaque rura}
\text{Taenariumque cacumen Apollineaque Therapnas}
\text{armorum tonitru ferit et trepidantia corda}
\text{implet amore sui.}\]

Again Nemea is associated with pastoral Arcadia (and Taenarium), in stark contrast with martial violence.

In book 4, when the Argives – and Statius’ narrative – finally arrive in Nemea, our Callimachean expectations are fulfilled: the Seven encounter a woman breastfeeding a small child. ‘L’intrusion dans l’épopée d’un bébé,’ Delarue observes, ‘est déjà inattendue’. Indeed, in the masculine genre of ‘essential epic’ – to use Hinds’ useful term – women and children have no place, whereas Callimachus is most interested in humble characters (e.g. Hecale) and children (e.g. Linus). Moreover, the word ‘child’ features programmatically in the Aetia prologue as symbol of Callimachus’ interest in the small (Aet. fr. 1.5-6 ἕπος δ’ ἐπὶ τυτθὸν νεικία / παιζ ἀτέμ). The Callimachean associations of Opheltes are underscored with the similes that compare him to infant gods:

\[\text{τε} \text{κυκλευ} \text{τι κέρατον γυναικικήν}
\text{ἄνδρα σιδηροῦ συνεκυμονές}
\text{ἰαθυσίας εἴσιν} \text{ἐν} \text{θυμίαν κυρίαν}
\text{καὶ} \text{τοίχῳ τοίχοις ἐφιλέον} \text{ταῦτα}
\text{μηδέν μοι ὁ πότε} \text{τιπατήσαι}.\]

nondum ... ausim with further references. The following line continues the metapoetic overtoness with nondum ... ausis, which clearly echoes nondum ... ausim in the epic’s proem (1.17-8). In short, Nemea is presented as a place of poetic Callimachean shepherds, terrified at the appearance of Hercules. Naturally, all this looks back to Callimachus’ Victoria Berenices (see §1.3.6).

notes the parallel). At the same time, however, the invocation to Apollo as a whole (4.649-51) clearly reworks Luc. 1.681-2 quia furor hic, o Phoebe, doce, quo tela manusque / Romanae miscent acies bellumque sine hoste est (see Parkes on 4.649-51), which implicates the Nemean episode in the poem’s central theme: civil war.

The phrase nos rara manent exordia famae is generally understood as a reference to the narrator’s limited knowledge (rara exordia) of the story to be told (famae) in contrast with Apollo’s omniscience (see Parkes ad loc. and cf. Melville ‘to us are left / only a few beginnings of the tale’, Parkes ‘scant beginnings of the story remain to us’). On that interpretation, the rara ... exordia could be read metapoetically as a reference to Statius’ Callimachean model, the Victoria Berenices. However, manere + acc. normally means ‘to await’, and the most natural translation is: ‘scant beginnings of fame await me’, or perhaps (understanding rara as transferred adjective) ‘the beginnings of exceptional fame await me’, with reference to the poetic fame to which Statius’ Nemean episode lays claim – an interpretation that is confirmed by Hygipyle’s famaeque exorsa ... ambitiosa meae in 626-7 (where see note). The line remains difficult, and the variant lections moment and mouent are food for thought, as are Gronovius’ non and Hall’s nunc.

On the rich literary heritage of the encounter see Parkes on 4.753-71 with further references.


Hinds 2000; cf. e.g. Verg. Aen. 1.1. arma iriuneque, Ecl. 6.3 reges et proelia, Hor. Ars 73 res gestae regumque ducumque et tristia bella.

Cf. also e.g. Theseus’ request to Hecale, that he would like to hear ‘a little story’, SH 285.5 ἢ τι ποθῇ σέῳ τυτθῷ ἀκοίασαι. See further Ambühl 2005, Harder ad loc.
tender ... Maurors), Mercury (4.801 puer ales) and Apollo (4.802-3 reptans ... Apollo). As Brown and Delarue have noticed, these similes look back to the hymns of Callimachus. One might compare the Callimachean ‘miniaturisation’ of Hercules in Siluae 4.6.

The encounter with Hypsipyle occurs inter silusas (4.746), and Hypsipyle guides them to a spring with pure water, Langia. We need only remember Propertius to see the Callimachean associations (3.1.1-4).

Callimachi Manes et Coi sacra Philitae,
in uestrum, quaeso, me sinite ire nemus,
primus ego ingredior puro de fonte sacerdos
Itala per Graios orgia ferre choros.

Significantly, the march of the Argive soldiers is hampered by the dense woods (5.44-5 nec facilis Nemee latas evoluere uires, / quippe obtenta comis et ineluctabilis umbra; cf. also 4.647 uaga legiones, 747 errantes). On a poetic level, this suggests that Callimachean Nemea does not easily accommodate epic (note the verb evoluere, which figures prominently in the proem of the Thebaid). In that respect, the phrase nemorumque per auta in our episode may also be significant, recalling the ‘untrodden paths’ of the Aetia prologue (see 5.564n). 

Adrastus addresses Hypsipyle as diua potens nemorum (4.753). Although Hypsipyle is the granddaughter of the god Bacchus, she is of course not diua herself; yet there is some symbolic truth in Adrastus’ potens nemorum. As Alison Keith has shown, the wet-nurse Hypsipyle is symbolically identified with the nourishing Nemean landscape in which she lives: it is no coincidence that Statius chooses to describe Hyppile’s noble features by means of a water metaphor (4.751-2 nec mersus acerbis / extrat honos); nor is it coincidence that Langia, the one remaining spring in Nemea, ‘nourishes’ her waters (4.724 nutrit Langia), like the wet nurse Hypsipyle (4.796 nutricem) ‘nourishes’ her nursling. The nourishing Hypsipyle is one with the landscape in which she lives.

322 Brown 1994: 134-5; Delarue 2000: 130 with n. 61, suggesting that paruum circa... Tonantem verbally echoes Callim. H. Zeus 52 σα πασι. However, Statius rather seems to have in mind Lucr. 2.635 pueri circum puerum (Parkes on 4.789-91 quotes Lucr. 2.633-9 in full, but in her note on 4.790-1 also takes over Delarue’s suggestion). The similes, I believe, also anticipate Opheltes’ future deification (cf. Scaffai 2002: 158 ‘i paragoni ... preannunciano la sua futura divinizzazione’); Parkes on 4.789 overlooks the allusion).

323 As Delarue 2000: 129 notes, the name Langia also has Alexandrian origins (Nic. Alex. 106).


325 On woods as ‘topographical version of the labyrinth which dooms those caught inside’ more generally see Brown 1994: 14 with references. Cf. also 12.728-9 nisi silua furentes / impedit.


327 To Parkes’ note ad loc. add the echo of 4.34-5 o nemoris regina sonori / Calliope, which anticipates Hypsipyle’s epic narrative.

328 Augoustakis 2010: 37 n. 22 suggests etymological play with languageus, which he connects with the Nemean mora; cf. Parkes 2012: xvii n. 14. In Euripides, Hypsipyle calls the spring Achelous (fr. 753 δείξο μίν Ἀργείοις Ἀχελόων ἄροιον, where Achelous probably means ‘river water’ in general (see Cropp ad loc.).

329 See Parkes on 4.723.
The same holds for her nursling Opheltes: when Hypsipyle places him on the ground, he finds himself ‘in the bosom of the vernal earth’ (4.793 in gremio urnae telluris); Opheltes is a nursling of the idyllic landscape as well as Hypsipyle. The greeneries of Nemea also accord well with Opheltes’ childhood, the colour green being symbolic of youth. It is no coincidence that he is fond of flowers, and that he falls asleep with his hand clutching the grass (see 5.502-4n.). Opheltes, too, is one with the landscape in which he lives.

4.3. Thebaid 5 and Callimachus’ Hecale

In an unpublished paper, Heslin goes one step further than McNelis, arguing that book 5, from the first line to the last, can be seen as a self-contained epyllion modelled on Callimachus’ Hecale. As such, he argues, the episode is even more Callimachean, even more anti-epic than McNelis thinks. Probably Heslin would heartily agree with Lactantius Placidus, who notes (on 5.1) that hunc librum poeta extra ordinem carminis fecit, excessit enim oeconomiam suam. In the Hecale, famous in antiquity, Callimachus tells how Theseus, before slaying the bull of Marathon, lodges in the humble dwelling of the old woman Hecale, who provides him with food and tells him the sad story of her life: the death of her husband and sons. The next day, Theseus kills the bull. When he returns to Hecale’s shack, the old woman is dead. According to Heslin, the plot of Thebaid 5 is essentially similar: the Seven play the role of Theseus, Hypsipyle that of Hecale, and the Nemean serpent takes the place of the Marathonian bull. Both stories are aetiological and end with death and funeral. The sad story of Hecale (who also lost her husband and her two sons) matches the sad story of Hypsipyle, embedded narratives being an essential feature of Greek and Latin epyllion.

Heslin’s idea is attractive, especially since we find other echoes of Callimachus’ Hecale in Statius’ epic. However, in his eagerness to see epyllion everywhere, he sometimes overstates his case. Heslin claims, for instance, that the name of Opheltes’ mother, Eurydice, turns our minds to Vergil’s Aristaeus epyllion in Georgics 4, but the name is simply dictated by tradition (cf. §1.4.1); and according to Heslin the simile in 5.723-4 alludes to Vergil (see 5.723-4n.).

331 See Brown 1994: 146; cf. Keith 2000: 58, Parkes on 4.723, also Smolenaars on 7.273 for ‘the concept of a country vel sim. as the mother or nurse of men’.
332 See OLD s.v. uiridis 5a; cf. e.g. 3.212 uiridis manus, Hor. Carm. 1.9.16 uirenti.
333 Statius Workshop, University of Nottingham, January 2010; see the conference report in Bollettino di studi latini 40 (2010) 265-6. I thank Peter Heslin for his permission per e-litteras to mention his ideas.
334 See e.g. Asper 2004: 37.
336 On which see Baumbach and Bär 2012.
337 Cf. Asper 2004: 337 ‘Statius’ Thebais spielt öfter auf die Hekale an’. McNelis 2007: 86, 167-9 (after Delarue 2000: 123-4 and 136-8) notes allusions to the Hecale in the topographical names in the catalogues in books 4 and 12, namely in 4.44 celsa Prosymna, 117 Lyrce, 122 Asterion (cf. Hec. fr. 95-6, 98 Hollis; see also Parkes ad loc.), and in 12.619-22 Melaenae ... Aegaleos ... Parnes ... Hymetti (cf. Hec. fr. 18, 84 Hollis; Pollmann ad loc. notes only the Callimachean background of Melaenae). He also connects the lamenting Argive women at the ara clementiae, Evadne in particular, with Callimachus’ characterisation of Hecale (fr. 47-9, 57 Hollis).
338 Parkes on 4.655 sees an allusion to the story of Bacchus and Icar(i)us: in return for the latter’s hospitality, the first introduced the vine in Attica; later Icar(i)us was killed and his daughter Erigone committed suicide. The story, which is also about hospitality followed by violence and grief, was treated by Callimachus’ pupil Eratosthenes.
4.4. Herculeam Nemeen

As we have seen in §4.2, Nemea is associated with Callimachean poetics. At the same time, Nemea is associated with Hercules, epic hero *par excellence*. The assimilation of Nemea and Lerna, site of another Herculean labour, reinforces these associations. The importance of Hercules is also signalled at the very beginning of the Nemean episode itself, in the lines that describe the Argives’ arrival in Nemea, immediately before the invocation of Apollo (4.646-8):

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interea gelidam Nemeen et conscia laudis
Herculeae dumeta uaga legione tenebant
Inachidae
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And at another important juncture, in the anonymous speech that concludes book 4, we are again reminded of Hercules’ first labour (4.833-5):

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non Herculis actis
dura magis, rabidi cum colla comantia monstri
angeret et tumidos animam angustaret in artus!
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Brown has argued that Statius associates Nemea with Hercules only in order to frustrate our Herculean expectations with the small child Opheltes and the female voice of Hypsipyle. After the unmistakable allusions to Callimachus, she argues, we expect the Nemean *mora* to be the ‘the aetiology of Hercules’ encounter with the Nemean Lion, and his stay with Molorchus, told to the Seven by another party or by Molorchus himself’, but ‘the giant Hercules is sidelined for stories of women and babies’. This idea is taken over by Parkes in her recent commentary on book 4: ‘our expectations of a repeat labour are foiled’.

Instead of Hercules’ first labour, we are given the story of Opheltes, which according to Brown recalls the infant Hercules’ encounter with the two snakes sent by Hera, the hero’s very first labour told in Pindar’s first Nemean epinician and Theocritus 24. She suggests that Statius ‘implicitly patterns his narrative of Opheltes after that of the paradigmatic hero in order to emphasise the disparity between the two’, reading the fateful death of Opheltes as an inversion of ‘the ideal heroic pattern of exposure, threat and eventual triumph’, whereas Herakles, even at the very beginnings of his life, is an ἀλεξίκακος, Opheltes is from infancy a Beginning of Doom’.

* Taken from 6.368-70 haud procul Herculeam Nemeen clamore reductus / aspicit atque illic ingens certaminis instar / quadriiugi, where Apollo turns his eyes to Nemea. The epithet *Herculeam* not only reminds us of Hercules’ first labour, it also points, like *ingens* and *certaminis*, to the epicness of the chariot race. It does not (pace Pavan ad loc.) refer to Hercules as founder of the Nemean Games (see §1.1).

339 1.355-60, 2.375-9, 3.420-4 (discussed in §4.2); cf. also 5.499 *Lernaeis*, 579 *cognatae ... Lernae*, 748 *Lernaea palus* (where see notes), 6.368 *Herculeam Nemeen*.


341 Parkes on 4.646-850; cf. her note on 4.646-7 ‘Statius creates the expectations of an excursus on Hercules’ deeds […] The foiling of the expectation draws attention to the lack of a Hercules figure and Herculean deeds’. Cf. also McNelis 2004: 275 n. 56.

342 There is a connection in *Silvae* 3.1, where Hercules’ little priest is like baby Hercules when he killed the two snakes (3.1.46-8) and at the same time an anti-Opheltes (3.1.143 *cedat atrox Nemeae: litat hic felicior infans*). Cf. Brown 1994: 215. A fourth century AD contorniat also associates Opheltes and Hercules (see App. B o).

343 On this story pattern see e.g. Harder on Callim. *Aet.* fr. 25e-31b with references.

Hercules’, which she connects, on a poetic level, with the supposed Callimacheanism of the Nemean episode.

It cannot be denied that the passages in books 1, 2, 3 and 4 that introduce Nemea in the poem, connect Nemea with Callimachean poetics in general and the Victoria Berenices in particular. And surely Statius foils our expectations, as we are given neither the story of Hercules’ visit to Molorchus nor his fight with the Nemean lion. In my reading of the Nemean episode, however, Statius does not so much foil our Herculean expectations, he foils our Callimachean expectations! Admittedly, Hercules does not appear in the narrative himself, but on a different level, I would argue, our Herculean expectations are not foiled at all. The Nemean serpent, I believe, is to be understood as an incarnation of the Herculean monster, an amalgamation of the Nemean lion (location) and the Lernaean Hydra (serpent). Capaneus’ slaying of the monster clearly replays Hercules’ exploit. Not accidentally Capaneus carries a shield depicting the Hydra of Lerna (4.168-72), which aligns him with Hercules346 and which invites us to regard his fight with the serpent as a repetition of Hercules’ fight with the Hydra. Moreover, we are emphatically reminded of ‘kindred Lerna’ after the monster has been slain (5.579 cognatae ... Lernae).347

On a metapoetic level, the associations with Hercules call attention to the ‘epic turn’ in Statius’ Nemean episode: Callimachean Nemea becomes the site of quintessentially epic action.348 In addition to the description of the serpent, with its epic overtones (see 505-33n.), this is signalled by armorum ... uiorum (5.557) at the beginning of the passage that describes the fight of Hippomedon and Capaneus with the monster. We may also point to Capaneus’ speech (5.565-70), which frames his attack on the Nemean serpent in Gigantomachic terms – Gigantomachy being pointedly anti-Callimachean.349 When Capaneus assimilates his opponent to a Giant, he puts himself in the role of Hercules as well as Jupiter (see 5.565-74n.). Thus Statius foils our expectations: we expect something along the lines of Callimachus’ Victoria Berenices, but we are given martial epic. In the following chapter, we will discuss this epic disruption of Nemea more closely.

347 Contra Parkes on 4.832-7 ‘Admittedly, a snake will be killed in Nemea by Capaneus. However, despite the reference to cognatae stagna ... Lernae at 5.579, this is not a reduplication of Hercules’ slaying of the Lernaean Hydra: the snake is sacred to Jupiter’, with reference to Vessey 1973: 188 ‘On the surface, the action of Capaneus appears Herculean, for he rids the world of a monster – but it brings him no laus.’
348 On the metapoetic aspect of Hercules as epic hero see e.g. Heerink 2010, Nauta 2013: 247.
349 As McNelis 2007: 125-6 himself notes in a different context, where he approvingly quotes Hinds: ‘to any writer with an ounce of Callimacheanism in his make-up this theme [i.e. Gigantomachy] more than any other stands for the sort of unacceptable pomposity repudiated in the Aetia preface’; cf. also Heerink 2009: 317 with n. 57. Gigantomachic imagery will pervade the martial books of the Thebaid, culminating in Capaneus’ attack on Jupiter in book 10 (see e.g. McNelis 2007: 129-30, 139-40, 142-4, 151).
5. Nemea as paradise lost

qui legitis flores et humi nascentia fraga,  
frigidus – o pueri, fugite hinc – latet anguis in herba!  
— Vergil Eclogues 3.92-3

5.1. Introduction

Recently Carole Newlands has written that there is a certain ‘doubleness’ to Statius’ Nemea: geographically a liminal space between Argos and Thebes, it is both pastoral and epic, life and death, reunion and loss.\(^{350}\) McNelis, advocate of Nemea’s Callimacheanism, also admits that the Nemean episode is not completely Callimachean, since it includes Hypsipyle’s Lemnian narrative – although he argues that even that episode is Callimachean in that Venus’ prominent role in the massacre goes against the martial epic agenda of her husband Vulcan. Yet McNelis concedes that ‘Statius’ Callimachean Nemea’ not only ‘deflects the narrative away from warfare’, but also ‘highlights the destructive forces that drive his epic world’.\(^{351}\)

In this chapter, it will be argued that the episode does not merely ‘highlight’ the destructive forces of the poem, but narrates the destruction of Nemea’s tranquil world. In my interpretation, the Nemean episode shows the violent disruption of an idealised pastoral world, not unlike the disruption of the pastoral and Arcadian world in Aeneid books 7 and 8. On a poetic level, this means the dissolution of pastoral – which includes ‘Callimachean’ features – in favour of epic (cf. §4.4), a transformation which is also figured in the metamorphosis of the Nemean landscape. On a political level, the disruption of Nemea’s pastoral world can be read as the disruption of the Augustan dream of a golden age: it will be argued that the episode engages Vergil’s fourth Eclogue as well as the Georgics, as the death of Opheltes realises one of the darkest scenarios in Vergil’s didactic poem. In short, the peaceful pastoral world of Nemea is disrupted by the incursion of the bellicose Argives, and Nemea is brutally swept along in the Thebaid’s maelstrom of civil war.

5.2. The epic disruption of pastoral

That Nemea will be swept along in the poem’s epic narrative of civil war, is signalled right at the beginning of the episode, when Bacchus makes his appearance (4.652-79). As we have seen, the god’s entrance can be read metapoetically as an indication that the following episode will be tragic, as the Nemean episode takes its plot from Euripides’ Hypsipyle (see §2.3). At the same time, however, Bacchus brings war to Nemea, as the first line unambiguously states (4.652 edomito bellum referebat ab Haemo). Significantly, the god is not accompanied by satyrs or bacchants, but by the grim personifications Ira, Furor, Metus, Virtus and Ardor (4.661-3). Critics have been troubled by these companions, ‘more suited to the entourage of Mars, a god who also might be expected to arrive from Thrace’, than to Bacchus.\(^{352}\) Parkes solves the problem by saying that ‘Statius emphasizes the martial aspect […] in order to build

\(^{350}\) Newlands 2012: 44.  
\(^{351}\) McNelis 2007: 95.  
\(^{352}\) Parkes on 4.661-3.
up to the anticlimactic refusal of the god to use these forces. Delarue even argues that Bacchus, despite everything, is a Callimachean figure, because the Mimallones (4.660) in his train are also mentioned in some fragment of Callimachus. Again, the one-sided emphasis on Nemea’s Callimachean aspects has blinded critics to the obvious: Bacchus brings war to Nemea, for his intervention will implicate Nemea in the Theban War, as it leads not only to the death of Opheltes, an event which inaugurates the Seven’s doomed expedition against Thebes, but also to the near outbreak of civil war in Nemea itself (5.650-709). The very Anger (Ira) that accompanies Bacchus, we may recall, was also involved in the production of Harmonia’s necklace (2.287), symbol of the epic’s martial programme. If we consider the Nemean episode as *mise en abyme*, Bacchus plays the role that Mars will play in book 7.

The disruption of Nemea is clearly figured in the metamorphosis of the landscape. In *Thebaid* 4, when the Seven against Thebes – and their readers – arrive in Nemea, they wander into an idyllic pastoral landscape, which recalls not only ‘des paysages dits “idylliques” largement répandus dans la peinture romaine’, but also the landscapes of pastoral poetry, Vergil’s *Eclogues* in particular. The atmosphere contrasts starkly with the grim landscapes of books 1, 2 and 3, and especially with the horrid scene of the necromantic ritual at Thebes earlier in book 4. When the narrator introduces Nemea and invokes Phoeus to tell the Nemean interlude (4.646-51), he immediately evokes its greeneries (4.647 *dumeta*) and its pleasant coolness (*4.646 gelidam Nemeen*). We find refreshing waters – springs, streams and lakes (4.683-96) – and there is repeated reference to Nemea’s woods (e.g. 4.727 *nemus*, 4.746 *siluas*). Nemea is even called *siluarum ... longe regina uirentum* (4.832). As Joanne Brown points out, to a Roman audience the very name Nemea would suggest woods (*nemus*) clearly refer to the pleasant coolness of shade (cf. e.g. Aen. 8.159 *Arcadiae gelidos ... finis*, Ov. *Met.* 2.455 *nemus gelidum*).

Bacchus’ speech (4.684-96) is notable for its variation in ‘water words’; we find *fluuiorum, fontibus, amnes, stagna, riuos, liquor and gurgitae*. Cf. 5.10, 6.91, 113, 155 etc. In the *Siluae* Nemea is given the epithet *frondens* (1.3.6).

Brown’s argument that *gelidam* ‘casts a mysterious chill over the scene, recalling Eteocles’ ghastly *lucus*’ (1994: 21-2) does not convince. Admittedly, the word also occurs in Statius’ description of the bleak Theban forest, but cold is not something ‘sinister’ (*ibid*. 17) in itself; it takes its associations, positive or negative, from the context. And in the description of Nemea, as in other descriptions of idyllic landscapes, words like *gelidus* clearly refer to the pleasant coolness of shade (cf. e.g. Aen. 8.159 *Arcadiae gelidos ... finis*, Ov. *Met.* 2.455 *nemus gelidum*).

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Brown 1994: 9 with n. 56. In *Z Pind. Nem. hypoth. c* (= App. A f) we find two Greek etymologies: the name should derive either from the nymph Nemea, daughter of Zeus and Selene, or *ἀπὸ τῶν βασικά τῶν ὑπὸ Ἀργοῦ γεγομένων ἐν τῷ χορῷ*.

Cf. e.g. Ov. *Pont.* 4.16.33 *Tityron antiquas †passerque redirett† ad herbas*, where Tityrus and *herbae* will evoke the bucolic world of Vergil’s *Eclogues*.


Elsewhere Statius employs the ideal *locus amoenus* to emphasise the horrors of the underworld. When Laius is leaving the underworld, an anonymous shade cries: *heu dulces uisure polos solemque relictum / et uirides terras et puros fontibus amnes, tristior has iterum tamen intrature tenebras* (2.23-4); cf. also 1.89-90 *inaeuenum*
With the arrival of the Argives and Bacchus’ intervention, however, this landscape changes dramatically. Langia, the pure Callimachean spring, is muddied when the epic Argive soldiers plunge en masse into her gentle stream (4.823-30). Even McNelis concedes that ‘martial interests prevail in this particular clash’. As a result, the female nymph (4.726 deae) becomes a swollen masculine river (4.837-50), characterised with the participle tumens, which is often used to describe the ‘swollen’ style of epic poetry. In order to stress the point, the Argives that drink from Langia’s stream are compared to an army plundering a city (4.828-30). Thus Nemea’s Callimachean stream becomes the site of epic warfare. Goodbye, Callimachus.

Brown and Newlands have connected the pastoral landscape of Nemea with the idyllic landscapes of Ovid’s Metamorphoses in particular. Brown writes that ‘[w]oods so dominate the Ovidian landscape that on entering Nemea, the reader of the Thebaid is arguably obliged to recall the topography of Statius’ Augustan predecessor; the woodland setting for Bacchus’ advent in Metamorphoses III and IV proves especially relevant’. Newlands points out that in Ovid the locus amoenus often sets the scene for horror and violence – one might think of Actaeon, Callisto or Salmacis. Indeed, in Ovid this pattern figures so frequently, that an idyllic wooded landscape qualitate qua forbodes violence and death. In the Thebaid, too, Newlands argues, ‘the landscapes [...] provide a vivid canvas on which Statius displays the spreading evil of a civil war’. But Statius, Newlands rightly observes, goes one step further: in the Thebaid the idyllic landscapes not only provide the background for violence, the landscape itself falls victim to violence. Thus, she concludes, Statius presents ‘the dissolution of that Ovidian paradise’. Newlands confines herself to the sacred grove of Diana in book 4, Nemea in books 4-6, and the Ismenos in book 9, but the destruction of landscape is indeed a recurrent motif throughout the Thebaid. In this context is worth quoting McIntyre’s observation about the storm in book 1, which also harasses the landscape: ‘the landscapes affected by the storm include Arcadia (1.356), an archetypal locus amoenus, as well as Nemea (1.355), which features later as the most significant pleasance in the poem’. In Statius’ Thebaid the violent disruption of idyllic landscapes symbolises the cost and suffering of fraternal strife.

In book 6 the pastoral landscape is also brutally destroyed, as the Argives cut down the Nemean woods in their lignatio for the funeral pyre of the serpent (6.84-117). One might argue that the destruction of woods is a Callimachean element taken from the Victoria Bere-

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Cocytus. Later in book 2, when Statius describes the locus horridus of the Sphinx, he calls attention to the very absence of Fauns and Dryads (2.521-2).


364 The epic character of the scene also appears from its being echoed in Hippomedon’s fight with the river in 9.225-569.


366 See Parry 1964.

367 Newlands 2004: 133.

368 Newlands 2004: 134.

369 McIntyre 2008: 159.

nices: Brown speculates that ‘possibly the poem features the transformation of the landscape around Cleonae, as Herakles enables Molorchus to cut down the thickets to gather firewood’.371 It has also been suggested that ueteres incaedua ferro / silua comas (6.90-1) parallels Callimachus’ phrase δεσπόκινον γὰς ἀπευδά τέρρυς[α] (SH 257.25 ‘shoots unacquainted with the pruning hook’).372 That might be true, but that does not mean that the action itself – cutting down a sacred grove – is also Callimachean. In my view, the whole point of the passage is the very destruction of the pastoral – Callimachean if you like – world of Nemea. Not coincidentally, the trees in the passage are largely taken from Vergil’s pastoral world.373

The pastoral Nymphs, Fauns and birds that live in the sacred grove have to flee, as do the equally pastoral gods Pales and Silvanus.374 The trees that are cut down become flammis alimenta suprems (6.100). Even if the phrase should be an allusion to Callimachus’ πύρι δεσπόκινον (SH 257.23),375 Statius uses it quite differently: the pastoral trees of Nemea become fuel for the funeral pyre of the epic serpent! Other trees end up as spears that will drink blood in war (6.102-3). And again there is a simile, comparing the destruction of the grove to the capture of a city, while the final line of the passage – minor ille fragor quo bella gerebant (6.117) – hammers down the message that the cutting down of the grove mirrors war. In their very attempt to expiate their killing of the Nemean serpent, the Argives commit yet another sacrilegious crime.376 As Brown nicely puts it, the Argives ‘seem themselves unable to resist the opportunity to turn an infant’s funeral into full-scale, Herculean epic display’.377

Thus the trees of Nemea end up as spears and firewood – which brings to mind Statius’ use of fire imagery in the episode.378 While Nemea, as we have seen, is cool and moist, the Argives are assimilated to heat and fire.379 At the beginning of the Nemean episode, their desire to destroy Thebes is described as ardor (4.648-9 iam Sidionias auertere praedas, / sternere, ferre domos ardent instantque).380 Martial Bacchus – accompanied by heat personified (4.662 Ardor) – and the drought which he brings to Nemea (4.680-729), correspond with

371 Brown 1994: 50, in her extensive discussion of Callimachus’ poem, not making the connection with Statius.
372 Colace 1982: 148; Brown 1994: 45, 200; McNelis 2004: 272. However, Statius may have in mind Ovid rather than Callimachus, cf. Am. 3.1.1 stat uetus et multos incaedua silua per annos, Fast. 2.435-6 multis incaedus annis / lunonis magna nomine lucus erat, and esp. Met. 3.28 silua uetus stabat nulla violata securi. Cf. also S. 5.2.69-70 nescia falcis / silua.
373 In addition to its primary model Aen. 6.179-82, where the Trojans hew down a primordial Italian grove for Misenus’ pyre (a passage with clear metapoetic overtones; see Hinds 1998: 11-4), the catalogue of trees recalls Ecl. 6.1-8, 7.61-8 (Brown 1994: 24, 202), while the destruction of the grove also looks back to Luc. 3.399-452; see Ganiban loc cit. with references.
376 Ganiban 2013: 261. On the sacrilegious aspects of deforestation see Frazer on Ov. F. 4.751, Hollis on Ov. Met. 8.741-2 and esp. Leigh (1999). It may be worth noting that, before they were conquered by Theseus, the Amazons also used to fell trees (12.526).
378 Although biographical approaches are no longer in vogue, it is possible that Statius’ description of the scorched landscape is connected with the eruption of Mt Vesuvius in 79 AD, on which his father was writing a poem when death overtook him (see S. 3.5.72-4, 4.4.178-86, Nauta 2002: 195-6, 199).
380 The destructive plague of Apollo is also described in terms of fire, cf. 1.634-5 ab aetheri laeuus / ignis, 654 ignique, 662-3 ardentem ... Letoiden. On the correspondences between the two episodes see §3.
the Argives and their ardor. One could even read Bacchus’ drought as an outward manifestation of the frenzied ardor in the minds of the Seven against Thebes. In Statius’ vivid description of the Argives being tormented by thirst (4.730-45), there is notable emphasis on their weapons, as their shields become ardentes too (4.730 ardentes clipeos) and the fire of their weapons even inflames the sun. Symbolically, it seems, the Argives fall victim to the very fire of their own warlike furor, their own destructive ambitions (cf. 4.670 recalet furor). On a poetic level, the Seven’s ardor may also be connected with the calor that figures in the proem of the Thebaid, as a metaphor for the poetic frenzy that propels the narrative forward (1.3 Pierius menti calor incidit). In any case, the ardor of both Bacchus (literally) and the Seven (metaphorically) bring destruction to cool pastoral Nemea.

While its waters and woods are transformed into a landscape of martial epic, Statius’ Nemea also becomes the site of quintessentially epic events. In addition to the slaying of the serpent (see §4.4), we witness the near outbreak of civil war, first between the Seven and king Lycurgus, then in the town of Nemea (5.650-709); allusions to Lucan and Vergil make abundantly clear that these hostilities should be understood in terms of civil war (see 5.650-90n.). We may also point out that the reunion scene that follows is not simply a happy end, as Euneus and Thoas are disturbingly reminiscent of Eteocles and Polynices, while their mother Hypsipyle is connected with Vergil’s Latinus awash with civil war (see 5.710-30n.). The games in honour of Opheltes in book 6 also belong to the world of martial epic rather than Callimachean poetry. Lovatt calls them ‘a Callimachean celebration of the small, for the death of a baby, not a hero’, but it should not be forgotten that this Callimachean child has been killed by an epic monster, and that the funeral games that sink him to his grave are quintessentially epic, reworking above all Iliad 23 and Aeneid 5, and intimately connected with the Theban War – as Lovatt herself convincingly shows. Perhaps the games in book 6 contain an allusion to the Victoria Berenices; at the same time, however, Statius suppresses the wild celery, which is central to the Hellenistic poet’s a’itov (cf. §1.4.2), in favour of the epic

381 Statius is not the first to assimilate the destructiveness of war to fire; the metaphor has a long literary history; see Harrison on Aen. 10.405-11, Tarrant on Aen. 12.521-6 and cf. e.g. Il. 11.153-7, 15.605-6, 20.490-2, Ap.Rh. 1.1026-8; Ross 2007: 24 points out that the Georgics too ‘returns again and again to the opposition of fire and water, the destructiveness of war opposed to civilizing progress’.

382 Parkes ad loc. notes that ardentes not only means ‘flashing’, but also ‘conveys the hotness of the sun-baked metal shields’.

383 4.665 solem radiis ignescere ferri, an extremely daring inversion; see Parkes ad loc.

384 Newlands (2012: 59-60) nicely observes that the poem’s closure is associated with water, as the Thebaid reaches its harbour (12.809). For the narrator’s poetic furor cf. also 12.808 novus ... furor.

385 Lovatt 2005: 13. Cf. Brown 1994: 54, who sees Callimachus’ influence ‘in the “magnification” of the tiny and domestic at the expense of the huge and heroic’. McNelis argues that the Nemean Games are essentially Callimachean, with reference to Prop. 2.34.37-8, where according to McNelis ‘Propertius singles out Archemorus’ funeral games as part of the Theban story that is appropriate for a Callimachean’ (2007: 19); these controversial lines, however, can also be interpreted differently (see §1.3.5).


387 6.438-9 prior Hippodamus fert ora sequentum, / fert gemitus multaque umeros incenditur aura (cf. 6.603-5) may recall SH 254.8-10 διόξειν προφθέρον ύπνοις φιόχον / ἀσβωμοι χθαλιόου ἵππωμας ‘they ran nor did they warm with their breath the shoulders of anyone in front of them’ (Colace 1982: 144; cf. McNelis 2004: 272). However, as Colace 1982: 144 points out, ‘un’anali di tutta la sezione della Tebaide relativa ai giochi non rivelasse altri preziosi echi tratti dalla Victoria Berenices’, and the phrase could also derive from Il. 23.380-1 πνοὶ δ’ Ἠμιψιρίων ματάκαναν εὐθας τ’ οἴωμ / Ἴχθαματ (which underlies Callimachus; cf. Colace loc. cit.) and Geo. 3.111 umescunt spumantes flatus sequentium (which looks back to Homer and, perhaps, Callimachus; see Thomas ad loc.); see Pavan on 6.438-9 (who does not even mention Callimachus).
prizes that Callimachus says will not be awarded in the Nemean Games.\(^{388}\) The games in book 6 are clearly epic, not Callimachean.

Finally we may point to Hypsipyle’s epic narrative about the Lemnian massacre. It is absolutely astounding to see how various scholars, in their eagerness to ‘Callimacheanise’ Statius’ Nemea, attempt to read Hypsipyle’s narrative as a Callimachean episode. Delarue even suggests that Statius’ Lemnian episode is modelled directly on Callimachus, who ‘avait raconté la légende dans une pièce lyrique’ – a claim which he bases on nothing but one little fragment (fr. 226 Pf. ή Λήμνος τό παλαιόν, εί τις ἄλλη) from a work that in all likelihood was not even about the Lemnian massacre (witness the title Πής τοις ὕφαινοις).\(^{389}\) McNelis’ argument that the Lemnian massacre is spurred by Venus and therefore opposes the poem’s martial poetics (Vulcan and his necklace) is even more baffling.\(^{390}\)

In book 4, the Argives enter an idyllic world, but in book 7 they leave behind a barren landscape. As Newlands puts it, ‘[t]he Nemean spring and grove represent a pastoral order that is sullied by the advent of war’.\(^{391}\) One should not Aonium tingere Marte nemus. Properius writes (3.3.42), but that is precisely what Statius does in his Nemean episode.\(^{392}\) The locus amoenus becomes a locus horridus. The arrival of the Argives, in combination with Bacchus’ intervention, sweeps Nemea along in the maelstrom of civil war. The pastoral dream of Nemea is transformed into an epic nightmare.

In this respect, Statius’ Nemea looks back to the pastoral world of king Evander and his Arcadians in the Aeneid.\(^{393}\) The woods, the humble peasants, and the presence of Jupiter are reminiscent of Pallanteum and the Arcadians in book 8.\(^{394}\) It is significant that Lycurgus, who loses his beloved son to the expedition of the Seven against Thebes, is intertextually modelled on king Evander, who similar loses his son Pallas to the war between the Trojans and the Latins (see 638-49n.) – Pallas also being the key model for Statius’ Arcadian puer Parthenopaeus, whose mors immatura lies at the heart of the Thebaid (cf. §6.3).\(^{395}\)

5.3. Snakes in paradise

The monstrous serpent’s killing of the innocent child inverts the more optimistic scenario in which promising babies are said to be safe from snakes, such as Iamos in Pindar’s sixth

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\(^{388}\) Despite Aet. fr. 58 Harder ἀξον αὐτὸς δ’ ὄχι ἰππῶν ἀξίλεον, ὁς μὲν ἵππων / θαῦμαν (‘and as a prize they will receive no racing-horse, no cauldron able to contain an ox’), in Statius we find a horse (6.644 equum) and a Herculean (!) bowl (6.531-2 cratera ... Herculeum.

\(^{389}\) Delarue 2000: 131.

\(^{390}\) McNelis 2007: 90-1. Cf. also Augoustakis’ claim that ‘the middle of the Thebaid is transformed into an extensive Herois’ (2010: 32) which similarly denies its epic nature.

\(^{391}\) Newlands 2012: 52.

\(^{392}\) Cf. Ach. 1.10 Aonium nemus, where it refers to the grove of the Muses as well as the Thebaid.

\(^{393}\) Cf. Parkes 2012: xxxii n. 90 ‘in some respects the interlude at Nemea is also evocative of the pastoral delay of Aeneid 8 (cf. the stories of Hypsipyle in Theb. 5 and Evander in A. 8)’. Brown 1994: 53-4 connects Thebaid 4-6 and Aeneid 8 in that both episodes look back to Callimachus’ Victoria Berenices, which underlies the theme of ‘theoexic aetiology’ as well as Hercules’ presence in Aeneid 8.

\(^{394}\) Cf. Aeneid 8.102-89, 306-69, 454-585; woods e.g. 8.104 and 125 luco, 8.108, 345 and 351 nemus, 314 haec nemora, 342 lucum ingentem, 348 sileustribus ... dumis, 350 siliam; humble lifestyle 8.100 res inopes, 105 pauper, 176 gramineo ... sedili, 178 solio ... acerno, 360 pauperis Euandri, 455 humili tecto, 543 parruosque penatis; presence of Jupiter 8.351-4; there is also mention of nymphs, Aen. 8.314, 336, 339.

\(^{395}\) For the connection between Nemea and Arcadia cf. also Aen. 12.517-9 et iuuenem exosum nequiquam bella Menoeten , / Arcada, piscosae cui circum flumina Lernae / ars fuerat pauperque domus etc. and Val. 1.35-6 olim Lernae defensus ab angue / Arcas.
Olympian (Ol. 6.43-63) or the Horatian puer in the fourth Roman Ode (Carm. 3.4.17-8 ut tuto ab atris corpore uiperis / dormirem), or even conquer snakes, as does the infant Hercules in Pindar’s first Nemean and Theocritus 24. 396 Most importantly, I believe, the death of Opheltes is an inversion – or perhaps annihilation – of Vergil’s fourth Eclogue, which famously heralds the birth of a prodigious child and the death of the evil serpent.

Since babies are rare in classical literature, Statius’ remarkable description of Opheltes playing around in the idyllic Nemean landscape (4.793-803) immediately brings to mind the most famous puer of Latin literature: the ‘Wunderkind’ of Vergil’s fourth Eclogue, who inhabits a similar landscape, the symbolic landscape of the Golden Age. 397 The connection is reinforced by the emphasis on nourishment and flowers, as well as the intimate connection between child and earth, puer and tellus. 398 The allusion to Vergil’s fourth Eclogue is underscored by the emphasis on Nemea’s siluae (‘woods’). Whereas Brown connects Nemea’s siluae with Statius’ Silvae 399 which, between brackets, had not yet been published under that title before 92 AD 400 in my view the Nemean woods, in combination with other pastoral buzzwords such as agrestis, primarily serve to evoke the pastoral landscapes of Vergil’s Eclogues, which are symbolically represented as siluae by Vergil himself. 401 The word figures most prominently at the beginning of the fourth poem, Eclogues 4.3 si canimus siluas, siluae sint consule dignae. The end of book 4, with Opheltes in the idyllic landscape, surely recalls Vergil’s prophetic child (Ecl. 4.18-25):

\[
\text{at tibi prima, puer, nullo munuscula cultu errantis hederas passim cum baccare tellus mixtaque ridenti colocasia fundet acantho. ipsae lacte domum referent distenta capellae ubera, nec magnos metuent armenta leones; ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores.}
\]

396 Brown 1994: 137-42 discusses the ‘Wunderkind’ in the two Pindaric odes; later (144-5) she also mentions Hor. Carm. 3.4.9-20. Strikingly, the Horatian puer falls asleep ludo fatigatumque somno (3.4.11), which parallels 5.502-4, while the poem also features a nurse (3.4.10 nutritis). Another example, we may note, is Glauclus in S. 2.1.48-9 cui sibila serpens / dormirem

397 Vessey 1973: 105 ‘One is reminded of Virgil’s fourth Bucolic in which the birth of an infant is said to herald a new Golden Age: in the Thebaid, the death of two babies [Opheltes and Linus] portends doom’. Brown 1994: 133 develops the idea. In scholarly discussions of the Thebaid, however, Vergil’s Eclogues hardly play a role. Statius’ engagement with the Eclogues, according to silent communis opinio, occurs in his Silvae, not in his epic poetry: ‘The title [Silvae] also surely refers to Virgil’s programmatic use of the word siluae in the Eclogues. The connection with the Eclogues gives an attractive symmetry to St[atus]'s poetic corpus; in his Thebaid he acknowledges the importance of the Aeneid (Theb. 12.816-7), and in the Silvae he makes literary homage to the Eclogues which, like St[atus]'s poems, strikingly intermingle naturalism and artifice, fantasy and politics’ (Newlands 2011: 6-7).

398 Opheltes is called puer in 4.793, 5.539; Vergil uses the same word in Eclogues 4.8, 18, 60 and 62. Cf. Theb. 4.788 floribus agestis (with Parkes’ note) and Eclogues 4.23 ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores. For tellus cf. Eclogues 4.14 terras, 19 tellus, etc. Brown 1994: 133 connects 4.796 residens with the child’s smile in Eclogues 4.60-3.

399 Brown 1994: 22-9. One of her central arguments is that, as the Nemean episode in the Thebaid delays the epic expedition of the Seven, so Statius’ Silvae delay his epic project (cf. 1.5.8-9); and the many ecphrases in the Silvae, she ventures, have their counterpart in Hysipsyle’s narrative, ‘itself a form of narrative ecphrasis’ (28).

400 See Nauta 2002: 249-50. On the possible relevance of Lucan’s Silvae nothing can be said.

401 Cf. Ecl. 1.2 siluestræm ... musam, 6.2 nostra nec erabuit siluas habitare Thalea. Newlands 2012: 9 n. 54 ‘The Augustan poet uses siluae as a collective image for his Eclogues’. We may add that siluae also represents the Eclogues in the false (but ancient) preem to the Aeneid, 1.1b egressus siluis. On the title Siluae, which not only looks back to Vergil’s Eclogues, but also carries associations with Greek ἔργα, speedy composition and (perhaps) variety, see Nauta 2002: 252-4, Newlands 2011: 6-7 with references.
The fourth Eclogue mentions the death of the serpent, chthonic creature *par excellence*, symbolic of the powers that threaten the peaceful and prosperous world which the poem prophesies. In the Golden Age there is no place for snakes.\(^{402}\) Statius pointedly inverts Vergil’s scenario, as the serpent brings death to the child.\(^{403}\) The simile that compares Hypsipyle and Opheltes to a mother bird and her nestlings also points in that direction (see 599-605n.). And the fact that Opheltes is killed whilst sleeping – an element taken from *Georgics* 3 (see §5.4 below) – might be seen as the perversion of a golden age motif: in Hesiod’s golden age people used to die in sleep (not in war).\(^{404}\)

That the *Thebaid* engages the poetic discourse on the Golden Age need not come as a surprise.\(^{405}\) The poem’s central theme, the *nefas* of fraternal strife, is one of the most prominent symbols of the degeneration of the Golden Age. As such it figures prominently in the finale of Catullus’ epyllion (64.399 *perfudere manus fraterno sanguine fratres*), where there is also mention of the incestuous relationship between mother and son (cf. 64.403 *ignaro mater substernens se impia nato*), which cannot fail to recall Oedipus. In Ovid’s narrative of decline we find fraternal strife too, as characteristic of the Iron Age (cf. *Met.* 1.145 *fratrum quoque gratia rara est*).\(^{406}\) And in Hesiod’s account the expedition of the Seven against Thebes and the Trojan War mark the beginning of the Heroic Age (*Op.* 161-3).\(^{407}\) In *Thebaid* 11, when Pietas leaves the earth and Jupiter turns his eyes away, we may be reminded of the climactic moment in the story of Atreus and Thyestes,\(^{408}\) but there is also an allusion to Astraea and the gods’ departure at the end of the Golden Age.

The allusions to Vergil’s fourth Eclogue can be seen to have a political dimension. In Augustan ideology serpents and giants often represent the powers that threaten the Pax Augusta, which itself is often figured as a return to the golden age.\(^{409}\) In the bleak world of the *Thebaid*, however, the optimistic *aurea aetas* prophesied in Eclogue 4 is utterly impossible: as there is no place for the serpent in the golden dream of the fourth Eclogue, so there is no place for the innocent child in Statius’ nightmarish epic.\(^{410}\) Thus, on a political level, the death of Opheltes can be connected with the *Thebaid*’s ‘rupture with Augustan optimism’ after

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402 Cf. Alfred Tennyson *To Virgil* ‘summers of the snakeless meadow’. For the serpent as symbol of the powers that threaten peace and prosperity, we may also compare the *laudes Italie* in the second book of the *Georgics*, where Vergil also mentions the absence of snakes: *nec rapit immensos orbis per humum neque tanto / squameus in spiram tractu se colligit anguis* (*Geo.* 2.153-4). For snakes as symbols of evil cf. also *Aen.* 7.753-5, *Hor. Ep.* 16.52 *neque intumescit alta uiperis humas*.


405 Where the preceding phrase, *Met.* 1.145 *non socer a genero [sc. tutus]*, could be applied to Adrastus and Polyneices.

406 Cf. also the extensive account in *Sen.* *Oct.* 391-434.


408 See McNelis 2007: 47-8 with references.

409 The same suggestion I now find in Ganiban 2013: 258 ‘Perhaps we might also recall description of the Golden Age, such as in *Eclogues* 4.23-4, wherein flowers will form cradles (*cunabula*), and the *serpens* will die. The deaths of Statius’ Opheltes and Linus both would then suggest the opposite of a Golden Age.’
Rome’s traumatic relapse into civil war in 68-69 AD.\textsuperscript{411} The Nemean episode, too, is affected by the horrors of civil war.

In the previous section we have seen that the dissolution of pastoral in favour of epic looks back to the second half of the \textit{Aeneid}. Statius’ engagement with the fourth \textit{Eclogue} and the poetic discourse of the golden age can also be connected with the \textit{Aeneid}: in Thomas’ reading of the poem, the primitive world of the Italians is a ‘golden’ Saturnian world, which the arrival of the Trojans and the following war corrupts into an ‘iron’ Jovian world.\textsuperscript{412}

\textbf{5.4. The Vergilian plot: \textit{Georgics} and \textit{Culex}}

Initially, at the end of \textit{Thebaid} 4, we may be under the impression that we have wandered into an ideal ‘golden’ world, inhabited by an infant reminiscent of the symbolic \textit{puer} of Vergil’s fourth \textit{Eclogue} (§5.3). However, it soon becomes clear that Nemea is no paradisal world at all. It is not only inhabited by shepherds and farmers, who do not belong to the Golden Age,\textsuperscript{413} it also harbours an enormous serpent (cf. Ecl. 4.24 \textit{occidet et serpens}). In Vergil’s pastoral world, we should note, serpents are not entirely absent, witness the proverbial \textit{anguis in herba} in Ecl. 3.93-4. Perhaps Statius recreates Vergil’s pastoral world? On even closer inspection, I would argue, Statius’ Nemea recreates neither the golden world of the fourth \textit{Eclogue}, nor the idealised world of pastoral poetry generally, but the complex world of Vergil’s \textit{Georgics}.

In the first place, the Nemean serpent is sacred not to Saturn, but to his son Jupiter, who presides over Nemea (cf. 5.511 \textit{Inachio ... Tonanti}) as he presides over the post-lapsarian world. In the first book of the \textit{Georgics} Jupiter famously puts an end to the Golden Age of his father Saturn, in order that men should employ their skills and labour (\textit{Geo.} 1.118-46): the god’s very first action is to ‘add evil poison to dark snakes’ (1.129 \textit{ille malum uirus serpentibus addidit atris}). This venomous Jovian serpent seems to underlie the Jovian serpent that looms dangerously in Statius’ Nemea. In the \textit{Georgics}, as elsewhere, these dark snakes are the symbol \textit{par excellence} of the calamities that threaten mankind, of the dark forces of nature that we must attempt to overcome – often in vain – with our toilsome \textit{labor improbus}. And the clear allusion to Molorchus in 4.159 not only points to Callimachus, but also to the second proem of the \textit{Georgics} (3.19).

Secondly, the very plot of the Nemean episode realises a scenario from Vergil’s \textit{Georgics}. The death of Opheltes, who falls asleep in the meadow and is killed by the thirst-maddened serpent, looks back to Vergil’s Calabrian water snake, a passage that deserves full citation (\textit{Geo.} 3.425-39).\textsuperscript{414}

\begin{verbatim}
est etiam ille malus Calabris in saltibus anguis squamea conuoluens sublato pectore terga atque notis longam maculosus grandibus aluum, qui, dum amnes ulli rumpuntur fontibus et dum uere madent udo terrae ac pluuialibus Austris,\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{411} The phrase is borrowed from Newlands 2012: 3-4.

\textsuperscript{412} Thomas 1982: 94-107. For a brief discussion and literature see Lovatt 2005: 147 n. 12.

\textsuperscript{413} Cf. e.g. 4.715 \textit{pastorum}, 5.512 \textit{agricolae}, 667 \textit{agrestum ... manus} and also 4. 681 \textit{aruis}, 702-4 \textit{seges ... culmi ... pecus ... armenta}.

\textsuperscript{414} Vessey 1986: 2981-3 points to the relevance of these lines for the snake simile in 2.410-4.
As long as streams gush forth from their sources, as long as the earth is moist, the Calabrian snake lives peacefully, lingering on river banks and feeding on fish and frogs. When the snake is tormented by thirst, however, it changes into a lethal monster. The passage ends with the explicit warning not to fall asleep when that serpent is around (3.435-9).

These lines certainly inform the death of Opheltes in the second half of *Thebaid* 5. Like its Calabrian counterpart, the Nemean serpent normally lives peacefully, dwelling on the river banks (5.514-7); when tormented by heat, however, it becomes ferocious (5.518-28). In Statius, Vergil’s worst case scenario becomes reality: Opheltes, or rather his nurse Hypsipyle, does not heed Vergil’s warning, and the innocent child falls asleep – and falls victim to the serpent. The structural and thematic parallels are reinforced by several verbal echoes (e.g. 5.538 extremae caudae < Verg. Geo. 3.423 extremae ... caudae). It is also worth noting that the didactic poet advises to kill the snake with rock and with wood (Verg. Geo. 3.420-2 cape saxa manu, cape robora, pastor, / tollente mque minas et sibila colla tumentem / deice), a scheme that we also find in Statius (5.558-74). And on the brink of death, the serpent flees away (3.422-4), something we also find in Statius (5.574-8n.). We may point out that in the remaining fragments of Euripides’ *Hypsipyle* there is nothing that suggests that the serpent that kills Opheltes is maddened by thirst, and nothing that suggests that Opheltes has fallen asleep. These two elements are taken directly from the *Georgics.*

The *Georgics* is an immensely complex poem, and one should be careful not to reduce it to a simple moralistic message. Yet if there is one lesson to be learnt from Vergil’s didactic poem, it is that human life is fragile, that human existence is an everlasting struggle with the hostile powers of nature, against which men – and animals – are ultimately powerless. One of the most important passages, in this respect, is the poet’s discourse on diseases and the poignant description of the plague that concludes the third book (Geo. 3.440-566). And it is precisely this most somber episode to which the description of the Calabrian serpent forms a prelude. From a didactive perspective, the passage instructs farmers how to keep snakes away from their flocks and herds; on a symbolic level, however, the Calabrian serpent can be read as a powerful symbol of the disastrous forces of nature that dominate the remainder of *Georgics* 3. The Nemean serpent in the *Thebaid*, it will be argued in §6, does the same.

In the context of the georgic background of Opheltes’ death, it may be worth mentioning that, according to Thucydides (3.96) and Plutarch (Mor. 162d), Hesiod received a warning from the oracle in Delphi that death would overtake him in the grove of Nemean Zeus. The

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415 Cf. §1.3.2 on ἀπαγεσσὰ in Bacchylides.
poet from Ascra therefore avoided Nemea, but there also was a grove of Nemean Zeus at Lokris, where he died.  

Statius’ engagement with *Georgics* 3 also seems to involve the pseudo-Vergilian *Culex*. The *Culex* does not figure prominently in discussions of the *Thebaid* or any other post-Vergilian poem, since for modern readers the *Culex* is not Vergilian and therefore not important. We should remember, however, that Statius and other poets of the late first century AD regarded the *Culex* as an authentic Vergilian poem. In any case, the plot of the *Culex* – a dangerous snake threatens to kill a sleeping goatherd – is clearly inspired by *Georgics* 3, where Vergil’s didactic persona warns his pupils not to fall asleep when a dangerous snake is around. Moreover, the serpent in the *Culex* also seems to represent the forces that threaten the idyllic pastoral world described at length in the first part of the poem: Janka plausibly suggests that in this respect the *Culex* looks back to *Eclogue* 4: ‘Die Schlange als Symbol der Depravation, Falschheit und Gewaltsamkeit hat der CD [Culex-Dichter] vielleicht aus der Prophetie der vierten Ekloge übernommen [...]. Die großartige Vision vom neuen, para-diesischen Goldzeitalter würde so zum scherzepischen Schlängentod verflacht.’

That Statius has in mind the *Culex* as well as *Georgics* 3 is suggested by some striking verbal echoes in the description of the Nemean serpent (see 5.505-33n.). Other points of contact are the death of the *Culex*’ minuscule protagonist – called *paruulus alumnus* in *Cul.* 183 – and the erection of an elaborate funeral monument which concludes the poem. When Opheltes falls asleep, he seems to play the role of the goatherd, but in the somber *Thebaid* there is no mosquito to save his life. Later, Opheltes rather plays the role of the little insect: as the death of the mosquite saves the life of the goatherd, so the death of Opheltes saves the lives of the Argives. It is tempting to see a further connection in that the *Culex* presents itself as a prelude vis-à-vis Vergil’s *Aeneid*, while the Nemean episode acts as a prelude to the Theban War in the second half of the *Thebaid*.

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416 See Miller 2004: 34 n. 32.
417 See S. 1 praef. et *Culicum legimus et Batrachomyomachiam etiam agnoscimus*, 2.7.73-4 (Lucan) *haec primo iuuenis canes sub aeuo, / ante annos Culici Maroniani*, Mart. 8.55.19-20, 14.185-6; for a discussion of these and other testimonia see Seelentag 2012: 9 ff.
419 Janka 2005: 40 n. 27.
420 Pavan on 6.242-8 notes the relevance of the *culex*’ tomb for Opheltes’ *tumulus*, also pointing to the correspondence between 5.558-67 and *Cul.* 192-7 (the killing of the serpent).
421 On *ludus* and *praeludere* see Lovatt 2005: 8-10.
6. The Opheltes episode as *mise en abyme*

‘Quid ad nos ea fabula Hypsipyles, quae fere dimidium quarti libri, quintum-que et sextum librum Thebaidis obtinet?’

— Lehanneur (1878: 166)

6.1. Introduction: unity

‘Ubicumque de Statii arte iudicari audiveris,’ the German scholar Karl Fiehn wrote in 1917, ‘imprimis reperies poetam partes carminis parum coniunxisse neque satis operam dedisse, ut poema, quod omnibus partibus cohaerert, componeret’. Indeed, Statius’ *Thebaid* has often been criticised for its supposed lack of unity. Criticasters have particularly aimed their arrows at the two embedded narratives in the poem, Adrastus’ story of Linus and Coroebus (1.557-672) and Hypsipyle’s story of the Lemnian women (5.28-499), not always hampered by knowledge of the poem. We also find condemnations of the whole Nemean episode (4.646-7.104) or even the whole first hexad (books 1-6). These episodes, the allegation goes, are mere digressions without meaningful relation to the main narrative, the result of Statius’ desire to follow in Vergil’s footsteps and the first-century practice of *recitation*.

In recent decades Statian scholarship has moved beyond such simple judgements. Admittedly, the *Thebaid* lacks unity in the Aristotelian sense. It is not a ‘closed structure’: the epic lacks a single protagonist and several episodes are indeed redundant in terms of plot. However, that does not entail that the *Thebaid* lacks unity. We should regard Statius’ epic as

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426 Most shocking is Mendell 1967: 124 ‘digressions in the form of largely irrelevant stories brought in for their own inherent interest. The longest is that of Hipssyple [sic], told by herself (V.17-498), but there are also Admetus’ [sic] story of Apollo and Coroeus (I.557-661), the fatal necklace of Hermione [sic] (II.268-305), and the tale of Hopleus and Dymas (X.347-448).’
427 Lehanneur 1878: 166 (see motto); Moore 1921: 171 ‘long and distracting episodes, of which the worst occupies the last part of book four and all of the fifth and sixth books’; Legras 1905: 148 ‘Virgile ayant consacré six livres aux voyages d’Ené et six livres à ses combats, Stace voulait partager aussi son poème en deux moitiés. Or, rien de plus ennuyeux que la première. [...] ses six premiers livres restent languissants et confus, pleins d’épisodes et de descriptions parasites’. Cf. also Newlands 2012: 40 with n. 162.
an ‘open structure’ that includes various characters, various episodes. Unity is achieved by different means, through recurring motifs and themes, correspondence and contrast, mirroring and "mise en abyme."\(^{430}\)

An alternative response has been to embrace the alleged lack of unity as an iconic expression of the poem’s disordered universe. Thus Brown writes that ‘a unitarian approach does no justice to Statius’ subject-matter’, quoting in approval Galinsky’s idea that ‘[t]he Thebaid is about a fragmented, disturbed world, which calls for narrative discontinuity’.\(^{431}\) In a similar vein McNelis connects the tension between ‘epic’ and ‘Callimachean’ poetics in Statius’ Thebaid (see §4) with its central theme of discordia: the poem ‘incorporates' themes that could direct the narrative away from martial themes. This tension reflects the poem’s theme of dissension within a single house, of authority called into question and of boundaries confused.\(^{432}\)

In this chapter it will be argued that the Opheltes episode can be read as "mise en abyme." The death of Opheltes is not only a prefiguration of the events in the second half of the epic, his death and the events surrounding it are also a reflection of the poem’s central issues of internecine war, premature death and maternal bereavement. As such, Statius’ story of Opheltes mirrors and illuminates the epic as a whole.\(^{433}\) To abuse a phrase of Pliny the Younger: *non enim excursus hic eius, sed opus ipsum est.*\(^{434}\) To break the ground, we will first examine the story of Ino and Melicertes, which touches on some of the same issues.

### 6.2. The paradigmatic story of Ino and Melicertes

In the Thebaid we find many references to the story of Ino and Melicertes, or Leucothea and Palaemon as their divine alter egos are called. Their first appearance in the narrative comes at an important juncture in book 1, when – in reaction to Oedipus’ *peruersa uota* (1.59) – Tisiphone leaves the underworld, takes position on the highest peak of Mt Cithaeron (1.114-5) and utters terrible hisses as ‘a signal to the world’ (1.116 *signum terris*).\(^{435}\) As all Greece trembles with horror, the sound also reaches the Isthmus, where the sea goddess Leucothea (olim Ino), terrified by the Fury’s cries, snatches her son Palaemon (olim Melicertes) from his dolphin and presses him to her bosom in a protective gesture (1.121-2):

\[
\textit{ipsa suum genetrix curuo delphine uagantem abripuit frenis gremioque Palaemona pressit.}
\]

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\(^{430}\) The term ‘open structure’ is borrowed from Mastronarde’s insightful discussion of the structure of Euripidean tragedies (Mastronarde 2010: 63-87; cf. Van Opstall 2010); *mutatis mutandis* the concept can be applied fruitfully to Statius’ epic as well. On the unity of the Thebaid see further Steiniger 2005: 39-42, Franchet d’Espérey 1999: 83-105, Scaffai 2002: 153-4, Rüpke 2012: 212-7 with references.

\(^{431}\) Brown 1994: 5.


\(^{433}\) On *mise en abyme* see Dällenbach 1989, who defines it as ‘any aspect enclosed within a work that shows a similarity with the work that contains it’ (1989: 8); see further Heerink 2009: 315 n. 53, 2010: 9 n. 30 with references. In Latin studies the term is often applied to epicharacter and stories that are situated on a different narrative level, e.g. Aeneas’ shield and Evander’s story in Aeneid 8. The Opheltes episode, of course, is not quite ‘enclosed’, and I use the term *mise en abyme* loosely.

\(^{434}\) Plin. *Ep.* 5.6.44 (about Aratus).

\(^{435}\) There is a significant echo in 11.555-6 *clamore Cithaeron / erigitur*, when Polynices has mortally wounded his brother Eteocles.
On one level, these lines are a tongue-in-cheek allusion to Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, the most extensive treatment of the myth of Ino and Athamas in Latin literature (4.416-542): as wet-nurse to Jupiter’s extramarital child Dionysus, son of her sister Semele, Ino incurs the wrath of Jupiter’s wife Juno. The goddess calls upon Tisiphone, who strikes Ino’s husband Athamas with madness. Athamas then kills their son Learchus, after which Ino – in an attempt to escape from her frenzied husband – hurls herself from a cliff into the sea with their second son Melicertes in her arms. Finally, at Venus’ request, Neptune transforms mother and child into the marine deities Leucothea and Palaemon. No wonder that Statius’ post-Ovidian Leucothea is terrified when she hears Tisiphone!

And there are more references to Ino and Melicertes in the *Thebaid* (2.379-81, 3.185-7, 4.59-60, 562-4, 570-1, 7.420-1, 9.401-3); they also figure prominently in the proem (1.12-4 cui sumpserit arcus / infelix Athamas, cur non expauerit ings / Ionium socio casura Palae-mone mater). Why are they mentioned so often? It has been suggested that Statius simply felt attracted to the combination of horror and sentimentality which the story offers. It has also been suggested that there is a connection with the successful participation of the elder Statius in the Isthmian Games. The many references may also reflect the increasing Roman interest in the Isthmus and the cult of Palaemon in the first century AD.

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437 Statius’ Leucothea pressing Palae-mon to her bosom inverts Ovid’s Athamas snatching Learchus from his mother’s bosom, cf. *Met.* 4.516 deque sinu matris ridentem rapit. In Statius, Leucothea ‘snatches away’ (abripuit echoing rapit) Palaemon from his dolphin.

438 Vessey 1973: 64 observes that most of the stories which Statius catalogues in 1.4-14 are told in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. Keith 2002: 382-3 argues that the proem thus programmatically signals Statius’ engagement with Ovid. However, in Ovid’s story Ino and Athamas there is no arcus, whereas for Statius the bow seems essential (cf. also 4.562-3 anhelam cernimus Ino / respectantem arcus); other details are also incompatible with Ovid: the mountain in 3.185-7 funerea cum laude potitus / infelix Athamas trepido de monte ueniret, and Athamas’ carrying Learchus over his shoulders in 4.570-1 dextramque in terga reflexum / Aeoliden, umero iactantem funus onusto. Although Keith’s claim that Ino and Melicertes received ‘their fullest treatment […] in Ovid’s Theban history’ is an sich not incorrect, Statius clearly does not have in mind Ovid alone. Heuvel on 1.12 arcus plausibly suggests: ‘arcus desumpti videntur ex eodem fonte, quo Apollod. usus Biblioth. 1.9.2 [= 1.84] ἔτρεξες scripsit’. That source, I suggest, may be Euripides’ *Ino*, or perhaps Laevius’ adaptation of that play (fr. 12 Büchner describes Ino’s leap). Euripides’ play is lost, but we have a synopsis (Hyg. *Fab.* 4-5 ‘Ino Euripidis’) in which Athamas kills Learchus in *enatone*, which may underlie Statius’ *de monte ueniret*. Admittedly, Hyginus does not mention a bow, but maybe Apollodorus also has in mind Euripides. If my suggestion is correct, the proem signals not only the relevance of Ovid, but also that of Euripides. It is also possible that Statius has in mind some Hellenistic version (cf. Callim. *Aet.* fr. 91 and 92 Harder, *Lycophron Alex.* 107, 229ff., 757ff.). Valerius also has in mind a hunt (cf. Val. 3.67-8); Spaltenstein *ad loc.* suggests contamination with the story of Pentheus.

439 Ross 2004: xii notes that Statius ‘several times refers to the myth of Palaemon’ in his *Silvae*, to which he adds that the myth ‘so oddly recurs in the *Thebaid*’. In the remainder of this section I hope to show that the references are not ‘odd’ at all.

440 Laguna on S. 3.2.39-41 ‘En Estacio el tema, con su mezcla de sentimentalismo y horror, se hace obsesivo’.

441 Cf. S. 5.3.143 nunc Athanantea protectum tempora pinu; see Heuvel on 1.120, Fortgens on 6.11.

442 Since the reestablishment of Corinth as the capital of the Roman province Achaea in 46 BC, the sanctuary of Poseidon (including a circular hero-shrine for Melicertes-Palaemon) became increasingly rich and important. In addition to the Isthmian Games, the Quinquennial Caesarea were founded in honour of Augustus, and a third set of Games was added under Claudius. Nero even visited Corinth himself: at that occasion he not only revealed his plans for the Corinth Canal, but also sang a lyric song to Palaemon and Leucothea (see Hawthorne 1958: 97). The archaeological evidence suggests that the cult of Palaemon reached its climax in the reign of Hadrian. There are also numerous visual representations of Palaemon dating from the Roman period, which might have influenced Statius (cf. Duncan 1914: 27-8).
However, none of these ideas explains the significance of Ino and Melicertes within the *Thebaid*. Why are they important to the poem? Undoubtedly the story is central to the *Thebaid*, because it is about *furor*, premature death, and maternal bereavement – a story that is ‘Theban’ in more than just a geographical sense. ‘For Statius’, Dewar rightly notes, ‘the myth seems to have symbolized the universal pathos of bereavement’.\(^{443}\) It is no coincidence that Horace, in his *Ars poetica*, chooses the adjective *flebilis* to capture the essence of Ino’s character; the Suda even mentions Ινοῦς ἀχη as a proverbial expression.\(^{444}\) For Statius, too, Ino first and foremost embodies maternal lamentation (e.g. 4.59 Inoas ... querelas, 12.131 planxit ab Isthmiaco genetrix Thebana sepulcro). In addition, the story of Ino and Athamas is about frenzied violence, caused by the intervention of Tisiphone, and about *mors immatura*. Thus the image of Leucothea pressing little Palaemon to her bosom after the appearance of Tisiphone in book 1 is emblematic of the *Thebaid* as a whole.

That Ino and Melicertes are of special importance for the *Thebaid* also appears from *Siluae* 3.2, a προπεμπτικόν on the planned sea-travel of Maecius Celer. There Statius mentions nine marine deities, including Palaemon (3.2.39-41):

\[
\text{tu tamen ante omnes diua cum matre, Palaemon, annee, si uestras amor est mihi pandere Thebas nec cano degeneri Phoebeum Amphiona plectro.}
\]

The mention of Palaemon and his mother Leucothea as sea divinities is not surprising in the context of sea-travelling, but the explicit connection with Statius’ epic *Thebaid* is remarkable. The line of thought is as follows: because the poet is working on a Theban epic, he has a particular claim on Palaemon and Leucothea, whose origins lie in Thebes; therefore he asks them to grant their favours to Maecius Celer’s sea-travel.\(^{445}\) Perhaps Statius simply seizes the opportunity to advertise his nearly finished epic to his occasional audience.\(^{446}\) Yet one cannot escape the impression that Palaemon and Leucothea are of special symbolic relevance to his *Thebaid*.\(^{447}\)

Like the story of Ino and Melicertes, the story of Hypsipyle and Opheltes is concerned with untimely death and female sorrow in a world torn apart by uncontrollable chthonic forces. As such, it will be argued in the remainder of this chapter, the Nemean episode can be regarded as a *mise en abyme* of the *Thebaid* as a whole – not unlike Hypsipyle’s Lemnian narrative in book 5 or the games in book 6, which are also in various ways connected with the main narrative.\(^{448}\) Dominik’s words on Hypsipyle’s narrative can also be applied to the second part of book 5: ‘the episode connects with other sections through the paralleling of

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\(^{443}\) Dewar on 9.401-3. Cf. Newlands 2012: 118 ‘The mythological figure of Ino, the Theban queen who lost her two children – Learchus to her husband’s madness, Palaemon to drowning – is a unifying figure of the *Thebaid* and the *Silvae*. She appears in the opening of the epic (Theb. 1.12-4) and at regular intervals thereafter as if to comment upon and reinforce its major theme of male violence experienced through women’s grief.’ Newlands exaggerates when she claims that Ino lost two children, since Melicertes was transformed into the sea divinity Palaemon.


\(^{446}\) The poem dates from 90 or 91 AD, before the publication of the *Thebaid*; see Nauta 2002: 443.

\(^{447}\) The same holds for Statius’ mention of Amphion; see Reitz 2013: 184-98.

episodes, foreshadowing of events, evocation of reminiscences and repetition of motifs in the main narrative’. 449 We will focus on three crucial correspondences. First we will examine the gruesome death of Opheltes as prefiguration and mirror image of the slaughter on the Theban battlefield (§6.3); then we will discuss why Hypsipyle’s lament connects with the other female voices of loss and suffering in the poem (§6.4); and finally it will be argued that the Nemean serpent corresponds with serpentine Thebes and its innate powers of destruction (§6.5).

6.3. Archemorus and the victims of war

As has often been observed,450 the death of Opheltes in Nemea looks forward to the many victims of the Theban War; it is an ominous prefiguration of the bloodshed on the battlefield in the second half of the Thebaid. The child’s elaborate funeral in book 6 foreshadows the importance of burial in the aftermath of the frater nas acies. Structurally, Opheltes’ funeral is balanced by the funeral of Menoeceus in book 12. The connection between Opheltes and the victims of the war is made explicit in the oracle that Lycurgus has received: ‘prima, Lycurge, dabis Dircaeo funera bello’ (5.647): the word prima indicates that more funera will follow.451 In the speech that concludes the fifth book (5.733-52), Apollo explains by the mouth of his seer that the events in Nemea are willed by fate (5.736 Parcae) and gods (5.739 superum), and in that context Amphaiarus calls the child by his alternative name Archemorus – puer, heu, nostri signatus nomine fati / Archemorus (5.738-9), articulating the symbolic connection between his death and the fate of the Seven against Thebes.

The name Archemorus (Greek Ἀρχέμορος) is a ‘speaking name’ that derives from ἀρχή and μόρος, which makes Opheltes the ‘beginning of doom’ – the doom that awaits the Seven against Thebes. The scholia and mythographers offer several comments on Opheltes’ second name.452 As we have seen (§1.3.2), the signification of the name Archemorus is made explicit by Bacchylides already (9.14 σῶμα μέλλοντος φόνου ‘sign of future slaughter’). In Euripides’ Hypsipyle Amphaiarus also explains Opheltes’ second name (fr. 757.109-20; see 5.731-53n.). Although the text is severely damaged, Euripides’ Amphaiarus seems to be more explicit about the doom of the Seven than Statius’ Amphaiarus, whose words nostri signatus nomine fati are rather oblique. In book 4, when the poet proclaims the future fame of Langia, he also alludes to the speaking name, 4.725-6 nondum illi [sc. Langiae] ... dederat lacrimabile nomen / Archemorus. Although sensu stricto the line refers to Langia’s renown (nomen) at the price

449 Dominik 1994: 56. Cf. Lovatt 2005: 19 ‘Like any great poem, every part of the Thebaid reflects on, is a mise en abyme of, the whole’; Parkes 2012: xxv ‘Each part of the Thebaid is set carefully within the whole, in a nexus of foreshadowings and cross-references’.
451 On the oracle see §1.4.3 and 5.647n.
452 LP on 5.739: ‘quoniam initia Thebani belli eius initia sunt morte, iure fatali postea Archemorus nominatus est Graecae prouniciatione sermonis, arche enim Graecae “principium” dicitur, moros “mors” sermone eodem nuncupatur.’ Ps.-Apollod. 3.6.4 Αμφιάραος δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν ἰακάσιον τὸ σημάδι τὰ μέλλοντα προμαντεύεται· τῶν δὲ πάντων Ἀρχέμορον ἐκάλεσεν. Σ Clem. Alex. Protr. 2.34 Αμφιάραος δὲ ὁ μάντης, ἐλευθερίας ἔργον ἡ γένεσιν ἔστατο τοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς ἱεροῖς ἁγιασμοῖς καὶ τῶν πάντων Ἀρχέμορον ἐκάλεσαν. Σ Pind. Nem. hypoth. c (= App. A f) Αμφιάραος δὲ τούτων μαντευόμενος Ἀρχέμορον αὐτὸν ἐκάλεσαν, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἀρχή μόρον ἐγένετο ὁ τοῦ παῖδος Ἰάνατος.
of Opheltes’ death and the sorrow of his wet-nurse and parents (lacrimabile), the words hint at the meaning of the name Archemorus as well.\footnote{See Parkes ad loc. She also compares Il. 11.604 κακοῦ δ’ ἄρα οἱ πᾶλιν ἄρχη, where Patroclus appears from his tent never to return.}

The standard translation ‘beginner of doom’\footnote{E.g. SB footnote on 4.726, Miller 2004: 35, Brown 1994: 76, Parkes on 4.725-6, 749.} is somewhat misleading, as it might suggest that Opheltes is the \textit{causa efficiens} of the Seven’s doom, which is not the case. The translation ‘First Dead Man’,\footnote{Wagenvoort 1971: 139; cf. Curtius 1948: 91 ‘Zuerst sterbend’, Cropp 2008: 251 and Ross 2004 on 5.739 ‘First to die’.} on the other hand, does not render the idea that Opheltes’ death foreshadows, prefigures, inaugurates, symbolises the doom of the Seven against Thebes. As Vessey puts it, ‘the new name of the child is itself a sign of what must come to pass’, ‘a prediction of the doom of the Seven’;\footnote{Vessey 1973: 191 and 1970: 49.} or, in the words of Melville, ‘his death is to be a prelude to and in a way an omen of the impending war’.\footnote{Melville 1992: xvii.} One of the finest translations, perhaps, is Stoll’s ‘Vorgänger im Tode’.\footnote{Roscher s.v. Archemoros (I, 472, 46); cf. also Ambühl in Der Neue Pauly s.v. Opheltes ‘Anfang des Todes’; Simon 1979: 31 ‘Anfang des Todesgeschicks’; Püllhorn in LIMC s.v. Archemoros ‘Anfang des Todesschicksals’.}

In modern times the name Archemorus has also been connected with Latin \textit{mora} (‘delay’), which plays such an important role in the \textit{Thebaid} (see §4.1). McNelis, for instance, following Mozley and Feeney,\footnote{Mozley 1928: 560, Feeney 1991: 339 ‘it clearly also denotes “Originator of Delay” (mora)’.} writes that the name Archemorus ‘may be a (false) bilingual play on the beginning of delay (ἀρχή and mora)’.\footnote{McNelis 2007: 93 with n. 53; cf. McNelis 2004: 270; Brown 1994: 29 ‘“Archemorus” sums up the significance of the Nemea episode, encompassing both aetiology and delay, ἄρχη (beginning) / mora (delay)’; Ganiban 2013: 253.} Indeed, Amphiarus’ which for \textit{plures ... moras} (5.743-4) follows shortly after his explanation of the name Archemorus (5.738-9). We may point out, however, that the Nemean delay is caused, first of all, by Bacchus’ drought \textit{and} Hypsipyle’s Lemnian narrative; although Opheltes’ death causes further delay (the child’s funeral and the first edition of the Nemean Games in book 6), it is not really the ἄρχη of the Nemean \textit{mora}.

As a curiosity, we may also mention the bizarre explanation of the name in pseudo-Fulgentius’ allegoresis \textit{Super Thebaiden} (12\textsuperscript{th} century). In this treatise the \textit{Thebaid} is read as a \textit{psychomachia}, largely on the basis of bizarre etymologies. The name Archemorus is etymologised as follows: ‘quilibet alumpnus \textit{sic} idolatri<ae> \textit{sic} Hypsipyle Archemorus potest vocari, id est principaliter <mortuus>’ (lines 136-7 ‘Archemorus can be called the foster child of idolatry, that is, essentially dead’).\footnote{<mortuus> is of course conjectural. Maltby 1991 s.v. \textit{mors} does not mention Greek μόρος, but cf. LP on 5.739 ‘arche enim Graece “principium” dicitur, moros “mors” sermone eodem nuncupatur’.} It makes sense to connect \textit{μόρος} with \textit{ἀρχή} shows that in pseudo-Fulgentius’ days knowledge of the Greek language had largely evaporated.

Back to Statius. In addition to the oracle and Amphiarus’ speech, there are more – and more subtle – indications that Opheltes’ death prefigures the fate of the Seven. Towards the end of the necromantic scene in book 4, shortly before the Nemean episode, the shade of Laius warns that war is coming: \textit{bellum, innumero uenit undique bellum / agmine, Lernaeos...}
que trahit fatalis alumnos / Gradiuuus stimulis (4.637-9) – programmatic lines that pointedly echo Vergil’s famous bella, horrida bella. The phrase Lernaeos ... alumnos of course refers to the Seven against Thebes; in the Thebaid the adjective Lernaeus is often used in the sense of ‘Argive’. At the same time, however, the adjective carries associations with the Hydra of Lerna, and in the following Nemean episode Lerna and Nemea are deliberately identified. As a result, the phrase Lernaeos ... alumnos is an invitation to regard the Seven chieftains, like Opheltes, as ‘nurslings of Nemea’, who will soon meet their (serpentine) doom.

In book 6, Opheltes’ mother Eurydice also connects the death of her son with the victims of the impending war, when she bitterly observes that the children of Thebes are not yet being lamented (6.144-5 at tua nondum, / Cadme, domus, nullus Tyrio grege plangitur infans); the word nondum indicates that, in due course, the house of Cadmus will be mourning for their children too. And when she says primitias egomet lacrimarum et caedis acerbae / ante tubas ferrumque tuli (6.146-7), the word primitias similarly implies that more tears will follow. Indeed, later in her speech she utters the wish that Theban mothers may soon lament their children as she laments Opheltes: sic aequa gemant mihi funera matres / Ogygiae (6.172-3). They will indeed. Brown rightly observes that ‘[w]hereas the Seven interpret the child’s fate with regard to their own destiny [...]’, Eurydice focuses on the tears shed by the bereaved. Eurydice, who has carefully listened to Amphiarraus’ speech (5.733-52), not simply wishes other women to suffer like she does, she perfectly understands the significance of her son’s death in the grand scheme of things: when she beseeches the Seven to kill Hypsipyle, she does so per ego haec primordia belli / cui peperi (6.171-2), primordia belli referring to Opheltes’ death as prefiguration of the war.

It is often assumed that it is Amphiarraus, inspired by Apollo, who renames Opheltes. In Statius, however, Amphiarraus is not the first to speak Opheltes’ alternative name: it has been used before, by the narrator (4.726) and by his wet-nurse Hypsipyle (5.609). The occurrence in book 4 can easily be explained from the omniscience of the narrator, who introduces the child with ‘his posthumous name by a kind of hysteron-proteron’ (Brown 1994: 129), but how does Hypsipyle know Opheltes’ second name? Perhaps Statius has overlooked the inconsistency, despite his poem being multa cruciata lima (S. 4.7.26)? Delarue notices the problem and infers that ‘[o]n ne peut dire, d’après ce passage, que le nom d’Archémore […] ait été donné à l’enfant seulement à ce moment [sc. à la fin du cinquième

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463 See Delarue 2000: 125, Parkes ad loc.
464 See notes on 5.499 Lernaeis, 579 Lernae.
465 As we will see, Statius also uses the word alumnus to establish a connection between Opheltes and the victims of the Lemnian massacre.
468 Cf. perhaps 1.4 primordia, with the suggestion that Thebes always repeats its beginnings.
470 Cf. Pache 2004: 106 ‘Statius uses the two names, Arkhemeros and Opheltes, without explanation’. Statius uses the name Opheltes twice in book 4 (729, 748); in books 6 and 7 the child is called Archemonus (6.517, 7.93).
471 Cf. Smolenaars on 7.274-5 ‘sloppiness’ is not ‘a conspicuous feature of Statius’ composition’.

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Apparently, Archemorus is no ‘posthumous name’ after all. But if it is not Amphiaraus who renames Opheltes, who then gave the child his second name? Perhaps, as Ross suggests, it is Hypsipyle, not Amphiaraus, who renames the child⁴⁷³ Nothing in the text points in that direction. Or perhaps Statius has in mind a version in which Opheltes was given his alternative name at an earlier occasion, when Lycurgus consulted the oracle for example? Or does Hypsipyle, paralectically, know the story in which she lives?⁴⁷⁴ In any case, it is no coincidence that the name Archemorus first occurs when the narrator outlines the importance of Opheltes’ death in the grand scheme of things, as foundational figure of the Nemean Games (4.725-9); nor is it coincidence, I think, that Hypsipyle uses the alternative lacrimabile nomen / Archemorus (4.725-6)⁴⁷⁵ whilst lacrimans, that is, in her lament for Opheltes (5.608-35).⁴⁷⁶ Recently Ganiban has suggested that, when Hypsipyle calls her nursling Archemorus in 5.609, she relates the nomen omen to her own doom rather than that of the Argives.⁴⁷⁷

Once we understand Opheltes’ death as symbol of the victims of the Theban War, we may also understand why Statius dwells on the atrocities of his dismembered little corpse. Statius devotes almost three lines to the description of Opheltes’ mutilated body, reveling in its horror and pathos, and inviting the reader to visualise every single detail. The language wittily recalls a passage from Lucan’s catalogue of snakes, where he describes the victims of the seps, ironically the smallest snake in his catalogue (see 596-8n.). More importantly, I think, the scene in which Hypsipyle finds Opheltes’ mangled remains and laments his death, corresponds with the so-called aftermath scenes elsewhere in the Thebaid.⁴⁷⁸ Since Opheltes is the symbolic first victim of the Theban War, his dismembered corpse corresponds with the carnage on the battlefield. It brings back to mind the long aftermath scene in book 3, where the Theban women find and lament the 49 warriors butchered by Tydeus (3.114-217, esp. 131-2 pars molliter aptant / bracchia trunca loco et ceruicibus ora reponunt); and Opheltes’ dismembered body also looks forward to the aftermath scenes in the second half of the Thebaid, especially the lengthy description of the gruesome carnage at the beginning of book 12, where we also find hands and faces severed from their bodies (12.22-49).

More specifically, Opheltes’ fate looks forward to several mortes immatura in the second half of the Thebaid, who are also often the subject of lengthy lamentation (see §6.4 below).⁴⁷⁹ There is the death of the Theban youth Eunaeus, the first to die on the battlefield, which clearly recalls the death of Opheltes (7.649-87); later Crenaeus (book 9.315-403), Menoeceus (book 10), and most importantly Parthenopaeus (book 9), the child warrior ‘for whom both armies wept alike’ (12.807) and whose fate symbolises the endless mourning with

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⁴⁷² Delarue (2000) 340 n. 34.
⁴⁷³ So Ross on 5.609 ‘Hypsipyle renames Opheltes to honor him as the first casualty of the Theban war; see line 739 for Amphiaraus’ public renaming of the boy’.
⁴⁷⁴ Cf. Feeney’s 1991: 340-3 observation that Tydeus in 8.472-3 seems to be ‘proleptically aware’ of Creon’s ban on burying the Argive dead (ibid. 341). On paralectsis see De Jong 2001: xvi with references.
⁴⁷⁵ Actually lacrimabile nomen refers to Langia’s fame, but it also applies to the name Archemorus that follows (see above).
⁴⁷⁶ On inconsistencies in Latin literature see O’Hara 2007.
⁴⁷⁷ Ganiban 2013: 253 ‘She does not take the name to involve the fate of the Argive expedition or imply a divine plan. Rather, she ties the death both to the Lemnian massacre [...] and to the one she predicts for herself.’
⁴⁷⁸ On aftermath scenes in the Thebaid see Pagán 2000.
⁴⁷⁹ Cf. Ganiban 2013: 259 ‘Opheltes’ death with its various intra- and inter-textual connections comes to encompass and perhaps even represent other important figures who suffer early or untimely deaths and are mourned by their parents’.
which the ship of Statius’ epic reaches harbour (12.805-7). It is telling that Statius introduces Parthenopaeus in the proem with the words plorandaque bella proterui / Arcados (1.44-5): more than any other character, the fate of the young Arcadian is emblematic of the whole poem, as his death shows the suffering and pointlessness of war. The death of the innocent Opheltes, being even younger, is a powerful symbol of the pointless suffering of these young men on the Theban battlefield. That mors immatura is the worst kind of mors, may be illustrated with Siluae 5.3, where Statius, in order to illustrate the depth of his grief, claims that the grief of Erigone at the death of her father was not second to the grief of Andromache for Astyanax (S. 5.3.64-79): apparently one would expect Andromache’s grief to be the greatest. Young people deserve to live. As Fortgens has shown, Statius is heavily fascinated with children and premature death in both the Silvae and the Thebaid.

Opheltes and Parthenopaeus have much in common. In the first place, they are both very young: although the Arcadian youth is no longer in reptantibus annis, he is still paruus, a word that, as Jamset rightly notes, links Parthenopaeus and Opheltes. In addition, as Parkes notes in her commentary on book 4, the description of Opheltes playing in the meadow echoes the behaviour of Parthenopaeus in the catalogue of troops (4.257 tenero signantem gramina passu ~ 4.794 faciles sternit procursis herbas, 5.612 prono uexantem gramina cursu), which forges a remarkable link between the two children. Both Opheltes and Parthenopaeus are the children of an idyllic, almost Golden Age, world: in Parthenopaeus’ Arcadia children are born from trees (4.279-81), while Opheltes is in several ways the child of nature too, for instance when Hypsipyle places him gremio uernae telluris (4.793). Finally, it is no coincidence that Statius has Parthenopaeus killed by a Giant, named Dryas, which corresponds with Opheltes being killed by a monstrous serpent. Although we should perhaps not push these parallels too far, it is clear that both Opheltes and Parthenopaeus are children of an idyllic pastoral world, brutally killed by enormous opponents against whom they are utterly powerless, leaving behind their mothers (and nurse) in desperate grief.

Opheltes also has much in common with Crenaeus, son of the nymph Ismenis, who is butchered by Hippomedon in book 9. Like Opheltes and Parthenopaeus, Crenaeus is the child of an idyllic world. He is Fauno nymphaque Ismenide natus (9.320), which recalls the nymphs and fauns that live in Statius’ Nemea (5.579-82). Like Opheltes, Crenaeus is tener

480 Not to mention minor figures such as the Olenian Butes, 8.486-7 puer malasque comamque / integer.

481 Cf. e.g. Lovatt 2005: 76 n. 42.

482 Cf. also Juv. 15.138-40 naturae imperio geminus, cum funus adultae / urginis occurring uel terra clauditur infans / et minor igne rogi, and Verg. Aen. 9.212 (Nisus addressing young Eurýalus) tua uita dignior aetas.

483 Fortgens 1959, e.g. 54 ‘Het is zeer opvallend, dat Statius herhaaldelijk in zijn dichtwerken vroeggestorven kinderen bezingt’, 59 ‘Geen andere Latijnse dichter ken ik, die zozeer bewogen is door de tragiek van het jong gestorven kind als Statius’. Numerous passages in the Silvae bear witness to Statius’ fascination with children, e.g. S. 1.2.261-2, 2.7.37-8, 3.1.175-9, 3.3.124-6, 4.5.33-4, 4.8.35 and 41-4; Statius’ obsession with children’s mors immatura appears from S. 2.1, 2.6 and 5.5, which deal, respectively, with the deaths of the pueri delicati Glaucias and Philetos and Statius’ own adopted son.

484 9.719 parue (Parthenopaeus) and 5.534 paruue (Opheltes); Jamset 2004: 97 n. 12.

485 Parkes on 4.257 ‘This picture of the youthful Parthenopaeus is soon to be echoed in the description of Opheltes. The link is ominous. After abandoning Opheltes in the grass [...] Hypsipyle will never see her foster-child alive again: he is the first victim of warfare. Atalanta similarly loses her child to the war’.

486 On Dryas as Giant see McNeilis 2007: 139-40. His name recalls the Dryades of Arcadia (see Parkes on 4.329).

487 Giants are associated with serpents, while the Nemean serpent is associated with Giants; see 5.569-70n.

488 On the Callimachean background of Parthenopaeus see McNeilis 2007: 140 with n. 60.

489 On the Callimachean background of Crenaeus see McNeilis 2007: 125-6.
and the green river banks that were his cunabula (9.322) connect him with Opheltes-like Linus (1.582-3 non tibi digna, puer, generis cunabula tanti / gramineos dedit herba toros). Significantly, Crenaeus and his mother Ismenis are also emphatically compared to Melicertes-Palaemon and Ino-Leucothea (9.330-1, 401-3). As we shall see, Ismenis’ lament closely parallels the lament of Hypsipyle for Opheltes (§6.4).

Opheltes’ death also has connections with the fate of Menoeceus, son of Creon and Eurydice. In book 10 Menoeceus, descendant of the Spartoi (cf. 10.668 terrigenam), sacrifices himself to appease the death of Mars’ serpent at the hands of Cadmus (10.806-10; cf. 612-3). In some sense, then, both Opheltes and Menoeceus are victims of serpents – a parallel that is particularly strong since the Nemean serpent is closely modelled on the Martius anguis. Whereas Opheltes is killed accidentally, an event that anticipates the horrors of the war, Menoeceus deliberately sacrifices himself, in an attempt to save his city from the war. The fates of the two children also constitute an important structural parallel: Opheltes’ funeral in book 6, before the war breaks loose, corresponds with Menoeceus’ funeral in book 12, after the fraternas acies have taken place. Finally, both Opheltes and Menoeceus are deified.

Opheltes’ death not only looks forward, it also recalls the Lemnian massacre, which in the second half of book 5 is still fresh in the reader’s mind. In her narrative Hypsipyle lays much emphasis on the fact that the children of Lemnos were not exempted from the women’s frenzied slaughter: furor omnibus idem, / idem animus solare domos iuuenumque senumque / praecipitare colos plenisque afgranere paruos / uberibus ferroque omnes exire per annos (5.148-51). Polyxo in her speech explicitly nominates her four children as future victims (5.125-8):

\[
\text{quattuor hos una, decus et solacia patris,} \\
\text{in gremio, licet amplexu lacrimisque morentur,} \\
\text{transadigam ferro saniemque et uulnera fratrum} \\
\text{mischebo patremque super spirantibus addam.}
\]

Polyxo’s words decus et solacia patris are clearly echoed in the opening lines of Hypsipyle’s lament over her nursling (see 5.608-10), which underscores the connection between Opheltes and the victims on Lemnos; the gory wounds also link Polyxo’s sons with Opheltes. In the description of the massacre itself, little Epopeus is butchered by his own mother as he is playing among chaplets (5.224-5 inter sert 

\[\text{torosque / barbara ludentem fodiebat Epopea mater:}\]

\[\text{again there is a connection with Opheltes, who is also fond of flowers. Most of all,}\]

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490 On Linus and Opheltes see §3.
491 Not accidentally, perhaps, Menoeceus fights at the Dircaean Gate, since Dirce is the spring where Mars’ Theban serpent used to live (8.357).
492 Gossage 1972: 203 notes the structural correspondence.
494 These lines look back to the speech of Iris-Beroë in Aeneid 5 (Göttin 1969: 76 with n. 118), Val. 2.185 praecipites excussit ab ubere natos, cf. also Val. 2.203 adstricto riguerunt ubere nati. In Göttin’s analysis the ‘Knabenopfer’ in Hypsipyle’s narrative corresponds structurally with Tydeus’ ambush in book 2 in the main narrative (loc. cit. 78).
495 It might be worth noting that, in Apollonius Rhodius, Polyxo is Hypsipyle’s nurse (1.668-9). Hence Polyxo :: Hypsipyle (in Apollonius) ~ Hypsipyle :: Opheltes (in Statius)? In Valerius Polyxo is a seer (2.316).
Opheltes’ death is reminiscent of the gruesome death of the baby that is sacrificed when the women take a pledge to slay their husbands (5.159-63):496

\[ \text{\textit{nec de more cruor: natum Charopeia coniunx}^{497} } \]
\[ \text{obtulit. accingunt sese et mirantia ferro} \]
\[ \text{pectora congestis auidae simul undique dextris} \]
\[ \text{perfringunt, ac dulce nefas in sanguine uiuo} \]
\[ \text{coniurant, matremque recens circumuolat umbra.} \]

As the sacrifice of the Lemnian infant inaugurates the Lemnian massacre, so the violent death of Opheltes inaugurates the bloodshed of the Theban War. Not accidentally, perhaps, the sacrifice also takes place in a green grove (5.152 \textit{uiridi luco}), an environment that is disturbingly similar to the greeneries where Opheltes is killed. Note also that both the Lemnian victims and Opheltes are killed whilst sleeping. When Statius describes Opheltes falling asleep, he plays with the associations between sleep and death (see 5.502-4n.), which might recall the beginning of the Lemnian massacre, \textit{cum consanguinei mixtus caligine Leti / rore madens Stygio morituram amplectitur urbem / So}nus (5.197-9). And when Statius describes how Opheltes opens his eyes on the brink of death (5.540 \textit{in solam patuerunt lumina mortem}), we are reminded of the Lemnian men being killed in their sleep, for instance Helymus, whom \textit{invelix sopor admota sub morte refugit} (5.211). In short, the death of Opheltes is in various ways linked to the victims of the Lemnian massacre. It is no coincidence, I think, that the island is introduced as \textit{diues alumnis / terra} (5.54-5), as the word \textit{alumnis} links the Lemnians with Hypsipyle’s \textit{alumnus} (cf. on 4.638 \textit{Lernaeosque ... alumnos} above).

6.4. Hypsipyle and maternal bereavement

‘Basic to the \textit{Thebaid}’s story’, Brown has written, ‘is the sufferings of its mothers and children’.498 As we have seen (§6.2), the marine deity Ino-Leucothea repeatedly surfaces in the \textit{Thebaid} as a paradigmatic Theban mother – bereaved, frightened, lamenting. In addition to Ino-Leucothea, we find other women from Thebes’ mythical past, Autonoë (4.562 \textit{orbam Auto}noën) and Niobe (1.711 \textit{Thebanaque mater}), the quintessentially Theban mother who lost all her children to divine wrath.499 These female figures remind us that Thebes always repeats itself: as Oedipus’ sons are doomed to reenact the \textit{fraternas acies} of the Spartoi, so the epic’s women are doomed to reenact the mourning and lamentation of Ino, Autonoë and Niobe. In the powerful formulation of John Henderson: ‘Thebes is a mother’s lament’.500

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496 Vessey 1973: 181 writes somewhat euphemistically that ‘[t]he women seal their resolve in a magical ceremony (152 ft.), which recalls in atmosphere the necromancy at Thebes in book 4’. Mauri on 5.143-71 notes the scene’s affinities with Luc. 3.399-405 and Sen. \textit{Thy.} 638-743. An immediate model passage does not present itself, however, something which Statius seems to acknowledge metapoetically with the phrase \textit{nec de more} (Mauri on 5.159; perhaps inspired by Feeeny 1991: 341 on Oedipus’ recognition of his own literary tradition in 11.615 \textit{ex more}).

497 Vessey 1973: 173 seems to believe that \textit{Charopeia coniunx} refers to Polyxo (‘in Statius she [Polyxo] is the ageing wife of Charopeus [sic]’). Mauri on 5.159 notes that the wife of Charops is otherwise unknown (cf. SB index s.v. Charopeius).


499 In 6.124-5 subtly aligns Opheltes with Niobe’s children; Ganiban 2013: 262 suggests that, since it was Apollo (and Diana) who killed Niobe’s children, we are also reminded of Linus again.

500 Henderson 1991: 78 n. 191, his italics.
Lamentation runs like a scarlet thread through Statius’ *Thebaid*, which significantly ends – and does not end – with endless mourning. Although we find Polynices lamenting Tydeus (9.49-72, 75-6) and Oedipus lamenting his sons (11.605-26, 630-1), most of these laments are spoken by women, notably Ide (book 3), Eurydice (book 6), Moenoeceus’ mother (book 10) and Argia (book 12). The most important function of the many speeches of lament, as Dominik rightly points out, is ‘to draw attention to the suffering of humankind brought about by the loss of loved ones in war. Most of the lament speeches are delivered by mothers over their young sons who have become the victims of martial violence’.

It is telling, for example, that Foley’s discussion of mourning women in ancient epic is devoted almost exclusively to the *Thebaid*, which ‘offers a complex representation of female mourners that pervades the whole poem and dominates the ending’. It is also telling that Dante’s Vergil, talking about Statius’ *Thebaid* in the *Divina Commedia*, does not mention the Seven heroes, or Theseus for that matter, but the poem’s female characters Antigone, Deipyle, Argia, Ismene, Hypsipyle and Manto (*Purg.* 22.109-14). Recent studies by Micozzi (1998), Fantham (1999), Dietrich (1999), Lovatt (1999), Markus (2004), Augoustakis (2010: 30-91) and Newlands (2006 and 2012: 113-122) have shown that maternal bereavement and lamentation and mourning are at the heart of the *Thebaid*. The sheer length of these laments in the *Thebaid* indicates their importance, and the frequency of the verb *orbare* in the poem may also serve as an illustration.

In the *Silvae* lament plays a central role as well. Markus (2004) has convincingly argued that Statius, both in the *Thebaid* and in the *Silvae*, embraces the popular ‘feminine’ genre of excessive lamentation, rejecting the ‘masculine’ philosophical consolatory discourse with its rational approach and emotional restraint. Similarly Newlands shows how the poet attempts to break free from the traditional gendered roles of male restraint and female excess. The crucial difference between the *Silvae* and the *Thebaid*, when it comes to lamentation, is that the *Silvae* offer consolation, whereas the *Thebaid* does not: in *Silvae* 5.5 Statius presents himself as ‘he who so often was able to charm and soothe the pains of mothers and fathers and their sorrow of bereavement’, whereas at the end of the *Thebaid* his narrator cries that ‘a hundred voices’ would be insufficient to express the loss and suffering of the bereaved. In the context of the epic’s ending, attention has also been called to the (meta)

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501 For a complete overview of laments in the *Thebaid* see Dominik’s chapter on ‘speeches of mourning and consolation’ (1994a: 119-39), which especially discusses the laments’ rhetorical figures and the relationship between Statius’ epic lament and the rhetorical genre of formal lament described by e.g. Menander Rhetor.
504 Cf. Wetherbee 2008: 171-4. The importance of the female voice in Statius’ *Thebaid* contributed much to his popularity in the Middle Ages; see Newlands 2012: 9, 102, 122-35.
505 Gossage 1972: 202 calls attention to the length of Ide’s lament in book 3 (over 100 lines).
506 Cf. Smolenaar on 7.342.
507 *S.* 2.1, 6 and 7; 3.3; 5.1, 3 and 5. In the light of *mors immatura* one especially thinks of the poems on the death of *puer delicatus* Glaucias (2.1), Philetos (2.6) and on the death of Statius’ own *puer* (5.5). An excellent introduction is Gibson 2006: xxxi-l (‘consolation and self-consolation in *Silvae* 5’). For the intersection between the laments in the *Silvae* and those in the *Thebaid* see Gibson 2006b: 175-6, Brown 1994: 110.
508 A fine example in the *Thebaid* is 6.46-50.
510 *S.* 5.5.38-42; cf. 2.1.30-2.
poetics of mourning, to lamentation as vehicle of memoria, and to the solace and catharsis which it may offer both characters and readers.

In the epic genre, lament traditionally functions as a foil to heroic exploits, reminding us of the cost of heroic achievements. Thus, in the Aeneid, the ‘pessimistic’ or ‘private voice’ of sorrow balances the ‘optimistic’ or ‘public voice’ that heralds the Golden Age of Augustus. In the Thebaid, however, the heroes achieve very little; the fraternal conflict brings little more than grief and loss. As Gossage points out, the Thebaid is not about ‘the actions of a hero, but about the sufferings of a family divided against itself’. Fantham writes that in the Thebaid ‘lament become[s] a countermovement equal in force to the deaths that are its occasion’, to which she adds the argument that, in Statius, lament can fuel further conflict and ‘can become a “dangerous voice” that challenges the heroic ideology’; and she concludes, rightly I think, that the many laments in the Thebaid drive home the message that in the Thebaid ‘the grief is greater than the glory’. And in addition to the recurring laments, Statius repeatedly mentions anonymous mothers and children, almost in passing, to remind his audience of the (imminent) cost and suffering of the Theban War.

The end of the Thebaid lays considerable emphasis on the tragic mors immatura of the Arcadian youth Parthenopaeus (12.805-7 Arcada ... Arcada ... Arcada). As we have seen, his premature death symbolises the pointless suffering in Statius’ bleak universe. At the same time, the lines suggest hope, in that Argives and Thebans are united in their grief and mourning for the child, for whom ‘both armies wept alike’ (12.807 geminae pariter fleuere cohortes). In this respect, the Thebaid owes something to Seneca’s Troades, which also focusses on the suffering and bereavement of women in a world torn apart by war. At the end of the play, the Trojans and Greeks are similarly united in their grief and mourning for the innocent Astyanax and Polyxena (Sen. Tr. 1160 ETERQUE FLEUIT COETUS; cf. 1119). The horrors of the Trojan and Theban Wars may be unspeakable, but they also reveal common human values. In the end, in the absence of the gods (celestial as well as infernal), the only hope for mortal beings is to be sought in their shared humanitas – although it remains an open question whether it is there to be found.

Traditionally, the mourning women of the Thebaid are seen as embodiments of pietas, as opposed to the violent furor of most male characters. This idea finds strong support in e.g. 11.461 ceu soror infelix pugnantum aut anxia mater / deflebat, where Statius aligns Pietas with the poem’s lamenting women. Thus Gossage describes a contrast between, on the one hand, the ‘unnatural behaviour inspired by immoderate and perverted passions’ and, on the

513 See Markus 2004.
514 Cf. e.g. the many laments in Iliad 24; Euryalus’ mother in Aen. 9.481-97, Pallas’ father in 11.213-7. For the role of lamentation in epic in general see the section ‘epic and lament’ in Beissinger et alii (1999), esp. Green’s contribution, with further references.
515 See e.g. Hardie 1998: 94-101 with further references.
517 Fantham 1999: 221.
519 E.g. 2.459, 479-80, 4.16-7, 7.520-1.
other, the mourning women that represent pietas.\textsuperscript{522} Of course pietas prescribes lamentation of one’s near and dear.\textsuperscript{523} However, Fantham has argued that the female voice can also have a destabilising effect and sometimes leads to even more violence.\textsuperscript{524} In the case of Hypsipyle, one could argue, the female voice – lamenting and memorising the Lemnian massacre – leads to the death of Opheltes.\textsuperscript{525}

Let us now return to the idea of the Opheltes episode as microsm of the Thebaid as a whole. As Opheltes’ death is connected with the slaughter of the Theban War (and the Lemnian massacre), his nurse Hypsipyle (like his mother Eurydice in book 6) is related to the other bereaved women that populate the Thebaid. It is telling that her entrance in the poem is marked by sadness (4.728 \textit{tristem Hypsipylen}, 4.747 \textit{maerore}): she has lost her crown, her island, her family. Significantly, Adrastus mistakes her for (a follower of) Diana, a goddess associated with both maternity (Lucina) and death (Hecate).\textsuperscript{526} And in book 5, she also loses her beloved nursling, \textit{rerum et patriae solamen ademptae / seruitique decus} (5.609-10); and since she is responsible, she is even about to lose her life. In her emotional lament for Opheltes, she even wishes for death.

Hypsipyle’s lament for her nursling (5.608-35) is in various ways connected with the other laments in the poem. In the first place, it recalls the lament of Ide (3.151-68), who “programmatically offers a universalising condemnation of the sheer wastefulness of civil war”;\textsuperscript{527} not accidentally, Ide is also the mother of twins. At the same time, Hypsipyle’s lament looks forward to the laments of Eurydice (6.138-76), Ismenis (9.351-403), Menoeceus’ mother (10.793-814) and Argia (12.322-48) – many of whom lament for \textit{mors immatura} as well. Hypsipyle’s lament also foreshadows the collective female mourning at the end of the Thebaid.\textsuperscript{528}

The intratextual correspondences between Hypsipyle’s lament and the laments of these other women are underscored by numerous verbal parallels (see 5.605-37nn.). The parallels with Crenaeus’ mother Ismenis in book 9 are particularly striking, unsurprisingly perhaps given the earlier parallels between \textit{tener Crenaeus} (9.320) and Opheltes. The circumstances are very similar too. When Crenaeus dies, his last word is ‘mother’ (9.350 ‘\textit{mater!’}), which recalls Opheltes’ dying wail (5.541-3).\textsuperscript{529} Alarmed his mother Ismenis searches for her son, but he is nowhere to be found (9.356 \textit{nusquam ille}), which cannot fail to recall Hypsipyle’s search for Opheltes (5.548 \textit{nuquam ille}).\textsuperscript{530} Furthermore, both women are compared to a mother bird that finds her nestlings gone (5.599-604 and 9.360-2). Before Ismenis begins her lament, Statius describes how she dries his wet face with her hair (9.374-5), echoing

\textsuperscript{522} Gossage 1972: 202; on Hypsipyle as ‘eroina della pietas’ see esp. Scaffai 2002.
\textsuperscript{523} Gossage 1972: 202 with n. 42; cf. e.g. Servius on \textit{Aen.} 6.325, Cat. 101.7-10, Verg. \textit{Aen}. 11.96-7, Ov. \textit{Fast}. 4.849-50).
\textsuperscript{524} Cf. Newlands 2012: 114 ‘[women’s mourning] also explores the dangerous potential in female grief that the philosophers sought prescriptively to contain’. Thus Ide is disturbingly compared to a Thessalian witch (3.140-6); see Newlands 2012: 116.
\textsuperscript{525} Cf. Brown 1994: 73.
\textsuperscript{526} Brown 1994: 95-6.
\textsuperscript{527} Newlands 2012: 114.
\textsuperscript{528} Brown 1994: 74-93, 127. Note that Hypsipyle, first, cannot find words to express her grief also (5.593).
\textsuperscript{529} Note the verbal parallels, 5.541-3 \textit{moriens ... ore ... uoces} ~ 9.349-50 \textit{moribundo ... ore ... uocem}.
\textsuperscript{530} Note also that Ismenis calls herself \textit{nympharum longe regina} (9.384), echoing 4.832 \textit{siluarum, Nemea, longe regina}. 

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Hypsipyle twining Opheltes’ remains in her hair before her lament (5.604-5). Shortly before his death, Crenaeus had challenged Hippomedon with the following words: *non haec fecunda ueneno / Lerna, nec Hercules haustae serpentibus undae* (9.341-2). Crenaeus is correct, the Ismenos is not Lerna, but on the symbolic level Crenaeus could not be more wrong: the parallels with book 5 show that the episode repeats the events in Lernaean Nemea.

### 6.5. Jupiter’s serpent and epic furor

The cause of Opheltes’ death is the Nemean serpent, which accidentally kills the child with a flick of its tail (5.538-9). As the fate of Opheltes looks forward to the victims of the Theban War, the death of the serpent is a prefiguration of the death of Bacchus’ tigresses, which inaugurates the Theban War in book 7.\(^{531}\) More importantly, on a symbolic level, the serpent that causes Opheltes’ death corresponds with the powers of (self)destruction that inspire the fraternal conflict and the frenzied bloodshed in the *Thebaid*.

In the first place, the Nemean serpent is related with the serpentine city of Thebes, a city that was founded ‘under the evil omen of the snake, even to the point where the founders are themselves metamorphosed into snakes’.\(^{532}\) This connection appears, first, from the intertextual allusions to the *Martius anguis* in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*; although more intertexts are involved, Statius’ description of the monster – and its death at the hands of Hippomedon and Caneus – are modelled primarily on Cadmus’ encounter with the Theban serpent sacred to Mars (*Met*. 3.28-94).\(^{533}\) The foundational story of Cadmus and the *Martius anguis* captures the essence of Thebes, as the first Thebans, the earthborn Spartoi, immediately engage in *fraternas acies*. Significantly, Cadmus’ sowing of the serpent’s teeth also figures prominently in the proem of the *Thebaid* (1.7-8 *trepidum si Martis operti / agricolam infandis condentem proelia sulcis*); it reminds us that the *fraternas acies* of Eteocles and Polynices reenact the foundational fratricide of the Spartoi.\(^{534}\) More explicit references to the Spartoi occur later in the poem,\(^{535}\) while the fifty Theban warriors that ambush Tydeus in book 2 are also in various ways reminiscent of the Spartoi.\(^{536}\) Thebes is repeatedly associated with serpents in other ways too. Statius twice mentions the metamorphosis of Cadmus and Harmonia into snakes,\(^{537}\) for instance, and Theban king Eteocles is associated with serpents via two similes (2.411-4 and 11.310-4).\(^{538}\) Furthermore, Statius lays much emphasis on the serpentine character of the Fury Tisiphone (1.103-13), who plays a

\(^{531}\) 7.564-607; see Vessey 1973: 188-9, Kenyeres 97 n. 130.

\(^{532}\) See Brown 1994: 147-51 (citation from 150).

\(^{533}\) See 5.505-33n. On Statius’ engagement with Ovid generally see Keith 2002 and 2004-5, Newlands 2004.

\(^{534}\) Cf. 1.180-5 (the speech of the anonymous Theban).

\(^{535}\) E.g. 1.680 *tellus Mauortia Thebe*, 2.572-3 and 590-4, 3.285 *uipeero Tyrios de sanguine*, 4.434-8 *fetus ager Cadmo*. In 2.310 the royal palace of Thebes is called *Echionia ... aula*, Echion being one of the Spartoi.

\(^{536}\) Their leader is called Chthonius (2.538), which calls attention to the earthborn origins of the Theban race; another is descended directly from the Spartoi (2.572-3 *Martisque e semine Theron / terrigenas confisus auos*); and while the soldiers fail to kill Tydeus, they do kill each other, reenacting the battle of the Spartoi (2.590-4).

\(^{537}\) 2.289-91 *Cadnum comitataiacentem / Harmonia uersis in sibila dira querelis / Illyricos longo sulcavit pectaro campos*, 3.289-90 *Veneris quod filia longum / reptat et Illyricos dejectat uirus in herbas*.

\(^{538}\) On snake-similes in the *Thebaid* see Parkes on 4.95-100 (Tydeus) with references. The snake in 2.410-4 also suffers from *longa sitis*, which forges an important link between the frenzied king of Thebes and the frenzied Nemean serpent (cf. Brown 1994: 154); other details, such as the venom and the hurling of a rock, underscore this connection. Vessey 1986: 2981-4 discusses the simile (in a surprisingly postmodern style), but is silent on the parallels with the Nemean serpent.
leading role not only in the conflict between Oedipus’ sons, but also in the horrors of the Theban past, as appears from Oedipus’ prayer (1.56-87). As a serpent, then, the Nemean monster carries associations with Thebes and its concomitant powers of destruction, and the Ovidian palimpsest underscores this symbolic connection. As Brown puts it, ‘the serpent figure [...] inextricably binds the episode to the rest of the Thebaid’; she also observes a connection in the serpent being terrigena (5.506), which may remind us of the Spartoi (4.441 terrigenae).

However, in the Thebaid serpents are not simply symbolic of Thebes; they are rather symbolic of the furor that inspires horrors such as the fraternas acies. That appears, most clearly, from the serpentine necklace of Harmonia which, as McNelis has shown, ‘symbolises the evil, interfamilial passions that drive the narrative’ (2.276-85):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ibi arcano florentes igne zmaragdos} \\
\text{cingit et infaustas percussum adamanta figuras} \\
\text{Gorgoneosque orbes Siculaque include relictos} \\
\text{fulminis extremi cineris uiridumque draconum} \\
\text{lucentes a fronte iubas; hic flebile germen} \\
\text{Hesperidum et dirum Phrixei uelleris aurum;} \\
\text{tum uarias pestes raptumque interplicat atro} \\
\text{Tisiphone de crine ducem, et quae pessima ceston} \\
\text{uis probat; haec circum spumis lunaribus unguit} \\
\text{callidus atque hilaris perfundit cuncta ueneno.}
\end{align*}
\]

McNelis rightly points out that Harmonia’s serpentine necklace looks back to the snake of Allecto that entwines itself around the neck of queen Amata in Vergil (Aen. 7.351-2 fit tortile collo / aurum ingens coluber) and also serves as ‘an impetus for war’. Significantly, the ecphrasis of Harmonia’s necklace is repeatedly echoed in the description of the Nemean serpent: venom, crest, green, gold – all these elements link the Nemean serpent with the necklace that symbolises the powers of evil that propel the narrative towards its fratricidal climax. When Opheltes falls victim to the Nemean serpent, then, on a symbolic level he also falls victim to the forces that inspire the fraternas acies of the Thebaid.

It should be stressed that the warlike Argives are associated with serpents as well. The Theban king Eteocles is compared to snake when he confronts Tydeus, but in the catalogue in book 4 Tydeus himself is also compared to a dangerous serpent (4.95-100). And at the beginning of book 12 there is an extensive simile that compares the terrified people of Thebes to doves – birds of peace and innocence – that are threatened by a monstrous snake (12.15-21); in this simile, the snake clearly corresponds with the attacking Argives. The simile in book 12 is particularly relevant to the Nemean episode, since it recalls the simile in our episode (5.599-604), where Hypsipyle finding Opheltes’ remains is compared to a mother bird that finds her nestlings devoured by a snake. While warriors, both Argive and Theban, are

539 Brown 1994: 147, 149. One might even be tempted to connect the Nemean serpent’s terma agmina of teeth (5.508) with Thebes’ tripli .. muros (2.454), which, as Mulder ad loc. notes, alludes to Vergil’s Tartarus (Aen. 6.549 tripli .. muro; see Mulder ad loc.); perhaps Greek τριστοίχος (‘threefold’), found in Hesiod’s description of Tartarus (Th. 727), suggested τετραχώς (‘wall’)? Cf. 5.509-10n.

540 The association of snakes with ira or furor can be traced back to Homer (Il. 22.93-5); cf. e.g. Aen. 2.379-81 and 471-5 (Pyrrhus); in Statius the similes in 2.410-4, 4.95-100, 11.310-4 are especially revealing.

541 See McNelis 2007: 50-75. The citation is from Newlands 2012: 86.

542 McNelis 2007: 55. The golden fleece and the Gorgon, he points out, also carry associations with snakes.
compared to frenzied snakes, Brown has suggested,\(^{543}\) the Nemean snake is reminiscent of a warrior: it is called *hostis* (5.549), its teeth are referred to as *agmina* (5.509), and ‘its crest is implicitly compared to a warrior’s helmet’ (5.510-1).\(^{544}\) While the snake represents *furor* and the destructiveness of war, the nestlings represent its innocent victims. The serpent does not simply represent Thebans or Argives, it ‘symbolises the war itself, which destroys the innocent with the guilty’.\(^{545}\)

Thus we can read the monstrous serpent as symbol of the destructiveness of war, the innocent child as symbol of its victims. At the same time, however, Statius undermines these polarities, as the serpent in various ways mirrors its victim (and vice versa). Both the infant and the snake are sacred (see 5.505n. *sacer horror*), both are ignorant (see 5.539n. *ignaro*), both level the grass whilst crawling (see 5.525-6n. *arua gemente radens / pronus adhaeret humo*), both are given a funeral pyre (cf. esp. 6.118-25 *pari cumulo ... aequus labor*)\(^{546}\) – and there are many more verbal connections that link them together. An interesting passage, in this respect, is the pastoral lament for the epic serpent (5.579-82): one might expect the nymphs and fauns of Nemea to rejoice after the serpent has been slain, but instead they lament the monster’s death. Opheltes may be a *flebilis infans* (6.245), but the serpent is also deserving of tears. Pastoral elements are often employed to highlight the cost and suffering of war, but now the ‘war’ is itself made the object of lamentation. Both the child and the monster, it seems, are presented as victims of the grand scheme of things, of which they themselves are completely ignorant. The links between the killer and the killed show that, in Statius’ poetic universe, distinctions are difficult to maintain – *pereant agedum discrimina rerum* (8.37). We may recall Capaneus’ slaying of Jupiter’s serpent, which, as we have seen (§3.3; cf. 5.565-79n.), is also extremely ambiguous, as it is difficult to tell apart the god and the giant, heaven and hell. In Statius’ *Thebaid*, as in Theban myth, the distinctions between self and other are often collapsed.

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\(^{543}\) See Brown 1994: 154-5.

\(^{544}\) We may note that in Eur. *Hyps. fr. 754a.4* the serpent’s crest is called *πήλημα* ‘(crested) helmet’ (see Collard-Cropp *ad loc.*).


\(^{546}\) The two pyres recall the pyres for Idmon and Tiphys in Val. 5.1-72.
7. Statius’ Nemea: fact or fiction?

Statius spends little time on the topography of Nemea.
— Brown (1994: 13)

In his seminal book on the Thebaid, Legras claims that Statius’ description of Nemea is a fictional *topothesia* rather than a factual *topographia*:547 ‘La Némée de Stace ne ressemble pas du tout à la réelle [...]; mais Stace n’avait pas vu la Grèce, et ne croyait pas en avoir besoin’ – unlike Vergil, Legras hastens to add, who ‘avait parcouru tous les lieux d’Italie et de Sicile où il place son poème’!548 Legras is certainly right about Vergil,549 but on what grounds does he deny similar knowledge to Statius? Legras is not alone; others have also denied the possibility of Statius travelling Greece, especially in older scholarship.550 In this section it will be argued, contra Legras, that Statius’ Nemea is actually a *topographia* rather than a *topothesia*, as the mythical events are mapped onto an existing landscape.551

When Statius introduces Nemea, invoking Phoebus to tell the Nemean interlude (4.646–51), he immediately evokes its greeneries (4.647 *dumeta*) and coolness (4.646 *gelidam Nemeen*); there is also mention of a river (see 5.516–7, 523 with notes). Although these are all typological features of the *locus amoenus*, they are in accordance with Nemean reality: as Miller points out – and as visitors of the archeological site can still experience today – ‘[t]he valley is fertile and well watered, and its vineyards and olive groves give it a verdant hue even during the heat of summer’.552 The river, winding its way past the Ophelteion, Opheltes’ *heroon*, and the Temple of Zeus, can still be seen today as well – without water, though, as if the local nymphs are still remembering Bacchus’ request.

The above similarities may be explained away as typological features of an idyllic landscape, but there are other elements in Statius’ Nemean landscape that leave little room for doubt. Statius mentions the Temple of Zeus (see 5.513n. *templa*), which still dominates the archaeological site of Nemea. He mentions ‘woodland altars’ (5.512 n. *siluestribus aris*), which could well be an allusion to the altars within the *peribolos* of the Ophelteion, which are mentioned by Pausanias (see below) and which have indeed been excavated. The spring Langia that quenches the Argives’ thirst may be identified with the nearby spring that, in later times, was channelled through rock-cut tunnels to supply the bath-houses with water. And last but not least, there is an accurate ecphrasis of Mt Ap(h)esas with its characteristic truncated summit (3.460–5; cf. 5.640-1n.).

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547 Servius on Aen. 1.159 explains: *topothesia est [...] fictus secundum poetica licentiam locus [...] ; topographia est rei uerae descriptio.*
548 Legras 1905: 259 n. 2.
549 Williams in his commentary on Aeneid 5 (Oxford ed. xxiv) suggests that Vergil’s ‘projected visit to Greece in 19 BC was undertaken to give him the local colour and first-hand knowledge which he felt he needed for revision and (perhaps) partial recasting’. Hor. Carm. 1.3 suggests that Vergil had visited Greece before.
550 Cf. e.g. Dilke 1954: 3 n. 5 ‘It does not necessarily follow from *Silv.* V, 3, 141 ff. that Statius’ father visited Greece and won prizes at the Pythian, Nemean and Isthmian games, and H. Frère (*Silvae*, ed. Budé, 198 n. 6) denies this’; Clinton 1972: 79 ‘Statius the younger [...] probably never left Italy’.
551 Cf. Ogden 2013: 55 ‘The topography of the Opheltes myth is easy to relate to the archaeological discoveries in the vale of Nemea’. Unfortunately, he does not expand.
Apparently Statius had some knowledge of the Nemean *couleur locale*. The question is what sources of information the poet had at his disposal. One could maintain, with Legras, that Statius never saw Nemea with his own eyes, and that his Nemean landscape is a literary construction. Indeed, the building blocks of Statius’ Nemea may be quarried from literary sources: in the extant fragments of Euripides’ *Hypsipyle*, for instance, we also find the Temple of Zeus, and it is possible that other elements of the Nemean landscape, such as Mt Ap(h)esas, were mentioned, or even described, in the play. Statius may also have used other poetic treatments of the myth, which have not survived the ages (see §1.3).

Alternatively, Statius may have consulted geographical writings. Various elements of Statius’ Nemean landscape – the river (5.516-7), the grove (e.g. 5.505), the woodland altars (5.512) and the temple of Jupiter (5.513, 577) – are mentioned in Pausanias’ description of the Nemean sanctuary (Paus. 2.15.2-3):

> Νεμείου Δίος ναὸς ἐστὶ δέξις ἅξιος πληρ ὅσιων κατερφύνει τε ὁ ὀρφος και ἀγαλμα οὐδὲν ἔτι έλειπεται, κυπαρίσσι τε ἄλος ἐστὶ περὶ τοῦ ναοῦ, καὶ τὸν Οφέλτην ἡκαία ὑπὸ τῆς τροφού τεθέντα ἐς τὴν πόλιν διαφαίρει λέγουσιν ὑπὸ τοῦ δράκοντος. (3) θύουσι δὲ Αρχεῖοι τῷ Δίῳ καὶ ἐν τῇ Νεμέᾳ καὶ Νεμείου Δίῳ ἑδρεία αἰρόταιται, καὶ δὴ καὶ όμοιον προτίθεσάν αὐτῷ ἀνάδραμον ὑπηλιμένος Νεμείου πανηγύρει τῶν χειμερινῶν. ἡκαίαι ἐστὶ καὶ τὸν Οφέλτον τάφος, παρὶ δὲ αὐτὸν ἄγιχον λόδων καὶ ἐντὸς τοῦ περιβόλου βωμοὶ ἐστὶ δὲ χιώνα τῆς Λυκοφροὺ Μηνώμην τοῦ Οφέλτου πατρός, τὴν δὲ πηγὴν Αδράστειαν οὐσιομάζουσαν εἶτε ἐπὶ ἀλλη τινι αἰτίᾳ εἰτε καὶ ἀνευρόντος αὐτήν Αδράστον· τὸ δὲ οὐμα λέγουσι τῇ χώρᾳ Νεμέαν δοῦναι Υγατέρας Ασποῦ καὶ θαυτήν· καὶ ὡς Απέσας ἐστίν ὑπὸ τὴν Νεμέαν, ἔνθα Περσία πρῶτον Δίῳ θύουσιν ἀπαιδευτικῷ.

‘In Nemea is a noteworthy temple of Nemean Zeus, but I found that the roof had fallen in and that there was no longer remaining any image. Around the temple is a grove of cypress trees, and here it is, they say, that Opheltes was placed by his nurse in the grass and killed by the serpent. (3) The Argives offer burnt sacrifices to Zeus in Nemea also, and elect a priest of Nemean Zeus; moreover they offer a prize for a race in armour at the winter celebration of the Nemean games. In this place is the grave of Opheltes; around it is a fence of stones, and within the enclosure are altars. There is also a mound of earth which is the tomb of Lycurgus, the father of Opheltes. The spring they call Adrastea for some reason or other, perhaps because Adrastus found it. The land was named, they say, after Nemea, who was another daughter of Asopus. Above Nemea is Mount Apesas, where they say that Perseus first sacrificed to Zeus of Apesas.’ (transl. Jones and Armorand)

Statius did not read Pausanias, of course, who lived in the second century AD; but it is conceivable that similar texts were available in the late first century AD. Pausanias’ remark that the roof of the temple has collapsed and that the cult-statue is missing is also noteworthy: would it be possible that Statius, tongue in cheek, alludes to the disappearance of the statue of Jupiter when he describes the turmoil in Nemea (see 5.696-7n.)?

In addition to textual sources, the Nemean landscape in the *Thebaid* may also be informed by (indirect) autopic information. From *Silvae* 5.3, the *epicedion* that Statius wrote for his father, we know that the elder Statius was victorious in the musical competition of the Nemean Games (S. 5.3.142-3 *gramine Lernae ... protectum temporae*). Although in the

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553 In fr. 752c Hypsipyle’s sons, Thous and Euneus, admire the painted reliefs on the pediment.

554 See Nauta 2002: 199; *gramine Lernae* refers to the wreath of wild celery (cf. §1.4.2).
Roman era the Nemean Games took place in the city of Argos, and not in Nemea itself,\(^{555}\) it is possible that the poet visited the old site.\(^ {556}\) And if he did, what he saw there must have been not unlike what Pausanias was to describe in the second century AD. That the elder Statius visited Greece is confirmed by an inscription from Eleusis (\textit{IG} II\(^2\) 3919), datable to ca. 50-150 AD:

\begin{verbatim}
ἡ βουλὴ ἡ ἐξ Ἀρήν Πάλαγον
Πόπλαον Παπίνιον Στράτινον
ἀρτῆς ἑνεκα καὶ εὐνοιὰς
\end{verbatim}

In all likelihood, as Clinton has argued, the inscription and the statue to which it belonged honour Statius the elder,\(^ {557}\) who won victories at the Pythian, Nemean and Isthmian Games, which made him a περιοδονίκης. Back home in Naples, the poet certainly told his son about his travels in Greece. Similarly, as Heuvel and Fortgens have suggested, the frequent references to Ino and Palaemon in the \textit{Thebaid} may be related to the fact that Statius senior had been victorious in the Isthmian Games (S. 5.3.143 \textit{nunc Athamantea protectum tempora pinu}).\(^ {558}\)

It is even possible, I would suggest, that our Statius, who learned his poetic skills from his father, accompanied his father on his travels through Greece. After all, the elder Statius taught his son, amongst other things, \textit{sidera ... aequoraque et terras} (S. 5.3.211-2), and when Statius was composing the \textit{Thebaid}, it was his father who showed him ‘the layout of places’ (\textit{S. 5.3.236-7 positusque locorum / monstrabas}). The latter phrase primarily refers to literary composition and literary loci, but it is tempting to think of real loci as well. And even if Statius did not accompany his father, it is possible that he spent some time in Greece as part of his education. Admittedly, we cannot prove that Statius has travelled Greece, but it is certainly possible.

Statius’ accurate description of Nemea does not stand alone; there are other passages in the \textit{Thebaid} that seem to betray an intimate knowledge of the local situation, such as his descriptions of Argos and, most importantly, his ephrasis of the Altar of Clementia in book 12.\(^ {559}\) Nowadays, it seems, scholars are less sceptical than Legras,\(^ {560}\) but a comprehensive study on Latin poets’ dealings with (the discourse on) the topographical and geographical

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\(^{555}\) From 573 BC to ca. 400 BC the Nemean Games were controlled by Kleonai. From ca. 400 BC onwards, when Argos had gained control of the area, the Games were more frequently held in Argos. Ca. 330 BC, after the Battle of Chaironea and the foundation of the so-called League of Corinth, the Games returned to Nemea. But in 271 BC the Games moved permanently from Nemea to Argos. See Miller 2004: 30-2.

\(^{556}\) According to Miller (2004: 32) after 271 BC ‘Nemea received only casual visitors’, but Roman coins from the early second century AD have been found in Nemea, and in imperial times, poets and savants were fond of visiting famous sites.

\(^{557}\) See Clinton 1972. His argument is accepted by Nauta 2002: 199 and Newlands 2012: 5.

\(^{558}\) Heuvel on 1.120 ‘Papinius a patre suo, qui [...] victoriam Corinthi reportaverat, certior factus esse videtur de Isthmo deque ipsa urbe, cum saepe de his rebus loquatur’; Fortgens on 6.11 ‘Statii pater ipse quoque poeta [...] in ludis Isthmiis praemia meruerat. Apparet ex multis locis, qui spectant ad Inonem Palaemonemque [...] poetam nostrum ab eo multa audivisse de Corintho et de mysteriis Inonis Palaemonisque ibi factis’. Cf. §6.2.

\(^{559}\) See esp. 1.380 ff, 2.251 ff., 12.481 ff. Cf. e.g. Stafford 2000: 206 ‘Statius himself is likely to have visited Athens’.

\(^{560}\) Steiniger on 4.44 \textit{celsa Prosymna}, for instance, notes that the adjective is ‘geographisch gerechtfertigt’; cf. her note on 4.47 \textit{ingenti turritae mole Cleonae}. Mottram on 6.54 \textit{teneraque cupresso} suggests that ‘There may be an historical remembrance [...] As is confirmed by \textit{Silv.} 5.3 and 5, Statius had family connections, and maybe even personal knowledge of Nemea’. And in his review of Micozzi’s commentary on 4.1-344, Harrison suggests (with respect to 4.149-51): ‘Could these lines be imagined as spoken from the point of view of a 1C CE traveller in Greece seeing ancient sites (as Statius no doubt did)?’
realities of the Greek world, including sites and monuments popular with Roman tourists, would be welcome.
8. Note on the text

8.1. Transmission

Manuscripts of the Thebaid are numerous, which reflects the popularity of the epic in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Until the recent investigations of Anderson and Hall, the manuscripts of the Thebaid were divided into two families: on the one hand the codices meliores, represented by the codex Parisinus Latinus 8051, a beautiful 9th century French manuscript, probably produced in Corbie Abbey, which has long been regarded as the codex optimus (P); and on the other hand the codices deteriores, that is, the rest (ω). The most important grounds for this bipartition were the absence of 10.100-5 and 112-7 from the vast majority of ω manuscripts, and the juxtaposition of conflicting readings difficult to explain from scribal error (e.g. 1.32 Pierio P: laurigero ω).

However, there is little agreement between the ω manuscripts and, more importantly, the transmission is heavily contaminated: in many ω manuscripts P readings are found. Hill has attempted to account for this anomaly by classifying some manuscripts as ‘intermediary’, that is, essentially stemming from ω but affected by π, the hypothetical branch of which P should be representative. In short, the idea of a bipartite transmission is highly problematic, and Hall in his most recent edition of the Thebaid (2007) reaches the conclusion that the distinction between P and ω cannot be maintained. As he writes in his preface, ‘we do not believe in the existence of a hypothetical ω standing over against a P enthroned in splendid isolation’. Indeed, he concludes that ‘grouping or classifying the generality of manuscripts’ is impossible.

Hall’s sobering conclusions have important implications. It follows that, for the editor, it is impossible to make textual decisions on the basis of manuscript authority. When manuscripts are divided, the editor’s selectio must be the result of critical judgement. And as every classical scholar knows, critical judgement in practice often means taste, however judicious it may be.

8.2. Hall’s edition

With some simplification, editors are often said to fall into two groups: conservatives and sceptics. Both groups acknowledge that any manuscript, or indeed any impeccably recon-
structured archetype, potentially includes countless scribal errors. The difference between the two groups is that the sceptics embrace this potential erroneousness of the text as an excuse to change (smoothen, improve upon, etc.) it by means of conjecture; whereas the conservatives, on the other hand, are inclined to stay as close to the manuscripts as possible, not because they fail to understand that any given lection is potentially incorrect, but because they feel that conjecturing is likely only to remove the text even further from the unattainable original, instead of bringing it closer.

Hall is an archetypical sceptic. His recent edition (2007) is a monumental scholarly achievement, and I do not intend to derogate from its merits; we may agree with Berlincourt that his edition is ‘bound to delight even the most conservative minds’. Yet the textual choices he makes are often doubtful, and his conjectures sometimes purely provocative. In my view, conjectures that aim to ‘improve’ sense or syntax are a priori highly questionable, not to mention conjectures in the service of the postmodern ideal of ‘defamiliarising’ or ‘destabilising’ the text.

What I would like to take issue with, however, is not so much Hall’s editorial practice as the assumptions on which it is based. It may be instructive to give an extensive quote from his preface:

‘Statius was a popular author who wrote to be understood on a first hearing; and the endless scrabbling with more or less unsatisfactory manuscript readings in an obstinate desire to squeeze some sense out of them is in our view a futile exercise. We must go with the flow of the sense, and we must not be content except with a text which makes immediate sense. Are we to suppose that the non-sense which still passes for the work of Statius is what drew contemporary audiences to come running when they heard that a recitation had been advertised?’

Hall is referring, of course, to the famous passage in Juvenal which testifies, or so it seems, to the popularity of Statius’ Thebaid with his contemporary audience. Leaving aside the consideration that we should treat Juvenal’s testimonium with the greatest care, for the simple reason that Juvenal is a satirist and not a historiographer, I refuse to accept Hall’s line of thought. In my opinion, the density, difficulty and obscurity of Statius’ diction are the hallmark of his style; the poet, I believe, consciously stretches the Latin language to its limits, and indulges in ambiguity and paradoxical expressions, to produce suum peculiare genus dicendi. If we transform the Thebaid into a text that ‘makes immediate sense’, it would cease to be the fascinating poem that it is. Perhaps Hall believes that difficulty and

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570 Berlincourt 2010.
571 Hall et al. 2007: vii-viii.
572 Juv. 7.82-6 curritur ad uocem iucundam et carmen amicae / Thebaidos, laetam cum fecit Statius urbem / promissique diem; tanta dulcedine captos / adfecit ille animos tantaque libidine uolgi / auditur. (‘Men flock to hear the pleasing voice of Statius and his recital of the Thebaid that they adore, when he has made the city happy by announcing the day; so great is the delight with which he captivates their spirits, so great the pleasure the crowd takes in hearing him’ (transl. Gossage 1972: 187). Cf. S. 5.2.160-3.
573 See Newlands 2012: 24-5; Nauta 2002: 3 with n. 9.
575 Parrhasius as cited by Jortin (1790: 424).
popularity are mutually exclusive. When a Greek listened to Pindar, we might ask, did he immediately understand every single detail?

‘We do not print conjectures unless we believe them to be necessary, that is to say, unless we think that the text, however intelligible it may seem to some to be, is not what Statius left behind; and not to print conjectures when we deem them necessary seems to us to be an act of moral cowardice and dereliction of critical duty.’\textsuperscript{576}

That is firm language. Not being an authority on matters of morality, I confine myself to the observation that, regrettably, Hall’s edition does not always account for the textual choices and conjectures he makes, although he appends a massive 774 pages ancillary volume.\textsuperscript{577} Admittedly, the prose translation that accompanies Hall’s edition sometimes sheds light on the editorial decisions,\textsuperscript{578} but occasionally more clarification would have been welcome.

As Berlincourt observes in his review, Hall’s critical choices will arouse ‘lively and constructive discussions for many years to come’, and his edition ‘contains plenty of material to stimulate future commentators’. Indeed, my commentary repeatedly takes issue with Hall’s choices. Although I reject most of his conjectures and minority readings – it will not surprise that I consider myself, in textual matters, a conservative rather than a sceptic – his text has been an extremely valuable sparring partner.

8.3. My text

The text is taken from Hill’s revised edition (1996\textsuperscript{2}), for the pragmatic reason that in so doing the following list of deviations may be kept as short as possible. Minor changes in punctuation are not listed. Since Hall has shown that the bipartition of \(P\) and \(\omega\) cannot be maintained, the sigla are taken from his edition (2007). Other editions that have been consulted are listed in the bibliography. Textual problems are discussed in the commentary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HILL</th>
<th>SOERINK</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>510 fronti (P) U1pc U2ac</td>
<td>frontis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>519 trepidaeque</td>
<td>tepidaeque Fpc, Koestlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>593 funeris ... fulmine Gossage</td>
<td>fulminis ... funere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>606 dolori Heinsius</td>
<td>dolore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>628 anguis,</td>
<td>anguis? Shackleton Bailey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>634-5 quae — me ... humus! Brinkgreve</td>
<td>quae me ... humus?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>637 tacite</td>
<td>tacitas ego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>669 Amphiarus ait: ‘ne, quae so!</td>
<td>Amphiarus † ait ne quae so † ego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>683-4 e. socii, si tanta uoluptas,</td>
<td>excidium, socii si tanta uoluptas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>721 inruerant</td>
<td>inruerunt Gronovius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>745 recedat</td>
<td>recedas (Gul) (P) M4 U2 (Z19ac)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{576} Hall et al. 2007: viii.
\textsuperscript{577} For Hall’s arguments, one has to consult his articles in Illinois Classical Studies 14 (1989) and 17 (1992). His third volume does include, however, an orthographical index of remarkable length. In Hall’s opinion, apparently, it is no ‘futile exercise’ to think about whether Statius wrote, say, \textit{exstare} or \textit{extare}. Contrast Hill 1996: x ‘nullus librarius unam orthographiae rationem per totum suum codicem seruauit. ergo uel librariis uel poetae ipsi minimi fuit momenti orthographia, quam ob rem credo nos non posse poetae orthographiam recuperare.’
\textsuperscript{578} Berlincourt 2010.
TEXT
talia Lernaeis iterat dum regibus exul
Lemnias et longa solatur damna querela
inmemor absentis (sic di suasistis!) alumni,
ille graues oculos languentiaque ora comanti
mergit humo fessusque diu puerilibus actis
labitur in somnos, prensa manus haeret in herba.
interea campis, nemoris sacer horror Achaei,
terrigena exoritur serpens tractuque soluto
inmanem sese uehit ac post terga relinquit.
liuida fax oculis, tumidi stat in ore ueneni
spuma uirens, ter lingua uibrat, terna agmina adunci
dentis, et auratae crudelis gloria frontis
prominet. Inachio sanctum dixere Tonanti
agricolae, cui cura loci et siluestribus aris
pauper honos; nunc ille dei circumdare templum
orbe uago labens, miserae nunc robora siluae
atterit et uastas tenuat complexibus ornos;
saepe super fluiuos geminae iacet aggere ripae
continuus, squamisque incissus adaestuat amnis.
sed nunc, Ogygii iussis quando omnis anhelat
terra dei tepidaeque latent in puluere Nymphae,
saeuior anfractu laterum sinuosa retorquens
terga solo siccique nocens fuit igne ueneni.
stagna per arentesque lacus fontesque repressos
uoluitur et uacuis fluuiorum in uallibus errat,
incertusque sui liquidum nunc aera lambit
ore supinato, nunc arua gemia radens
pronus adhaeret humo, si quid uiuirantia sudent
gramina; percussae calidis adflatibus herbae,
qua tulit ora, cadunt, moriturque ad sibila campus:
quantus ab Arctois discriminat aethera Plaustris
Anguis et usque Notos alienumque exit in orbem;
quantus et ille sacri spiris intorta mouebat
cornua Parnasi, donec tibi, Delie, fixus
uexit harundineam centeno uulnere siluam.
quis tibi, parue, deus tam magni pondera fati
sorte dedit? tune hoc uix prima ad limina uitae
hoste iaces? an ut inde sacer per saecula Grais
gentibus et tanto dignus morerere sepulcro?
occdis extremae dextrectus uerbere caudae
ignaro serpentem, puer, fugit ilicit artus

P. Papinii Statii *Thebaidos* liber V, 499-753
somnus, et in solam patuerunt lumina mortem. 540
cum tamen attonito moriens uagitus in auras
excidit et ruptis inmutuit ore querelis,
qualia non totas peragunt insomnia uoces,
audit Hypsipyle, facilemque negantia currum
exanimis genua aegra rapit; iam certa malorum
mentis ab augurio sparsaque per omnia uisu
lustrat humum quaerens et nota uocabula paruo
nequiquam ingeminans: nusquam ille, et prata recentes
amisere notas. uiridi piger accubat hostis
collectus gyro spatioque iugera complet
sic etiam, obliqua ceruicem expositus in aluo.
horruit infelix uisu longoque profundum
incendit clamore nemus; nec territus ille,
sed iacet. Argolicus ululatus flebilis aures
impulit; extemplo monitu ducis aduolat ardens
Arcas eques causamque refert. tunc squamea demum
torus ad armorum radios fremitumque uiorum
colla mouet: rapit ingenti conamine saxum,
quo discretus ager, uacuasque impellit in auras
arduus Hippomedon, quo turbine bellica quondam
librati saliunt portarum in claustra molaris.
cassa ducis uirtus: iam mollia colla refusus
in tergum serpens uenientem exhauserat ictum.
dat sonitum tellus, nemorumque per auia densi
dissultant nexus. ‘at non mea uu
clamat
et trabe fraxinea Cpaneus subit obuius, ‘umquam
effugies, seu tu pauidi ferus incola luci,
siue deis, utinamque deis, concessa uoluptas,
non, si consertum super haec mihi membra Giganta
subueheres.’ uolat hasta tremens e
ora subit linguaque secat fera uincla trisulcae,
perque iubas stantes capitisque insigne corusciigitur alta solo. longus uix tota peregit
membra dolor, rapido celer ille uolumine telum
circumit auulsumque ferens in opaca refugit
tempia; hic magno tellurem pondere mensus
implorantem animam dominis adsibilat aris.
illum et cognatae stagna indignantia Lernae,
floribus et uernis adsuetae spargere Nymphae,
et Nemees reptatus ager, lucosque per omnes
siluicolae fracta gemuistis harundine Fauni.
ipse etiam e summa iam tela poposerat aethra
Iuppiter, et dudum nimbique hiemesque coibant,
ni minor ira deo grauioraque tela mereri
seruatus Capanus; moti tamen aura cucurrit
fulminis et summas libuit uertice cristas.
iamque pererratis infelix Lemnia campis,
liber ut angue locus, modico super aggere longe
pallida sanguinesis infectas roribus herbas
prospicit. huc magno cursum rapid efferat luctu
agnoscitque nefas, terraeque inlisa nocenti
fulminis in morem non uerba in funere primo,
non lacrimas habet: ingeminat misera oscula tantum
incumbens animaeque fugam per membra tepem
quaerit hians. non ora loco, non pectora restant,
rapta cutis, tenuia ossa patent
sanguinis imbre noui, totumque in ulnere corpus.
ac uelut aligerae sedem fetusque parentis
cum piger umbrosa populosus in ilice serpens,
illa redit querulaeque domus mirata quietem
iam stupet impendens aductosque horrida maesto
excitore cibos, cum solus in arbore paret
sanguis et errantibus per capta cubilia plumae.
ut laceros artus gremio miseranda recepit
intexit comis, tandem laxata dolore
uox ineuinit iter, gemitusque in uerba soluti:
‘o mihi desertae natorum dulcis imago,
Archemore, o rerum et patriae solamen ademptae
seruitiique decus, qui te, mea gaudia, santes
extinxere dei, modo quem digressa reliqui
lasciuum et pron uexantem gramina cursu?
heu ubi siderei uultus? ubi uerba ligatis
imperfecta sonis risusque et murmura soli
intellecta mihi? quotiens tibi Lemnon et Argo
sueta loqui et longa somnum suadere querela!
sic equidem luctus solabar et ubera paruo
iam materna dabam, cui nunc uenit iritus orbae
lactis et infelix in ulnere liquitur imber.
nosco deos: o dura mei praesagia somni
nocturnique metus, et numquam impune per umbras
attonitae mihi uisa Venus! quos arguo diuos?
ipsa ego te (quid enim timeam moritura fateri?)
exposui fatis. quae mentem insania traxit?
tantane me tantae tenuere obliuia curae?
dum patrios casus famaeque exorsa retracto
ambitiosa meae (pietas haec magna fidesque!).
exsolui tibi, Lemne, nefas. ubi letifer anguis?
ferte, duces, meriti si qua est mihi gratia duri,
si quis honos dictis, aut uos extinguite ferro,
ne tristes dominos orbamque inimica reuisam
Eurydicen, quamquam haud illi mea cura dolendo
cesserit. hocne ferens onus inlaetabile matris
transfundam gremio? quae me prius ima sub umbras
mergat humus?’ simul haec terraque et sanguine uultum
sordida magnorum circa uestigia regum
urtitur et tacitas maerentibus imputat undas.
et iam sacrifici subitus per tecta Lycurgi
nuntius implerat lacrimis ipsumque domumque,
ipsum aduentantem Persei uertice sancto
montis, ubi auerso dederat prosecta Tonanti,
et caput iratis rediens quassabat ab extis.
hic sese Argolicis inmunem seruat ab armis,
haud animi uacuus, sed templa araeque tenebant.
necdum etiam responsa deum monitusque uetusti
exciderant uoxque ex adytis accepta profundis:
‘prima, Lycurge, dabis Dircaeo funera bello.’
id cauet, et maestus uicini puluere Martis
angitur ad lituos periturisque inuidet armis.
ecce (fides superum!) laceras comitata Thoantis
aduehit exequias, contra subit obuia mater,
femineos coetus plangentiaque agmina ducens.
at non magnanimo pietas ignaua Lycurgo:
fortior ille malis, lacrimasque insana resorbet
ira patris, longo rapit arua morantia passu
uociferans: ‘illa autem ubinam, cui parua cruoris
laetae damna mei? uiuitne? impellite raptam,
ferte citi, comites: faxo omnis fabula Lemni
et pater et tumidae generis mendacia sacri
exciderint.’ ibat letumque inferre parabat
ense furens rapto; uenienti Oeneius heros
impiger obiecta proturbat pectora parma,
ac simul infrendens: ‘siste hunc, uesane, furorem,
quisquis es!’ et pariter Capaneus acerque reducto
adfuist Hippomedon rectoque Erymanthius ense,
ac iiuenem multo praestringunt lumine; at inde
agrestum pro rege manus. quos inter Adрастus
mitius et sociae ueritus commercia uittae
Amphiaraus † ait: ‘ne, quaesio! † absistite ferro,
unus auum sanguis, neue indulgete furori,
tuque prior.’ sed non sedato pectore Tydeus
subicit: ‘anne ducem seruaticemque cohortis
Inachiae ingratis coram tot milibus audes
mactare in tumulos (quant i pro funeris ulti or!),
cui regnum genitorque Thoas et lucidus Euhan
stirpis auus? timidone parum, quod gentibus actis
undique in arma tuis inter rapida agmina pacem
solus habes? habeasque, et te uictoria Graium
inueniat tumulus etiamnum haec fata gementem.’
dixerat, et tandem cunctante modestior ira
ille refert: ‘equidem non uos ad moenia Thebes
rebar et hostiles huc aduenisse cateruas.
pergite in excidium, socii si tanta uoluptas
sanguinis, imbuite arma domi, atque haec inrita dudum
templa Iouis (quid enim haud licitum?) ferat impius ignis,
si uilem, tanti premerent cum pectora luctus,
fit mora, iamque faces et tela penatibus instant,
uertere regna fremunt raptumque auferre Lycurgum
cum Ioue cumque aris; resonant ululatibus aedes
femineis, uersusque dolor dat terga timori.
alipedum curru sed enim sublimis Adrastus
secum ante ora uirum fremibunda Thoantida portans
it medius turmis et ‘parcite, parcite!’ clamat,
‘nil actum saeue, meritus nec tale Lycurgus
excidium, gratique inuentrix fluminis ecce.’
sic ubi diuersis maria euertere procellis
hinc Boreas Eurusque, illinc niger imbribus Auster,
pulsa dies regnantque hiemes, uenit aequor alti
rex sublimis equis, geminusque ad spumea Triton
frena natans late pelago dat signa cadenti,
et iam plana Thetis, montesque et litora crescut.
qu is superum tanto solatus funera uoto
pensauit lacrimas inopinaque gaudia maestae
rettulit Hypsipylae? tu gentis conditor, Euhan,
qui geminos iuuenes Lemni de litore uectos
intuleras Nemeae mirandaque fata parabas.
causa uiue genetrix, nec in hospita tecta Lycurgi
praebuerant aditus, et protinus ille tyranno
nuntius extinctae miserando uulnere prolis.

ergo adsunt comites (pro fors et caeca futuri
mens hominum!) regique fauent; sed Lemnos ad aures
ut primum dictusque Thoas, per tela manusque
inruerunt, matremque auidis complexibus ambo
diripiunt flentes alternaque pectora mutant.
illa uelut rupes inmoto saxea uisu
haeret et expertis non audet credere diuis.

ut uero et uultus et signa Argoa relictis
ensibus atque uemeris amborum iunctus Iason,
cesserunt luctus, turbataque munere tanto
corruit, atque alio maduerunt lumina fletu.
addita signa polo, laetoque ululante tumultu
terqaque et aera dei motas crepuere per auras.

720

725
tunc pius Oeclides, ut prima silentia uulgi
mollior ira dedit placidasque accessus ad aures:
‘audite, o ductor Nemeae lectique potentes
Inachidae, quae certus agi manifestat Apollo.

730

735
iste quidem Argolicis haud olim indebitus armis
luctus adest, recto descendunt limite Parcae:
et sitis interitu fluuiorum et letifer anguis
et puer, heu nostri signatus nomine fati,
Archemorus, cuncta haec superum demissa suprema
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 nouis bellare uetemur
casibus, et semper, Thebe funesta, recedas.

740

745
at uos 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,
ne fletu uiolate sacrum, ne plangite diuos:
nam deus iste, deus, Pyliae nec fata senectae
maluerit, Phrygiis aut degere longius annis.’
finierat, caeloque cauam nox induit umbram.
COMMENTARY
499-504. Opheltes falls asleep

One long sentence, these lines round off Hypsipyle’s narrative and draw back attention to Opheltes, last mentioned in the previous book; the description of the child falling asleep continues the description of the child playing in de meadow (4.748-803).\footnote{The passage has been much admired, e.g. Butler 1909: 222, Hartman 1916: 354 ‘parva depingere vel maxime callebat noster’, Summers 1920: 51 ‘[t]here is hardly a more tender passage in all Latin poetry’, Taisne 1972: 359 ‘plein de grâce et de naïveté’, Vessey 1973: 169 ‘one of the most effective descriptions of an innocent child in ancient literature’, Van Dam on S. 2.1.179-82 ‘one of the most moving descriptions of a playing child in antiquity’. Currie includes 4.786-96 in his anthology of Silver Latin Epic, commenting that ‘[t]here are in the whole range of Latin poetry few passages which surpass this in its tender quality’ (1985: 25, 69). Cf. also Brandon’s 1962: 741-3 and Legras’ 1905: 261-2 more general remarks on Statius’ talent for describing children.} We are not given any evaluative comment or reaction to Hypsipyle’s tale, neither from the internal audience (the Schicksals) nor from the narrator (Brown 1994: 123, 162). In lines 5.541-5 we will learn that Hypsipyle’s narration was ‘interrupted by her charge’s wails’ (Brown 1994: 129) – interrupted at the very moment Hypsipyle’s narration brings her (back) to Nemea.

Falling asleep in Latin hexameters is never without risk, as appears e.g. from Palinurus’ fate in the Aeneid or the near-death of the goatherd in the Culex (cf. §5.4). Moreover, the infelix sopor (5.211) of the Lemnian men is still fresh in the reader’s mind. For children falling asleep cf. S. 5.5.84-5 (with Gibson) and Andromache’s touching words in II. 22.502-4. The tenderness of the scene throws into relief the horror that follows. As Krumbholz (1955: 238 n. 2) observes: ‘Selten gibt Statius einmal ein friedlich-idyllisch Stimmungsbild, und wenn, dann nur wegen des Kontrastes. Das kindliche Spiel und friedliche Entschlummern des Archemorus [...] soll lediglich die Furchtbarkeit des ihm drohenden Schicksals hervorheben’. (cf. Taisne 1972: 359; Parkes on 4.793-800).

The sense of impending doom is reinforced by means of prolepsis. Already in book 4, some elements suggested that Opheltes would soon meet his death: in addition to the name Archemorus (4.726; on the child’s (n)omen see §6.3) we find 4.749 proles infausta (also alluding to his ominous fate; see Parkes ad loc.), 4.786 miserum, 4.787 sic Parcae uoluere (modelled on Aen. 1.22, as Deipser 1881: 27 notes), 4.799-800 malorum / inscius. From a narratological perspective, then, Hypsipyle’s embedded narrative is, inter alia, a retardation that keeps the narratese in suspense as to the child’s fate. The present lines continue the auspicious atmosphere of 4.748-803 (cf. Scaffai 2002: 242): line 501 in particular strikes an ominous note, while line 502 eerily recalls the ecphrasis of Medusa in 1.546-7; Statius also exploits the similitude of sleep and death (traditional since II. 14.231 Τινὸς ..., κασιγνήτω Θανάτου, cf. e.g Williams on 10.300-1 somnique et mortis) to foreshadow the child’s fate. For the overall effect one could compare e.g. Ovid’s famous description of Icarus playing with his father’s wax and feathers, blissfully unaware that Daedalus’ wings will lead to his death (Ov. Met. 8.195-200), where we also find prolepsis to exploit the contrast between the child’s innocent happiness and his impending doom (Met. 8.196 ignorau sua se tractare pericla, 241 fatorum ignara).

Statius’ description of Opheltes playing in the meadow looks back primarily to Euripides (Hyps. fr. 754; see §1.4.2), which also underlies 4.793-800 (Lehanneur 1878: 157 n. 2; Ribbeck 1892: 229; Reussner 1921: 43; Fiehn 1927: 65; Aricò 1961: 64). Ribbeck (1892: 229) and Vessey (1970: 50) suggest influence of Callimachus’ Linus (cf. Aet. fr. 25e Harder); on Opheltes, Linus and Callimachus see §3.4. That Opheltes falls asleep before he is killed, I think, follows the scenario suggested by Geo. 3.425-39 and developed in the Culex (an authentic Vergilian poem according to Statius, cf. S. epist. 1.1 and 2.7.74), which similarly describes a pastoral figure falling asleep before the appearance of a monstrous serpent (Geo. 3.435-6, Cul. 15.67-62; see further §5.4.)
499. *talia:* capturing Hypsipyle’s preceding narrative (5.49-498). Gibson (2004: 161 n. 48) suggests that ‘*talia* [...] raises the intriguing possibility that we are in fact being given only a version of Hypsipyle’s words and not the real thing’. Indeed, as Newlands (2012: 40 n. 163) observes, ‘Hypsipyle is a problematic narrator in that Statius does not explain how she could have seen many of the individual murders she describes’. And there are hints that Hypsipyle’s narrative might be fraudulent (659 *mendacia*, 6.149 *fraude*); see Nugent 1996: 55-6 and 67-8, Brown 1994: 116-7, Gibson 2004: 164, Newlands 2012: 42-3. The possibility is intertextually reinforced by Hypsipyle’s fraudulent narrative in Apollonius of Rhodes (1.793-833), which contradicts the earlier ‘authorial’ version of the narrator (1.609-23); Apollonius’ Hypsipyle claims that she is telling the truth (1.796-7), but the narrator explicitly points out that she is not (1.834-5). Statius’ Hypsipyle is thus ‘contaminated’ by her earlier incarnation in Apollonius. The intertextual relevance of Sinon in *Aeneid* 2 (Ganiban 2007: 75 n. 14) also points in that direction. Gibson (2004: 164) toys with the idea of applying this fraud, retrospectively, to the narratives of Odysseus (*Od*. 9-12) and Aeneas (*Aen*. 2-3): can we trust their stories? Hypsipyle’s point of view may also call into question the earlier (masculine) versions: whereas Gibson (2004: 164) refuses to believe Hypsipyle’s contention that she did not love Jason (5.463-5), Newlands (2012: 43) suggests that ‘[s]he opens up to question the tradition of Jason’s sexual allure’ (cf. feminist readings of Ovid’s *Heroïdes*; see Nauta 2013: 244 with references). These are important issues, but to read them into *talia* is unlikely, since the word is perfectly normal in speech formulae, e.g. Vergil’s *talia fatur* (11 times in the *Aeneid*, e.g. 1.313, 256) and *talia uoce refert* (*Aen*. 1.94, 208). Moreover, even if we embrace Gibson’s suggestion, *talia* concerns the (un)truthfulness of the narrator’s representation of Hypsipyle’s narrative rather than that of Hypsipyle’s narrative itself.

*Lernaea:* in the *Thebaid*, Lerna / Lernaean is usually synonymous with Argos / Argive (cf. e.g. 3.348 with Snijder, 6.131 with Fortgens, 4.360 with Parkes). Here, too, the *Lernaea* refers primarily to the Argive origins of the Seven (Barth *ad loc.* glosses ‘Argivis, à fonte et regione’). However, *Lernaea* also bends our minds to the story of Hercules and the Hydra of Lerna, esp. after 5.443-4 *Lernaea ... arma* (cf. also 2.376-7), an association that subtly prepares for what follows: the monstrous serpent and its slaying at the hands of Capaneus (cf. §4.4). In a similar vein, Valerius reminds us of the Hydra of Lerna when Hercules is about to confront the sea monster (Val. 2.496).

*Iterat:* an archaism reintroduced in Latin literature by Horace (Galli on Val. 1.29); the verb is extremely rare in epic (not in Vergil, twice in Valerius and Silius) – until Statius (14 times). See Smolenaars on 7.494-5.

As Barth *ad loc.* observes, ‘saepe enim ante hos aliis narraverat’: to her father Thoas on Lemnos (5.244-5), to Lycuragus (657-60n.), to Eurydice (6.149), and many times to her nursling Opheltes (615-6n.), on whom her tale, ironically, used to have a soporific effect. The prefix re- in 5.626 *retracto* also implies that Hypsipyle did not tell her story for the first time, as does the imperfect *narrabit* in 6.149 (Brown 1994: 113). In 4.781 she ‘restrains herself’ from repeating the tale of her past as she is wont to do’ (Parkes *ad loc.*); her seeming reluctance to embark on her narrative in 5.28-39 is best understood as a successful rhetorical device to entice her audience (cf. Ganiban 2007: 72-4). Hypsipyle’s narrative itself is also full of repetitions: the Lemnian women find themselves three times without men, for example. Hypsipyle draws special attention to this repetitive pattern in 5.445 *ergo iterum Venus*, 5.478 *heu iterum gemitus iterumque nouissima nox est*.

Hypsipyle as repetitive poet figure is no Statian invention: in Euripides’ *Hypsipyle* already the story of Jason and the Argo is always on her lips (fr. 752f.19-26; see §2.6). In Apollonius of Rhodes she famously retells the narrator’s version of the events to Jason (1.793-833 retelling 1.609-23); in Valerius Flaccus she reproduces the events in the form of an epheccrastic
embroidered cloak (Val. 2.408-17, echoed in 5.36; see Dietrich 1999: 49, Newlands 2012: 41), embroidery being a familiar symbol of poetic composition.

On a metapoetic level iterat, belonging to the ‘vocabulary of self-conscious repetition’ (Lovatt 2005: 98), alludes to earlier literary treatments of the story (Apollonius Rhodius, Valerius Flaccus, perhaps Varro of Atax): Statius’ Lemnian episode is an iteration, a retelling of these earlier versions, and his Hypsipyle’s repetitions are part of the very literary tradition, which may be traced back to Odysseus’ repetitive narrative to Penelope after the death of suitors in Od. 23.306-43 (Gibson 2004: 161).


regibus: not all Seven are kings sensu stricto, but Statius often uses rex in the loose sense of ‘chieftain’, after Homeric ἄναξ, cf. e.g. 636 regum, 6.38 Inachii ... reges, 10.180-1 magnis ... regibus, 7.375 magnanimi reges (with Smolenaars’ note), Ach. 1.156 Argoos ... reges (the Argonauts).

exul: when the Lemnians discovered that Hypsipyle had saved her father, she stealthily left the city, after which she was taken hostage by pirates and sold into slavery (5.484-98, 5.47 regno deiecta). Cf. Eur. Hyps. fr. 759a.84-8 ναῦται κόπταις / Ναῦταλων ας λιμένα / ξενικόν τόρον ἁγαγον με / δουλουσίγλας τ’ ἐπέβασαν, ὦ τέκνον, / ἐνύθαδε νάϊν, μέλαν ἄμπολλάν, fr. 752b.1 ἀπίστοτολν. Apollod. 3.6.4 (= App. A a) τήν δὲ Ἄγαπον ἀπημπόλησαν. Although she has not officially been exiled, then, she is an exile in the sense that it is impossible for her to go back (cf. Harrison 2007: 127 ‘Exile, in the broad sense of extended and/or enforced absence from home with imperilled or impossible prospect of return’). One wonders, by the way, where the pirates got their ship, if the Argo really was the first ship (cf. Nugent 1996: 65 n. 40 and Ganiban 2007: 79 n. 43 on Thoas’ vessel in 5.287 curvo robore clausum).

Exile is an important motif in the Thebaid, as it is in classical epic in general (see Harrison 2007: esp. 149-53 on Statius). The poem’s most important exile is, of course, Polynices, banished from Thebes by his brother Eteocles; sometimes he is simply called exul without further specification (e.g. 1.312, 3.73-4 consanguineo ... exule, 3.406, 698, 4.77, 6.504, 7.500 exsilio uagus, 9.52, 11.503); later in the poem Creon banishes Oedipus from Thebes (11.665-756, esp. 11.730 exul erit). Statius several times reminds his audience that the founder of Thebes, Cadmus, was an exile too (1.153-4 Tyrri ... exsilis, 182-3 Cadmus / exul. 3.180-1 Sidonius ... hospes): while the plot of the Thebaid replays the fraternal strife of the Spartoi, so Polynices’ exile can be seen as a repetition of Cadmus’ exile (cf. Davis 1994: 468, Keith 2002). The motif is not confined to Thebes: Tydeus is banished from Calydon as fratricide (1.401-4; cf. 2.190 exulibus = Tydeus and Polynices), and even Adrastus is originally an exile (see Mulder on 2.179-81, Parkes on 4.49). Another Theban exul is king Lycus in Seneca’s Hercules Furens (274).

Harrison (2007: 153) suggests that, here, exul has a metapoetical dimension: ‘[Hypsipyle] is in exile from another mythological story, that of the Argonauts, and [...] she could even be said to be “in exile” through her literary displacement from another contemporary poem [Valerius’ Argonautica]’.

500. Lemnias: i.e. Λημνιας (with short ā) ‘woman of Lemnos’, cf. 5.29 Lemnias; in 4.775 and 5.588 Statius prefers the Latin adjective Lemnia. As Mauri (on 5.29) notes, Statius’ emphasis on Hypsipyle being a Lemnian woman sottolinea la connessione tra i due episodi [sc. Hypsipyle’s Lemnian narrative and the Nemean episode in which it is embedded]. Lemnias just before and after Hypsipyle’s narrative (5.29 and 500) creates ring composition and emphasizes Hypsipyle’s involvement, as Lemnian woman, in her own narrative (cf. Nugent 1996: 60-2). Her very first words in the Thebaid are introduced with reddit ... Lemnia (4.775 with Parkes).
**longa ... querela:** the ‘long complaint’ is Hypsipyle’s preceding ‘epyllion’ on the Lemnian massacre (5.49-498); *longa* self-consciously calls attention to its remarkable length. The phrase recurs in 616 (in the same *sedes*), where we learn that Hypsipyle used to sing her epyllion in order to lull Opheltes to sleep. The word *querela* is noteworthy, as it carries funereal as well as elegiac associations (see e.g. Keith 2002: 143 with n. 19, Michalopoulos on Ov. *Her.* 17.11). Hypsipyle’s story is a long ‘expression of grievance’ (OLD 1) over everything she has suffered and everyone she has lost (*damna*; cf. 609-10n.). At the same time, however, *querela* invites us to regard Hypsipyle as an elegiac poet, as in Ovid’s *Heroides* (cf. esp. Ov. *Her.* 6.17 *queror*), and her narrative as elegiac poetry – which it certainly is not. She may be an elegiac character, displaced in Statius’ epic world, but she has become a skilled epic poet (cf. §2.5).

In Statius’ days, of course, it had become part of the Latin epic tradition to reflect metapoetically upon the ‘un-epic’ presence of women and love in the masculine and martial ‘epic’ genre (see Hinds 2000; Heerink 2009: 306-8 with further references).

The end of the first hemistich (*longa* before the caesura) is congruent with – and rhymes with – the end of the second (*querela* at the end of the line). On this hexametric structure, favourite with Statius, see Mulder on 2.1, Fortgens on 6.9 and Norden 1923: ii 829-31 with examples from Homer onwards; in our episode e.g. 501, 510, 511, 515, etc.

**solatur damna:** LP rightly compares 5.48 *dulce loqui miseris ueteresque reducere questus* (Scaffai 2002: 161 n. 24 attributes the line to Adrastus) and 5.617 *sic equidem luctus solabar*; cf. also 5.609n. *solamen* (Opheltes). Nugent has argued that Hypsipyle’s retelling of her traumatic Lemnian past is not unlike the therapeutic ‘talking cure’ in psychoanalytic practice (Nugent 1996; cf. Ganiban 2007: 81 ‘more like reliving than retelling’), an idea that we find already in Vessey (1986: 2989 ‘by opening up old wounds we may also close them’) and Brown (1994: 108 ‘the iteration of painful matter is therapeutic’). This cathartic function also explains *dulce* in 5.48, which relates to the ‘pleasure’ of lamentation (cf. 6.72 *miseranda uoluptas*, S. 2.1.15 *iam flendi expleta uoluptas*, 5.5.56 with Gibson, Sen. *Tr.* 1066-7 *gaudet magnus aerumnas dolor / tractare totas*). Markus takes the idea of a ‘self-induced *consolatio*’ (2004: 109) one step further and argues ‘that Statius extends the qualities of the “talking cure” to all his poetry; he uses Hypsipyle to act out that function of the poet’s art that provides solace both to the poet himself and to the audience’ (Markus 2004: 110). For the more general topos that storytelling or poetry can provide comfort cf. e.g. S. 5.5.38-9, *Ecl.* 9.17-8, 10.33-4, *Geo.* 1.293 *longum cantu solata laborem*, [Verg.] *Mor.* 29-30, Homer. 586 *cithara dulci durum lenibat amorem* (Achilles).

**501. immemor absentis – sic di suasisistis – alumni:** the line strikes an ominous note, continuing the inauspicious atmosphere of 4.748-803 (see 499-504n.); Von Moisy (1971: 28, 36) speaks of ‘Worten, die schon ein Unheil ahnen lassen’, ‘ein dunkler Ausblick in die Zukunft’. Van den Broek (2007: 59) notes that *immemor* recalls Apollo’s absentmindedness, which caused the death of Linus (1.596 *sero memor*); on Opheltes and Linus see §3. The adjective also aligns Hypsipyle with Theseus abandoning Ariadne (cf. Cat. 64.58, 123, 135, 248). The line raises the question to what extent Hypsipyle is responsible for Opheltes’ death: on the one hand, his death is the result of her being *immemor*; the parenthesis *sic di suasisistis*, on the other, exculpates Hypsipyle. Although the narrator here attributes the death of Opheltes to the gods, it should be noted that his fate is nowhere attributed to Bacchus, who sets the events in Nemea in motion (cf. Götting 1969: 18-20), or any other god in particular; cf. 739n. On the question of Hypsipyle’s guilt see 620-8n.

The parenthesis, Von Moisy observes (1971: 36), harks back to the similar parenthesis in 4.787 *sic Parcae uolueres*; ‘Zugleich aber wird der Ton nun, da das Unheil näherrückt, durch eine feine Variation persönlicher, gefühlsbetonten: Hieß es in IV neutral in der 3. Person *sic Parcae uolueres*, so wird nun mit dieser Formel eine Prophonese verbunden *sic di suasisistis*. So wird das Thema “Tod des Opheltes” in allmählicher Steigerung der sprachlichen Mittel...
gestaltet’. On the frequent use of parenthesis in Statius see Von Moisy (1971: 6-7); Brinkgreve (1914: 104) lists numerous examples, e.g. 2.249 Lachesis sic dura iubebat, 4.746 sic Euhius ipse pararat, 6.376 sic ... nigrae uoluere Sorores, and with the same verb 6.744 materiae suadebat amor.

For suasitis Barth ad loc. glosses ‘coegistis’, comparing Aen. 3.161-2 suasit / Delius, 11.253 quae uos fortuna quietos / sollicitat, suadetque ignota laccersere bella; add Vergil’s parenthetic suadet enim uesana fames (Aen. 9.340 and 10.724); see further Mulder on 2.75 suaserat.

502. ille graues oculos languentiaque ora: the line is bound to recall the ecphrastic description of Medusa depicted on Adrastus’ golden cup: illa graues oculos languentiaque ora / paene mouet uiuoque etiam pallescit in auro (1.546-7). Note that Adrastus’ cup depicts Perseus as he is about to leap up into the air (1.545 iamiamque uagas – ita uiusis – in auras), which situates the scene on Mt Aphisas in Nemea (cf. 640-1n. Persei uertice sancto / montis).

How should we interpret the intratextual echo? As 1.546 describes Medusa’s death, on one level it seems to herald the death of Opheltes; Medusa’s serpentine nature is appropriate to the present context, as the Nemean serpent is about to make its appearance. At the same time, however, the echo puts the monster Medusa and the innocent child Opheltes on a par: how should we make sense of that? Perhaps we could read the echo as an indication that in the poem’s disturbing universe not only monsters, but also (and especially) children get killed; cf. McNelis 2007: 41 n. 74 ‘This bowl contains images that contrast with the situation in the Thebaid: the severed head of the Gorgon indicates the ability of humans to eradicate destructive forces, but that idea is countered in the Thebaid’. While Adrastus misunderstands the world he inhabits (see e.g. Hill 1989: 109-16, Parkes on 4.753-70), his cup provides us with a flawed model of that world. Newlands discusses the ecphrasis at some length (2012: 75-86; cf. Hill 1989: 112-3), arguing that Medusa is ‘a figure of Statius’ civil war poetics’ and that her ‘proleptic’ presence on Adrastus’ patera evokes ‘the prominent civil war themes of the Thebaid’; unfortunately, she is completely silent on the parallel under consideration.

Adrastus’ cup also depicts another scene: Jupiter abducting Ganymede (1.548-51). Perhaps Opheltes, killed by the Jovian snake, is also put on a par with Ganymede, abducted by Jupiter? In any case, as Newlands (2012: 79) points out, Ganymede ‘surely does introduce to the poem its tragic theme of premature death’.

Opheltes’ graues oculos are symptomatic of sleep; cf. e.g. Prop. 2.29.16, Aen. 6.520 somnoque grauatum (Barth ad loc.), Ov. Met. 11.618-9, Val. 1.300, 4.18 ille graues oculos (Hercules). But the words may also be associated with death; cf. 1.546, 11.558, Aen. 4.688, Ov. Met. 4.145. The same holds for languentia; cf. e.g. 8.639 dependet languida ceruix (Atys on the brink of death).

-que ora: on the assumption that my sample (5.499-699) is representative, the Thebaid has ca. 44 elisions per 100 lines, fewer than Vergil (52), more than Catullus 64 (33) (statistics for Vergil and Catullus from Smolenaars 1991). On elision in Latin poetry see Soubiran.

502-3. comanti ... humo: Hypsipyle left Opheltes behind in the grass, cf. 4.786 caespite, 793-4 in gremio uernae telluris et alto / gramine ... herbas. LP explains comanti as herbosae (apparently he takes comanti as dative, although an ablative is equally possible); cf. Waltz 1916: 140 ‘couvert de gazon’, Pache 2004: 107 ‘the luxuriant earth’. Barth ad loc. complains that the greeneries are misplaced, since Nemea is plagued by heat and drought: ‘Et jam dixit dicturusque est siti et aestu omnia exaruiisse. Mira incogitiantia tantu auctoris.’ Cf. the misguided attempts to ‘emend’ 4.793 uernae telluris (see Parkes ad loc.).

comans is not attested before Vergil (see Tarrant on Aen. 12.413, Smolenaars on 7.369-70). Since the substantive coma often denotes the foliage of trees (e.g. 6.352, Aen. 7.60; cf. LSJ s.v. xóphi II), comare, comans and comatus can be applied to leafage too (see TLL s.v. comans 1755.28-40 and cf. e.g. Val. 1.429 siluasque comantes, Sil. 6.183 comantes ... ramos). It is
part of the common metaphor that describes a tree as a human body (or vice versa); cf. *bracchium, truncus*, etc. Statius’ use of *comanti* is exceptional, however, for he applies *comans* to the soil, not to a tree. Deipser (1881: 11) compares Geo. 4.122 *comantem narcissum* (the first attestation of the word), to which we may add Aen. 12.413 *caulem foliis et flore comantem purpureo*. These parallels suggest that, in Vergil at least, *comans* means ‘blooming’ rather than *herbosus*. Probably the phrase suggest a blooming meadow, which in combination with 5.504 suggests that Opheltes is picking flowers. See further §1.4.2.

Since the baby falls asleep, it is tempting to see wordplay with *κόμα* (‘sleep’). Admittedly, *comanti* has short ὀ, but that does not preclude word-play: see Thomas on Vergil’s wordplay with *Silarus* and *asīlus* in Geo. 3.146-7; Parkes on the possibility of 4.438 *inges* (with short e) punning on *gens* (with long e) and 4.280 *pōpulos* punning on *pōpulus*.

503. *mergit*: ‘drowns (in sleep)’; cf. Liv. 41.3.10 *uīno somnoque mersos*, Val. Arg. 8.66 *lumina ... somno mergimus*; for the association of sleep and water cf. also II. 2.19 *κέρατα ὑπνοῦς*, Aen. 1.691-2 *placidam per membra quietem / inrigat somnus*.

The phrase is borrowed by Claudian (*Aen.* 2.739 *lassa*) claims that in Silver epic *lassus* is even less frequent than in Ovidian epic, but Statius is an exception (16 times), although *fessus* (32 times) is indeed more frequent. Like Ovid and Lucan, however, our poet does like the verb *lassare*, e.g. 6.41 (cf. Axelson 1945: 30 n. 8).

504. *labitur in somnos*: for the expression cf. Petr. *Sat.* 21.7 *cum laberemur in somnum*, 22.1. 100.5, which suggests that the language is not particularly poetic, although the expression also occurs in poetry, e.g. Ov. *Met.* 11.631; Sen. *Her.F.* 1044-5; cf. also Aen. 5.838 *delapsus Somnus*. Statius’ phrase is borrowed by Claudian (*Ruf.* 2.327).

Again we may detect funereal overtones: *labi* is sometimes applied to persons at the brink of death, e.g. Parthenopaeus in 9.885 *labimur*, the victims of Apollo’s plague in 1.632 *labuntur dulces animae*, Priscilla in S. 5.1.194 *labens*, and famously Camilla in Aen. 11.818-9 *labitur exsanguis, labuntur frigida leto / lumina*.

Austin on Aen. 2.9 *somnos* has an extensive note on the difference between singular and plural forms of *somnus*. He claims that, in Vergil, ‘[t]he plural is used if “sleep” is a means of comfort or enjoyment’. In that case, Statius’ plural would be sinister. However, we should not read too much into the poetic plural; probably Statius wrote *somnos* for the sake of euphony: the plural, with its long vowel drawn out by the caesura, sounds more sonorous and soporific than *somnum*, even though the latter would be metrically possible.

*prensa manus haaret in herba*: LP beautifully comments: ‘δεινυτικῶς expressit aetatem. nam in actu[s] ludicro[s] cum somno requiescit infantia, quicquid tenuerit non relinquit’. As crawling babies do (*experto crede*), Opheltes is plucking at everything in his way – and then suddenly falls asleep. Brown (1994: 152), reading the serpent’s killing of Opheltes as an inversion of Herakliskos’ killing of Hera’s snakes, sees an allusion to the hands of little Her-

Like *puerilibus actis*, the phrase looks back to Opheltes’ playful behaviour in the previous book, esp. 4.798 *obuia carpit* (an expression taken from [Verg.] *Cul.* 166 *obuia ... carpens*, where it is applied to the serpent; see Güntzschel 1972: 188-9; Parkes *ad loc.* overlooks the parallel). As Güntzschel convincingly argues, *obuia carpit* means ‘rupft und zuft an dem, was ihm gerade in die Hände gerät’ (*TLL s.v. carpo* wrongly reads 4.798 *obuia carpit* in a metaphorical sense). On the suggestion that Opheltes is picking flowers, perhaps wild celery, see §1.4.2.

Not accidentally, perhaps, *herba* also figures in Vergil’s warning not to fall asleep when the Calabrian *hydrus* is around (cf. *Geo.* 3.436 *per herbas*); on the importance of the *Culex* see §5.4 and 5.534-40n.

**505-33. Description of the serpent**

While Opheltes is sleeping, Statius gives a marvellous description of the Nemean serpent – although not everyone likes snakes (Pache 2004: 111 ‘thirty lines of gory details’). The passage again (cf. 499-504n.) retards the climax of the Nemean episode, the death of Opheltes, and keeps us in suspense: ‘Durch eine ausführliche Beschreibung ihres schreckenerregenden Äußeren, ihrer gewaltigen Kraft und ihrer durch die Dürre noch vermehrten Wut wird die Spannung immer mehr gesteigert, voll bangem Mitgefühl sieht der Leser ein Unheil immer näher rücken’ (Von Moisy 1971: 28). Crusius (1745: 389) comments: ‘De beschryving der ysselyke slange die Archemorus verslondt, terwyl Hypsipile zyn Minnehoudt hier hem in ’t gras gelegd had, gegaan was om het heer eene bron te wyzen, is vreesselyk, en zeer bequaam om den lezer tot het volgende droevig voorval te bereiden’. The Nemean serpent clearly recalls the description of Python (1.562-9) in Adrastus’ aetiological narrative about Linus and Coroebus (see §3).

After the reptile has made its appearance, Statius first describes its physical features (505-11a), after which he comments upon the serpent’s sacred nature (511-3). The rest of the description comes in two halves. Lines 513b-17 describe the snake’s normal behaviour: it is wont to surround Jupiter’s temple, to thin down trees, and to bathe in the river. Lines 218-28 describe its pernicious present behaviour under the influence of the drought. Statius places much emphasis on the drought (contrast the description of flooded Nemea in 1.355-60), both directly by mentioning heat and dust, and indirectly by mentioning the refreshing waters that are painfully absent (*stagna, lacus, fontes* and *fluuiorum* in 522-3). The reader is invited to feel the maddening thirst from which the snake is suffering. As a result of the drought, the serpent becomes more ferocious (520 *saevior*) and is driven to madness (521 *furius*). As a result, it severely damages its environment (see 527-8n.). The similes that round off the description (529-33), like the opening lines 505-8, emphasise the serpent’s enormity, in stark contrast with the small child that precedes (499-504) and follows (534-40) the ecphrasis: Hutchinson (1993: 121; cf. McNelis 2007: 126 n. 7) rightly notes how Statius exploits the opposition ‘between the gigantic snake and the little child, and between wild grandeur and pathetic charm’.

On the symbolic significance of the serpent see §6.5 (cf. §§3.3 and 5.3). The Nemean serpent also seems to have a metapoetic dimension, several features of the epic monster reflecting features of the epic genre; see notes on 507 *immanem*, 508 *tumidi*, 509 *agmina*, 510 *gloria*, 514 *orbe*, 515 *tenuat*, 515-6 esp. *continuus*, 524 *liquidum nunc aëra lambit*.

The whereabouts of the serpent are somewhat unclear: Lactantius comments ‘exoritur de nemore’, but at the end of book 4 Opheltes has entered the *nemus* (4.799-800 *nemori ... inerrat*). Nevertheless, *campis* and *herba* (504) suggest that the child is in a meadow rather
than a grove (so Taisne 1972: 358 ‘la prairie où est étendue sa victime’). Although such
realistic problems may not be very important, we may solve the problem by imagining an
open space in the grove.

According to Juhnke (1972: 105 n. 225) the passage is ‘szenisch nicht in Anlehnung an
bestimmte erhaltene Vorbilder gestaltet’. There may be no Homeric model, but the passage is
highly intertextual, as ‘Stace pratique une large contaminatio pour le mettre en relief’ (Taisne
1994: 332); the monster is literally ‘mis en relief’ on Opheltes’ tomb (6.246-8). The physical
appearance of the Nemean serpent is in accordance with the typology of monstrous snakes
(see Sauvage 1975); its enormity, fiery eyes, venom, crest, threefold tongue and teeth are all
traditional features.

Despite the typological character of the description, however, there is little doubt as to its
primary model: the whole passage (5.505-87) is clearly modelled on Cadmus’ encounter with
the Theban serpent. The present description reworks Ovid’s description of the Theban serpent
(Met. 3.28-49), and the fight with the serpent looks back to Ovid also (see 5.554b-78n.). The
parallels have often been observed (e.g. Helm 1892: 58-9, Eisfeldt 1904: 416, Legras 1905:
72-3, Aricò 1963, Brown 1994: 148). The Theban palimpsest is important, as it links the
Nemean serpent with Thebes (see §6.5).

Statius also has in mind, of course, Euripides’ Nemean serpent (e.g. Aricò 1961: 65). We
have one fragment that describes the serpent, Hyps. fr. 754a (Hypsipyle speaks 1-6, to which
the Chorus responds):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{κρύφη} & \text{ ἵσκαιζ} & \text{a spring (is shaded?) ...} \\
\text{δράκων} & \text{πάροικος} & \text{a serpent living by it ...} \\
\text{γοργυπᾶ} & \text{λείσσω} & \text{staring fiercely ...} \\
\text{πύλεωσ} & \text{σέιων, ὡς φοδί} & \text{shaking its helm, (in fear?) of which ...} \\
\text{ποιμένες} & \text{ἐπισιγ’ ἐν.} & \text{shepherds ... (text uncertain) ...} \\
\text{παῦ} & \text{μα} & \text{σαὶ καὶ ἔν.} & \text{to do ... and ...} \\
\text{— φεῦ} & \text{Alas,} \\
\text{γυναικὶ} & \text{πάντα} & \text{γίνεται for a woman everything is ...} \\
\text{..... ἰς ἤκα τῦλακα δ’ ὡς πι} & \text{comes ... but ... not ... guardian ...}
\end{align*}
\]

In Euripides the Nemean serpent guards the spring (2 δράκων πάροικος, 8 φιλακα), like the
Theban serpent in Euripides’ Phoenissae (658 φιλακ) and Ovid’s Metamorphoses (see below;
on snakes as spring-guardians see Fontenrose 1959: 545-9). In Statius, however, the Nemean
serpent is not specifically related to the spring; it rather guards the temple of Jupiter. That
relates to another difference: in Statius Opheltes dies in a meadow in the woods, whereas in
Euripides the child meets his death in the immediate surroundings of the spring (cf. §2.6.2).
The physical features of Euripides’ snake – the fierce eyes, the crest – are all in accordance
with Statius’ description. Noteworthy are the shepherds (5 ποιμένες): in Statius we find
agricolae (5.512), but shepherds figure prominently in the story of Linus and Coroebus, in
both Callimachus and Statius (see §3). While Euripides’ shepherds seem to be afraid of the
serpent, Statius emphasises their veneration for the sacred animal. That also relates to another
difference: in Euripides the slaying of the serpent is a heroic exploit, whereas in Statius it is
also a sacrilegious act and even an indirect assault on Jupiter (see §3.3).

As I have argued in the Introduction (§5.4), an important model for the episode is Vergil’s
passage on the Calabrian water-snake in Georgics 3.414-39, which ends with the explicit
warning not to fall asleep when there is a serpent around. Vergil’s description of that snake –
closely modelled on Nicander (see Thomas ad loc.) – is organised in much the same way:
after a general description, Vergil first describes its normal ‘watery’ behaviour (Geo. 3.428-
31) and then its ferocious behaviour under the influence of heat (Geo. 3.432-4). To my
knowledge only Cazzaniga (1959: 127 n. 4; cf. Iglesias Montiel 1973: 19) has noted the rele-
vance of the Georgics. Statius’ engagement with the Georgics is mediated, I believe, by the Culex, whose scenario is itself inspired by the Calabrian snake in Georgics 3: the pastor falls asleep and is almost killed by a monstrous serpent. The serpent in the Culex, too, shows two different types of behaviour (cf. esp. Cul. 175 acrior instat).

There has been some discussion as to the possible relevance of Hellenistic poetry. Cazzaniga (1959: 125-6) has argued for influence of Nicander, Euphorius and Callimachus. In reaction to Cazzaniga’s article, Aricò (1963) has argued that Nicander’s influence is mediated all through Ovid. For the details see notes on 508-11, 525-6 and 531-3.

Occasionally Statius seems to have in mind other texts also, esp. Laocoon’s snakes in Aen. 2.199-227 (Eisfeldt 1904: 416 notes their relevance), the sea-monster in Valerius’ Argonautica 2 (Hercules and Hisione), and the sea-monster in Manilius’ Astronomica 5 (Perseus and Andromeda). The description of the serpent being tormented by thirst may also owe something to Lucan’s poignant description of the parched Pompeians (Luc. 4.262-381), an intertext mined in book 4 (see Parkes on 4.646-850). The close similarities between Statius’ Nemean serpent and Silius’ Bagrada serpent I have discussed elsewhere (Soerink 2013).

**interea:** i.e. ‘simultánea a la narración de Hipsipila’ (Iglesias Montiel 1973: 19); cf. 499 dum. In Latin epic interea often marks the transition to a new scene, with the implication that what follows is contemporaneous with what precedes (see Mulder on 2.1, Smolenaars on 7.398, Harrison on Aen. 10.1). Parkes on 4.646 connects interea with ‘the lack of temporal progress’ and Nemean mora. The fact that Opheltes’ death occurs during Hypsipyle’s narration also prompts the question to what extent she is responsible for the death of her nursling (cf. notes on 5.501, 626-7).

**sacer horror:** cf. 511n. Inachio sanctum ... Tonanti. At the very beginning of the passage, Statius calls attention to the serpent’s sacred nature, explained in 511-3 Inachio ... honos, which is to play a significant role in what follows: when Caneus attacks the serpent, he indirectly attacks Jupiter himself (see 5.565-74, 583-7). The combination sacer horror well captures the serpent’s ambiguous nature, monstrous and sacred at the same time. For an ancient audience, sacer horror is less oxymoronic than for modern readers: horror conveys the awe the snake inspires in its beholders rather than its fearsome appearance; as LP on 1.494-5 laetus ... horror explains, horror goes with a variety of emotions, including joy, fear and grief. For the religious aspect of horror see e.g. Austin on Aen. 6.10, Mankin on Hor. Ep. 7.20, Val. 2.433 numinis ingens horror. In 2.442 sacer ille senex Statius uses sacer in the negative sense ‘accursed’. Barth ad loc. and Lehanneur (1878: 16) point to Claudian’s imitation in De sexto consulatu 33 sacer horror.

The word sacer also links the serpent with its victim (Brown 1994: 145), cf. 4.729 sacram, 5.536 sacer (see further 5.81n. reptatus).

The abstract noun horror is sometimes metonymically applied to individuals, e.g. Lucr. 3.1034 Scipidas ... Carthaginis horror, Luc. 5.344 orbis Hiberi horror; cf. also Ov. Fast. 1.551 Cacus, Auentinae timor atque infamia siluae, Sen. Her.F. 224 Nemeae timor, Callim. Aet. fr. 54e.2 Harder Ἀγείων ... ἀάρια (Nemean lion). Perhaps Statius took his inspiration from Ovid, whose Python is called terror (Met. 1.440)? Brown (1994: 184) nicely points out that the dogs responsible for Linus’ death are also referred to with an abstract noun, 1.589 dira rabies (cf. §3).

**nemoris:** monstrous serpents traditionally live in sacred groves, as does the Ovidian model snake (Met. 3.28 silua utetus stabat nulla uiolata securi, 44 nemus). On sacred woods in the Thebaid see Taisne (1994: 342-3). It is difficult, and perhaps unnecessary, to chose between objective gen. (Taisne 1972: 357 ‘terreur sacrée pour le bois achéen’) and subjective gen. (SB ‘holy horror of the Achaean wood’). nemoris ominously echoes 4.798-9 nemorum ... nemorique malorum / inscius ... inerrat. The Nemean woods are called lucus (e.g. 567, silua
(e.g. 514) and nemus (e.g. 553); Servius (on Aen. 1.310) notes that lucus est arborum multitudo cum religione, nemus composita multitudo arborum, silua diffusa et inculta, but his distinctions are hard to maintain; see Brown 1994: 12-3.

Achaei: Mulder on 2.164 wonders whether the adjective denotes Greece in toto or only the Peloponnesse. The latter seems the more likely, since elsewhere in the Thebaid it is applied to the Pelopponesian Argives (e.g. 4.721); cf. Waltz 1916: 140 ‘Achaei est pris dans un sens large et désigne, non l’Achaïe, mais le Péloponèse entier’. In Statius’ days, it would be the Roman province Achaea that determines the geographical scope of the name.

506. terrigena: ‘earthborn’ (masculine). Adjectives in –gena, after Greek –γενής, traditionally belong to the epic style (see e.g. Fordyce on Cat. 64.355 Troigenum). Snakes are chthonic creatures par excellence (see Sauvage 1975: 245; cf. e.g. Eur. Phoen. 931 δράκων ὁ γηγενής, Sil. 6.152 telluris gemitum); other chthonic beings, such as Cerberus and the Furies, are often equipped with snakes. The word connects the Nemean serpent with Python (1.563 terrigenam Pythona) as well as with the Theban Spartoi (2.573 terrigenas ... auos, 4.441 terrigenae, 4.556-60, 8.601 terrigenas ... patres) and their descendant Menoeceus (10.668 terrigenam); see further §6.5.

exoritur: ‘at subitam apparitionem spectat’ (Barth ad loc.). MSS are divided between exoritur and erigitur. In light of 2.412. 4.97, the Ovidian model (Met. 3.43 erectus) and the corresponding Silian passage (Sil. 6.181-7, 222-4, 233-4; cf. Soerink 2013), the latter may seem preferable (Hall). With some hesitation I follow the majority of editors in printing exoritur: it is difficult to see how erigitur would be corrupted into exoritur, whereas erigitur may well have been corrupted into erigitur precisely because erigitur occurs so often in connection with snakes (cf. Hill ad loc. ‘fortasse natum est e 2.412 uel 4.97’; for erigere applied to snakes cf. also e.g. Man. 5.596 erigit).

tractuque soluto: the phrase can be understood in two different ways: (a) tractu may refer to the movement of the serpent, ‘das gestreckte sich vorwärts Winden der Schlange’ (Seelen 1923: 171); cf. Bindewald ‘in a slithering motion’. (b) Alternatively, tractu may refer to the coils of the serpent, not their movement, in which case tractuque soluto is an abl. absolute describing the snake uncoiling its lengthy body (the very opposite, in fact, of Geo. 2.154). Thus Waltz (1916: 140) and Taisne (1972: 357) translate ‘en déroulant ses anneaux’; cf. Bindewald ‘[eine Schlange] die im Vorgehn / ihre gewaltigen Ringe, sie lösend, hinter sich her zog’ (my italics). This is also how Barth understands the Latin, as appears from his note ad loc.: ‘contraxerat se enim, nunc omni nexu soluto ululit se per campos erectum qua potest. Tractus alioquin iter seu meatus serpentum’. As I have argued elsewhere (Soerink 2013: 376-7), the second interpretation is the more attractive in light of Sil. 6.227-9 resoluens / contortos orbes, directo corpore totam / extendit molem, even though we cannot establish with certainty who imitates whom. For uncoiling serpents cf. also Theoc. 24.17 (see 5.526n. pronus adhaeret humano).

507. immanem sese uchit: the application of the adjective to the object sese rather than the subject, suggests that the snake is hampered by the enormity of its own body (cf. Soerink 2013: 375 with n. 65); one could even read immanem predicatively with concessive force, although to make this explicit in translation – ‘drags itself enormous though it is’ – spoils the subtlety of the Latin. The spondaic rhythm of immanem sese suggests the snake’s weight and slow movement, while the placement of immanem ‘en tête de vers’ underscores the monster’s proportions (Taisne 1972: 358).

For the phrasing cf. esp. 8.273-4 (Phoebe) seseque uagantem / colligit, where we find a similar construction (with less concessive participle). Cf. also Aen. 9.597 (Numanus)
The expression **se ...** from the preceding clause: ‘and leaves [its enormous self] behind its back’. As Hutchinson (1993: 122) notes, *post terga reliquit* is ‘a phrase used of humans leaving something behind them’; Michler (1914: 21) offers parallels, e.g. Luc. 2.628 *rebus post terga relicitis*, Ov. *Met.* 2.187 *multum caeli post terga relicticum, 10.670 iuuenem post terga relinguit*, Fasti 4.281 *Lesbo post terga relicta*. Statius amusingly applies of the phrase to a snake, which cannot quite ‘turn its back’. Alternatively, one could take *post* as an adverb and *terga* as the object of *reliquit*: ‘and leaves its back behind’. This interpretation is suggested by the adverbial *pone* (‘behind’) in Statius’ model, *Aen.* 2.207-8 (Laocoon’s snakes) *pars cetera pontum / pone legit sinuatre immensa uolmine terga*. For *terga* applied to a serpent cf. also *Man.* 5.585 *tergique consumunt pelagus* (also inspired by Vergil).

But what exactly are we to envisage? According to Hutchinson Statius is ‘imagining vertical curves, as in a lavish form of rectilinear motion’ and ‘behind what seemed its back or backs still remains itself’ (1993: 122 n. 22). Waltz (1916: 140) more clearly comments: ‘expression audacieuse pour peindre <l>a grande taille du serpent. Il a fait avancer une grande partie de lui-même, pendant que l’autre trêna encore par derrière’. Empirical research in the ‘Reptielenhuis’ of Natura Artis Magistra, Amsterdam, confirms this interpretation. Cf. the serpentine motion of the sea monster in *Val.* 2.501-2 *pelagoque remenso / cauda reedit, passosque sinus rapit ardua ceruix*, on which Mozley *ad loc.* comments: ‘[t]he lines ... express the straightening-out movement of snakes, when, as the front half moves forward (passos ... ceruix), the tail seems to move towards the rear. On a large scale this might be described as “reaching backward over the sea it has already covered”’ (cf. also Langen and Poortvliet *ad loc.*).

508-11. As has often been observed (e.g. Lehanneur 1878: 248-9), these lines are closely modelled on Ovid’s Theban serpent (*Met.* 3.32-4):

\[
\text{cristis praesignis et auro} \\
\text{igne micant oculi, corpus tument omne ueneno,} \\
\text{tresque micant linguae, triplex stant ordine dentes.}
\]

In Statius the elements occur almost in the same order; in Ovid the crest comes first, in Statius it comes last. Aricò (1963: 122) notes the skilful variation of the numerals: *tres > ter* and *triplici > terna* (for such *variatio* cf. e.g. *Aen.* 10.329 *septem ... septena*, 565-6 *centum ... centenas*; on poets and numeralia see Maurach 1995: 43-4).
Cazzaniga (1959: 125) argues for direct influence of Nicander and Euphorion, comparing Euphor. fr. 71.6-7 Lightfoot (Cerberus) οὐφαίοι λεχμώντα περὶ πλευρὰς δράκωντες, / ἐν καὶ οἱ βλεψάροι κυνω ἄρηστάστων Ἴδης (‘the serpents of his tail licked round his ribs, and in their lids his eyes flashed out blue-black’), and Nic. Ther. 227-9 αἴταρ ἐνωτῆς / γλύτνα φοινίστει τεθωμένος, δὴ δὲ δική / γλύττηση λιχαμάξων νέατω σκωλύπτεται οὐρή (‘but the eyes in his face turn blood-red when he is angered, and as his forked tongue flickers rapidly, he lashes the end of his tail’). The expression tumidi stat in ore ueneni / spuma uirens (508-9) goes back, according to Cazzaniga, to Nic. Ther. 443-4 νάβεδά δὲ πώγων / αἰῶν ὑπ’ ἀνθρέπου πόδηθαμος (‘and lower down beneath his chin there is ever a beard of yellow stain’), while the phrase terna agmina adunci / dentis (509-10) reworks Ther. 441-2 ἐν δὲ γενείῳ / τρίστοιχοι ἕκατερδε περιστιχώσων ὁδόντες (‘in his jaw above and below are arrayed three rows of teeth’). Aricò (1963) is rightly sceptical (cf. 505-33n.); although the motifs are deeply rooted in the literary tradition, Statius’ actual words seem to be inspired by different models.

508. liuida fax oculis: the snake’s eyes are both ‘fiery’ and ‘livid’: ‘rapprochement para-
doxal de deux termes qui inspirent la crainte’ (Taisne 1972: 358). Ogden (2013: 57) translates ‘a bluish fire in its eyes’. The phrase perhaps underlies Milton Paradise Lost 1.182 ‘livid flames’ (Ross 2004: xxvi explains Milton’s words from 1.57 Styx liuida, where the flames are absent). The phrase may recall the eyes of Tisiphon, 1.105 ferrea lux oculis.

In Bacchylides (9.12 ἐκώδωρες; see §1.3.2) and Euripides (Hyps. fr. 754a.3 γραγώνα λευσ-
σολο) the Nemean serpent also has fiery eyes. Direct imitation is possible, but fiery eyes are of course a traditional serpentine motif, cf. e.g. Pl. Ὀι. 6.45 γλαυκώπες, Ap.Rh. 4.1543-4, Theoc. 24.18-9 ἄπ’ ὕφαλμοι δὲ κακοῦ πύρ / ἐρχόμενοι λάμπεσκε, Nic. Ther. 178 ὑπαφονίστει δέμα, Geo. 3.333 ἰσταντίσσα λυμινα, Aen. 2.210 ἀρδεντισκός oculos, 5.277 ἀρδενσκὸς oculos, Val. 2.499-500 stellantia ... lumina, 8.60 (for more parallels see Sauvage 1975: 244-5 and Seelentag on [Verg.] Cul. 173). The feature may be explained from ancient etymology (δράκων < δέρκα, δράκος < ὅρτος; see Sylburgius sub uocibus); in the constellation Draco two of the stars correspond with the serpent’s eyes (Arat. Phaen. 55-6 ἐπιλάμπεται ... δύο δ’ ὀμμασν, Germ. 58 ardent ingentes oculi). Fiery eyes also indicate ira or furor, cf. Sen. Ira 1.1.4.

Fax applied to eyes is extremely rare (see TLL s.v. fax 404.53-7), the only occurrences before Statius being Prop. 2.3.14 oculi, geminae, sidera nostra, faces and Val. 5.379 has ego credo faces, haec virginitis ora Dianae; Statius does it again in 6.396 face lumina surgunt and Ach. 1.164 tranquillaque faces oculis (Achilles’ eyes).

With respect to ‘livid’ Sauvage observes that ‘il faut lui accorder une valeur plus affective que chromatique’. The colour carries associations with death (cf. e.g. 1.57 Styx liuida, Aen. 6.320); it is applied to Poiné’s dead eyes (1.617 liuentes in morte oculos), which the serpent’s eyes may recall. The colour may also hint at the snake’s venomous nature, as Barth ad loc. suggests (‘lividum a veneno’). Barth’s suggestion is supported by Juv. 6.631 liuida materno feruent adipata ueneno, Plin. Nat. 22.92 and 97 (poisonous fungi), Suet. Cal. 1.2 (where Germanicus’ livid skin-colour is mentioned as an indication that he was poisoned), Val. 1.63 externo liuentia mella ueneno (Medea feeding the Colchian serpent, but the text is disputed). See further Schöffel on Mart. 8.28.9 Amycleo decuit liueru ueneno. The colour is first applied to a snake by Ovid, Met. 4.715 liuentia terga.

tumidi stat in ore ueneni / spuma uirens: combines Ov. Met. 3.33 corpus tumet omne ueneno and 3.74 spumaque pestiferos circumfluit albid a rictus. Venom is a traditional element of descriptions of literary snakes; see Sauvage 1975: 250-2 and cf. e.g. Theoc. Id. 24.19 βαρὺν δ’ ἐξέπτυον ιόν, Nic. Ther. 443-4 (see 508-11n.). Many Romans thought all snakes were venomous (Plin. Nat. 8.85). Like fiery eyes, a foaming mouth is symptomatic of ira (Sen. Ira 1.1.6). The combination of foam and venom is frequent in post-Vergilian epic; cf. 1.360 spumavit Lerna ueneno, Ov. Met. 4.500-1, Val. Arg. 6.447, Sil. Pun. 2.538, 3.210. Parkes (on 4.692) seems to think that the snake’s foaming mouth results from the heat (‘note
the foaming poison of the heat-maddened snake’), but here Statius is still describing the serpent’s normal behaviour – although we may be reminded of the parched horses in 4.736-7 non spumeus imber / manat equum.

**tumidi**: enallage (frequent in Statius; see Pollmann 2004: 50-1): not the venom, but the snake is swollen – because of the venom. The ideas of ‘swelling’ and ‘venom’ are closely related; see Austin’s note on Aen. 2.472 tumidum, where Henry even claims that tumidum equals uenentatum. The adjective is often applied to the snake’s swollen throat or neck, where the venom was believed to be situated (cf. 11.313-4 tumefactaque ... colla, Theoc. 24.28-9, Cic. Vat. 4, Geo. 3.421, Aen. 2.381, Ov. Met. 3.73 plenis tumuerunt guttura uenis, Sen. Her.F. 221, Val. 2.547 colla tumens, Sil. Pun. 1.128-6). Hence, I think, Barth’s conjecture tumido. Like fiery eyes and foaming mouth, swelling is also a symptom of furor (Sen. Ira 1.1.6 irritatis colla serpentibus). On a metapoetic level, tumidus is equally applicable to the hyperbolic epic genre that the serpent seems to embody (cf. e.g. Catullus’ condemnation of Antimachus as tumidus in Cat. 95b.10).

**stat**: sometimes almost a poetism synonymous with est; cf. Servius on Aen. 1.646 omnis in Ascanio cari stat cura parentis ‘stat modo est’. Nonius (GL 392.1) claims that stare can mean ‘to be full’, quoting Lucil. 213 M interea stat pectus sentibus. Pinkster (1987: 215-8) distinguishes between (i) stare as ‘copula’, (ii) existential stare for locative use, (iii) stare with perfect passive participle; the present case would classify as (ii).

Unlike est, the verb stat (taken from the Ovidian model, Met. 3.34) suggests that the venomous foam, which in Ovid is dripping around the serpent’s mouth (Met. 3.74 circumfluuit), has stiffened; see OLD s.v. 5b and 7b and cf. 9.747-8 stat faucibus unda / sanguinis, 11.582-3 ueteri stat sordida tabo / utraque canities (Oedipus), Luc. 6.224 stetit imbre cruento informis facies. Thus Austin on Aen. 2.333 stat ferri acies mucrone corusco notes that ‘stat, as so often, expresses strong rigidity’ (cf. e.g. Prop. 4.6.27 stantem ... Delon). For a different Vergilian usage of stat (‘it is my fixed intent’) see Austin on Aen. 2.750, Tarrant on Aen. 12.678. In both usages, however, the idea of ‘fixedness’ is there.

**uirens**: in the Ovidian model the foam is white (Met. 3.74 albida; cf. 7.415, 15.519). Aricò (1963: 122) suggests influence of medical jargon: perhaps Romans and Greeks connected uirus and uirens, χολή and χλή (see Aricò 1963: 122 with nn. 10 and 13)? However that may be, the colour nicely corresponds with the colour of the serpent’s scales (cf. 5.549 uiridi).

509. **ter lingua uibrat**: flickering tongues are another traditional serpentine motif, cf. e.g. Theoc. 24.20 λυχνώμενος, Lucr. 3.657 lingua uibrante, Aen. 2.211 sibila lambebant linguis uibrantibus ora; [Verg.] Cul. 166 uibranti ... lingua; Ov. Met. 15.684; Luc. 9.631; Val. 1.62; for more examples see Sauvage (1975: 249-50).

*ter* means ‘three(fold)’, not ‘three times’, as 571 trisulcae and the Ovidian model (Met. 3.34 tresque micant linguae) show. Contra Waltz (1916: 140) ‘sa langue s’agite trois fois, c.-à-d. qu’il agite, qu’il darde une triple langue. La lange des serpents n’est que bisulca; mais la rapidité des mouvements pouvait la faire paraître triple.’ Waltz’ interpretation is that of Servius (on Aen. 2.211): ‘tanta celeritate linguam mouet, adeo ut triplicem linguam habere uideatur, cum una sit’. According to Mynors (on Geo. 3.439) the background of serpent’s threefold tongues is a misunderstanding of Gr. τρισόλυς.

The threefold tongue corresponds neatly with the three rows of teeth (see following note). Literary snakes are often equipped with such tongues, e.g. Geo. 3.439 = Aen. 2.475 linguis micat ore trisulcis, Ov. Met. 7.150 linguisque tribus, Sen. Med. 687 trisdamque linguam, Sil. 6.222-3 trífido uibrata per auras / lingua micat motu (cf. Soerink 2013: 368). Apul. Met. 6.15 trisulca. Valerius even goes one step further: Arg. 1.61 multífidas ... linguas, 161 multífidae linguae. The motif is, of course, poetical fiction; in Plautus’ “realistic” world snake tongues are always twofold (Sauvage 1975: 249 with n. 89; cf. also Ov. Met. 9.65 linguam ... bisulcam).
Some Romans believed threefold tongues really existed (Plin. Nat. 11.171); Servius clearly did not.

**509-10. terna agmina adunci / dentis:** modelled on Ov. Met. 3.34 triuplici stant ordine dentes. Three rows of teeth are typical of monstrous snakes, cf. Nic. Ther. 441-2 ζ ώ δέ γέναψι / τείστοτοιραι ἤκατερζε μπαριστίχωσιν ἠδὼνες (modelled on Od. 12.91), Val. 2.500-1 ordine curua trisulco ... ora (also modelled on Ov. Met. 3.34; see Poortvliet ad loc.). Statius also reworks, Ov. Met. 7.150-1 linguistique tribus praeasignis et uncis / dentibus and 11.775-6 adunco / dente (adduced by Barth ad loc.) and Sauvage 1975: 250 n. 97 respectively); cf. also Calp. Ecl. 5.92 dentes ... uncos, Luc. 9.764 flexo dente. The usage of agmina for teeth is without parallel. The combination of teeth, intertext (Cadmus’ Theban serpent) and military language (agmina) bends the reader’s mind to the Spartan (cf. 506n. terrigena and §6.5), while agmina also suits the martial epic genre that the serpent seems to represent.

**510-1. auratae crudelis gloria frontis / prominet:** as the Ovidian model (Met. 3.32 cristas praesiginis et auro) makes clear, these words refer to the serpent’s crest, mentioned again in 5.572 perque iubas stantes capitisque insigne corusci (where insigne echoes Ovid’s praesignis). Lehanneur (1878: 10) detects an imitation in Aus. Mos. 471 auratum frontis honorem (on Ausonius’ use of Statius in the Mosella see Newlands 1988).

Crests are a traditional feature of fictional snakes, including Euripides’ Nemean serpent (Hyps. fr. 18.4 πῦλια σφών, Philostr. VA 3.9), which is also depicted with a crest on the Apulian krater from Ruvo (see App. B c). Cf. e.g. Plaut. Amph. 1108 angues iubatae, Liv. 41.21.13 and 43.13.4 anguem ... iubatum, Ov. Met. 4.599 cristati colla draconis, Val. 8.63 ille suis haec uibrat fulgura cristas, Claud. De raptu 1.184 frontem crista tegit; for more parallels see Sauvage 1975: 243-4, Seelentag on [Verg.] Cul. 171-2 crista superne edita. We also find crested snakes in the visual arts, on Greek vases (e.g. the famous calyx crater depicting Cadmus and the dragon, Louvre N 3157, ca. 350 BC) and various Pompeian frescoes (e.g. House of the Centenary), the likes of which Statius might have seen with his own eyes. Unfortunately, as Pliny the Elder observes (NH 11.122), draconum cristas qui uiderit non reperitur!

The golden colour seems to be an Ovidian touch (Met. 3.32 quoted above, cf. also 15.669 cristas aureus altatis); Vergil’s Laocoon snakes are equipped with crimson crests (Aen. 2.206-7 iubaeque / sanguineae), like the snakes in Pompeii. Ogden (2013: 57) understands ‘a crest rising from a golden forehead’, but the Ovidian model suggests that it is the crest, not the forehead, that is golden (enallage of auratae). The golden colour could be an allusion to the serpent’s imminent death, since the horns of sacrificial animals would often be gilded (see Servius on Aen. 9.627 et statuum ante aras aurata fronte iuuenicum, Bömer’s extensive note on Ov. Met. 7.161-2 inducta ... cornibus aurum / uictima uota cadit, Val. 1.89 auratis ... cornibus with Kleywegt, Val. 3.431 lectas aurata fronte bidentes), something that goes back to Homer (Il. 10.294 χρυσόν κάλασαν περιχείας).

**crudelis gloria frontis:** the MSS are divided between frontis and fronti. As Hutchinson (1993: 122) rightly notes, frontis is preferable ‘since it is needed by gloria’: it is a gen. explicativus that indicates wherein the gloria resides (= crudelis frons gloriosa). Hill reads fronti, comparing (with Müller) 1.609-10 lateri duo corpora parum / dependent, 4.129 capiti tremit aerea cassis, 580 1.154-5 flauae capiti tergoque leonum / exuiae. These parallels may illustrate Statius’ liberal use of the dative to indicate location (cf. Müller 1861: 28, Parkes on 4.129-30), but corpora, cassis and exuiae are all concrete subjects, whereas the abstract gloria needs a genitive. For gloria applied to the object that brings glory see Smolenaaers on 7.226; cf. also Legras 1905: 337 n. 1 on Statius’ use of gloria. The word (translating Gr. κλάζως, see e.g. McNelis 2007: 141 n. 63) might also hint at the serpent as embodiment of epic poetry.

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580 Where Hill reads niueum; he supports fronti with a reading he rejects himself.
Note the *callida iunctura of crudelis gloria*; such oxymoronic combinations are characteristic of Statius’ style; see Pollmann 2004: 48 and cf. e.g. 1.663 *tristemque ... honorem*, 4.788-9 dulces ... lacrimas.

511. *prominet*: the metrical placement of the word underscores its meaning, the enjambment ‘sticking out’ from the hexameter, so to speak. Strong diaeresis after the first foot is a hallmark of Vergil’s style and even more that of Statius (cf. 5.527, 554, 555, 591 etc.). On Statius’ frequent use of enjambment (more than Vergil or Ovid) see Frank 1968: 405-6; on the poet’s mastery over both hendecasyllable and dactylic hexameter generally see now Morgan (2010: 49-76, 331-2, 359-62). *prominet* might recall the Giant on the helmet of Capaneus (4.175-6 *galeaeque corusca / prominet arce Gigans*), who will shortly kill the serpent.

511. *Inachio sanctum dixere Tonanti / agricola*: Jupiter’s relation with Nemea is explained in the relative clause cui ... *honos* (512-3). Lewis (1773) translates ‘Jove / *The tutelary Patron of the Grove*. In 2.50-2 *Arcadii perhibent ... coloni* Statius similarly ‘reports’ local tradition.

*Inachio*: since Inachus is both an important Argive river and the first king of Argos (cf. 5.748n.), *Inachius* usually means ‘Argive’; it occurs 26 times in the *Thebaid*, mostly in this sense (see Smolenaars on 7.14). Here it is more or less synonymous with ‘Nemean’, Nemea being Argive territory: cf. 4.743 *Inachii ... Lycurgi, 4.686-8 Argilos ... praeceptam Nemeen*, Σ Clem. Alex. Protr. 2.34 τῶν Νεμέων· τόπος δὲ οὗτος τοῦ Ἀργοῦ, Σ Pind. Nem. hypoth. c (= App. A f) ἐστὶ δὲ ἡ Νεώμα τῆς τῶν Ἀργείων χώρας μοῦρα. Statius has numerous variations on ‘Argive’, e.g. Danaan, Pelopean, Phoronean; as Davis (1994: 474-5) has argued, these ‘comparatively abstruse epithets’ are symptomatic ‘not so much of a fondness for learned display but of an intention to stress the genetic connection between past and present’ (cf. 5.647n. *Dirceae*).

Müller has conjectured *Inachii* (so Klotz, Hall, Brown 1994: 147, Brouwer ‘Naburige boeren’), congruent with *agricola*. As Häkanson (1973: 34) has convincingly argued, however, there is no need for conjecture. He points to *agricolae* without attribute in 7.420 and to Paus. 2.15.2 where ‘Nemean Zeus’ is mentioned twice (see §7). Traglia-Aricò (1980: 86) and most other editors rightly accept Häkanson’s argument. The close connection between Zeus and Nemea is also apparent from 4.832-3 *Nemea ... lecta iouis se* Nemeens. Cf. also Pind. Ν. 2.4-5 Νεμεαῖον ... Δίος, 4.9 Κρονίδα τα Δί και Νεμέα, Bacchylides 9.4-5 Νεμεαίον / Ζηνός, Eur. Hýps. fr. 752h.28 τούπιψωρον Δίος, fr. 752h.10 ὦ Ζεύς, Νεμέας τήρδε ἀλος ἐξω, Callim. Aet. fr. 54.1 Harder Ζηνί τα και Νεμέη. Moreover, combinations of Jupiter and local epithet are quite common, e.g. Callim. Hec. dieg. 11.7 Ἐκαλαῖον Δι[ός], Aen. 7.799 *Iuppiter Anxurus*; Statian examples include 1.421 *Pisaeo ... Tonanti*, S. 2.7.93 *Nasamonii Tonantis*.

Taise’s translation ‘Jupiter, vainqueur d’Inachus’ (1972: 358) makes little sense in this context. Probably she follows Waltz (1916: 140) who explains the phrase as an allusion to Jupiter’s affair with Io, daughter of Inachus: ‘Jupiter est appelé Inachius, sans doute à cause de Io, fille d’Inachus, roi d’Argos. C’est à Némée que, changée en vache, elle fut gardée par Argus.’

*dixere*: the –ere form of the perfect is popular with epic poets since Ennius, partly for its archaic ring, partly for its metrical convenience (cf. Austin on *Aen*. 2.53). On Statius’ use of –ere and –erunt and their distribution over the hexameter, see Steele 1911 (cf. Mulder on 2.4); in this respect Statius’ hexameters are similar to those of Vergil.

*Tonanti*: Jupiter is called ‘Thunderer’ 25 times (*Iuppiter, iouis etc. 109 times*) in the poem, always in the same metrical position. In that light it seems far-fetched to regard the word as an anticipation of Jupiter hurling his thunderbolt at Capaneus (583-7) – although Statius sometimes uses the epithet with great significance (e.g. 2.71, 7.329). *Tonans*, originally a cult title (cf. Homeric ἀγίδοντας), is popular with poets since Ovid (see Mulder on 2.69, Smolenaars on 7.24, Van Dam on S. 2.7.93-7). Building on Dominik (1994: 165), Yaggy (2009: 43, 47, 58,
65-6) argues that the epithet Tonans associates Statius’ Jupiter with Domitian, who escaped death in the temple of Jupiter Tonans on the Capitol, who issued coins depicting himself with Jupiter’s thunderbolt, and who is often called Tonans in Martial (e.g. 5.55.1, 6.10.9, 7.56.4). For literature on Statius’ Jupiter and Domitian see e.g. Feeney 1991: 359 n. 151.

agricolaev: emphasising the rurality of Nemea; cf. 667n. agrestum and §5.

512-4. Frank (1968: 733 with n. 19) points out that these lines are a fourfold repetition of the same metrical pattern (DSDS). The balanced rhythm may underline the calmness of the serpent’s normal behaviour (cf. 505-33n.). On the other hand, we should perhaps not read too much into the metre, as DSDS simply happens to be Statius’ favourite metrical pattern. Other such ‘metrical clusters’ in the Thebaid are 2.416-9, 3.453-6, 8.495-8, 631-4, 9.447-50.
cui: i.e. Jupiter. According to Barth ad loc. ‘alii referunt haec ad Draconem, sed incogitan-ter’. One wonders who these ‘alii’ may have been.
siluestribus aris: Barth ad loc. explains: ‘non lapidibus caesis constructis, sed ex caespite vivo’ (cf. Hor. Carm. 3.8.2-4); Lewis translates accordingly ‘altars raised of living turf’; see further Mulder on 2.246 caespite nudo, N-H on Hor. Carm. 1.19.13 uium ... caespitem, Tarrant on Aen. 12.118-9 aras / gramineae, Val. 3.456 frondentibus ... aris. In combination with pauper (513), the woodland altars evoke the Nemeans’ humble and uncorrupted way of life. In addition, there may be an allusion to historical Nemea: Pausanias (2.15.2-3) notes that the sanctuary included a sacred cypress grove and that the Ophelteion contained several altars, which archaeologists have indeed found (see §7).

513. pauper honos: not degrading the farmers’ offerings, but evoking their humble way of life. This aspect of Statius’ Nemea is esp. reminiscent of pastoral Pallanteum in Aeneid 8; cf. 8.100 res inopes, 105 pauper, 360 pauperis Euandri, 455 humili tecto, 543 paruosque penatis.Cf. also Tib. 1.10.17-9, Hor. Carm. 3.23, Sen. Epist. 95.47-50, Ben. 1.6.3, Ph. 498-500; see further Smolenaars on 7.720 pauper and Wick’s extensive note on Luc. 9.519. In 2.246-8 we are told that small sacrifices are no less pleasing to the gods.

513b-7. Description of the serpent’s normal behaviour: it is wont to surround Jupiter’s temple, to thin down trees, and to bathe in the river. The three elements, each two words longer than the previous one (‘Trikolon der wachsenden Glieder’), are introduced by nunc (513), nunc (514) and saepe (516). The bathing scene comes last, which creates a pointed contrast with its present behaviour under the influence of the drought (518 sed nunc).

513. nunc ille dei circumdare templa: the serpent surrounds the temple of Jupiter in a protective gesture; cf. Barth ad loc. ‘circumire, ut costodes et vigiles solent, rebus sacris et pretiosis dare custodiam draconum et serpentum’; on snakes as temple guardians see Nilsson 1947. One may be reminded of the snake that appears at the tomb of Anchises, Aen. 5.86 amplexus placide tumulum.
dei ... templa: the temple of Jupiter already mentioned at the end of the previous book (4.833 Iouis sedes). The mythical temple has a counterpart in historical Nemea: around 573 BC a Temple of Zeus was constructed at Nemea; around 330 BC the temple, ruined in the late 5th century, was replaced by another one, which Pausanias – in spite of its collapsed roof and missing statue – thought ‘worth seeing’ (2.15.2; see §7). In Euripides (Hyps. fr. 752c) Euneus and Thoas admire the painted sculptures in the temple’s pediment, which might reflect the fame of the temple in the classical period (cf. the ecphrases of Delphi in his Ion). The temple is also depicted on the marble relief in the Palazzo Spada (see App. B j).
circumdare: historic or narrative infinitive, ‘quite frequent in Statius’ (Williams on 10.150); Heuvel on 1.413 lists numerous examples, e.g. 2.308, 544, 5.381-3, 10.753-4.581 Adema (2005) argues that, when the ‘temporal base’ lies in reference time (note the surroun-

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581 Heuvel erroneously includes 5.693, where the infinitives are part of an acc. c. inf.
ding ‘historic presents’), it can be used (a) ‘to indicate simultaneity, (b) ‘to cancel an interpretation of a successful or finished state of affairs’, or (c) ‘to evoke an iterative effect’. Here (c) is correct interpretation, as the surrounding adverbs (nunc ... nunc ... saepe) show; cf. 9.588-90. On Vergil’s use of the narrative inf. see Harrison on Aen. 10.267 with references. The inf. circumdare may be felt as a Vergilian touch; after Cat. 64.377, it occurs six times in Vergil, usually in the same metrical sedes as here.

514. orbe uago labens: the word orbe not only denotes the serpent’s coiling body, but also the circle that is formed as the snake surrounds Jupiter’s temple. The motif of encirclement may be inspired by Ovid’s description of the Martius anguis in Met. 3.77-8 ipse modo inmensum spiris facientibus orbem / cingitur. On a metapoetic level, the word (translating Greek κυκλικες) may also be connected with the epic nature of the monster (cf. Barchiesi 1999: 333-4 on Aen. 1.457 bellaque iam fama totum ulgata per orbem; Heerink 2009: 300-1 on Callim. Ep. 28.1 Pf. ἐξαιρετο τὸ ποίημα τὸ κυκλικων), even though the context is not explicitly concerned with nature. The well chosen adjective uago suggests that the circle is not only vast (cf. Ov. Met. 3.77 inmensum ... orbem), but also winding, moving, changing. Statius is fond of uagos, which occurs 38 times in the Thebaid.

514-5. miserae nunc robora siluae / atterit et uastas tenuat complexibus ornos: the snake ‘thins down’ trees with his branches, because, we may imagine, it breaks of the branches (Barth ad loc. ‘frangendo ramos’) and scrapes the bark. In doing so, the Nemean serpent recalls not only its Ovidian model, Met. 3.80 obstantes proturbat pectore siluas, but also Python (1.564-5 squamisque annosa terentem / robora), modelled on Seneca’s Theban serpent, Oed. 726-7 aut anguis imis uallibus editus / annosa circa robora sibilat. Hutchinson (1993: 122) draws attention to the oxymoron uastas tenuat; for similar wordplay cf. S. 4.7.9 Maximo ... tenuare with Coleman (cf. Gibson 2006: xxv). An Apulian krater also depicts the Nemean snake coiled around a tree (see App. B c).

As Newlands has argued, the ‘destruction of groves’ expresses ‘the profound disorder at the heart of Statius’ universe’ (2004: 137; cf. 2012: 53-5); cf. 1.355-63 where the ‘epic’ storm crushes the woods, 7.625-7 where the beginning of the battle is compared to a sudden storm that destroys the forest; 6.84-117 where the Argives cut down the pastoral grove for the funeral pyre (see §5.2). The Nemean serpent thus becomes symbolic of the destructive powers (see §6.5). The drought will make the serpent even more destructive (cf. 518-28, esp. 521 nocens, 525 radens and 527-8).

miserae: Hall (1992: 291) comments: ‘The semi-personification imported by miserae strikes me as out of place here. A more significant, and appropriate, epithet would be sacrae.’ Hall’s suspicion is Barth’s (ad loc.): ‘Egregie suspектum mihi hoc semper fuit. Nec tamen ausim mutare, genium Papinii insolentiorum veritus.’ Unlike Hall, I share Barth’s reverence. For the (slight) personification of nature cf. 525n. gementia, 579-81n.

tenuat: according to Waltz (1916: 141) ‘tenuat exprime, en l’exagérant, la même idée que atterit’, but the verbs nicely complement each other, as atterit describes the action, tenuat its result. It is tempting to see metapoetic significance in the verb tenuare, often used with an eye on the Callimachean ideal of ‘slender’ (tenuis) poetry (e.g. S. 4.7.9 carmen tenuare, Prop. 3.1.5 dicite quo pariter carmen tenuastis in antro). The epic serpent, then, would make the pastoral Nemean woods even more Callimachean – by destroying them! Precisely because this is a bizarre idea, the poetic overtones may point to the incongruity between the epic monster and Nemea’s pastoral world. In 516-7 below the serpent makes the landscape more epic.

complexibus: the ‘embraces’ may be inspired by Lucan, cf. 3.421 roboraque amplexos circum fluxisse dracones (sacred grove) and 9.363-4 serpens / robora complexus (garden of the Hesperides). Statius also has robora.
ornos: the conversation between Hypsipyle and Adrastus at the beginning of book 5 takes place antiqua ... forte sub orno (5.18) and Adrastus’ ominous arrow is aimed at an ornos as well (6.933) – one of the ash-trees not cut down for the pyre (6.101 ornique). The addition of forte in 5.18 suggests, at least to me, that the ash-tree is of some significance. Perhaps we are reminded of the Arcadian ornos giving birth to a puere in 4.281 feta uiridis puere excidit orno (the only other occurrence of ornos in the Thebaid).

516-7. saepe super fluvios geminae iacet aggere ripae / continuus, squamisque incisis adaestuat amnis: the snake lies stretched from one river bank to the other (cf. Waltz 1916: 141 ‘son corps s’étend d’une rive à l’autre’; Barth ad loc. quotes one of his doubtful vetera scholia, ‘extensus de ripa in ripam’). Its massive body forms a dam that breaks the current of the river. The splashing s’s and the vowels that oscillate between open a’s and closed i’s nicely give voice to the water.

Scholars have debated which river is meant. Some believe that Statius refers to the Inachus, since 1.355-7 could be taken to mean that the Inachus rises at Nemea; Brown (1994: 183 n. 81) believes that Statius refers to Langia (on Langia see Parkes on 4.782-5). In my view Statius simply refers to the ‘Nemea’ river, mentioned in 1.575 Nemeaei ad fluminis undam as the location of Psamathè’s rape; cf. Liv. 33.15.1 Androstenes [...] Corinno profectus ad Nemeam – amnis est Corinthium sicut Sicyonium interfluens agrum – castra locat.

The scene may recall the Argives plunging into Langia in 4.816-30. It also echoes 4.144 magnumque obiectus detinet amnem, where Hippomedon is compared to the centaur Hylaeus damming the current of the river Peneus with his bulk, a simile that clearly looks forward to Hippomedon’s fording the Asopus in 7.424-40 (which nods inter alia to Lucan’s account of Caesar crossing the Rubicon; see Smolenaars ad loc.) and his machē parapotamios in 9.225-569 (see Parkes on 4.143-4), where Ismenos’ waters are clogged with dead bodies (9.429-30). Barth notes the echo of 5.517 continuus in 9.430 (river Asopus) continuus telis; another verbal echo is 9.455-6 super ripas utroque extantior ibat / aggere. While the serpent will kill the child Opheltes, Hippomedon will kill the child Crenaeus. In a different way, Python also stops a river (see 7.349-50 suetus anhelam / ferre sitim Python annemque auertere ponto with Smolenaars’ note). Cf. also 7.749 medios intercipit amnes, where Amphiaras is compared to a fallen mountainside blocking a river. The connection of two river banks is also curiously reminiscent of S. 1.3, esp. S. 1.3.3 sociae com / ripae; where we also find, in a different way, the motif of ‘blocking’, cf. S. 1.3.25-6 alternas servuant praetoria ripae / non externa sibi fluuiumque obstare queruntur.

Since rivers are well-known poetic symbols (see Jones 2005), it is tempting to read the scene metapoetically. Newlands writes that ‘in the Thebaid water appears as a prime site of violation of sacred or protected space’ (2012: 52), with reference to the (epic) pollution of the (Callimachean) spring Langia (4.804-5.16) and Hippomedon’s transgressive fording of the river Asopus (7.424-40). The Nemean serpent, too, transgresses the river, both literally and metaphorically: the epic serpent (cf. §6.5) transforms the pastoral stream into a river in spate (symbolic of epic poetry; see e.g. Brown 1994: 19-20, McNelis 2007: 79, 135, Newlands 2012: 56 with n. 54, Callim. h.Ap. 105-12, Hor. Carm. 4.2.5-8). The correspondences with the deeds of Hippomedon (see above) support this reading. At the same time, the serpent blocking the current of the epic river may be related to the Nemean mora and the suspension of the epic narrative; the association of the epic’s teleological narrative with a river in spate appears from the simile in 3.671-6, where frustra prohibentibus ... obicipus clearly corresponds with Amphiaras’ attempts to delay the expedition against Thebes (cf. 3.643 furentibus obstat); see McNelis 2007: 79; cf. also the simile in 7.744-9, esp. aut uallem cauat aut medios intercipit amnes. Such an interpretation has precedents: in Aen. 11.297-9 ceu saxa morantur / cum rapidos amnis, fit clauso gurgite murmur / uitcinaeque fremunt ripae crepitantibus undis, the saxa correspond with Latinus and the rapidos amnis represent the ‘war and civil dissent’
(Horsfall *ad loc.*); and Ovid uses a river-simile to illustrate how the *moderamina* of Cadmus, Athamas and others only make Pentheus’ *rabies* worse (Ov. *Met.* 3.568-71).

In the Ovidian model the Theban serpent is compared to a river (*Met.* 3.79-80 *ceu concitus imbribus amnis / fertur*), but Statius’ bathing snake rather looks back to Vergil’s Calabrian water-snake (*Geo.* 3.428-31; Cazzaniga 1959: 127 n. 4 has noted the parallel):

```
qui, dum amnes ulli rumpuntur fontibus et dum
uere madent udo terrae ac pluuialibus Austris,
stagna colit ripisque habitans hic piscibus atram
improbus ingluuiem ranisque explet
```

which passage also underlies [Verg.] *Cul.* 165 *mersus ut in limo magno subsideret aestu* (see Seeltentag *ad loc.*). On the importance of the *Georgics* and *Culex* see §5.4.

The water splashing against the serpent’s scales might owe something to Valerius’ sea-monster (*Val.* 2.503-4 *pontus / prosequitur lateri adsultans*). The closest parallel is Sil. 6.164-5 *nondum etiam tot demersus corpor in annem / iam caput aduersae ponebat margine ripae* (cf. also 6.280-1 *longoque resoluens / aggere se ripae*); according to Lehanneur (1878: 263) Statius took his inspiration from Silinius, but the chronological relation between the two passages is problematic (see Soerink 2013: esp. 368-9 on these lines).

Perhaps Milton’s description of Satan in *Paradise Lost* 1.192-7 owes something to Statius:

```
Thus Satan talking to his nearest mate
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blazed, his other parts besides
Prone on the flood, extended long and large
Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size
```

**516 fluuios:** poets often prefer *amnis* or *flumen* over *fluuius*, but Vergil is rather fond of the word (see Axelson 1945: 126), and Statius follows suit.

**517. continuus:** ‘se in longitudinem pretendit’ (Barth *ad loc.*); ‘the effect of the adjective *continuus*, with the significant enjambment, is impossible to render in prose’ (Hutchinson 1993: 123). The serpent is so long that it spills over into the next line. Cf. perhaps Milton’s ‘extended long and large’ (see 516-7n.). Taisne (1972: 358) notes that the snake’s position contrasts with its usual twists and coils. Reading the serpent as symbol of epic poetry, one might connect *continuus* with Callimachus’ famous ἔν ἄσωμα δηρεξ (Aet. fr. 1.3 Harder).

**squamisque incisus:** ‘coupé par les écailles’ (Waltz 1916: 141); see OLD s.v. *incido* 5 ‘To break the continuity of’. *squamisque* echoes the description of Python (1.564), although scales are a traditional element in descriptions of monstrous snakes, e.g. *Geo.* 2.154 *squeueus*, [Verg.] *Aetna* 46 *squeueus ... serpens.*

**adaeestuat:** the verb, although easily understood, is attested nowhere else in extant Latin literature. We find many neologisms in Statius (pace Pollmann 2004: 49), although they are usually formed along conventional lines, more or less according to Horace’s guidelines (*Ars* 48-72; cf. Quint. 8.6.31): the neologism *fluctiuagus*, for instance, is not very startling after Lucretius’ *montiuagus* (Lucr. 1.405) and Catullus’ *memoriuagus* (Cat. 63.72) (see Dewar on 9.305). Statius is particularly fond of coining new compound verbs (e.g. 6.4 *praesudare*, 9.586 *desacrauerat*, 9.647 *inrubuit*), especially verbs with prefix *ad*–: Dewar on 9.686 *aduerberat* lists *aderro* (9.178, S. 2.2.120), *adnarror* (8.619) and *adstrido* (11.494), to which we may add *adfrango* (5.150, S. 5.1.36), *adgemo* (6.112, 11.247), *adnubilo* (S. 5.1.149), *aduerro* (4.203), *adsocio* (3.454) and *adsibilo* (5.578 where see note). Cf. also Vergil’s coinage *adlacrimo* (Aen. 10.628) with Harrison’s note.

Perhaps the verb puns on aestus in the sense ‘heat’; in 4.692 aestifer ... spumat canis (Sirius) Statius also seems to play with the double meaning of aestus. Possibly Statius took his inspiration from Sil. 6.162 (see Soerink 2013: 369).

518-28. The second half of the ecphrasis, introduced markedly with sed nunc, describes the serpent’s unusual behaviour now that it is tormented by heat and thirst. The model for this is the ferocious behaviour of the Calabrian chersydrus in Geo. 3.432-4 postquam exusta palus terraergue ardore dehiscent, / exilis in siccum, et flammantia lumina torquens / saeuit agris asperque siti atque exterritus aestu, in combination with Cul. 175-82 (see 5.505-33n. and §5.4). On the intratextual level, the raging serpent may recall ‘the rampaging of the drought-stricken horses’ (Parkes on 4.739-40 perfurit aruis / flammatum pecus).

That heat makes snakes more ferocious was a widely held belief; Taisne (1994: 332) compares Ap.Rh. 4.1541-5 and Luc. 9.729, to which we may add e.g. Aesch. Th. 381, Sal. Jug. 89.5 natura serpentium ipsa perniciosa siti magis quam alia re acceditur. Not accidentally the sun is at its zenith when Ovid’s Theban serpent appears (Met. 3.50); in the Culex the snake also appears immediately after noon (Cul. 101-3, 107). That relates to the Hellenistic tradition of noon as the time for divine epiphanies and danger (see Gow on Theocr. Id. 1.15, Nugent 1996: 59 n. 27, Parkes on 4.680-2). Statius also plays with these literary associations of noon: when the Argives meet Hysipyle, whom they mistake for an epiphanous goddess, the sun is at its zenith (4.680-2); and, as Parkes ad loc. observes, ‘the violence occurs in the form of the snake’s attack upon Opheltes’.

518-9. Ogygii iussis quando omnis anhelat / terra dei: Bacchus ordered the drought in Nemea to delay the expedition of the Seven against Thebes; cf. his speeches in 4.670-8 and 684-96, which the following lines repeatedly echo.

Ogygii: an elevated synonym for ‘Theban’, after the mythical king of Boeotia Ogyges (cf. Var. R. 3.1.2 uetustissimum oppidum cum sit traditum Graecum Boeotiae Thebae, quod rex Ogyges aedificavit). The adjective is common in Greek poetry about Thebes (e.g. Eur. Phoen. 1113 Ὀγγυα δ’ ἐς πνεύματα’ ἔπηνάν ἄναξ). In Latin it is first attested in Accius, later e.g. Ov. Her. 10.48 (see Töchterle on Sen. 1.82); it remains rare until Statius, who uses it 26 times in the Thebaid (Dewar on 9.812) and even coins Ogygidae for ‘Thebans’ (2.586). For its combination with Bacchus – who is Theban because of his mother Semele – cf. Ov. Her. 10.48 Ogygio ... deo (‘doubtless with Hellenistic precedent’ Knox ad loc.), Val. Arg. 2.623 Ogygii ... Bacchi, Sen. Oed. 437 Ogygio ... Iaccho and see Mulder on 2.85 Ogygii ... Iacchi. On the various alternatives for ‘Argive’ and ‘Theban’ in the Thebaid see 511n. Inachio and 647n. Dircaeo respectively.

anhelat: the verb and the corresponding adjective anhelus, favourite with Statius, originally denote hard breathing or panting, caused for example by exhaustion (cf. e.g. 10.686 cursus festinus anhelo) or thirst (cf. e.g. 3.329 anhela sitis). Here, with a slight personification, Statius uses the word to describe the cracking parched soil; cf. 4.109 anhelantes aegrescunt puluere ripae of the Achelous river, foreshadowing the Nemean drought (see Parkes ad loc.). The verb is often used in connection with heat and fire (see TLL s.v. 66.80-67.15 and cf. e.g. 4.470 ardor anhelat, Aen. 8.421 fornicatus ignis anhelat), to the extent that the original meaning is sometimes pushed to the background; cf. Laguna on S. 3.1.54 anhelantes ... agros ‘En Estacio anhelus / anhelans suele significar «tórrido, seco»’. Statius uses the word with considerable freedom; see Mulder on 2.76 anhelaum, Smolaenars on 7.325 ripis ... anhela, 7.473 anhelantum ... equorum (of the Sun). The word echoes 4.681 anhela dies (cf. Parkes ad loc.).
519. tepidaeque latent in puluere nymphae: the river nymphs, to whom Liber addressed his speech (4.684 agrestes, fluuiorum numina, nymphae), are now sweating and swimming in dust (not water), unable to refresh themselves in their streams – an amusing scene that contrasts with the preceding image of the bathing snake (cf. 513b-7n.). LP and Barth show little imagination when they simply explain nymphae as ‘streams’: the nymphae represent the streams of Nemea, but at the same time we are invited to visualise the nymphs hiding their beautiful bodies in dust; cf. 4.108-9 (with Parkes) and 4.697-8, where Statius also plays on the nymphs’ double nature, as does Ovid in Met. 13.689-90 (see Hopkinson ad loc.); another example is S. 1.3.37 emisses per cubilia nymphas, where strictly speaking the nymphas are ‘personified plumbing’ (Fantham 2009: 166), but at the same time the combination of bed-chambers and nymphs is playfully erotic. The same poem provides a nice parallel for the present scene, S. 1.3.45-6 uaporiferis iunctus fornacibus amnis / ridet anhelantes uicino flumine Nymphas.

Statius perhaps took the motif from Apollonius Rhodius: when the Argonauts approach the Hesperides, the nymphs ‘at once became dust and earth where they stood’ (Arg. 1408-9 ταί δ’ αἶψα κόνις καὶ γαῖα, κιόντων / ἐσσυμένως, ἐγένοντο καταυτόθι). Statius’ primary model, as Håkanson (1973: 34-5) points out, is Ovid’s Phaethon episode, esp. Met. 2.268-9 ipsum quoque Nerea fama est / Doridaque et natas tepidis latuisse sub antris. The burning heat of Phaethon’s sun-chariot is an important intertext also in book 4 (see Parkes on 4.705-10, 716-22, 844-6).

tepidae: with one exception (Fpc) the MSS read trepidae, which is accepted by the majority of editors; Kißel (2006: 216) and Fantham (2009: 182 n. 40) also opt for trepidae, the latter because she considers tepidae ‘too undramatic’. Admittedly, trepidae can be paralleled with Ach. 1.17-8 trepidum patere hoc sudare parumper / puluere (cf. also S. 1.1.73 lacu trepidans), but why should the nymphs be afraid? Are they afraid of the snake? Line 5.580 suggests otherwise. Barth ad loc. explains ‘quia mortem metuant’, but the nymphs are immortal and Bacchus has promised not to harm them (4.684-96). Traglia-Aricò (1980: 86) argues that ‘il fatto che “at 4,684-96 Bacchus is asking them in a friendly manner to do as he wants and promises the nymphs hiding their beautiful bodies in dust; cf. 4.108-9 (with Parkes) and 4.697-8, where Statius also plays on the nymphs’ double nature, as does Ovid in Met. 13.689-90 (see Hopkinson ad loc.); another example is S. 1.3.37 emisses per cubilia nymphas, where strictly speaking the nymphas are ‘personified plumbing’ (Fantham 2009: 166), but at the same time the combination of bed-chambers and nymphs is playfully erotic. The same poem provides a nice parallel for the present scene, S. 1.3.45-6 uaporiferis iunctus fornacibus amnis / ridet anhelantes uicino flumine Nymphas.

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Köstlin’s conjecture tepidae, supported by Fpc and accepted by SB and Håkanson (1973: 34-5), is more attractive. A strong argument in favour of tepidae is tepidis in the Ovidian intertext (see previous note); cf. also the dried-up streams in Geo. 4.427-8 caua flumina siccis / faucibus ad limum radii tepefacta coquebant (Vergil’s caua flumina recur in 5.523 uacuis fluuiorum in uallis, where see note). We may add that corruption into trepidae is not hard to imagine and attested elsewhere; see the examples listed by Hill on 12.413-4 trepido Phaētona sorores / fumantem lauere Pado, where the reading is equally controversial: Pollmann ad loc. (tepido) vs. Cowan 2007 (trepido). Finally we may point to the Silian parallel in Pun. 6.289 Naiadum, tepida quas Bagrada nutrit in unda, which tips the scales in favour of tepidae (regardless of the chronological relation between the two passages; see Soerink 2013).

The problem is reminiscent of 4.698 exaruit (SB, Hall, Parkes) vs. exhorruit, the reading of most MSS (Hill et alii). For much the same reasons I think that exaruit is to be preferred. See Parkes ad loc.

latent: punning on latex ‘water’. Nymphs are wont to hide themselves in their waters (e.g. Ov. Fast. 3.654 amne ... latens); now the Nemean nymphs must hide in dust. Servius on Aen. 1.686 and various grammarians after him connect latex and lateo; see Maltby 1991 s.v. latex

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582 According to Hall’s secondary app. crit. (vol. ii 522) Håkanson conjectured tepidoque, which he did not.
and cf. Liv. 44.33.2 occulti latices, Aen. 1.108 saxa latentia (rocks under the water surface), Luc. 4.293 occultos latices.

520. saeuior: the comparative marks the second stage of the serpent’s behaviour, after Geo. 3.434 saeuit agris and Cul. 175 acrior instat (see 518-28n.). The adjective saeuus suggests not only ferocity, but also destructiveness.

520-1. anfractus laterum sinuosa reterquens / terga solo: Deipser (1881: 12 and 27) seems to understand the phrase as a combination of Aen. 11.753 sinuosa uolumenta (‘de angue dictum’) and Aen. 8.460 terga reterquens; in any case, sinuus is a Vergilian coinage (Geo. 1.244 hic lexu sinuoso elabitur anguis). Steele sees influence of Cul. 167 squamosos late torquebat motibus orbis, 169 corpus revolubile uoluens, 195 horrida squamosi uoluentia terga draconis (see Güntschel 1972: 185 with n. 128); one could add Cul. 180 flexibus eueris torquentur corporis orbes. More parallels abound, e.g. Aen. 2.208 sinuataque immensa uolumenta terga, Ov. Met. 9.64 flexos sinuati corpus in orbes, [Verg.] Aetna 45-6 (Giants) ima per orbes / squameus intortos sinuat uestigia serpens, Germ. Arat. 49 (constellation Dragon; cf. 529-30n. below) inmanis serpens sinuosa uolumenta torquet, Man. 1.333 (constellation Serpens) sinuataque terga, 5.596 tortis ... orbibus. The parallels are so numerous, that it seems best to understand the sentence as an original cocktail of traditional ingredients.

The words anfractus and sinuus are often applied to snakes; they are so serpentine, that Valerius’ lines Alcides Telamonque comes dum litora blando / anfractu sinuosa legunt (2.451-2) seem to allude to the serpent that is about to appear. On Statius’ predilection for adjectives in –osus see Heuvel on 1.217 and Parkes on 4.45.

anfractus laterum: best taken as nomen actionis (OLD s.v. anfractus2 2b ‘A wheeling movement, turn, twist’) describing the movement that is characteristic of snakes. Cf. Val. 7.523 immensis recubantem anfractibus anguem. Cf. Barth ad loc. ‘reflexione, curvatura’. The genitive laterum goes with anfractus. Seelentag on [Verg.] Cul. 167 (quoted above) comments on such ‘pleonastischer Verstärkung von Verben durch ein Substantiv’. For the phrasing cf. 4.173 (Capaneus) laterum tractus, S. 1.129 (equestrian statue) laterum passus.

coccique nocens furit igne ueneni: a complicated phrase. The essential idea seems to be that the drought increases the snake’s venomousness (cf. Barth ad loc. ‘vim augente veneni aestu’; Waltz 1916: 141 ‘on croyait que le serpent altéré avait un venin plus dangereux’).

The difficulty of the expression hinges on igne, which does not refer to the heat, but to the serpent’s fire-like venom. As Sauvage (1975: 251) explains, ‘le venin est [...] assimilé à une sorte de feu interne’; cf. 9.748 sacri facies rubet igne ueneni (Parthenopaeus has killed Coroebus with a poisonous arrow), where the poison is also ‘seen as a kind of fire inflaming the blood’ (Dewar ad loc.); cf. also [Verg.] Dir. 23. The serpent is tormented not only from without by the heat, but also from within by its own ‘feu interne’, which may recall the Argives suffering from interior ... uis in 4.732-5 (cf. esp. 734-5 siccis cruer aeger adhaeret / uisceribus), inspired by the thirst-maddened Pompeians in Luc. 4.324-7 (see Parkes ad loc.); on fire imagery see §5.2.

The effect of the heat rather resides in sicci. As the H₂O evaporates, the venom perhaps becomes more concentrated, and the serpent more ferocious. Or the serpent may be losing its venom altogether (cf. Brouwer’s translation ‘snaknt naar zijn gif’); in Statius’ world, after all, snakes need water to produce venom, cf. 1.89-91, 4.53-8 and 11.95-6, where the serpentine tresses of the Furies ‘tank’ from the Cocytus and the Elisson.

nocens: the damage is explained in 525 radens and 527-8 below. Before the drought, however, the serpent also inflicted damage on its surroundings; see 514-5n.

522. stagna per arentesque lacus: i.e. pools and lakes that have dried up as a result of the scorching heat; arentes goes ἄπω κοννomega with both stagna and lacus. In real Nemea, this would not happen often (cf. Miller 2004: 19 ‘the bowl of the valley drains badly, and it is clear that it naturally becomes a swamp if left to its own devices’).
Waltz (1916: 141) points to the inversion 

\textit{stagna per = per stagna}, for which cf. 4.313 \textit{saxa per et plenis obstantia flumina ripis}, 9.552-3 \textit{clipeum per et aerea texta / loricae}, \textit{S.} 1.3.60 \textit{tecta per et postes}. This poetic syntax has precedents in Vergil, e.g. \textit{Geo.} 3.276 \textit{saxa per et scopulos}, \textit{Aen.} 5.663 (= \textit{Theb.} 5.404) \textit{transtra per et remos}. In all these cases the inversion of preposition and substantive is smoothed by the fact that the following word(s) belong to the same noun-phrase. Cf. the frequent placement of a preposition between substantive and adjective (e.g. 1.294 \textit{aera per liquidum}) or between substantive and genitive (e.g. \textit{Aen.} 6.58 \textit{corpus in Aeacidae}). On the background of this phenomenon see Penney (1999: 263-7). Cf. also the frequent postponement of connectives (e.g. 5.500 \textit{Lemnias et}) and conjunctions (e.g. 5.683 \textit{socii si}), a metrically convenient practice that can be traced back to the \textit{neoterici} (see Austin on \textit{Aen.} 4.33 \textit{Veneris nec praemia} with references).

\textbf{fontesque repressos}: i.e. springs that are suppressed, `refoulés sous la terre' (Waltz 1916: 141). The \textit{fontes} are still alive, but hidden in the earth, in conformity with Bacchus' request (4.692-3 \textit{ite volentes, / ite in operta soli}). Barth \textit{ad loc.} explains `non exsiccatos, fugerant enim in viscera telluris', rightly comparing \textit{Ov. Met.} 2.254-5 \textit{Nilus in extremum fugit perterritius orbem, / occulitique caput} (punning on the double sense of \textit{caput}); cf. also \textit{Sen. Thy.} 107-9 \textit{cernis ut fontis liquor / introrsus actus linquat, ut ripae uacent / uentusque rara}. It is echoed in 6.248 (Archemorus' tomb).

\textbf{uacuis fluviorum in uallibus}: recalling Bacchus' speech, 4.701 \textit{caua ... flumina} (after \textit{Geo.} 4.427 \textit{caua flumina}; cf. 519n. \textit{tepidae}) and 4.707 \textit{desertae gurgite ualles}; cf. also 1.358 \textit{calcandaque flumina} (discussed in §4.2). Two interpretations, not mutually exclusive, are possible: (a) the river valley is empty because the river has disappeared; (b) the river bed itself has become like a valley now that its water is gone. Barth \textit{ad loc.} mentions both, attributing (b) to his enigmatic \textit{vetera scholia}: `Valles enim ab aestu erant spoliatae fluminibus. V.S. intelligit alveos fluviorum'. Note the alliteration. The Nemean valley is mentioned in \textit{Pind. N.} 3.18 \textit{βαθυπεδος Ναμιχ}. See also 516n. \textit{fluuios}.  

\textbf{errat}: `roams' or `wanders', but the verb also suggests that the serpent has lost its way in its very own environment. Parkes on 4.647 \textit{uaga legiones} claims that `[w]ords for wandering proliferate in the Nemean episode' (cf. 4.747 \textit{errantes}, 687 \textit{errantes ... riuos}, 800 \textit{inerrat}, 5.588 \textit{pererratis ... campis}, 604 \textit{errantes ... plumae}), which she connects with the programmatic characterisation of the episode as \textit{medius error} (4.650). However, \textit{error} (12×) and \textit{errare} (28×) are equally frequent in the rest of the \textit{Thebaid}.

\textbf{incertusque sui}: `uncertain of itself', an arresting phrase, for which the closest parallel (noted by SB \textit{ad loc.}) is \textit{Sen. Her.F.} 183-4 \textit{gens hominum fertur rapidis / obuita fatis incerta sui}, which is equally problematic itself. Fitch \textit{ad loc.} proposes two interpretations: `people are unsure of themselves, that is of their nature and their true good [...] Alternatively, the phrase may simply indicate the spiritual condition in which the majority live'. Two interpretations have been proposed: (a) Klotz \textit{ad loc.} interpret `mentis non compos': heat and thirst have induced the snake to madness (cf. 521 \textit{furit}). (b) Most attractive is \textit{LP}, quoted in approval by Hill \textit{ad loc.}, `id est de uita desperans uel quid agat ignarus aut quo tendat': the serpent, tormented by thirst, despairs of his life and does not know what to do. The closest parallel within the \textit{Thebaid} also points in that direction: 3.444 \textit{incertusque anini}, indicating Adrastus' indecisiveness. Schrader's \textit{incensus siti} (Garrod, Hall) is ingenious, but there is no
need for conjecture (cf. Williams on 10.670 certa tui, which has also been subject to unnecessary conjecture), although siti, echoing Geo. 3.434, would again link the serpent with Vergil’s Calabrian chersydus (cf. 505-33n.).

524-5. nunc ... nunc: mirroring nunc ... nunc (513-4) in the description of the serpent’s normal behaviour. Note the contrast between ‘vertical’ (525 ore supinato) and ‘horizontal’ (526 pronus).

liquidum nunc aëra lambit: in its desire to find moisture, the serpent even takes to the air. Statius takes his inspiration from Lucan’s thirst-maddened Pompeians, Luc. 4.329-31 pandunt ora tamen nociturnunque aëra captant ... et siccis uolto in nubibus haerent, which in turn looks back to Ovid’s description of the plague, Met. 7.556-7 tepidisque arentia uentis / ora patent, aurauque graues captantur hiattu. Intratextually, the serpent’s desperate gesture recalls the panting horses in 4.737-8 siccis inlidunt ora lapatis, / ora catenatas procul exsertantia linguas, as Parkes ad loc. notes. Silius’ Bagrada serpent shows similar behaviour, cf. 6.222-3 trifido uibrata per auras / lingua micat motu atque assultans aethera lambit (Lehanneur 1878: 263), but the relationship between the two passage is unclear (see Soerink 2013).

At the same time, it seems, Statius plays with the traditional motif of monsters attacking the air instead of their intended victims; cf. Callim. Hec. fr. 165 inc. auct. Hollis (= fr. 732 Prf.) πολλὰ μάτη τεράτων ἥματα μάτη ἥματα (Marathonian bull?), Cat. 64.111 (Minotaur) neque quam uani iactantia cornua uentis, Ov. Met. 7.786 (Cephalus’ dog) uanos exercet in aera morsus, Man. 5.601-2 (sea-monster fighting against Perseus) saeuit in auras / morsibus et uani crepitant sine uuthere dentes, Val. 7.528 (serpent) uacuo furit ore per auras. Luc. 2.181-2 exactaque lingua / palpitat et mutto uacuum ferit aera motu is a macabre variation.

For liquidus applied to air cf. S. 1.3.60 (tree) liquidas emergis in auras, Geo. 1.404 liquido ... in aëre, Hor. Carm. 2.20.2 per liquidum aethera (with N-H’s note). It is first attested in Enn. sat. 4 liquidus ... aetheris oras. Lucretius distinguishes between aer and aether, the latter being ‘most light and fluid’ (5.500-1 liquidissimus aether / atque leuissimus), to which Ovid looks back in Met. 1.23 et liquidum spisso secreuit ab aëre caelum. Applied to air, liquidus conveys clarity, absence of clouds (cf. Sil. 4.103 liquida, non uillis nubibus, aethra); thus it is is more or less synonymous with serenus, cf. e.g. Luc. 1.58-9 pars aetheris illa sereni / tota uacet, nullaeque obstent a Caesare nubes.

Since the adjective is usually applied to water, however, Statius’ liquidum is extremely ironic: the serpent hopes to find moisture which is not there (cf. 526-7), not unlike the disappointed animals in 4.703-4 deceptum margine ripae / stat pecus atque amnes quareunt armenta natatos. Brouwer makes this explicit in his translation ‘likt aan elk zweempje / vocht in de lucht’. Vergil similarly exploits the watery associations of liquidus in Aen. 7.65 liquidum trans aethera uectae, where it denotes ‘clear’ air but also alludes to the Trojans’ sea-voyage (Horsfall ad loc.), and in Geo. 4.59 nare per aëstatem liquidam, where ‘liquidam contributes to the image of nare’ (Thomas ad loc.). This may be reinforced by Greek ιργός, cf. Pind. N. 8.41 ιργόν αἰθέρα, Eur. Iol 796 ιργόν ... αἰθέρα, Callim. Aetia fr. 110.13 δι’ ήματα δ’ ιργον ἐνείκας (with Harder). There is a similar irony in 4.734 gelant uenae, where ‘gelant is a paradoxically cool word to apply to the effects of sun’ (see Parkes ad loc.). On a metaphorical level, one might discern an ironic allusion to Callim. Aet. fr. 1.33-4 Harder ἀ πάντως, ἢν γάρ τις ἢν δρόσου ἢν μὲν ἄειδον / πρώκιον ἢν δῆς ἡμέρας οἴδαμ ἤδων (‘oh, in all respects, in order that, as to old and as to dew, I may sing linke the second – eating the free food from the divine sky’), in which case the epic serpent would show Callimachean behaviour (cf. 515n. tenuat).

ore supinato: the gesture is reminiscent of visual representations of monstrous snakes (cf. App. B), which often raise their heads; cf. also Aen. 5.277-8 sibila colla / arduus attollens, Ov. Met. 3.43-4 leuis erectus in auras / despicit omne nemus, Luc. 4.726 caput uanas serpentis in auras, Sil. 6.186 extulit assurgens caput. Statius is fond of the verb supinare (see Smolenaars on 7.346-7).
525-6. nunc arua gementia radens / pronus adhaeret humo: according to Cazzaniga (1959: 125) *pronus adhaeret humo* is based on Nic. Ther. 296 γαίη ἐπιθλῆνον γηδόν (‘scrapping its belly over the earth’) and *arua gementia radens* on Ther. 297 ὑποφορόμενα καλάμης χωτίν οία διάφησι (‘as though crawling through a heap of straw’). Aricò (1963: 120) denies influence of Nicander, pointing to the Ovidian model: Met. 3.75 terraque rasa sonat squamis, a parallel already noted by Deipser (1881: 26). Clearly Statius’ *radens* reworks Ovid’s *rasa* (which proves wrong *roden*, the reading of three minor MSS and Heinius, adopted by Hall). The motif itself, however, may well be Hellenistic; cf. also Theocr. 24.17-8 (Hera’s serpents) τῶ δ’ ἐξαίλισσάντες ἐπὶ χόνι γαστέρας ἄμω / αἰμβόρουσαν ἐκύλιον. Another noteworthy parallel is Ov. Met. 1.459 (Python) *pestiferou iugera uentre prementem*, which intertextually links the Nemean serpent and Python in the story of Linus and Coroebus (cf. §3).

Statius’ *gamentia*, inspired by Ovid’s *sonat*, is best understood proleptically: the sound is caused by the snake’s movement. Alternatively, one could see a slight personification of nature (cf. 514n. *miserae*) and imagine the earth groaning as she is being scraped by the monster’s scales; cf. 6.107 *dat gemitum tellus*, where the earth groans as the Argives hew down the *nemus*, and 6.527 *dat gemitum tellus*, where Amphithaurus’ chariot scoops up the sand; cf. also Pollmann on 12.656. Barth *ad loc.* notes ‘ob aestum et pondus serpentis’, also connecting *gamentia* with the drought (cf. 518-9 *omnis anhelat / terra*). For groaning under weight cf. S. 1.156-7 *pondere tanto / subter anhelat humus* and famously Aen. 6.413 (Chiron’s vessel) *genuit sub pondere*.

The serpent’s behaviour recalls Opheltes crawling in the meadow (cf. 4.794 *faciles sternit procursibus herbas*, 5.612n. *prono uexantem graamina cursu*), while the vocabulary also recalls the description of Opheltes falling asleep (*humo* and *haeret* in 5.503-4; cf. 527n. *herbae* below). The allusions also prepare for the following scene, which will describe the death of Opheltes. The serpent and its victim are linked several times (cf. §6.5 and 536n. *iaces* and *sacer*, 581n. *restatus*). The word *adhaeret* may also recall the Argives’ suffering from thirst (cf. 4.734).

526-7. *si quid uiridantia sudent / gramina*: the serpent hopes to find grass that still contains some moisture (cf. 524n. *liquidum*); its hope, of course, is vain. The image seems inspired by Lucan’s thirst-maddened Pompeians, cf. Luc. 4.316-8 *tunc herbas frondesque terunt et rore madentes / destringunt ramos et si quos palmite crudo / arboris aut tenera suco pressere medulla*, which we also find *sudantia* (4.301). The combination *uiridantia gramina* is taken from [Verg.] *Cul.* 50, where the goats *tondebant tenero uiridantia gramina morso* (Deipser 1881: 21 notes the parallel). Güntzschel (1972: 184-5 n. 127) notes that ‘diese Wortverbindung mit dem nicht häufigen *uiridare [uiridans]* ist anscheinend nur an diesen beiden Stellen belegt’. For botanic ‘sweating’ cf. Catul. 64.106 *conigeram sudanti cortice pinum, Ecl. 8.54 pinguia corticibus sudent electra myricae, Sen. Nat. 2.26.2.

For *si see OLD 11, K-St. ii.425-6 ‘si c. coni. abhängig von den Verben des Versuchens und Erwartens’. As elsewhere, the purpose of expectation is implicit in the preceding clause. The construction is not unusual in epic, cf. 4.367 (with Parkes), 741, 782, Enn. Ann. 334 *expectans si mussaret* ‘to see if it would grumble’), Aen. 1.181-2, 6.78.

527-8. *percussae calidis adflatibus herbae, / qua tulit ora, cadunt*: the serpent’s pensive hot breath scorches the grass – *herbae* ominously recalling the grass where Opheltes has fallen asleep (504 *herba*). The element is again taken from the Ovidian model (Met. 3.49 *necat adflatu funesti tabe uenenii*, cf. also 3.75-6 *halitus exit / ore niger Stygio, uitiatas infect auturas*), which furnishes the rare word *adflatus*. On this poetic word, first attested in Ovid, see Mulder on 2.57 and cf. Val. Max. 1.8 ext. 19 (Bagrada serpent) *corporisque iacentis pestiferou adflatu*, Sil. 6.159 *tabe afflatus* (also inspired by Ovid; see Soerink 2013: 368). Cazzaniga sees influence of Nic. Ther. 297 (see 525-6n.), Statius’ *qua tulit ora* reworking Nicander’s *oia diágreti* (for the expression *ora ferre* cf. 1.641, Val. 1.263 *fert comminus ora*, 5.417 *ad geminas*.
fert ora fores). Cf. also Cul. 166 grauis aere (Seelentag ad loc. interprets ‘pestilens spiritu’; the text is problematic), which according to Pléstant ad loc. Statius ‘semble paraphraser’.

Pernicious breath is a traditional feature of literary snakes, cf. e.g. 3.290 (Harmonia after her metamorphosis) reptat et Illyricas deiectat vitrus in herbas, Nic. Ther. 371, Aen. 7.753 grauerter spirantibus hydris, Hor. Sat. 2.8.94-5, Luc. 9.679-80. Romans really believed that serpentine breath was harmful, cf. Col. 8.5.18 cauendum ne a serpentibus adflentur, quorum odor tam pestilens est, ut interimatur uniuersos, Plin. Nat. 8.78 necat frutices, non contactos modo, uerum et adflatos, exurit herbas, rumpit saxa. The adjective calidis (‘hot’) alludes to the serpent’s venom, which is assimilated to fire (see 521n.). At the same time, it aligns the Nemean serpent with monsters that breathe real fire, such as Chimaera (Lucr. 2.705 flammam taetrio spirantis ore Chimaeras; cf. Aen. 7.785-6) and Cacus (Aen. 8.199 ore uomens ignis, 304 spirantem ignibus); the finest parallel is Ovid’s Calydonian boar, whose breath also scorches its green surroundings (Met. 8.289 frordes aflatibus ardent). As Hollis ad loc. notes, fiery breath is a sign of ‘supernatural origin’; cf. e.g. Diomedes’ or Latinus’ semi-divine horses (Lucr. 5.30 = Aen. 7.281 spirantis naris ignem) or the fire-breathing bulls of Aeetes in Ov. Met. 7.105 or Ap.Rh. 3.496. Cf. also the serpent exhaling smoke on the Sotades cup (see App. B a).

528. moriturque ad sibila campus: repeating the preceding clause in different words, a feature of Vergilian style (see Gransden 1976: 47 on ‘theme and variation’). Barth ad loc. compliments Statius with the phrasing (‘pulcerrime ... dicit’), but Legras (1905: 320) criticises Statius for taking liberties with the preposition ad. For Statius’ use of ad in the sense ‘in reaction to’ see Fortgens on 6.161 blandus ad illam, Augustakis 2010: 53 with n. 51. On Statius’ somewhat free use of prepositions see Lehanneur 1878: 70-1; on poetic usage of prepositions in general Maurach 1995: 44-7. For the phrasing cf. also S. 3.3.128 pubentesque rosae primos moriuntur ad austros. The word campus rings with campis (505) at the beginning of the passage, while moritur mirrors exoritur (506).

529-33. The description of the serpent is rounded off by two similes, two and three lines respectively. As elsewhere in the Thebaid, they function as closural device to mark the end of the passage (see Smolenaars on 7.86-9, 791-3; cf. Zissos on Val. 1.682-92). The similes also constitute a suspension of the narrative, which heightens the tension at a critical moment. The similes emphasise the serpent’s giant proportions (cf. Hutchinson 1993: 123 ‘two extreme similes of size’; Taisne 1994: 332 ‘une double comparaison [...] renchérit sur sa taille immense”), but the celestial constellation and the primordial monster also suggest that the Nemean serpent, too, is a creature of cosmic importance (cf. Genovese 1983: 145 on Ovid’s celestial simile in Met. 3.44-5); Statius often uses similes to suggest cosmic ramifications (see Lovatt 2005: 34-5). The second simile also calls attention to the intratextual correspondences with the story of Linus and Coroebus in book 1 (see §3), and prepares for the allusion to Ov. Met. 1.456 in line 534 (where see note).

The similes are anaphorically by quantus. These correlatives do not correspond with an explicit tantus. Müller transposed 529-33 after 507 to make quantus correspond with immemani sese, for which there is no need. Vergil has a triple quantus simile without tantus (Aen. 12.701-3). Cf. 599-604n.

Fraenkel (1957: 427-8) notices that ‘the duplicating of similes in parallel sentences or clauses was employed by several Augustan poets as a means of stressing the importance of a passage by adding to its stylistic weight’ (e.g. Aen. 4.469-73, Prop. 1.3.1-6). Multiple similes are used in epic from Homer onwards (e.g. II. 2.455-83, Ap.Rh. 4.1298ff;); they are particularly frequent in Ovid (e.g. Met. 4.331-3, 11.24-7); a famous double simile in Vergil is Aen. 6.309-12 (the second simile longer than the first, as here). Gärtner (1994: 312) stresses
that ‘Wie bei Valerius Flaccus tritt [die Häufung von Gleichnissen] in der Thebais nicht willkürlich auf, sondern in Momenten großer Bewegtheit’.


529-30. In the Ovidian model, the Theban serpent is compared to the constellation *Draco*, which snakes its way between the two Bears in the northern hemisphere: *Met.* 3.44-5 *tantoque est corpore, quanto, si totum spectes, geminas qui separat Arctos*. Ovid’s simile looks back to Arat. *Phaen.* 45-8 τὰς δὲ δ’ ἀμφότερα ὁνὴ ποταμοῦ ἀπαρχαῖ / εἰλιτάτη μέγα ῥαῖμα, *Δράκων*, περὶ τ’ ἀμφὶ τ’ ἐαγώς / μυρίος; αἱ δ’ ἀφα ὁ σπάργες ἑκάτερδε φέρονται / Ἀρκτοι, κακαίοι πεφυλαγμέναι ώκεανοῖ, a famous passage, translated by Cicero and Germanicus (Cic. fr. 8.1-3 *has inter, ueluti rapido cum gurgite flumen, / toruu’ δρακo serpit super superaque reuoluens / sese conficiensque sinus e corpore flexos*, Germ. 48-50 *has inter medias abrupti fluminis instar / inmanis serpens sinuosa uolumina torquet / hinc atque hinc superataque illas mirabile monstrum*; see Possanza 2004: 146-56), imitated by Vergil (*Geo.* 1.244-6 *maximus hic flexu sinuoso elabitur Anguis* / *circum perque duas in morem fluminis Arctos*, / *Arctos Oceani metuentes aequore tingui*, alluded to by Ovid (*Met.* 2.172-3 *et uetito frustra temptarunt aequore tingui*, / *quaque polo posita est glaciali proxima Serpens*); cf. also Vitr. 9.4.6, Man. 1.306-8 *has inter ... diuidit ... Anguis* and 5.19 *illinc per geminas Anguis qui labitur Arctos*, *Sen. Th.* 869-72, *Val. Arg.* 2.64-5 and 6.40, *Sil.* 3.192-3.

In imitation of Ovid, Statius also has a celestial simile (Lehanneur 1878: 249 and Mozley 1933: 34 note the parallel); Hutchinson (1993: 123) mentions *Sil.* 6.181-4 as possible model, but the relation between the two passages is most problematic (see Soerink 2013: esp. 370). However, Statius does not simply reproduce Ovid’s simile. In the first place, Statius’ constellation is called *Anguis* (5.530), not *Draco*. One could maintain that *Anguis* is simply another name for the same constellation: in the passages quoted above both *Anguis* (Vergil and Manilius) and *Serpens* (Ovid) are used with reference to the constellation *Draco* (so Tragliaria-Aricò *ad loc.* ‘la constellazione del Drago detto anche *Anguis o Serpens*, Ross *ad loc.* ‘Statius refers to the large constellation *Draco*, Fröhlich 2000: 175 n. 10 ‘Sternbild Δράκων’). However, we should bear in mind that there are, in fact, three different serpentine constellations: Dragon, Serpent, and Hydra (for an instructive celestial map see Goold 1977). Secondly, if we read carefully, it appears that actually Statius’ *Anguis* does not separate the two Bears, but the sky (5.529 *discriminat aethera*)! Admittedly, the language echoes Ovid’s *geminas qui separat Arctos*, but that does not necessarily mean that Statius has the same image in mind. Finally, Statius’ *Anguis* extends into the southern hemisphere (5.530 *usque Notos alienumque exit in orbem*; cf. Waltz 1916: 141-2 ‘jusqu’à la partie méridionale du ciel, région qui n’est pas la sienne’), something which *Draco* certainly does not: like the two Bears, the Dragon never sets in northern latitudes (cf. *Val.* 2.64-5 *uetitus qui numquam conditus undis / axe nitet Serpens* with Poortvliet’s note, Smolenaars on 7.8-9).

According to Joseph Scaliger in his commentary on Manilius (1579), Statius here confuses the constellation Dragon with the constellation Hydra. I quote Barth (on 5.529): ‘Errorem Papinio adnotat Scaliger, Commentario Maniliano, Libro V. Statius, inquit, *pueriliter Anguem Ursarum cum Hydra confundit, V. Thebaidos. Quantus ab Arctois etc. Nam Anguis Ursarum non exit in Notum, neque in alienum orbe, id est Notium, quem Manilius vocat peregrinum Orbeum. Quiquid hujus sit, illud pueriliter non admittamus. Poetarum enim est praeterpropter loqui, nec nimiris accurate vel de siderum situ vaticinari. Reliquam rem, non excutimus; sunt enim odiosae magnorum hominum exagitationes.’ Barth bravely defends Statius, but he makes no attempt to defend Statius’ astronomical knowledge. Müller (see Hill *ad loc.*) and Mozley (1933: 34) follow suit: ‘Statius elaborates [on Ovid], but thereby falls into an astro-
nomical error, confusing Hydra and Serpens’. Joyce (2008: on 529-30n.) notes in her translation: ‘The constellation Draco winds between the two Bears in the northern hemisphere but does not extend into the south; there, the serpentine star groups are Serpens and Hydra, neither of which reaches into the north; Statius has conjoined or confused two of these’.

Personally, I refuse to believe that Statius has confused the constellations (cf. Parkes on 4.691-2). Leaving aside the consideration that all Romans, living in a world without light pollution, were ipso facto familiar with the nocturnal sky, I am convinced that our poeta doctus knew his constellations from Aratus’ Phaenomena, which was immensely popular in Rome and translated into Latin more than once. There seem to be three scenarios:

(1) Statius’ Anguis is to be identified with Draco. This interpretation gains credibility from Vergil, who renders Aratus’ Δᾶκρον as Anguis (Geo. 1.244 quoted above) and the Ovidian model (Met. 3.44-5). In that case Statius has not fallen into an astronomical error, but consciously blown up the constellation, making it divide not only the two Bears, but the whole sky, even extending into the southern hemisphere. It crossed my mind that both Ursa Minor and Ursa Maior count seven stars (cf. e.g. Man. 294-5, 620-1, Sen. Herc.F. 130, Tr. 438 with Keulen’s note, Val. 2.65 axe nitet serpens septenosque implicat ignes with Poortvliet’s note): would it be possible to read the two bears as symbolic representatives of Argos and Thebes, with the Nemean monster in between?

(2) Statius has deliberately conflated two constellations Draco and Hydra (cf. Joyce’s ‘conjoined’): Draco is between the two Bears, while Hydra does indeed extend into the southern hemisphere (Man. 1.415 uses Anguis with reference to the constellation Hydra). In that case Statius creates a celestial snake of unprecedented length. Brown (1994: 148) even thinks that ‘Statius has actually conflated three serpentine constellations, Draco, Hydra and Serpens’.

(3) The third possibility, I would like to suggest, is that the Ovidian intertext and Statius’ mention of the two Bears is misleading and has led critics astray. Joyce and others start from the assumption that Statius, like Ovid, compares his serpent to the constellation Draco. At close reading, however, it appears that Statius’ constellation does not wind between Ursa Maior and Ursa Minor, but away from the Bears (5.529 ab Arctois ... plaustris), that is, away from the north, into the southern hemisphere. His Anguis, then, like Anguis in Man. 1.415, then, may simply refer to the constellation Hydra, not Dragon.

The idea of the constellation separating the sky might be inspired by the equinoctial and solstitial colures (imaginary lines connecting the two poles), partly because these lines, too, combine the northern and southern hemisphere, partly because they run through several serpentine constellations (cf. Man. 1.603-30).

Arctois ... Plaustrum: a mannered combination of Ἀρκτος (= Ursa ‘Bear’)583 and Plaustrum (= Ἀμαξα ‘Wain’), two different names, one Greek one Latin, for the same constellation. Both names are ancient, cf. Od. 5.273 Ἀρκτον δ’, ἤν καὶ Ἀμαξαν ἐπύλησιν καλλίστωσιν, Germ. Arat. 24-7 Axem Cretaeae dextra laeuaque tuentur / siue Arctoe seu Romani cognominis Ursae / Plaustraue, quae facies stellarum proxima uero: / tres temone rotis que micant sublime quaternae. In Latin, celestial Plaustrum is first attested in Prop. 3.5.35; in 1.692 (quoted below; cf. 1.371 with Heuvel’s note) Statius has Temo as a metonym for Plaustrum (cf. Keulen on Sen. Tr. 439 iugum). The adjective Arctous, not attested before Seneca, is popular with Silver Latin poets (see Ferri on [Sen.] Oct. 233-4), in Statius e.g. 1.18 Arctoos ... triumphos, 7.35 Arctae ... portae. For conflation of the two images, bear and wain, cf. 1.692-3 sed iam temone supino / languet Hyperboreae glacialis portitor Vrsae, 3.684-5 sola superstite Plaustro / Arctos ad Oceanum fugientibus inuidet astris, and Fitch on Sen. Her.F. 131 uerso temone.

583 Pollmann on 12.653 mistakes Arctos for a plural; it is of course Ἀρκτος.
**discriminat ... Anguis:** Van den Broek (2007: 60) detects an allusion to the description of Poine, 1.600 *frontem discriminat anguis*. On the correspondences between the Opheltes episode and Adrastus’ story of Linus and Coroebus see §3.

**alienumque exit in or eben:** *orbem* does not, as one might expect in this serpentine context, refer to the serpent’s coils (cf. 514, 1.563), but to the southern hemisphere; see *OLD* s.v. *orbis* 9e and cf. e.g. Man. 1.454 *hunc orbem caeli*. Barth *ad loc.* notes the close parallel in 2.138-9 *alienumque aethera tardo / Lucifer exit equo*; cf. also 6.363-4 *imane tellus / an media et rursus mundo succincta latenti*, where *mundo ... latenti* indicates the invisible southern hemisphere (LP *ad loc.* “‘latentem mundum’ antipodas dicit’; see Pavan *ad loc.*. Cameron 2004: 313).

531-3. The second simile ‘plainly recalls and develops’ (Hutchinson 1993: 123 n. 24) the description of Python in Adrastus’ narrative (1.562-9), itself modelled on Ov. *Met.* 1.438-44, which is also echoed here; the simile esp. reworks 1.563-5 *Pythona ... septem orbibus abris / amplexum Delphos squamisque annosa terentem / robora* and 567 *absumptis numerosa in uulnera telis*. This is the culmination of Statius’ intratextual allusions to Python in his description of the Nemean serpent, which invites readers to connect the story of Linus and Coroebus and the story of Opheltes (see §3). As an aetiological story of games (the Pythia; cf. 6.8-9), the simile may also look forward to the foundation of the Nemean Games. In book 6 the god makes his killing of Python the subject of his song (6.358-9 *suique / anguis opus*) and looks down *Parnassi summo... ab aethere* to the earth (6.357). Cf. also 4.352-3 *quas / hic deus innumera laxaut caede pharetras*. Cazzaniga (1959: 125-6) sees influence of Callim. *Hymn* 4.92-4 *αλλ’ έτι κεών / Ζηρίδων αιγογένιν ἀπό Πλειστῶν καθέδρων / Παρνηθίων νίψεντα πηριστέφει έννεα κύκλως*. Bending our minds to Ovid’s Python (*Met.* 1.146-51), the simile also prepares the allusion to Ov. *Met.* 1.156 in 534 below.

**quantus et ille:** *ille* points back intratextually to Adrastus’ description of Python in 1.562-9. For postposition of *et* see Van Dam’s extensive note on S. 2.2.81-2 and Williams (Oxford ed.) on *Aen.* 5.5.

**spiris:** dative of the agent with *intorta*. Gr. *σπίρα*, often applied to snakes, e.g. Theocr. *Id.* 24.14, 30, Eur. *Ion* (Cecrops) *σπίδασιν ειλόσοντι*, Aen. 12.848 *serpentum spiris* (Jupiter’s Dirae). It varies 1.563 *septem orbibus abris*. In book 6 Statius describes Python’s coils as 6.8 *uipeore ... nemu*.

**intorta:** passive participle of *intorqueo*. It suggests violence, but the word also sits nicely with *cornua* (Columella applies *intortus* ‘twisted, crooked’ to a bull’s horns in *Columella, 7.3.3 intortis cornibus*).

**sacri ... cornua Parnasi:** for the traditional twin peaks of Mt Parnassus cf. 1.62 *bicorni ... iugo*. 1.628-9 *biuerticis ... Parnasi* (Apollo sending the plague), Soph. *Ant.* 1126, Eur. *Phoen.* 227 *δικόρυφον, Ion 1126-7 πόταρα ... δισάρας, Ov. Met. 1.316-7 uerticibus ... duobus*, Sen. *Oed.* 281 *biceps, Luc.* 5.72 *geminoc ... cole*, Dante *Paradiso* 1.16-8, Smolenaaars on 7.346-7. In reality, Mt Parnassus has many peaks of more or less equal height; it is probably the so-called Phaedriades, seen from Delphi, that gave rise to the idea of ‘twin-peaked’ Parnassus (Mastronarde on Eur. *Phoen.* 226-8).

The daring word *cornua* is taken from [Verg.]*Cul.* 15.6-6 *seu qua Parnasia rupes / hinc atque hinc patula praepandit cornua fronte*. Other instances of *cornu* applied to a mountain top are extremely rare; in addition to the aforementioned loci *TLL* s.v. *cornu* 971.34-41 gives *Acc. trag.* 660 *hinc *topocolomenate* geminis aptum cornibus* (Parnassus?), Val. 4.96 *Eoi cornua montis* (Taurus?), Claud. *Carm.* min. 2.3. Greek *κέφας* applied to a mountain peak (*LSJ* s.v. *V.6*) is equally rare; cf. Xen. *An.* 5.6.7 *τό κέφας του ὄψως and perhaps h.Hom. 1.8 (varia lectio). It may be no coincidence that the word *cornua* also occurs immediately after Apollo’s slaying of Python in Ovid (*Met.* 1.455), with reference to Cupid’s bow (cf. 534n.).
**tibi:** dative of the agent with the passive participle *fixus.*

**Delie:** i.e. Apollo, to whom Latona gave birth on the island of Delos (see Ov. *Met.* 6.183 ff.). Apollo is often referred to as *Delius* in Ovid (see Anderson on *Met.* 1.454), possibly with Callimachean associations (cf. Heerink 2009: 306). In Statius cf. 1.573-4 *Delia ... furta, 628, 7.753, Ach. 1.487.* Not accidentally, Apollo is also called *Delius* immediately after Apollo’s slaying of Python in Ovid (*Met.* 1.454).

**533. uexit:** echoes 507 *uehit,* creating ring composition (cf. 527-8nn.).

**harundineam ... siluam:** ‘une forêt de flèches’ (Waltz 1916: 141). *harundo* (‘reed’) is often used for ‘arrow’ (see *OLD* s.v. 4), in Statius e.g. 4.269 and 6.946 (Adrastus’ ominous arrow). Ironically the snake that used to damage the forest (1.564-5 *terentem / roborata*) is laid low by a ‘forest’ himself. For the metaphor (cluster of spears/arrow = forest) cf. 4.220-1 *ferrea ... silua, 8.704-5 densis iam consitus hastis / ferratum quait unbo nemus* (Tydeus’ shield), Luc. 6.205 *densamque in pectore siluam* (Scaeva), Sil. 4.619 (Lehanneur 1878: 263), all inspired ultimately by Aeneas’ shield in *Aen.* 10.887 *immanem aerato circumfert tegmine siluam* (Deipser 1881: 16). On the wide semantic scope of *silua* see Brown 1994: 22 n. 117. The actual words, however, are borrowed from *Aen.* 10.709-10 *silua ... harundinea,* where they do refer to proper reed (as at 6.274 *harundineae ... ripae,* the second occurrence of the word in Statius). The adjective *harundineus* is a Vergilian coinage (see Harrison on *Aen.* 10.710). Cf. also 1.711-2 *te uiridis Python Thebanaque mater ouantem / horruit in pharetris,* 6.9 *Apollineae bellum puerile pharetrae.*

**centeno uulnere:** echoing Adrastus’ description of Python (1.567 *numerosa in uulnera*), where we also find the number 100, as the monster occupies 100 acres of land (1.568 *centum per tugera*). Statius’ Apollo playfully improves on Ovid’s Apollo, who needed not a hundred, but a thousand arrows to kill Python (*Met.* 1.443 *mille ... telis*; cf. 1.460 *innumeris ... sagittis*).

534-43. The death of Opheltes

‘Da bricht Statius plötzlich ab,’ Von Moisy writes, ‘um mit einer Anrede an den Knaben neu einzusetzen’ (1971: 28). In fact, Statius does not break off abruptly: the description of the serpent ends markedly with a double simile (529-33n.), preparing the ground for a new scene, which begins equally markedly with three apostrophising questions. Statius often employs apostrophe to begin a new passage, as Von Moisy herself observes elsewhere (1971: 11-2); cf. e.g. 4.246-8 *tu quoque ... Parthenopeae, 6.491-2 at tibi ... Amphiarae, 10.650-2 sed neque te ... Menoeceu.* Questions also frequently mark the beginning of a new passage (see 5.710-2n.; cf. Georgacopoulou 2005: 58-61). Here the two devices are combined, as in 2.629 *uos quoque, Thespiadae...? 7.649 quis tibi ... Eunaee ...?, 9.744 quos ... sternis, puer improbe, cornu?* These parallels also link Opheltes’ death closely with the *mortes immaturae* of Ide’s sons, Eunaeus, Parthenopeus, Menoeceus (see §6.3).

It is remarkable that after such suspense building (cf. 505-33n.) few lines are devoted to Opheltes’ actual death; after the long crescendo one might expect more. As Hutchinson puts it, ‘the actual death brings the hyperbole to the finality of action in a moment astoundingly casual’ (1993: 123). Our expectations are shattered. In Von Moisy’s words (1971: 29): ‘Das Geschehen selbst, um dessenwillen Statius in solche Emphase ausbricht, wird zunächst stillschweigend vorausgesetzt, nur kurz nebenher angedeutet’: the serpent’s decisive lethal blow is indicated with a mere participle (538 *destictus*). In so doing Statius follows Hellenistic tradition, in which important events are also often treated offhandedly (cf. Brown 1994: 48 on this aspect of Callimachus’ *Hecale* and *Victoria Berenices,* Seelentag 2012: 28-9 on the *Culex,* Hershkowitz 1998: 260-1 on Statius’ nimble narration of Tisiphone maddening Oedipus’ sons in book 1).
The gruesome consequence of the serpent’s blow, Opheltes’ dismemberment, is described later through the eyes of Hypsipyle (596-8; cf. 650-1). For the moment, Statius does not speak of blood and gore. Instead, as Von Moisy observes, ‘der Hauptton [liegt] auf dem Mitleid-erregenden dieses Todes’ (1971: 29). Indeed, the emotional apostrophes and the strong emphasis on the child’s premature age (534 parcus, 535 uix prima ad limina uitae, 539 puer) do not fail to create ‘an almost sentimental pathos’ (Vessey 1973: 188; cf. Micozzi 1998: 106-7, 114-7). For the use of apostrophe to express ‘Mitleid mit dem beklagenswerten Geschick der Gestalten der Dichtung’ (Von Moisy 1971: 8) cf. e.g. 7.649-51, 10.498-500; Vergil similarly uses apostrophe to highlight dramatic moments with a touch of pathos; cf. Aen. 4.408 quis tibi tum, Dido...?, 10.825 (Laurus) quid tibi nunc, miserande puer...? On Statius’ use of apostrophe see further Von Moisy (1971: 8-15) and Georgacopoulou (2005).

Statius emphasises not only the pathos of Opheltes’ death, but also its momentous significance (534 tam magni pondera fatti, 537 tanto dignus ... sepulcro), looking forward to the founding of the Nemean Games in his honour as well as the doom of the Seven (§6.3).

The questions are not simply rhetorical, they are real questions (cf. 534-5n.). Although it is abundantly clear that Opheltes’ death is fated (cf. 4.787 sic Parcae voluere, 736n. recto descendunt limite Parcae), the exact role of the gods, Jupiter and Bacchus in particular, remains obscure (cf. 5.501n. sic di suasitis, 739-40n. cuncta haec superum demissa suprema / mente fluunt); as Ganiban observes, ‘why the death occurs is a question never fully explained’ (2013: 250). The narrator tentatively suggests an answer to the question, in an attempt ‘den Sinn des Geschehens zu deuten’ (Von Moisy 1971: 29): perhaps, it is suggested, Opheltes died for future generations to be worshipped in the Nemean Games – a teleological causa that explains Opheltes’ death from the founding of the Nemean Games, not the other way around. This explanation also operates on a poetic level, as the Thebaid needs Opheltes’ death to motivate the insertion of epic games in book 6. Unlike 5.710-2, where the question quis superum? is immediately answered (cf. Göttig 1969: 19 n. 19), here the narrator does not – or cannot – answer the question. In 620-8 Hypsipyle will attribute his death to Venus, although she takes full responsibility for the death of her nursling. In 733-52 Amphiarraus will offer an interpretation – not quite an explanation – of the child’s death.

The passage in various ways exploits the contrasts between ‘little’ and ‘great’, as appears nicely from Barth’s paraphrase ‘parve, quis tibi dedit tam grande fatum, ut tantillus puer a belua occideris’ (Barth on 5.534, my italics; cf. Schetter 1960: 60, Brown 1994: 21 n. 112). There is also a contrast between Opheltes’ short life (535 uix prima ad limina uitae) and his ever-lasting commemoration in the Nemean Games (536 per saecula; cf. 741 mansuris, 747 per saecula), and between indivual Opheltes versus Graias / gentibus (5.536-7).

Opheltes is killed accidentally (538 ignaro serpente), an unexpected innovation vis-à-vis the literary and iconographic tradition (see 5.538n.), which has often been overlooked.\footnote{Crusius 1745: 389 ‘verslondt’; Duncan 1913: 46 ‘attacked by a serpent’; Curtius 1948: 91 ‘Schlangenbijl’; Ten Kate 1955: 112 ‘mortifero morsu’; Scaffai 2002: 157 ‘morsa da un enorme serpente’; Van den Broek 2007: 77 ‘throttled’; Yaggy 2009: 91 ‘devoured’, Brouwer 2012: 139 ‘belaagd’.} Indeed, one would expect something like the death of little Phalerus in Val. 1.399-401 uacua nam lapsus ab arbore paruum / ter quater ardentis tergo circumuenit anguis: / stat procul intendens dubium pater anxius arcum (to which Statius might allude, see 535-6n.). But Statius chooses differently. Although Opheltes’ death is fated, it remains absolutely unclear how fate achieves the child’s death: nothing in the text suggests that the serpent is being guided by Parcae or gods (cf. Ganiban 2013: 251). What is the significance of this innovation? And does ignaro serpente suggest that not only the snake, but also Jupiter himself is ignorant? Critics have offered various explanations. Barth ad loc. quotes one of his curious vetera scholia: ‘quia non sensit tantulum rem’. Taisne explains it away as a baroque absurdity: ‘L’inconscience du monstre [...] rend d’autant plus absurde cette mort’ (1972: 361). According to
Vessey, in whose ‘optimistic’ Stoic interpretation Jupiter is the powerful executor of Fate (1973: 82-90 and passim), Opheltes’ death is ‘a sign of the favour, not the enmity, of the gods’ (1973: 188). The ‘pessimistic’ Dominik, by contrast, regards Opheltes’ death as an ‘act of divine cruelty’ (1994a: 62). Both ‘favour’ and ‘cruelty’, however, imply intentionality, which is precisely what Statius denies the Jovian serpent. Hill connects the detail with his idea of Jupiter as ‘blustering buffoon’ (Hill 2008: 129): ‘It is disturbing indeed that the baby is killed by a creature sacred to Jupiter. [...] We are left to wonder what sort of a god favours the snake over the baby’ (1996: 43). Gervais looks in the same direction: ‘The ignorance of the snake [...] points to a certain complexity in the god’s status as omnipotent’ (2008: 37 n. 80). Delarue is silent on the detail, but perhaps he would interpret ignaro serpente as yet another indication of the serpent’s peaceful nature (cf. Delarue 2000: 123, 323). Pache, by contrast, does not like the snake: ‘the serpent is unaware (ignaro serpente) of killing Opheltes, although the description of Opheltes’ mutilated body later in the narrative seems to indicate a certain degree of malice in his assailant (cf. 5.596-98; 6.35)’ (2004: 112). Perhaps, I would suggest, the serpent’s ignorance also mirrors that of Hypsipyle, who forgetfully left Opheltes behind, while it also links the snake with its victim (cf. 4.792-3 malorum / inscius; see further 579-82n.). Brown (1994: 184) points to the similarity with Linus’ death: ‘The actual agents of death act without particular malevolence, almost incidentally; the crucial acts are the exposures, one necessitated by the fear of a father’s anger, one by the desire to accommodate an army. Linus’ story warns how Opheltes’ story will end.’ In the poem’s disturbing universe, violence sometimes comes unintentionally (cf. 721n.).

Opheltes’ death is also described in S. 2.1.181-2 sic et in anguiferae ludentem gramine Lernae / rescissum squamis auidus bibit ignis Ophelten. How exactly we are to envisage the child’s death there remains somewhat unclear. Newlands (ad loc.) reads the Thbaibd into the Siluae: the ‘alliteration and assonance’ of rescissum squamis ‘grimly reproduce the sound of skin being flayed’ (cf. 5.596-8), and squamis ‘is synecdoche for the serpent’s tail’ (cf. 5.538 caudae). In any case S. 2.1.181-2 is compatible with the present passage.

In Euripides the second episode begins with an emotional lyric exchange between Hypsipyle and the Chorus, in which she informs the Chorus of Opheltes’ death (frr. 753d, 754; for the latter see §1.4.2). From these fragments we can infer that Opheltes is killed near the spring whilst picking flowers. More information about Opheltes’ death is given by Amphiaraus in the agōn scene, where his mutilated words suggest that Opheltes was strangled (fr. 757.101-8; the preceding six lines are lost):

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 ὅμησις δὲ[ ], ἢ And we ...
 ... Ἰαὶ ἔλοιποι σύς wanting (to rescue him?) ...
 ὃς ξάκων αὐτὸς the serpent ...
 ἡμόντιον ἠ ἦί shot forth ...
 καὶ ἱππὐρίης and ... him (rapidly?) ...
 ἐφίλησιν ἄμφω coiled around ...
 ὅμησις δ’ ἐδόλιστοι And we, seeing ...
 ἔγιο ὑ’ ἐποζωέοι’ and I shot (an arrow) ...
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As Collard-Cropp-Gibert ad loc. note, the verb ἡμόντιον’ ‘may describe the serpent shooting out its tongue or lunging at the child rather than someone throwing a javelin at the serpent’. If that suggestion is correct, the serpent dashes forward and coils around the baby (cf. Σ Pind. Nem. hypoth. d = App. A g), after which Amphiaraus kills it with an arrow. However, I would like to suggest, it is also possible that ἡμόντιον’ does refer to one of the Seven throwing a javelin, and that ἐφίλησιν ἄμφω refers to the snake coiling around the javelin rather than the child (cf. 575-6n.); in that case Opheltes’ death must have been described in six preceding lines that
are completely lost. In visual representations of Opheltes’ death, the child is sometimes strangled (App. B h, l), sometimes devoured (App. B b).

That Opheltes is killed whilst sleeping points to Vergils’ Georgics, where readers are warned not to fall asleep when the Calabrian serpent is around (3.414-39), and to the Culex, which takes its very plot from the same Vergilian passage; the combination extremae ... caudae (538) alludes to Geo. 3.423 extremaeque agmina caudae; see further §5.4. Another Vergilian passage that is evoked is Aen. 6.426-9, the babies’ animae in the underworld, which underscores that Opheltes’ death is representative of mortes immaturae generally (underlined words recur in 534-44):

continuo auditaes voces uagitus et ingens
infantumque animae flentes, in limine primo
quos dulcis uitae exsortis et ab ubere raptos
abstulit atra dies et funere mersit acerbo.

534-5. quis tibi, parue, deus tam magni pondera fati / sorte dedit?: the narrator asks ‘with pathos and indignation’ (Hutchinson 1993: 123) which god is responsible for Opheltes’ death – a question that readers may have asked themselves after the vague parenthesis sic di suasitis (501); Hypsipyle will raise the issue in 610-1. The question is not simply rhetorical or expository (cf. 5.710-2n.), it is a real question that invites reflection upon the role of the gods in the Thebaid, especially Jupiter, to whom the Nemean serpent belongs, and upon the complex interrelation between the gods and fate (cf. 5.534-40n.). The words fati and sorte emphasise that Opheltes’ death is fated (cf. 4.787 sic Parcae voluere); for the combination Barth ad loc. compares Aen. 6.72 (Sibyl’s prophecies) tuas sortis arcanaque fata. Since sors is often used with reference to oracles or prophecies (see OLD s.v. 3 and cf. Aen. 7.254 ueteris Fauni uoluit sub pectore sortem, Keulen on Sen. Tr. 524), sorte may allude to the oracle reported in 5.647.

For the phrasing cf. Ov. Met. 1.358 (Deucalion addressing Pyrrha) quis tibi, si sine me fatis erepta fuisses, / nunc animus, miseranda, foret?, Val. 1.291 quis tibi, Phrixe, dolor. Such emotional apostrophes, often with tui or tibi (cf. Hollis on Callim. Hec. fr. 65.1 = 292 Pf.), are typical of the Callimachean style (Hunter 2006: 23, e.g. Callim. Hec. fr. 15 Hollis = 281 Pf. τοὺς ἐγκυτὸς τέκνων ἐκήρυγγο); cf. esp. the apostrophes of Linus in Callim. Aet. fr. 25e.1 Harder ἄρις ταύ, φίλε κόσμε, συνήλπης, ἄρις ἑταίροι / ἐκνοῦ, ἐναυξάμηκα δ’ αἰλία καὶ βοτάναι (‘lambs, dear boy, were of equal age with you, lambs were your friends, and your sleeping-places were the sheepfolds and the pastures’) and fr. 25f τὸν σὲ Κροτωπιαδόν (‘you, the grandson of Crotopus’), which underlie both the description of Linus in 1.578-86 (cf. 1.580 saepta inter ouilia; see Brown 1994: 175) and the apostrophe in 1.582 non tibi digna, puer (McNelis 2007: 34), which is echoed here (Brown 1994: 183).

More specifically, the line seems an allusion to Ov. Met. 1.456 ‘quid’que ‘tibi, lasciae puer, cum fortibus armis’, where Apollo, after slaying Python, addresses Cupid. The Ovidian passage is fresh in our minds, as it has been alluded to in the preceding simile (see 531-3n. and cf. Met. 1.454-5 Delius ... uicta serpente ... cornua). The Ovidian passage, introducing Apollo’s primus amor (Met. 1.452) Daphne, is loaded with metapoetic significance: it alludes to elegiac Cupid stealing a foot from the hexameter in Ovid’ primus amor, that is, Amores 1.1 (cf. 1.1.5 quis tibi, saeue puer, dedit hoc in carmina iuris?) and thus signals the elegiac turn in Ovid’s epic poem (see Heerink 2009: 313-5). Statius’ allusion to Ovid at this point seems to recognise the un-epicness of the little child; at the same time, as Opheltes is killed by the serpent, it shows that, in contrast with Ovid’s puer Cupid, in Statius’ epic pueri are powerless.

parue: Barth takes parue deus together, as appears from his punctuation quis tibi, parue deus, etc. Although editors are right to place the comma after parue, the collocation of the two words might hint at his future divinity. Adrian (1893: 12) observes that often ‘voce parvi pro
puero utitur Statius’ (cf. 510, 547, 617, 7.93, 9.719, 839, S. 4.7.45, 5.5.74, Ach. 1.38). In 5.539 Opheltes is addressed as puer.

magni pondera fati: the phrase emphasises the significance, the symbolic weight, of Opheltes’ death. The combination of words may be taken from Luc. 7.686 pondere fati (cf. also Luc. 8.22 pondere famae). The magnum fatum refers to the fate of the Seven against Thebes, or the Theban War more generally. Statius’ predecessors use the phrase likewise with reference to the ‘grand scheme of things’: Luc. 5.189 inter fata ... tam magna (Phemonoe searching for Appius’ insignificant fate), Val. 1.553-4 cernes ... magnis Asiam concedere fatis (Jupiter foretelling the Trojan War), Sil. 2.424-5 ardentemque rogum media spectabat ab unda / Dardanus et magnis pandebat carbas fatis (with reference to Aeneas’ mission).

Statius is generally fond of metaphorical pondus and weight imagery; cf. 3.715 regnum uolubile pondus, 4.39 pondere curarum, 4.196 pondera belli, 4.320 pondera Martis; sometimes the word expresses literal and metaphorical weight at the same time, e.g. 11.586 (Aigona shouldering Oedipus’ hand) uirgo autem impositae sustentat pondera laeuae. 12.435 (the brothers’ pyre) commoto pondere. Nevertheless, in combination with fati, the words are reminiscent of Jupiter (cf. 1.213 pondus adest aerbis et uocem fata sequuntur) and his ‘scales of fate’ (cf. Aen. 12.725-7 Iuppiter ipse duas aequato examine lances / sustinet et fata imposit diuera duorum, / quem damnet labor et quo uergat pondere letum; modelled on ll. 22.209-13); other ‘Jovian’ occurrences of pondus are 1.181-2 Sidonii ... blanda iuuenci / pondera, 1.289 (Jupiter speaking) nostri reuerentia ponderis. The phrase is echoed in 577 magno ... pondere, which refers to the (literal) weight of Jupiter’s serpent.

Brown (1994: 184) detects an echo of Linus’ fata in 1.586; on the intratextual connections between the two episodes see §3.

535-6. tune hoc ... hoste iaces?: the Nemean serpent is called hostis again in 549 (cf. 509n. agmina and §6.5). Lehanneur (1878: 67) mentions this line as an example of Statius’ licentious use of the ablative. In post-classical Latin the ablativus causae is used more and more without passive participle, although there are examples from the classical period also (see K-St ii.1.396-7). The verb iaces links the serpent with its victim (554 iacet); cf. §6.5 and 532n. sacer, 581n. reptatus.

uix prima ad limina uitae: the expression, which goes back to Lucr. 3.681 uitae ... limen, famously occurs in Aen. 6.427-8 (see 534-43n.), an often imitated line, e.g. 7.166 limina uitae, S. 2.1.38 anni stantes in limine uitae, 4.2.13, Luc. 2.106, Sen. Her.F. 1133 (see further Austin on Aen. 6.427); cf. also S. 2.6.70 uitae modo margine adultae (where margine is disputed; see Van Dam ad loc.), Val. 7.338 occidis, heu, primo – potes hoc durare? – sub aeuo. The Latin phrase, in turn, looks back to the metaphorical usage of ‘threshold’ in Homer (cf. Il. 22.60 ἐπὶ γῆς οἴδα, Od. 15.246 γῆς οἴδαν ‘threshold of old age’); cf. also the expression ‘threshold of death’, e.g. Cat. 68.4 mortis limine. [Verg.] Cul. 224 leti iam limine ab ipso, Stat. S. 4.4.104).

A particularly close parallel is the death of little Promachus in Val. 1.823-5 primoque rudem sub limine rerum / te, puer, et uisa pallentem morte parentum / diripiant addunteque tuis, where the child is also apostrophied (and dismembered). Promachus is the first to die in Valerius’ epic, which corresponds neatly with Opheltes as prima funera of the Theban War.

536-7. an ut inde sacer per saecula Grais / gentibus et tanto dignus morerere sepulcro: suggesting an answer to the question (see OLD s.v. an 2), the narrator attempts to explain Opheltes’ death in terms of finality (ut inde) rather than causality. Thus the Nemean Games are not seen as the result of Opheltes’ death, but vice versa, his death is needed in order to bring about the founding of the Nemean Games.

As Pache (2004: 112) observes, Statius here refers to Opheltes as ‘cult recipient’, anticipating his post mortem transformation into deus Archemorus, which Apollo proclaims by the mouth of his seer Amphiaraus (see 731-53, esp. 751 nam deus iste, deus; 747 longum ... per
saecula nomen echoes the present line). Opheltes’ deification has been foreshadowed before in 4.725-9, esp. 729 sacram ... Ophelten; Götting (1969: 19 n. 20) rightly notes that the similes that compare Opheltes to baby gods (4.789-92, 801-3) also anticipate his future divinity (pace Hill 1996: 42 ‘no more than Callimachean doctrina’; cf. §4.2). The verbal echo of sacer (505) suggests that the child somehow takes his divinity from the Jovian serpent; Statius repeatedly creates verbal links between Opheltes and the Nemean serpent (cf. notes on 505 sacer, 536 iaces, 581 reptatus).

Grais / gentibus: in the high poetic genres Graius is always preferred over the prosaic Graecus (see Axelson 1945: 51-2). In the Thebaid, Graius is mostly used in the restricted sense ‘Argive’ or ‘Peloponnesian’ (e.g. 3.655, 6.127, 7.83, 8.342), sometimes in explicit contrast with the Thebans (e.g. 7.228-9 [nuntius docet] Graios / ire duces, nec iam Aoniis procul afore campis, 8.686 Sidonii Graique dei), even though the Thebans are actually Greeks as well (cf. Statius’ use of Achitae). But here, as the narrator looks from the mythical past to the future (on which see Parkes on 4.48), Grais gentibus includes all Greeks; cf. 6.5 Graium ex more with Fortgens, 9.610 more nihil Graio.

tanto ... sepulcro: Opheltes’ tomb is given an ecphrasis in 6.242-8, where moles and ingens also emphasise its proportions. On the real Ophelteion in Nemea see Bravo’s contribution in Miller 2004: 124-31.

morerere: imperfect subjunctive (= morerēris). The awkward verb form has troubled copyists: several MSS read morere, which one scribe has ‘corrected’ into moriare (Qpc). Ovid toys with the form in Her. 10.71 morerere recuruo (cacomphaton; see Knox ad loc.), the only exact parallel.

538. occidis: ‘Der Vers wird beherrscht von dem an die Spitze gestellten “du stirbst”’ (Von Moisy 1971: 29). The climactic verb may be suggested by Ecl. 4.24-5 occidet et serpens, et fallax herba ueneni / occidet (see §5.3).

extremae ... uerbere caudae: the combination extremae ... caudae points to the Vergilian model, Geo. 3.423 extremaeque agmina caudae (cf. 534-43n. and §5.3). Cazzaniga (1959: 126) sees imitation of Nic. Ther. 475-6 (Cenchries) μὴ δὴ σε καταπλέξη καὶ άνάγγη / πάντωδι μαστιξων οὐσὶ δόμας (‘for fear he wind about and strangle you as he lashes your body all around with his tail’). Tails are often assimilated to whips, e.g. Luc. 1.208 uerbere caudae (Michler 1914: 16), Geo. 3.59 ima uerrit uestigia cauda, [Verg.] Ciris 453 uerbere caudarum. The whipping tail may also recall the Ovidian model, Met. 3.93-4 ima / parte flagellari gemuit sua robora caudae: when Cadmus has killed the serpent, its tail remains alive for a while (cf. Ap.Rh. 4.1401-2, where the tail of the Hesperides’ snake is still writhing the following day; also Ov. Met. 6.559, Nonnus Dion. 4.412-6). Mopsus’ serpentine death in Argonautica 4 also involves the motif, as Mopsus steps on the snake’s tail-tip (Ap.Rh. 4.1518-9).

The serpent’s extrema cauda, responsible for Opheltes’ death, is echoed in the ecphrasis of the child’s tomb (6.242-8) with extremum ... orbem, even though the scene described is different (Pavan ad loc. only notes the echo of 5.514 orbe uago).

destructus: according to Brown (1994: 152-3) the verb may suggest ‘the action of stripping leaves’, which would associate Opheltes with flowers, and hence with young epic warriors, whose death is often ‘compared to the plucking or destruction of a flower’ (cf. Il. 8.306-8, Aen. 9.435-7, 11.68-71). On the role of flowers in the story of Opheltes see §1.4.2.

539. ignaro serpente: the child is killed accidentally, an innovation vis-à-vis the Euripidean model, in which Opheltes is probably strangled (Hyps. fr. 757.106 εἶληξεν ἀμφή ‘coiled around’; but see 434-43n.). In the mythographic accounts (see App. A) the serpent also kills the child intentionally: Hyg. Fab. 74 puerum exedit; Σ Clem. Alex. Protr. 2.34 πεφητεσσών implies an attack; Σ Pind. Nem. hyposth. b ὃν δέκινον περειλήψις ἤ ἵνον ἀφεῖς ἀνέτειλεν. On visual
representations of Opheltes’ death (see App. B) the serpent also kills the child intentionally. On the interpretation of this detail see 534-43n.

539-40. fugit ilicet artus / somnus et in solam patuerunt lumina mortem: sleep and death – the two words embrace the hexameter (cf. 4.658 with Parkes) – are again associated (cf. 499-504n.). Georgacopoulou (2005: 49) draws attention to the fluent ‘transition entre l’apostrophe et le récit à la troisième personne qui suit’; similarly Von Moisy observes that 539b-40 ‘allmählich wieder in den ruhigen epischen Erzählstil hinübergeraten’ (1971: 29).

Gervais (2008: 35 n. 75) rightly notes the parallel with 5.207-17, where Gorge kills Helymus, the first victim of the Lemnian massacre. Significantly, Helymus also dies while he awakes from sleep, cf. esp. 5.210-1 sed illum / infelix sopor adnota sub morte refugit, a detail that underscores the parallelism between the death of Opheltes and the Lemnian massacre (see §3.3). It may be worth noting that, on Greek vases, ‘people who meet with sudden, violent death [...] are regularly portrayed with their eyes open’ (Giangrande 1977: 168-9, discussing the famous Douris cup depicting the Colchian serpent devouring Jason).

 illicit: after Hypsipyle’s Lemnian tale, events in Nemea follow each other rapidly, which is underscored verbally by e.g. 545 rapit, 555 extemplo, 558 rapit, 575 rapido, 591 rapit, 593 fulminis in morem. Fastness is associated with the poem’s fratricidal τέλος as opposed to the recurring mora (on which see §4.1); cf. e.g. Tisiphone’s fast reaction (1.92 ilicet) and the Argives’ tempo after the Nemean delay (7.145 rapidum).

540. in solam patuerunt lumina mortem: ‘il ne rouvrit les yeux que pour mourir’ (Waltz 1916: 142); Barth ad loc. explains ‘semel aperuit oculos a somno, sed statim, id est post unum momentum, clausit eos in mortem’. For adverbial use of the adjective solus see K-St ii.1.236. The motif recalls the Lemnian massacre (see §6.3) and recurs in 10.303 tantum morientia lumina soluit (the massacre of the sleeping Thebans). Eyes are a traditional ingredient of the descriptio mortis (see Esteve-Forriol 1962: 141); cf. 8.648 defecta ... ora (Atys on the brink of death), 12.325 huc attolle genas defectaque lumina (with Pollmann), Aen. 10.463, 745-6 = 12.309-10 olli dura quies oculos et ferreus urget / somnus, in aeternam clauduntur lumina noctem, Ov. Met. 9.391. But Statius originally invents the normal idea of closing one’s eyes in death. Like other post-Vergilian poets, Lucan in particular, Statius is fascinated with the liminal condition between life and death, and with corporeal motion after death (see Dinter 2010).

541-2. cum tamen attonito moriens uagitus in auras / excidit: an original variation on the nouissima uerba, a traditional motif in the descriptio mortis (see Esteve-Forriol 1962: 142-4); as Opheltes cannot yet speak, his last utterance is an inarticulate uagitus. Cf. 8.641-4, esp. 643-4 gelidis iam nomen inerrat / faucibus (Atys), 9.349-50 ultimus ille sonus moribundo emersit ab ore, / ‘mater!’; in hanc miseri ceciderunt flumina uocem (Crenaeu), which, as Micozzi (1998: 106) rightly notes, recalls the last utterance of Opheltes here; cf. also S. 2.1.148-50 ille tamen Parcis fragile urgentibus annos / te uultu moriente uidet linguaque cadente / murmurat (Glaucias). Opheltes’ dying wail recalls the death of Linus, cf. 1.586-7 attonitas ... aures / matris (cf. §3).

The phrasing has a Vergilian ring, cf. Aen. 6.686 uox excidit ore (note ore in 542 below), 9.113 tum uox horrenda per auras / excidit. For excidit see OLD s.v. 5 ‘(of words etc.) to be uttered, let fall’; as Hardie on Aen. 9.113 notes, it suggests ‘accidental or unintentional utterance’.

Although strictly speaking it is Opheltes’ wail that passes away into the air, the familiar motif of ‘dissolving into air’ at the moment of death is also present; cf. e.g. 11.55 fugit in uacuas iam spiritus auras, Aen. 4.704-5 omnis et una / dilapsus calor atque in uentos uita recessit (Dido), 10.819-20 uita per auras / concessit (Lausus), 11.617 uitam dispergit in auras.
tamen: Opheltes is on the brink of death, yet he manages to utter a sound (cf. Brouwer ‘Maar toen toch een stervengekrijt die lippen ontsnapte’). Alternatively, we may connect tamen with auditī Hypsipyle, as does Barth: ‘Cum unum tantum gemitum, unque solo momento ederet percussus puer, tanta tamen erat vigilantia, tantus in eum amor miserae, ut statim audiret’ (ad loc. my italics); cf. SB ‘But, when [...], Hypsipyle heard’.

attonito: SB takes attonito with ore (‘from your shocked lips’), but such an hyperbaton is too daring even for Statius, as ore comes only in the following clause. We must take attonito with excidit, either as dative (cf. e.g. Cic. Phil. 10.6 quod uerbum tibi non excidit ... fortuito) or as ablative (cf. e.g. Aen. 6.686 uox excidit ore). Hall conjectures attrito (perhaps inspired by 515 atterit), which I do not find convincing after dextricus (538). Moreover, attonitus is favourite with Statius (see Smolenaars on 7.118-9 and 227). The wording is also perfectly Statian (cf. S. 1.2.31 tu tamen attonitus).

The metaphorical use of ‘thunderstruck’ can be traced back to Archil. 77 συγκεραυνωδεσίς (on its background see further Matthews on Luc. 5.476). The use of attonitus without specification (such as ira, amore) goes back to Seneca (Smolenaars on 7.118-9). The word is most popular with Ovid and Lucan also. Nevertheless, one might detect an allusion to Jupiter Tonans, to whom the serpent responsible for Opheltes’ death is sacred (cf. 511n. Tonantit).

I have considered conjecturing attonitas, with aurās, which then would be slightly personified; cf. 6.685 sic cadit, attonitus quotiens auellitur astris, / Solis opaca soror, 9.575 namque per attonitas curarum pondere noces, Sil. 4.7 (Fama) terrificis quatit attonitas rumoribus arces; see also TLL s.v. attonitus 2.0.1156.77 ff. ‘de rebus quae poëtic animantur’. Pathetic fallacy, one could argue, is appropriate at this dramatic moment, and Statius often applies an adjective to aurās (always in the sixth foot), cf. 1.295 superas ... ad aurās, 1.545 and 7.121 uagīs ... in aurās, 2.539 fuscas ... aurās, 5.730 motas ... per aurās, 6.857 aetherias ... sub aurās, 7.106 summas ... in aurās, 11.56 uacuas. attonitas would also be in accordance with Statius’ habits of versification: attonitas before the caesura corresponding with aurās at the end of the line (cf. 500n.).

uagitus: ‘a standard term for a baby’s wail’ (Parkes on 4.792); cf. e.g. Lucr. 5.226-6 uagitusque locum lugubri complet, ut aequumst / cui tantum in uita restet transire malorum, Coleman on S. 4.8.35; we find the corresponding verb in S. 2.7.37 primo murmure dulce uagientem (baby Lucan). The noun occurs three times in Statius’ oeuvre, the other instances being S. 2.1.105 uagītumque rudem / fetusque infantis and 4.792 uagitibus, where the wails of Opheltes are compared to the ‘mighty wails’ (magnis ... uagitibus) of the ‘little Thunderer’ (paruum ... Tonantem). Thus wails mark Opheltes’ entrance (in the poem) and exit (from life). The word also occurs in Vergil’s famous description of children in the underworld, Aen. 6.426 (cf. 534-43n. and 535n. uix prima ad limina uitae).

ruptis immutuit ore querelis: how exactly are we to understand ruptis ... querelis? One could read ruptis as simplex pro composito for abrumpit: ‘his complaints having been interrupted’ (by death). This is how Barth understands the Latin: ‘clamore interrupto obmutuit ore, quod in querulam jam aperuerat’. Cf. OLD s.v. abrumpo 5 ‘To put an end to, cut short, break off (an action, policy, condition, process, etc.)’ and TLL s.v. abrumpo 141.9-18, where we find parallels including Aen. 4.388 (Dido) his medium dictis sermonem abrupit, Claud. De raptu 3.160 abrumpit ... querellas. This interpretation finds strong support in line 543 and in 6.185 abrupsisque obmutuit ore querelis, which clearly echoes the present line (see below). However, although the simplex sometimes means ‘to break off, cut short (an activity, etc., begun)’ (OLD s.v. rumpo 9), it is not used in that sense with reference to cutting short speech (unfortunately, the TLL does not yet include rumpo); applied to speech, it rather means ‘to create a pause in, interrupt (a process)’ (OLD 7b), which is not quite the same.

The alternative interpretation is: ‘his complaints having broken forth’; cf. OLD s.v. rumpo 5b ‘To break forth into (utterance), to cause (cries, etc.) to break forth’. In light of Vergil’s
idiom (Aen. 2.129 *rumpit uocem* with Austin’s note, 4.553 *tantos illa suo rumpbat pectore questus*) and Statius’ imitation of it (6.136 *nudo uocem de pectore rumpit* and 11.676 *uocem de pectore rumpit*), this is an equally attractive interpretation.

There is a poignant echo of our line in 6.185 *abruptisque obmutuit ore querelis*, where Opheltes’ mother Eurydice suddenly falls silent with grief after accusing Hypsipyle. Mother resembles child. Cf. also 5.236-7 *in murmure truncos / ... uultus*, which connects Opheltes with the Lemnian massacre.

The only parallel for *immutesco* is Quint. 10.3.16 (Lehanneur 1878: 78). The normal verb is *obmutesco*, which is extremely rare in poetry (see TLL s.v. 119.47-50): it occurs twice in Vergil (Aen. 4.279, 6.155) and Statius (2.628 and 6.185). Perhaps Statius here coins *immutesco* to avoid a prosaic ring at this crucial moment? However, it is curious that in 6.185 Statius should use the other verb.

Lehanneur (1878: 16) sees imitation in Claud. Epith. Pallad. 108 *ereptis obmutuit unda querelis* (the river Mincius becomes silent now that all birds are gone to accompany Venus and the bride Celerina). Note the change of verb (*rumpo > eripio*). For literature on Claudian and Statius see Parkes 2012: xxxiv n. 99.

543. *qualia non totas peragunt insomnia uoces*: literally ‘like dreams do not finish complete utterances’, hence ‘like the unfinished utterances of a dream’ (SB); cf. Waltz (1916: 142) ‘comme dans les rêves on fait entendre des sons étouffés (*non totas*), comme les sons étouffés que l’on fait entendre dans les rêves’. Opheltes falls silent before he has finished his *uagitus* (see 541-2n.), like people sometimes utter incomplete speech in their sleep. Augustine (Conf. 1.8) remembers that, as an infant, he sometimes uttered little laughs whilst sleeping. The simile again works with the traditional association of sleep and death (cf. 499-504n.). The word pattern almost constitutes a ‘golden line’ (cf. 625n.).

According to Gervais (2008: 35 n. 74) the line ‘recall[s] the dream of Polyxo in which Venus exhorted and offered her support for the massacre (5.134-40)’, which I do not find convincing. On Polyxo’s and Hypsipyle’s dream of Venus see 5.620-8n.

The simile takes its inspiration from the loss of speech in the famous dream-simile in Aen. 12.908-12 (esp. 911-2 *non lingua ualet, non corpore notae / sufficiunt uires, nec uox aut uerba sequuntur*), combining II. 22.199-201 (cf. Homer. 939-43) with Lucretian elements (see Tarrant *ad loc.*). Vergil’s simile applies to Turnus’ rock which does not complete its course (Aen. 12.906-*7 tum lapis ipse uiri uacuum per inane uolutus / nec spatium euasit totum neque pertulit ic tum*); Statius’ *non totas ... uoces* corresponds with *nec spatium ... totum*. The duel of Turnus and Aeneas will be an important intertext for Hippomedon’s and Capaneus’ fight with the Nemean serpent (see 5.554b-78n.).

**insomnia**: not ‘sleeplessness’ (from which Statius’ *persona* suffers in S. 5.4), but ‘dreams’; see OLD s.v. *insomnium* 2 ‘an apparition seen in a trance or dream, vision, dream’. The word was coined by Vergil after Greek *ἐνύπνιον*, cf. Aen. 4.9 *‘Anna soror, quae me suspensam insomnia terrent!*’ and 6.896 *sed falsa ad caelum mittunt insomnia Manes* with Austin’s extensive note.

544-54a. Hypsipyle finds the serpent

When Hypsipyle hears Opheltes’ wail, she hurries back to the place where she had left him behind (4.785-9). There she finds the enormous serpent. She utters a loud cry which, in turn, induces the Argives to action. These lines bridge the death of Opheltes (5.534-43) and the fight with the serpent (5.555b-78). The transitional passage begins with Hypsipyle hearing Opheltes’ wail (*544 audiit*) and ends with the Argives hearing Hypsipyle’s (*554-5 aures / impulit*).
In Euripides, Hypsipyle does not leave Opheltes behind, but takes the child with her to the spring, where he dies more or less ante oculos of Hypsipyle and the Seven (cf. Hyps. fr. 757.101-8, quoted at 5.534-43 above). As I have argued in the introduction (§2.7.2), Euripides deviates from the Greek epic tradition.

The lines are replete with Vergilian echoes (see notes below), the most important model being Aeneas’ searching for Creusa in Aeneid 2 (see 547n. nequiquam ingeminans).

544-5. audīt: Hypsipyle facilèmque negantia cursum / exanimis genua aegra rapit: frightened out of her wits (exanimis) Hypsipyle hurries back (genua ... rapit), but overwhelmed by emotion (aegra) her knees refuse to run easily (facilèmque negantia cursum). Contrast her majestic gait in 4.806-7. Other examples of Statian staggering are 4.663 succiduique gradus, 7.479-80 aniles / praecipitantem artus et plus quam possit euntem.

The phrasing is Vergilian, combining Aen. 4.672 (Anna hearing the cries at Dido’s suicide) audīt exanimis trepidoque exterrita cursu and 12.746-7 quamquam tardata sagitta / interdum genua impedient cursumque recusan. Moreover, the combination facilèm ... cursum may be taken from Geo. 1.40, while genua aegra (‘ses genoux sans force, brisés par l’émotion’, Waltz 1916: 142) is taken from Aen. 5.468 genua aegra trahentem (cf. Val. 2.93 aegro ... poplite). Perhaps there is also a reminiscence of the Homeric expression γοίνατα λύνει (e.g. Il. 21.114 τοὺς θ’ αὐτῶν λύτο γοίνατα καὶ φίλον ήτοι).

audīt: the verb form is Vergilian; it occurs 13 times in Vergil (e.g. 4.220, 9.630) and 6 times in Statius, usually in initial position, marking a dramatic moment in the narrative. Vergil also uses it to shift the scene to another character (e.g. Anna in Aen. 4.672). Similarly, in Theocritus 24.34 Ἀλκήνωρ ἔχειν ἄκους βοῶς Ιάπικες’ wail alarms Alcene (cf. §4.4). Barth on 5.501 wonders about the distance between nurse and nursling: ‘non longe’, he thinks, otherwise Hypsipyle would not have heard the child’s wail, ‘neque tamen prope’, otherwise they would have noticed the huge serpent.

genua ... rapit: Hunink on Luc. 3.116 rapit pressus notes that ‘in Latin poetry rapere is increasingly used as an expressive verb of violent movements, occurring in various combinations’. Lucan uses rapere with pressus, iter (6.121-2) and cursus (5.403); similar examples in Statius are 3.464-5 raptos / gradus, 5.591 cursum rapit, 655 longo rapit arua ... passu (cf. 12.220). Such expressions may be understood as a bold extension of the internal acc. with verbs of motion (with the acc. expressing ‘das durchzogene oder durchfahrene Land oder Meer’, e.g. Aen. 3.191 currimus aequor; see K-St i.263-4 with more examples). Statius goes even further and makes genua the object of rapit. This may be understood in light of the expression pedem ferre (e.g. Aen. 10.794, Sen. Tr. 516) and the Homeric λαξιφάρα δε γοίνατ’ ἐνόμωμα (Il. 10.358; cf. 15.269, 22.24): the swiftness, expressed by the adjective λαξιφάρα in Homer, is implicit in the verb rapit in Statius.

545-6. iam certa malorum / mentis ab augorio: well before she has found the child, Hypsipyle is certain that something terrible has happened. Her presentiment is cast in terms of divination (augorio; cf. 7.258 omen with Smolenaars).

For certa malorum Deipser (1881: 11) compares 7.699 certus et ipse necis and Aen. 4.554 certus eundi; a closer parallel is Luc. 3.37 (Pompey) certa cum mente malorum. Hypsipyle’s certainty contrasts with the ignorance of Opheltes (4.792-3 malorum / inscius) and the snake (524 incertusque sui).

As Micozzi (1998: 106) suggests, Statius seems to have in mind Aen. 10.843 agnouit longe gemitum præsaga mali mens, where Mezentius senses Lausus’ death upon hearing his companions’ cries; cf. also Val. 1.693-4 at subitus curaque ducem metus acrior omni / mensque mali praesaga quattit, where Jason thinks of his parents back home. As Harrison on Aen. 10.843 notes, Mezentius’ præsaga mali mens ‘suggests the language of Greek tragedy’, comparing Aesch. Pers. 10-1, Ag. 977, Eur. Andr. 1072 aiāi: πρῶμαντις ὑμὸς ὑς τι πρὸδοκή.
These tragic associations also suit our Euripidean heroine. Cf. also Aen. 7.272-3 (Latinus speaking) *hunc illum poscere fata / et reor et, si quid ueri mens augurat, opto*. For presentiment of future events cf. Cic. Tusc. 1.33 *inhaeret in mentibus quasi saeculorum quoddam augurium futurorum*, Curt. 4.13.13 *si qua diuinae opis auguria humana mente concipi possent*. For more poetic parallels see Bömer on Ov. Met. 6.510 *timuitque suae praesagia mentis* (Pandion when his daughter Philomela sets sail to Thrace with Tereus).

A close verbal parallel is Sil. 13.818-20 *haec quoque castae / augurio ualuit mentis uenturaque dixit / regna uiro et dextrs agnouit in alite diuos*, where the Sibyl describes Tanaquil (wife of the elder Tarquin), but Hypsipyle is no prophet. A closer Silian parallel, in fact, is the Carthaginian senator Hanno wishing that his ill-boding *praesagia* will prove false (Sil. 11.570-1 *falsa ut praesagia nostra / sint, oro, mensque augurio ludatur inani*).

Hypsipyle’s *mentis augurium* seems connected with her ominous dreams, which she mentions in her lament for the dead child (5.620-1 *dura mei praesagia somni / nocturnique metus*). LP also links 5.545 and 620-2 (see 5.620-1n.). On the basis of these dreams, then, Hypsipyle knows that something terrible is going to happen; now she senses that the dreaded moment is there. Cf. Argia’s *augurium animi* (12.204), which looks back to the dream-apparition of her beloved Polynes (12.191-3). Cf. also the opening scene of the *Achilleid*: Thetis knows the prophecies of Proteus about her son’s fate (witness Ach. 1.32 *agnesco monitus et Protea uera locutum*), and when Paris’ fleet is on its way back to Troy, she senses that the fatal moment is there – an intuition for which Statius uses the same word (*Ach. 1.25-6 heu numquam uana parentum / auguria*); and, like Hypsipyle, Thetis also suffers from ill-boding dreams (*Ach. 1.129-30 non merito trepidus sopor attraque matri / signa deum et magnos utinam mentita timores?*).

Micozzi (1998: 106) rightly notes that the motif recurs in the reaction of Crenaeus’ mother in 9.351 *at genetrix ... protinus icta malo*. The correspondence is reinforced by the fact that both lines look back to the same Vergilian model (cf. 5.547-8 nn.). On the correspondences between Opheltes and Crenaeus see further §6.3.

**546. sparsisque per omnia uisu:** searching for Opheltes. Hypsipyle casts her eyes in all directions. For the phrasing cf. S. 1.3.52 *uisusque per omnia duco*. The verb *spargo* is striking, but not without parallels (e.g. Luc. 10.436 *acies ... sparsa*, Val. 6.584 *quaque iterum tacito sparsit uaga lumina uultu*, Pers. 5.33 *sparsisses oculos* with Kißel’s note; cf. also [Verg.] Cal. 176 *lumina diffundens*). It varies the expression ‘to cast one’s eyes’ (e.g. Lucr. 4.1139 *iactare oculos*, Cic. Cluent. 54 *oculi conciciebantur*, Ov. Met. 3.381 *aiciem partis dimitit in omnes*), perhaps under the influence of the expression ‘to scatter light’ (e.g. Val. 2.76 *mediasque diem dispersit in undas* [*Phoebus* scattered daylight all over the waves’]: since *lumina* means both ‘light’ and ‘eyes’, it is possible to conflate the two expressions, as does Valerius in 5.247-8 (Sol) *omnitua tua nunc terris, tua lumina toto / sparge mari*, where he playfully uses *lumina* as both ‘rays’ and ‘eyes’.

**547. nota uocabula paruo:** ‘words the baby knows’ (Golden 2014: 260). *uocabulum* (corresponding with Aen. 2.770 *uocau*; see following note) is an unepic word, not found in Vergil and only twice in the *Thebaid* (here and 6.463; cf. S. 2.4.20). The diminutive evokes the sort of language in which mothers, nurses and modern fathers (*experto crede*) communicate with babies: ‘blandas appellationes, quas libenter audiebat, et quibus assueverat mulceri’, according to Barth’s *uetera scholia*.

nequiquam *ingeminans*: echoing Aen. 2.769-70 (Aeneas searching for Creusa) *impleui clamore uias maestusque Creusam / nequiquam ingeminans iterumque iterumque uocau*; Aeneas’ *uocau* underlies Hypsipyle’s *uocabula*. Statius also reworks Vergil’s *lustro* (2.754 > 547 *lustrat*), *clamore* (2.769 > 553), *inflex* (2.772 > 552) and *quaerenti* (2.771 > 547 *quaerens*). The same Vergilian model underlies the reaction of Crenaeus’ mother in 9.355-6 *iterumque iterumque trementi / ingeminat Crenaeae sono* (cf. 5.45-6n.).
548. nusquam ille: ‘Ereptaverat enim ex eo loco infans, ubi illum deposuerat’, Barth’s uetera scholia explain (cf. 4.793-803). The simple, elliptical phrase has an enormous dramatic impact; Vergil also knows that sometimes less is more, cf. e.g. Aen. 3.669 sensit (Cyclops noticing Aeneas cum suis). As Micozzi (1998: 107) rightly observes, the words are pointedly echoed in 9.356 nusquam ille (Crenaeus).

548-9. prata recentes / amisere notas: ‘the meadows have lost the recent traces’, by which Hypsipyle could have identified the spot where she left her nursling behind. The notas might be understood as the natural features of the landscape (cf. OLD s.v. nota 1d ‘a natural sign (visible or not) by which one recognizes a person or thing’), but in combination with recentes the word probably refers to the trail which Opheltes left behind whilst crawling in the grass (cf. 4.793-4 and 5.612). Now these traces are no longer visible, because the landscape has been ravaged by the serpent (see 518-28); cf. LP ad loc. ‘ut etiam miseræ ambiguitas nasceretur quia pratorium signa defecerant. omnia enim perierant serpentis afflatu, et distinctum floribus campum ariditas indiscretæ confuderat’. Less convincing are Barth’s uetus scholium ‘gramine iterum erecto’ and LP’s second suggestion, that the landscape looks different because of the ariditas.

The word prata suggests a pastoral landscape (cf. e.g. Ecl. 3.111, 4.43, 7.11); moreover, the collocation prata recentes alludes to Vergil’s Elysium, Aen. 6.674 prata recentia. The following words are taken from Luc. 2.167 amisere notas, where mutilated bodies ‘have lost their distinctive features’, an ominous echo looking forward to Opheltes’ mutilation described in 596-8 (also modelled primarily on Lucan; see notes ad loc.). An intertextual lapse from heaven to hell.

549-50. uiridi piger accubat hostis / collectus gyro: how exactly are we to envisage the situation? Is the snake lying on top of Opheltes (Taisne 1994: 332 ‘il se couche sur sa jeune victime’)? The Ovidian model points in that direction (Met. 3.56 supra). It would also explain the wounds described in 5.596-8. But the verb accubo does not normally mean ‘to lie on’ (cf. OLD 3 with only one example). So perhaps we should rather envisage, with Amar-Lemaire (on 499-540), ‘serpentem juxta jacementem’. There is a nice green snake, collectus gyro and obliqua ceruicem expostus in aluo, on the cover of Hunink’s Dutch translation of Tacitus’ Histories.

One might detect an echo in S. 4.7.1-4 iam diu lato spatiata campo / fortis heroos, Erato, labores / differ atque ingen opus in minores / contrahe gyro, where the poet asks his Muse to ‘contract her huge work into smaller circles’, that is, to leave behind the epic genre and concentrate on smaller poetry. Although Statius employs the familiar ‘chariot of song’ metaphor, he also seems to allude to the Nemean serpent, one of his most epic creations. Reading back through S. 4.7, there is an additional irony in sic etiam (551): the serpent tries to be pastoral, but even though it has contracted its circles, as the Muse is asked to do in S. 4.7, it cannot help being an enormous epic creature.

uiridi: green is an unusual colour for literary snakes (see Sauvage 1975: 246), pace N-H on Hor. Carm. 1.17.8 uirides ... colubras. It caught the attention of LP, who explains it as ‘uenenoso’; Barth ad loc. rejects that interpretation (‘Lutatius [i.e. LP] de veneno nihil ad rem’), but it is not unattractive in the light of 508-9 tumidi stat in ore ueneni / spuma uirens (where see note). Brouwer nicely translates ‘gifgroen’. The unusual colour establishes yet another link with Python, 1.711 uiridis Python, as well as with Harmonia’s fatal necklace, 2.279-80 uiridumque draconum / lucentes a fronte iubas (cf. §6.5). Duff (1964: 395 n. 1) notes that Statius has ‘an evident liking for uiridis both in its literal and in its metaphorical sense’.

piger: the adjective is rarely applied to snakes, the sole other example being Ov. Am. 2.13.13 pigra ... labatur circa donaria. Perhaps it is inspired by Ap.Rh. 4.1506 νοῆσες ‘sluggish’ (the peaceful snake that kills Mopsus). In that case, it would confirm Delarue’s idea
that the Nemean serpent is essentially a peaceful creature, not as ferocious as its epic counterparts: ‘Le serpent de Némée, seul parmi ses congénères, n’a nul caractère frénétique. Paisible, aimé de tous, c’est sans intention de nuire qu’il écrase au passage le minuscule Opheltès abandonné sur le gazon’ (Delaire 2000: 132; cf. *ibid.* 323 ‘paisible, normalement inoffensif’). Barth connects *piger* with the snake’s giant proportions (cf. Barth *ad loc.* ‘ob magnitudinem corporis’). The serpent’s sluggishness may also (wrongly) suggest that it has just had dinner (cf. 549n. *accubat*, 551n. *obliqua ceruicem expostus in aluo*). The adjective recurs in 600 (where see note).

**accubat:** often used in the sense ‘to lie, recline (at table)’ (*OLD* 1a), the verb suggests that the serpent has devoured Opheltès (*quod non*). The mention of his belly (551n. *accubat*) also points in that direction. The description is focalised through Hypsipyle, who fears precisely that.

**hostis:** see 536n. *hoste* and §6.5.

**collectus gyro:** perhaps inspired by *Geo.* 2.154 *in spiram ... se colligit anguis. For gyrus* applied to a snake’s coils cf. 11.311, *Aen.* 5.85, Man. 1.331 (constellation Serpens) *serpentem magnis ... gyris.* Status is quite fond of the Greek word (11 times in the *Thebaid*).

**spatiosaque iugera complet:** cf. 1.568-9 (Python) *centum per iugera campi / uix tandem explicatum* (alluding to Luc. 5.80-1 *Paean Pythona sagittis / explicuit*, see McNelis 2007: 32). The adjective *spatiosus* was coined by Ovid, who uses it 15 times, notably of the Theban serpent in *Met.* 3.56 *spatiosi corporis hostem.* Cf. also Claudian’s imitation in *De raptu 2.338-9 et Tityos tandem spatiosos erigit artus / squalentisque nouem detexit iugera campi,* recognising the origins of the motif in *Od.* 11.577 ἐπ’ ἐννέα καῖτο πέλεξα (Tityus). We may also see an allusion to the epic ‘Motiv daß der besiegte Gegner eine große Fläche bedeckt’ (Korn on *Vol.* 4.320-1 [*Amycus*] *aruaque late / occupat*), which is found from Homer onwards (e.g. *II.* 16.776 καῖτο μέγας μεγαλωστι, see Bömer on *Ov.* *Met.* 8.422 [*Calydonian boar*] *immanemque ferum multa tellure iacentem*), foreshadowing the defeat of the serpent.

Ball (1894: 198) used our line to argue for *magna* in *Tib.* 1.1.2 *et teneat culti iugera magna soli,* and for *parua* in *Ov.* *Am.* 3.15.12: ‘Our acres, too, are all of the same size, but we say, rhetorically, “broad acres.” Why should not the Romans do likewise?’

**551. sic etiam:** as Håkanson (1973: 35) points out, we should take *sic etiam* with the preceding line: the serpent has coiled up its body, but ‘even so’, i.e. ‘even in that position’, it occupies a considerable space; cf. Mart. 2.1.12 *sic quoque,* Man. 5.611-2 (sea-monster defeated by Perseus) *et magnum uasto contexto corpore pontum,* / *tum quoque terribilis nec virginis ore uidenda.* As representative of the ‘old’ interpretation I quote Waltz (1916: 143) *‘sic etiam:* même en couvrant plusieurs serpents, il est replié de façon à reposer sa tête sur son ventre.’

**obliqua ceruicem expostus in aluo:** in combination with the gastronomic vocabulary (*aluo* and 549n. *accubat*) and its sluggishness (549n. *piger* and 554n. *iacet*), the serpent’s position suggests saturation after dinner. Cf. the Cyclops in *Aen.* 3.630-2 *nam simul expletus dapibus uinoque sepultus / ceruicem inflexam posuit,* *iacuitque per antrum / immensus etc.*

Jupiter himself may be reminiscent of his motionless Nemean serpent in 7.197-8 *sic expostus ego: inmoto deducimur orbe / fatorum.*

**ceruicem:** retained accusative with the passive participle *expostus*; cf. e.g. *562 mollia colla refusus* below. For the construction, popular with Augustan poets, see K-St i.288-92, Harrison (1991: 290-1).

**expostus:** syncope (= *expositus*), common in compounds of *pono.* Syncopation often serves metrical need (cf. e.g. *Aen.* 1.26 *repostum,* where *rēpōsitum* would not scan; cf. *Theb.* 4.840), but its spondaic rhythm (cf. 506n.) and archaic tone also suit the sluggish sacred beast. See further Norden on *Aen.* 6.24, Austin on *Aen.* 1.26 and 249, and R. Coleman’s discussion of
the phenomenon (1999: 38–40). Lehanneur (1878: 105) and Dilke (on Ach. 1.64) have collected Statian examples. Cf. 571n. \textit{uincla}.


For \textit{profundus} applied to woods, suggesting both height and density of trees, cf. Lucr. 5.41 \textit{nemora ac montes magnos siluasque profundas}, Geo. 2.391 \textit{saltusque profundi}, Aen. 7.515 \textit{nemus et siluae ... profundae}, Curt. 7.7.4 \textit{siluas ... profundae}, perhaps after Greek \textit{βασις} (see LSJ s.v. 2), esp. II. 5.555 \textit{βασις τάρσουν ὅπις}.

553-4. \textit{nec territus ille / sed iacet:} for the wording cf. Aen. 9.793 (Turnus) \textit{at territus ille}. For the fearless reaction cf. Aen. 10.717 (Mezentius) \textit{ille autem impauidus}, 10.770 (idem) \textit{manet imperterritus ille}, modelled (as Harrison notes) on II. 5.527 = 15.622 \textit{μένον ἐμπέθον οὔδε φέδος}. The element of ‘staying in place’ is implicit in \textit{sed iacet}, perhaps influenced by Geo. 3.354 \textit{sed iacet}. The verb also echoes 536 \textit{iaces} (Opheltes), where see note.

The phrase recurs (in the same metrical \textit{sedes}) in 9.814 \textit{nec territus ille}, where it describes Parthenopaeus not impressed by Diana’s warnings to stop killing Thebans. Since the fight between Capaneus and the Jovian serpent foreshadows Capaneus’ assault on Jupiter in book 10 (see 565–74n.), it is tempting to connect the calm reaction of the serpent with Jupiter’s calm in 10.897 \textit{non tamen haec turbant pacem Iouis}.

554b-78. \textit{The killing of the serpent}

The Argives are alarmed by Hypsipyle’s cries, and their leader Adrastus sends Parthenopaeus to make a reconnaissance. When he has informed the Seven about the situation, they confront the serpent. First Hippomedon attempts to kill the monster with a rock; after his unsuccessful attempt, Capaneus inflicts a lethal wound with his spear. The serpent flees to the temple of Jupiter, where it dies.

The passage clearly deviates from Euripides’ play, where Amphiaraurus kills the serpent with an arrow (\textit{Hyps.} fr. 757.101–8; see 534–43n.). As I have argued in the introduction (see §2.6.3), Statius rejects his Euripidean model in favour of the epic tradition, in which the Nemean serpent is also killed by more than one hero; the same holds for visual representations of the event (see App. B c, f, j).

Statius’ decision to have the serpent killed by Hippomedon and Capaneus should be understood from his characterisation of the two heroes. As Traglia notes (on 558ff.), ‘La scelta di Ippomedonte e Capaneo [...] è da mettere in relazione coi caratteri di fierezza e di empietà (si ricordi che il serpente è sacro a Giove) che li contraddistinguie nel poema.’ Notably, both
Hippomedon and Capaneus are associated with Giants as well as Hercules (see Lovatt 2005: 114–39), which accords well with the ambiguous status of their heroic monster-slaying (see notes below).

The passage is modelled primarily on Ov. Met. 3.28-94, where Cadmus kills the Theban serpent sacred to Mars. The unmistakable engagement with Ovid’s ‘Thebaid’ is important for our reading of the Opheltes episode as prefiguration and microcosm of the Theban War (see §6.5). The many verbal echoes are noted below; here we may point to some striking thematic and structural similarities: (1) both Cadmus cum suis and the Argives are searching for water; (2) both snakes are sacred to a god, Mars and Jupiter respectively; (3) as Lehanneur (1878: 249) and Taisne (1994: 332) rightly observe, both in Ovid and in Statius an unsuccessful attempt is made to kill the snake by hurling a rock, after which the beast is successfully killed by throwing a javelin. This pattern – unsuccessful action by A followed by successful action by B – is Homeric; see e.g. Hardie on Aen. 9.743-51 with references. An additional model is the duel between Aeneas and Turnus in Aeneid 12.

554-6. In less than three lines Statius describes the events between Hypsipyle’s cries and the Argives’ attack on the serpent, the narrative speed matching the quick actions of the Argives: when they hear Hypsipyle’s cries, their leader Adrastus (ducis) orders Parthenopaeus (Arcas eques) to make a reconnaissance; the young hero gallops away and returns to inform the Argives as to what has happened. In the next line, the Argives are already on their way to attack the serpent.

Argolicas: first attested in the Hellenistic period (Callim. fr. 114a.2 Harder Ἀργολικαὶ), the classical adjective being Ἀργολίς. Vergil uses it frequently in his Aeneid, usually in the sense ‘Greek’, sometimes sensu stricto for ‘Argive’ (see Austin on Aen. 2.78 Argolica de gente); metrically convenient, it remains popular with post-Vergilian poets (33 times in the Thebaid).

ululatus flebilis: the onomatopoeic ululatus, evoking the frenzied cries of maenads, conveys the intensity of Hypsipyle’s grief and distress. For its application to cries of mourning cf. Aen. 4.667–8 lamentis gemituque et femineo ululatu / tecta fremunt (reaction to Dido’s suicide), 9.477 femineo ululatu (Euryalus’ mother), 11.190 ululatusque ore dedere. The adjective flebilis here has the active sense ‘weeping’; elsewhere it means ‘lamentable, deserving of tears’ (e.g. 6.245, pace Newlands on S. 2.1.3). For the combination of words cf. Sil. 6.285 resonae siluis ulularunt flebile ripae, 13.258–9 maestis ululantum flebile matrum / questibus. Cf. also Servius on Ecl. 8.55 ululæ: ‘aues, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἄλοξτου, id est a fleto, nominatae’. In Ammianus Marcellinus we find a nice inversion of substantive and adjective, 29.5.12 ululabilis fletos.

554-5. aures / impulit: a Vergilian expression, cf. Aen. 12.618 arrectasque impulit auris, Geo. 4.349 maternas impulit auris (Deipser 1881: 28), Luc. 1.132-3 auris / impelli (Michler 1914: 32), Pers. 2.21, Sil. 2.580. Cf. also variations with different verbs, e.g. 12.362-3 erectas extremus virginis aures / accessit sonus, Val. 2.452 uox attigit aures, Homer. 841 aures diuerberat, Claud. Get. 625 pulsaretque tuas ululatus conjugas aures.

Hill suggests implet et, adding 4.309 imperat nuntas aures, but in light of the aforementioned parallels there is no reason to doubt the MSS reading, and the enjambed impulit with diaeresis after the first foot produces a fine Statian rhythm (cf. 511n. prominet).

The phrase may recall 4.808-9 saxosumque impulit aures / murmure, where the Argives, quenched by thirst, finally hear the sound of streaming water: in book 4 the sound heralds relief, here the sound that strikes their ears heralds trouble.

555-6. extemplo ... aduolat ardens / Arcas eques: the ‘Arcadian knight’ is undoubtedly Parthenopaeus (pace Barth’s V.S. ‘Arcadas Equites in hoc habebat Adrastus, ut explorarent omnia, et praecurrerent robur sui exercitus’): as Newlands (2012: 85) observes, “‘Arcadian’ occurs in initial line position to refer to Parthenopaeus” (except 2.258 Arcados Euhippi).
Arcadians are famous horsemen, cf. Aen. 10.364 Arcadas, insuetos acies inferre pedestr. Parthenopaeus is described at some length in book 4 (4.246-344); he is the central figure in the footrace (6.550-645; see esp. Lovatt 2005: 55-79); his aristeia and death form the final section of book 9 (9.570-907); his name also figures prominently at the end of the Thebaid (12.805-7), where his mors immatura is central to the endless lamentation. The emphasis on speed in extemplo and aduolat (with martial overtones; see OLD s.v. 2b) conveys Parthenopaeus’ boyish eagerness for warlike action (cf. e.g. 4.260-3), an essential feature of his character that will eventually lead to his premature death. Deipser (1881: 11) explains ardens as inflammatus, comparing Aen. 10.237 ardentis Marte Latinos. That passage is relevant indeed, as the combination Arcas eques is directly borrowed from Aen. 10.239 Arcas eques, where it is used differently as a collective singular to denote the Arcadian cavalry of Evander.

extemplo: found in Latin hexameters from Ennius onward; Vergil uses it 14 times (pace Axelson 1945: 26) in his Aeneid and ‘no doubt liked it as being an archais’ (Austin on Aen. 2.176). Axelson (loc. cit.) observes that Ovid uses the word in his epic Metamorphoses only (10 times), which also suggests that the word had become an archaism appropriate to the elevated style. Silver epicists use it with similar frequency, except Lucan (only once).

555. monitu ducis: the expression occurs again in 10.387, where Amphion leads his horsemen monitu ducis (sc. Eteocles) towards the Argives’ camp. Here the dux is Adrastus, commander in chief of the Seven against Thebes (on dux Adrastus see Ganiban 2013: 262 n. 53, who overlooks the present instance). For Adrastus sending out scouts cf. 4.740-1 huc illuc impellit Adrastus / exploratores.

556. causamque refert: the verb is often used in military contexts of scouts bringing back report (OLD s.v. refero 5); cf. 7.231. causam may refer to the cause of Hypsipyle’s cries (i.e. the monstrous serpent) or, more generally, to the situation that Parthenopaeus has found (OLD s.v. causa 14). For the pairing of words cf. Ov. Fast. 3.476 causa relata.

556-8. tunc squamea demum / torus ad armorum radios fremitumque uirorum / collo mouet: alarmed by their cries and flashing armour, the serpent now raises its head to confront its enemies. The lines recall Aen. 12.6-8 tum demum mouet arma leo, gaudetque comantis / excutiens ceruice toros fixumque latronis / impauidus frangit telum et fremit ore cruento. Vergil’s impauidus corresponds with 553 nec territus ille / arma leo, gaudetque comantis / excutiens ceruice toros fixumque latronis / impauidus frangit telum et fremit ore cruento. The intertext underscores that the serpent does not begin the fight: ‘the lion fights back only in self-defence (tum demum, implying that the lion holds back until forced to attack by sheer need to survive’ (Tarrant on Aen. 12.4-9).

tunc ... demum: ‘tmesis’ of tunc (or tum) demum is most unusual, the only three parallels being Pl. Trin. 781 tum tu iigitur demum, Sil. 6.270 tum fractus demum, 11.286 tum frontis redditum demum; although in different combinations separation of demum is less audacious. See further TLL s.v. demum 5.513.2-18 (‘de usu et collocatione’).

squamea ... colla: a notable hyperbaton. The combination of adjective and substantive recalls 2.414, where Eteocles is compared to a serpent induced to anger by heat. The snake’s scales are monumentalised on Opheltes’ tomb, where squameus is used pro substantivo (6.247). squameus seems to be a Vergilian coinage, the normal adjective being squamosus (once in Vergil, Aen. 4.408, not in Statius); cf. Servius on Aen. 2.218. Naturally scales are a traditional element in descriptions of monstrous snakes; cf. e.g. 517 squamisque, Geo. 2.154 squameus ... anguis, 3.426 squamea ... terga, Aen. 2.218, Cul. 167 squamosos ... orbes, Man. 1.416 (constellation Hydra) squamea ... tergora, 433 (constellation Cetus) squamea terga.

torus: frequently applied to snakes (e.g. Cic. Arat. fr. 8.1 torus Draco serpit, Aen. 6.571-2 toruosque ... anguis, Cul. 176 torus), often to the eyes (e.g. Cul. 173 lumine toruo, 189-90 torua tenentem / lumina ... serpentem, Val. 8.60 lumina torua draconis). Perhaps Romans felt an etymological connection with torqueo (cf. Aen. 7.399 sanguineam torquens aciem, toruumque, Luc. 5.211-2, Sen. Ag. 715 torquentur oculi)?
armorum radios fremitumque uirorum: note the chiasmus. The flashing light radiating from metal armour is a traditional motif in descriptions of armies and warriors; Statian examples include 2.532 flammae aeratis lunae tremor errat in armis, 4.132 flammae orbis, 4.665 radiis ... ferri (Parkes ad loc. rightly defends the MSS reading), 5.10 armorum ... fulgura, 12.659 armorum lux. The motif also occurs in Eur. Hyps. fr. 752f.30-1 ἃς τῇ δάπτει χαλκφόροι ὤπλος / Αχιλλεύς πέλλων πᾶν. 585 Achilles’ armour famously flashes like ‘burning fire or the rising sun’ in ll. 22.134-5. Echoing the incipit of the Aeneid, armorum ... uirorum sets the tone for the quintessentially epic ‘Drachenkampf’ (on the metapoetic potential of arma and uir see Hinds 2000, Heerink 2010: 216-7).

558-65. Before Capaneus finishes off the serpent, Hippomedon attempts to kill the monster with a rock. As Vessey observes (1973: 188), ‘in this action we see a foreshadowing of the hero’s part in the funeral games’, where Hippomedon is victorious with the discus (6.704-21); notably the hero himself invites recollection of his present (unsuccessful) action when he associates his discus with a war missile (6.656-9; Lovatt 2005: 105); the emphasis on the rock’s landing corresponds with that of his discus in 6.713-5 (cf. Lovatt 2005: 111). In the ‘Iliadic’ half of the epic, however, Hippomedon does not fight with stones (Klinnert 1970: 86 n. 23). Throwing rocks is common in epic battles since the Iliad; see Mulder on 2.559-76, Aen. 10.127 with Harrison, Val. 6.648-51.

Hippomedon’s action is closely modelled on Cadmus’ equally unsuccessful attempt to kill the Theban serpent with a rock in Ovid (Met. 3.59-64) –

dixit dextraque molarem
sustulit et magnum magno conamine misit;
illius impulsi cum turribus ardua celsis
moenia mota forent: serpens sine uulnere mansit,
loricaeque modo squamis defensus et atrae
duritia pellis ualidos cute reppulit ictus

– which looks back to Euripides’ Phoenissae, where Cadmus does manage to slay Ares’ serpent with a rock (Phoen. 663, 1063). Klinnert (1970: 86 n. 23) claims that ‘[d]ie Akzentuierung des Impulsiven bei Statius bedeutet den Wandel gegenüber Ovid’, but I fail to see why Hippomedon’s action should be more impulsive than Cadmus’. An additional model, as Lewis (1773 ad loc.) and Mozley (1933: 38) have succinctly noted, is Aen. 12.896-907, where Turnus unsuccessfully attempts to crush Aneas with a rock. The boxing match between Dares and Entellus in Aeneid 5 also seems relevant (see 563n. uenientem ... ictum). The following notes elaborate my earlier discussion of Statius’ use of Ovid and Vergil in this scene (Soerink 2013: 367-8). Baebius in Homer. 460-2 also combines precisely these two passages from Ovid (see Scaffai ad loc.).

558. rapit ingenti conamine: reworking Ov. Met. 3.59-60 dextraque molarem / sustulit et magno magnum conamine misit. Statius subtly improves upon his model: Cadmus lifts the rock singlehandedly (dextra), although he needs magno conamine to hurl it; Hippomedon needs ingenti conamine to lift up the rock in the first place. Ovid’s magno is replaced with ingenti, ‘the archetypal epic epithet, found 168 times in the Aeneid’ (Harrison on Aen. 10.127 furt ingens toto conixus corpore saxum); the adjective is often applied to rocks, after Homeric πέλλων (see Harrison loc. cit., where one might add Homer. 460 saxum ingens). Statius

585 In his Aris & Phillips edition (19951, 2004) Cropp defends the P.Oxy. reading Λέγεόν, but in his Loeb edition (2008) he adopts Von Arnim’s conjecture λεγείων (cf. his remarks in his review of Kannicht’s 2005 edition, BMCR 2006.05.23). In my view, λεγείων πέλλων should be maintained, as it balances the preceding ομήρων Νήματον (752f.29); the argument that the Argives are at Nemea (and not Argos) does not stand, since Nemea is Argive territory (cf. 511n. Inachia).
replaces *sustulit* with *rapit* in imitation of Turnus in *Aen.* 12.901 *manu raptum trepida*). The lifting up of the rock is a traditional motif of such scenes since Homer, cf. e.g. *Il.* 20.285-7, Harrison on *Aen.* 10.127, Scafsel on Homer. 460-2; in Statius cf. 2.559-60 with Mulder’s note. On *conamen* see Korn on Val. 4.40.

558-9. *saxum / quo discretus ager*: a most sophisticated phrase. In the Ovidian passage, Cadmus lifts up a *molarem*, in imitation of *Aen.* 8.250 *molaribus* (Hercules slaying Cacus). Ovid’s imitation, however, is slightly odd: one wonders, with Bömer, ‘wie gerade in diese Wildnis ein Mühlestein geraten konnte’ (Bömer on *Met.* 3.59). For that reason, it seems, Statius deliberately writes *saxum*, not *molarem*: that word he carefully reserves for the simile in 560-1. Furthermore, the words *quo discretus ager* explain what Ovid failed to explain, namely why the rock is there: it was placed there by peasants (the *agricolae* mentioned in 512) to demarcate a field. And in doing so, Statius imitates *Aen.* 12.897-8 *saxum antiquum ingens*, *campo quod forte iacebat*, / *limes agro positus litem ut discerneret aruis*. Cf. also 6.352-3 *saxeus umbo / arbiter agricolis* with Pavan’s note. In Nonnus’ version Cadmus kills the Theban serpent with a border stone (*Dion.* 4.409-11). Klinnert (1970: 86 n. 22) connects Hippomedon’s removal of the border stone with his transgression of boundaries, which he regards as a crucial feature of his character; cf. 7.424-40.

559. *uacuas impellit in auras*: elaborating Ovid’s *misit*; the verb *impellit* is chosen in imitation of Ovid’s *illus impulsi* (which recurs literally in 9.395 *illus* [sc. Hippomedon’s] *impulsi*). The phrase *uacuas ... in auras* is inspired by the secondary model, where Turnus hurling his rock *uacuum per inane* (Aen. 12.906); cf. also Aen. 7.593 *aurasque ... inanis*, 12.592 *uacuas ... auras*, *Geo.* 3.109 *aera per uacuam*, Val. 4.302 *uacuas ... per auras*, Hor. *Carm.* 1.3.34, Pind. *O.* 1.6 ἔρθως δ’ ἀιδέρος. As Klinnert (1970: 86) nicely observes, ‘klingt mit *uacuas* auch schon von Anfang an leise die Erfolglosigkeit der Anstrengung an’ (cf. Horsfall on *Aen.* 7.593).


Klinnert (1970: 86) draws attention to the fact that Hippomedon is named only at the end of the clause: ‘Herausreißen und Werfen werden unverzüglich vorgeführt; erst dann wird genannt, wer von den Helden handelt. Hippomedon tritt ganz hinter dem zurück, was er tut.’ Perhaps Statius wants to keep his readers in suspense as to which version he will follow?

Soerink 2013: 364-5). In 9.145-7 Hippomedon is himself compared to a city attacked with siege engines.

The phrasing is Vergilian. For the combination quo turbine cf. Aen. 11.284 quo turbine torqueat hastam, 12.320 quo turbine. The portarum ... clastra are taken from Aen. 7.185 portarum ... clastra (cf. 9.758 rumpere clastra ... portis). And librarre ‘in the sense of “poise to throw”’ is first found in Vergil’ (Harrisson on Aen. 10.421); cf. Aen. 5.479, 9.417, 10.773, Ov. Met. 8.757; in Statius e.g. 7.676, 8.523, 757; see further TLL s.v. libro 1352.11-40. An audacious Statian touch is saliunt, a verb rarely used of inanimate objects (cf. 6.502 with Pavan, 10.539 subitae saliunt in uela procellae).

In the boxing match between Dares and Entellus, the latter is also compared to a city under siege (Aen. 5.439-40); cf. 563n. uenientem ... ictum.

molares: see 558-9n. Van den Broek (2007: 60) discerns an echo of the millstones used to mutilate Poine’s corpse in 1.622-3 asprosque molares / deculcare genis, yet another echo of Adrastus’ narrative of Linus and Coroebus (cf. §3.2).

562. cassa ducis uirtus: corresponding with Ov. Met. 3.62 serpens sine uulnere mansit. While Ovid focuses on the serpent, Klinnert points out, Statius emphasises the failure of Hippomedon (1970: 87 n. 24 ‘Die Darstellung ist hier auf den Helden verlagert’). For the phrasing cf. Luc. 2.263 ne ... in cassum uirtus eat. Adjectival cassus, instead of in cassum, is poetic in classical Latin (e.g. Aen. 12.780, Luc. 2.663, 5.130 and the examples listed in OLD s.v. cassus1). Hippomedon’s attempt to kill the serpent can be seen as an instance of the recurring pattern of excessive energy followed by stagnation and exhaustion, discussed by Hershkowitz 1998: 249-60. Kenyeres 2001: 96 suggests that ‘[j]ust as Hippomedon is unsuccessful in killing the serpent, so too will he be unsuccessful in defeating the walled city of Thebes’ – unlike Cypanos, one could add, who will destroy both serpent and walls.

562-3. iam mollia colla refusus / in tergum serpens uenientem exhauserat ictum: what exactly happens? The verb exhauserat is puzzling (see note below). Two interpretations have been proposed: (a) The serpent avoids the rock. The line has often been so interpreted, as appears from the glosses evaserat and uitauerat (for exhauserat) found in several MSS. The verb effugies (567) also suggests that the serpent ‘escapes’ Hippomedon’s rock. Perhaps Statius took inspiration from the Ovidian model, where the Martius anguis avoids Cadmus’ spear (not his rock), Met. 3.88-9 laesaque colla dabat retro plagamque sedere / cedo arceb at. (b) Alternatively, the serpent does not avoid the rock, but ‘absorbs’ the impetus of the blow by catching it with its supple neck. That is how Klinnert (1970: 87 n. 25; cf. Roth 2009: 39) understands the Latin: ‘die Schlange legt den Kopf zurück, fängt mit dem Bogen des Innenhalses den Stein auf und erschöpt so die Wucht des Anpralls (ictum)’.

Either way, Statius deviates from his Ovidian model, where Cadmus’ rock rebounds from the snake’s hard scales, Met. 3.63-4 loricaeque modo squamis defensus et atrae / duritia pellis ualidos cute reppulit ictus (Ovid’s loricaeque modo nods to the motif of rebounding missiles in battle narrative from Homer onwards, cf. e.g. Homer. 611-2 at fers Aiax / ingentem clipeo septemplice reppulit ictum with Scaffai). In Statius, by contrast, the serpent is able to cope with the rock precisely because its neck is mollia (the very opposite of Ovid’s duritia pellis) – an ironically non-epic word (see e.g. Reitz 2013: 196 with nn. 69-70). Note that the word ictum is taken directly from the Ovidian model.

colla refusus / in tergum: the phrasing owes something to Ov. Met. 3.68 caput in sua terga retorsit as well as Met. 3.88-9 (see previous note). For the verb see OLD s.v. refundo 2 ‘(pass.) To move back (with a flowing motion), sink or slip back’, also applied in that sense to a snake in Val. 5.253-5 anguis ... spiris nemus omne refusis / implicuit (see Wijsman ad loc.). For snakes’ supplexness in general see Sauvage (1975: 250) and cf. e.g. [Sen.] Herc.O. 301 lenta serpens. The passage might bring to mind the constellation Serpens, which typically
turns back to confront Ophiuchus (‘snake-holder’); cf. Man. 1.331-4, esp. respicit ille tamen molli ceruice reflexus et reedit etc.

exhauserat: what exactly is this supposed to mean? As Williams on 10.294-5 notes, Statius uses exhaurire ‘in the most diverse ways’; bold usages include 4.616 exhaustos ... uulitus (Oedipus’ face), 6.236-7 labores / exhausti, 7.471 hauserat with Smolenaars’ note, 8.216 exhaustus sermone dolor, 10.295 inanes / exhaurire minas. The closest parallels are 6.683-4 (Phlegyas’ discus) tandemque exhaustus ab alto / tardior ad terram reedit (adduced by Klinnert 1970: 87 n. 25) and 10.838-9 exhaustis ... missilibus.

The verb is sometimes used in the sense ‘to remove or delete’, with physical (e.g. Val. Max. 5.3.ext.3 manibus exhausta moenia) or non-physical object (e.g. Cic. Att. 1.18.1 multa ... quae me sollicitant anguntque ... unius ambulationis sermone exhauriri possunt); the TLL lists our occurrence as an extension of this sense (TLL s.v. II.B.2.b ‘irritum reddere’) together with Cod. Iust. 3.29.8.pr. qui ... actiones filiorum exhauserint.

I think that exhauserat is best understood as a poetical equivalent to exceperat. The latter verb is used to describe the ‘catching’ or ‘intercepting’ of weapons (OLD s.v. 12; cf. e.g. Homer. 825-6 hastam / ... quam prolapsam celeri excipit ictu), but can also mean ‘to sustain the force of (an attack)’ (OLD s.v. 11). Perhaps Statius thought of exhaurio because excipio, like exhaurio, is also frequently used in combination with liquids (see OLD s.v. 1b and 5)? The suggestion could then be that the serpent ‘drains’ the blow of its energy.

Hall prints euaserat, which has been glossed in an 11th century MS and found in the margin of a 13th century one; but surely euaserat is meant to explain the bold usage of exhauserat rather than a correction based on comparison with other MSS. The same holds for uitauerat, which is found as a gloss in two other MSS.

uenientem ... ictum: the iunctura is taken from Aen. 5.444-5 ille ictum uenientem a uertice uelox / praevuldit celerique elapsus corpore cessit, where Dares avoids Entellus’ blow. The allusion – unexpectedly perhaps – aligns the Nemean serpent with the young and nimble-footed Dares, Hippomedon with the old and massive Entellus, whose giant physique is also emphasised (cf. esp. Aen. 5.422-3; like Hippomedon he is called arduus in Aen. 5.480).

564. dat sonitum tellus: a variation on Aen. 12.713 dat gemitum tellus, at the beginning of the duel between Aeneas and Turnus (cf. Theb. 6.107 and 527 with Pavan); cf. also Aen. 9.709 dat tellus gemitum (with Hardie’s note), 9.752 fit sonus, ingenti concussa est pondere tellus. The replacement of gemitum with sonitum may look back to Aen. 7.566-7 (Amsanctus) medioque fragosus / dat sonitum saxis, where the sound also involves rocks. The earth is slightly personified. In combination with uenientem ... ictum (see previous note), I am also tempted to see an allusion to Aen. 5.435 multa cauo lateri ingeminant et pectore uastos / dant tellus, where Entellus’ chest resounds with Dares’ blows – perhaps Statius’ tellus even alludes to Entellus?

564. nemorumque per auia: cf. 2.79 nemorosa per auia, 6.29 nemora auia and 12.232-3 inuia saxa ... nemorumque arcanana. The combination nemora auia was coined by Lucretius (2.145, 346, 5.1386) and imitated by Vergil (Aen. 7.580) and Ovid (Met. 1.479). In its present form, with partitive genitive, it is first attested in Lucan (1.569-70 auia ... nemorum). As Williams on 10.389 auia campi notes, auia is first used substantivally by Vergil (Aen. 2.736, cf. e.g. Val. 2.459), but not in combination with a gen. until the Silver Age. Maurach 1995: 91 points out that ‘in dieser umgewichtenden Ausdrucksweise das Adjektiv in die betonte Substantivposition kommt und das Ungewichtigere in die Genetivstellung rückt’; on the construction see Dewar on 9.877 deuia campi, Williams on 10.230 montis in ardua niti, Austin on Aen. 2.332 angusta uiarum. Maurach loc. cit. with references.

The phrase supports a Callimachean reading of Statius’ Nemea: on the poetic credentials of ‘woods’ see §4.2, while auia may bring to mind the ‘untrodden paths’ of the Aetia prologue (fr. 1.27-8 Harder κελεύουσι / ἀτρίπτως), as McNelis 2007: 35 suggests with respect to the
auia rura (1.579) where Linus is torn to pieces by dogs; cf. also 4.714 per auia, 726 auia and 4.805 deuia.

564-5. densi / dissulant nexus: ‘close bondings spring asunder’ (transl. SB), an opaque phrase that must refer to the rock damaging the intertwined branches (‘bonds’) of the trees (cf. Roth 2009: 39 ‘ein Auseinanderspringen des dichten Haines’; Brouwer ‘de vallende steen rijt takken en twijgen, / hele struiken uiteen’). In 4.139-40 Hippomedon is compared to the centaur Hylaeus ‘breaking the woods with his shoulders and twofold breast’; here our epic hero is also involved in the destruction of the pastoral landscape. Note the ὁσπέρνον πόστερον vis-
à-vis dat sonitum tellus: first the rock makes its way through the trees, then it hits the ground. Alternatively, the forestal damage may be caused by the shock as the rock hits the ground. For nexus applied to intertwined branches cf. Tac. Germ. 46.3 ramorum nexus, Luc. 3.400 conexit ... ramis, Val. 6.260-1 populeae fidentem nexibus umbrae / ... auem. Status is rather fond of the word, cf. e.g. 4.731 thoracum nexus (chain-mail), 6.31 uitatur nux (cf. Brown 1994: 55 with n. 121 on Statius’ use of nectere). Would it be ridiculous to connect the word with the programmatic nectam fraude moras (4.677) – Nemea’s poetic ‘woven woods’?

565-74. Following the Ovidian model, the unsuccessful rock is followed by a successful spear: ‘Capaneus is able to drive his spear into its mouth; it cuts out the serpent’s tongue and smashes through its brain and crest’ (Ogden 2013: 55). The hero thus replays Cadmus in Met. 3.65-7; at non duritia iaculum quoque uicit eadem: / quod medio lentae spinae curuamine fixum / constitit et totum descendit in ilia ferrum. Capaneus’ action comes quite suddenly. Lewis (1773 ad loc.) enthusiastically comments: ‘We are alarmed with the sudden interposition of Capaneus: he breaks in upon us like a Flash of Lightning (sic), and surprises the Reader, who was unprepared for it. [...] the chief Beauty of it, which consists in the sudden and abrupt Turn of the Address, had been entirely lost, if the Poet had followed the usual Forms and said, “Then Capaneus rushes with his Spear, and begins as follows”.’

Before he hurls his spear, Capaneus utters a brief ‘challenge speech’ (Dominik 1994a: 283; cf. ibid. 147-8 on Capaneus’ ‘taunts and challenges’), boasting that the serpent will not escape his spear, to which he adds three conditional clauses (seu ... siue ... si ...); the climax of this ‘tricolon crescendo’ is marked with a repetition of non. These si-clauses call attention to the ambiguous status of the serpent (both divine and monstrous) and, consequently, the ambiguity of Capaneus’ action: sacrilegious assault on the gods and heroic Herculean monster-slaying at the same time. For taunts as traditional element of the epic genre see Smolenaars on 7.677-80 with references. Capaneus’ rhetoric contrasts with the silence of Hippomedon, a man of few words (see Dominik 1994a: 313, 320; cf. e.g. 9.343 nihil ille).

In the second si-clause (568) the contemptor deorum (3.602, 9.550), in whose Epicurean opinion the gods are born from fear (3.661), expresses the hope that the serpent is sacred to the gods, so that by killing it he will offend the gods. Cf. LP (ad loc.) ‘est enim contemptor numinum et quaecum inuenire facultatem calcandae religionis’; Legras (1905: 216-7) ‘Toujours au premier rang quand il faut frapper, c’est lui qui tue le serpent assassin d’Ophéleis (V, 565 sqq.), non sans braver encore les dieux’ (similarly Melville on 568; Klinnert 1970: 31; Leigh 2006: 225). Ironically, Capaneus does not know that the serpent is indeed sacred, to Jupiter himself. Thus, although the hero is unaware, his confrontation with the serpent is a prefiguration of his assault on Jupiter in book 10. See further 583-7n.

Adding force to his taunt, Capaneus claims that he will kill the serpent even if it carried the upper body of a Giant (on the Giants’ serpentine legs see 569-70n.): ‘Mit d[i]es[er] Herausforderung [...] stellt er den Drachen, seiner Gestalt wegen, als einen Zeusgegner, einen Giganten hin und rückt sich damit indirekt neben Jupiter, genauer gesagt setzt sich als ein “alter Jupiter” an seine Stelle’ (Klinnert 1970: 31). This is most remarkable, since traditionally it is Capaneus himself who plays the role of Giant (cf. Aesch. Sept. 424, Eur. Phoen. 1131); in the
Thebaid he is also in many ways associated with the Giants, the most obvious examples being the Giant on his helmet (4.175-6) and the similes that compare him to the Aloidae (10.849-52), Enceladus (11.7-8) and Tityos (11.12-7). Lovatt (2005: 133-6) discusses the role-inversion, pointing out similar ambiguities in 6.750-5, where Capaneus is compared to the Giant Tityos but at the same time has fulmineas ... manus (6.750) which align him with Jupiter, and in book 10, where Capaneus ‘makes a claim to play Jupiter when he tries to claim the lightning for himself’ (10.925-6) and where the gigantomachic imagery seems to refer to heaven as much as earth (10.913-7). Assimilating Capaneus to both Giant and Jupiter, the poem ‘problematis[e]s any simple identification of gigantomachy with the victory of order over chaos’ (Lovatt 2005: 133). The assimilation of Capaneus and Jupiter also has a political dimension, in that it ‘makes the distinction between legitimised and illegitimate authority extremely difficult to maintain. Is Capaneus a freedom fighter or a terrorist? Is Jupiter a monstrous tyrant or an efficient ruler?’ (ibid. 137-8). We may add that Capaneus not only puts himself in the role of Jupiter, but also in that of Hercules, who also fought against Giants (see Brown 1994: 152 n. 102 with references). Statius problematises the polarities inherent in the Gigantomachic myth. Evadne also invites reflection on Capaneus (not) being a giant in 12.553-4 (cf. Feeney 1991: 361 n. 156).

That Capaneus is an ambiguous character also appears from his associations with Hercules (see Harrison 1992, McNelis 2007: 21, 82). His helmet may be adorned with a Giant, his shield depicts the recently slain Hydra of Lerna (4.168-72), which closely associates him with the civilising ἀλεξανδρος Hercules (cf. the Hydra on the shield of Hercules’ priest Theron in Sil. 2.158-9). Roth (2009: 53-4) also connects Capaneus’ slaying of the Nemean serpent with the image of the Hydra on his shield. As Lovatt (2005: 119-21) has shown, Hippomedon is an ambiguous hero, both monster (Giant) and monster-slayer (Hercules). The same applies to Capaneus.

The ambiguities are also reinforced through intratextual connections with the story of Linus and Coroebus. The serpent is reminiscent of both Python and Poine and, as a result, we are left to wonder which paradigm applies to the Nemean serpent (see §3.3). Statius’ intertextual engagement with Vergil’s Laocoon adds another layer of complexity: the priest is killed by monstrous snakes, the superum contemptor kills one (cf. notes on 570 hasta tremens, 572 iubas, 573 nigri sanie perfusa cerebri, 576-7).

565-7. at non mea uulnera ... umquam / effugies: the initial at non may be taken from the Ovidian model, where Cadmus’ second successful attack also begins with at non (Met. 3.65, spoken by the narrator; see 565-74n.). However, as Eissfeldt (1904: 386) has observed, Capaneus’ taunt also reworks Aen. 9.747-8 (Turnus addressing Pandarus) ‘at non hoc telum, mea quod ui dextera uersat / effugies, neque enim is teli nec uulneris auctor’. For hoc telum Statius has substituted mea uulnera, which Deipser (1881: 18) rightly explains as ‘vulnerantia tela’ (OLD s.v. uulnus 1c ‘of prospective wounds residing in missiles’; cf. 7.270 with Smolenaars, 11.53 with Venini). Deipser (loc. cit.) compares Aen. 10.140 uulnera, but Statius’ use of the word in this sense is more likely inspired by the aforementioned Vergilian model, Aen. 9.745-6 uulnus Saturnia luno / detorsit ueniens.

clamat: for opening, interposing and closing formulas to speeches in the Thebaid see Dominik’s appendix (1994a: 342-6). clamat occurs seven times, mostly interposing (3.6, 607, here, 5.701, 8.735, 11.478, always in the sixth foot) and one closing (2.624).

566. trabe fraxineae: in post-Vergilian epic trabs is occasionally used metonymically for ‘spear (shaft)’; see OLD s.v. trabs 2c and cf. 3.149, 9.124, Sil. 4.283. More conventional is 4.6-7 trabalem / hastam, which goes back, via Aen. 12.294 telo ... trabali, to Ennius’ trabale telum (e.g. Val. 8.301 tela trabalia, Homer. 373 teloque ... trabali with Scaffai).
In book 4 Capaneus is introduced as spear-fighter. In the catalogue, however, his spear is made of cypress wood (4.176-7 atque uni missilis illi / cuspidae praefixa stat frondibus orba cupressus); in books 8 and 9 he hurls a spear made of pine wood (8.661 Capaneaque pinus; 9.552 it tremibunda abies). Spears made of ash-trees are common since Homer (see Smolenaars on 7.269 and cf. e.g. II. 22.133 μζής νέας), so that Ovid speaks of fraxinus utilis hastis (Met. 10.93); Statius has infandos belli potura cruores / fraxinus (6.102-3).

Pléasant has suggested that Capaneus’ trabe fraxinea imitates the Culex, where the shepherd ualidum dextra detractit ab arbo re truncum (192) to kill the snake; Güntzschel (1972: 184 n. 123) objects that ‘die Waffe, mit der die nemeische Schlange getötet wird [...] ist keine “massue” [club], sondern eindeutig als hasta gekennzeichnet’. On the relevance of the Culex for our passage see §5.4. Lehanneur (1878: 67) mentions trabe fraxinea as an example of Statius’ licentious use of the ablative, but it is easily understood as instrumental abl. with the notion of attack implied in the verb subit (see following note).

subit: ‘a favourite word with Statius, used in many senses’ (Williams on 10.274); here it is almost synonymous with ‘attacks’ (cf. e.g. 2.474, Aen. 9.344). The implicit idea of upward movement is in accordance with the idea of Capaneus assaulting Jupiter like a Giant (Leigh 2006: 230-2). Cf. Man. 5.595 subit, where it is the serpent that moves upwards to fight flying Perseus.

obuius: Leigh (2006: 227-8) points out that Capaneus, godless though he may be, refuses to fight by trickery. For the underlying idea cf. 7.311 (Hypseus) ter insuto seruantur pectora ferro, / pectora: nam tergo numquam metus, Cat. 64.339 (Achilles) hostibus haud tergo, sed fortis pectorum notus.

567. seu tu pauidi ferus incola luci: according to LP (ad loc.) pauidus, unlike pauens, means ‘causing fear’, understanding ‘summitate arborum siue religionis metu incutientis pauorem’. But pauidus usually means ‘frightened’, and the most natural interpretation is ‘the savage denizen of the affrighted grove’ (transl. SB) – affrighted by the serpent, that is. Cf. 505n. nemoris ... horror. The slight personification of the grove is not unusual. incola (‘inhabitant’), not found in Vergil, is popular with Ovid. We may be reminded of the god-fearing peasants in pastoral Pallanteum, cf. Aen. 8. 349-50 iam tum religio pauidos terrebat agrestis / dira loci, iam tum siluam saxumque tremebant (on the connections between Nemea and Pallanteum see §5.2).

568. deis ... concessa uoluptas: ‘a plaything given to the gods’ (Ritchie-Hall). uoluptas here is abstractum pro concreto (see OLD s.v. uoluptas 2); the word is often so used in erotic language, e.g. when Mars addresses Venus as o mihi bellorum requies et sacra uoluptas (3.295); see Adams 1982: 197. The erotic overtones add to the blasphemous tone of Capaneus’ speech. The participle concessa means little more than ‘belonging to’, cf. 12.481-2 nulli concessa potentum / ara deum (the famous Altar of Mercy) and Sen. Herc.O. 598-9 spiciferae concessa deae / Attica ... Eleusin.

utinamque deis: the parenthesis repeats and “corrects” the preceding deis, a figure known as correctio in ancient rhetoric (see Wills 1996: 68-71). For utinam ‘introducing a single word or phrase’ see Smolenaars on 7.358. Capaneus positively hopes that the serpent belongs to the gods, so that his assault on the creature will be an (indirect) assault on the gods (see 565-70n.). Similarly in 7.677-81, addressing the young priest Eunaeus, Capaneus says that he would rather fight against Bacchus himself (the death of Eunaeus also recalls that of Opheltes; see §6.3); and in 6.735-6 he wishes his opponent in the boxing match to be someone from Thebes, whom he might legitimately kill.

569-70. non si consertum super haec mihi membra Giganta / subueheres: ‘not even if on top of these limbs you brought up against me a giant attached to them’ (Ritchie-Hall). On the important implications of this remark see 565-74n. The phrasing is extremely difficult,
and for a moment we may be under the impression that Capaneus refers to his own limbs and the Giant on his helmet (4.175-6); who plays the Giant in this scene is unclear (cf. 565-74n.).

The dative mihi goes with subueheres (OLD s.v. 1 ‘to convey upwards from below’); the preverbium sub- refers to the serpent’s imagined position below the Giant, as its serpentine legs. The verb is more often used as reflexive-passive, e.g. 1.337, Aen. 11.477-8 summas ... ad Palladis arces / subuehitur magna matrum regina caterua.

As LP notes, the Giants were said to have serpentine legs. He adduces Ov. Fast. 5.37 mille manus illis dedit et pro cruribus angues, to which we may add e.g. Tz. ad Lyc. 63 ἑκατοτό-πως. Ov. Met. 1.184 anguipedum. Tr. 4.7.17 serpentipedes ... Gigantas, Man. 1.429 permixtaque corpora, Luc. 9.656 stantes serpente gigantas, Val. 2.28 anguiibus with Poortvliet, Sil. 6.181-2 and the most elaborate Gigantomachy in Latin literature [Verg.] Aen. 45-6 (see Goodyear 1965 and Hildebrandt 1907). Cf. also Giants in the visual arts, e.g. the serpent-legged Giants on the Pergamon Altar in Berlin. I do not find parallels predating the Hellenistic period.

consertum: despite its military associations (cf. expressions like manum / proelium conserere, e.g. 3.18), the OLD is wrong in listing consertum sub 4c ‘to join battle’; it simply means ‘joined, fastened together’ (see OLD s.v. consero 2). Mozley also misunderstands the line (see Håkanson’s appendix). For the image one might compare S. 1.1.1 (the equestrian statue of Domitian) superimposito moles geminata colosso, although I do not wish to suggest that Domitian is presented as Giant.

membra: the poetic plural (again in 575) may wittily remind readers of the fact that snakes actually consist of just one membrum. For membra applied to serpentine coils cf. Aen. 5.279 nixantem nodis seque in sua membra plicantem (where Servius comments ‘etiam hoc ab homine transtulit’), 7.353 membris lubricus errat, [Verg.] Cul. 195 horrida ... uoluentia membra.

570. uolat hasta tremens: describing the weapon’s movement is a traditional, almost formulaic, prelude to the killing itself; see Smolenaa on 7.690 illa uolans and cf. e.g. Aen. 9.441-2 rotat ensem / fulmineum. For the combination hasta tremens cf. 12.774 hasta tremens (Pollmann ad loc. compares Aen. 2.52 stetit illa tremens, although Laocoön’s spear is no longer in the air), Aen. 2.175 hastamque trementem, 10.522 tremibunda superuolat hasta.

The hasta must be the trabe fraxinea mentioned in 566 – although one might prefer the spear made of cypress wood described in the catalogue (4.176-7), in which case the weapon sticking into the soil (573-4) might provide an aetiology for the cypress grove in the sanctuary of Nemea: not spears made from trees (as in 3.590), but trees made from spears (cf. 7.552 ante haec excusso frondesce lancea ferro, Ov. Met. 15.561-2, Plut. Rom. 20).

570-1. et hiantia monstri / ora subit: Capaneus’ action is reminiscent of Tydeus killing Chromis, 2.624-5 dum clamat, subit ore cauo [on the abl. see Williams 1951] Teumesia cornus, / nec prohibent fauces (cf. following note). Harrison on Aen. 10.323 interquens iaculum clamanti sistit in ore lists parallels for ‘the wound in the throat or mouth, usually sustained while speaking’, e.g. Il. 16.345, 404-5, Aen. 7.533-4, 9.442-3, to which one could add Ov. Met. 12.294-5, 456-8, Sil. 2.119; cf. also Hippomedon killing Eryx in 9.128-32, where Statius deliberately deviates from the norm (9.130 hastam non ore receptam).

571. linguaeque secat fera uincla trisulcae: the spear severs the serpent’s tongue, which continues the parallelism with Tydeus killing Chromis, cf. 2.625-6 atque illi uoce repleta / intercepta natat prorupto in sanguine linguæ. The severed tongue has Homeric origins, e.g. Il. 5.75 ἀντικύρα δ’ ἀν’ ἐδότας ὑπὸ γλῶσσαν τάμις χαλίς, 5.293, 17.619. The line is echoed in 9.868-9 nerauque obliqua sonor / uincla secat (Dryas’ spear severing Parthenopaeus’ bow-string).

The severed tongue plays with the Ovidian model, where Cadmus first wounds the snake’s palate (Met. 3.85-6 iamque venenifero sanguis manare palato / coeperat et virides adspergine
tinserat herbas) and then kills it by thrusting his sword into its mouth (3.90-1 Agenorides coniectum in guttura ferrum / usque sequens pressit). Statius combines the two elements and adds the severed tongue (that is what happens if you press in guttura ferrum / usque sequens, Statius perhaps thought). That the spear also cleaves the palate (note that a severed palate is symptomatic of thirst, cf. Luc. 4.328 rescisso ... palato) is implied in the following lines, where the spear flashes through the monster’s head, pierces it crest, and ends up sticking deep into the soil (572-4). A fine example of intertextual ‘Überbietung’. The combination of severed tongue and snake might also recall Ov. Met. 6.555-60, where Philomela’s tongue is cut out and compared to a writhing snake.

linguae ... uincula: ‘string(s) of the tongue’; since the snake has a triple tongue (trisulcae, 509n. ter), the plural need not be poetic. For the expression cf. NT sec. Marcum 7.35 ἐλύσῃ ὁ ἐσμός τῆς γλώσσης αὐτῶ = solutum est uinculum linguae eius, where however ἐλύσῃ is not meant literally; the same goes for Gell. 5.9.6 atque is oris uinculo solutus (man cured of speechlessness) and August. Conf. 1.14 in tuam inuocationem rumpemum nodos linguae meae. For uinculum applied to ‘ligaments vel sim. in the body’ (OLD s.v. 4b) cf. Lucan’s horrid 3.712-3 sedibus expulsae, postquam crurum omnium rupt / uincula, procurrent oculi and cf. 9.777 uincula neroorum et laterum textura caveae / pectus et abstrusum fibris vitulis omne / morte patet (from the seps passage, which underlies 596-8 below). Cf. also Ov. Met. 6.557 radix micat ultima linguae (cf. previous note). For the syncopated form (10 times in St.) of uincula (12 times in St.) cf. 551n. exposi[tus], 1.621 asp[er]osque, 4.237 mani[p]los, 7.176 peric[u]lis.

fera: Lehannue (1878: 80) lists fera as an example of Statius’ habit of using words in an unexpected sense, but I fail to see why fera should be unusual, other than that it is used metonymically (the serpent, not its uincula linguae, being fera). Mozley mistranslates fera as ‘rough’. Hall (1992: 291) comments: ‘[fera] indeed strikes me as fearfully weak at this juncture. Tria or sua would be better, I fancy’ (in his edition, Hall prints sua and translates ‘severing the tendons of its triple tongue’). Leaving aside that tria or sua is no less weak than fera, tria is most unlikely in combination with trisulcae, and sua is just impossible (it should be eius).

trisulcae: see 509n. ter lingua uibrat. The adjective is also used in the description of Python (1.565 ore trisulco); it occurs two more times in the Thebaid, applied to Jupiter’s thunderbolt, 3.321 and 7.324 (Smolenaars ad loc. erroneously lists 1.565 and the present line as instances of trisulcus applied to lightning); cf. also S. I.1.91-2 Iouis ignem / tergeminum. That could underscore the relationship between Jupiter and his serpent (cf. perhaps Brouwer’s translation of 509: ‘flitst in drie schichten / zijn tong’). For ‘three’ as a Jovian number cf. Aen. 7.141-2 hic pater omnipotens ter caelo clarus ab alto / intonuit (cf. Theb. 11.410-1).

572. perque iubas stantes capitisque insignis corusci: the hendiacys recalls the description of the snake’s crest at the beginning of the passage (510-1), creating ring composition. The closest parallel is 6.418-9 stantesque reptcit / aura iubas; Pavan ad loc. discusses hair standing on end as a manifestation of fear, which, given the serpent’s condition, would not be inappropriate. For stare of a crest cf. Ov. Met. 6.672 ... in ulucrem, cui stant in uertice crista (Tereus transformed into an epops); cf. 508n. stat.

iuba is first applied to serpentine crests in Aen. 2.206-7 iubaeque / sanguineae superant undas (Laocoon’s snakes) and Statius uses the word in that sense also in 2.279-80 uiridumque draconum / lucentes a fronte iubas (Deipser 1881: 18); for more Flavian examples see TLL s.v. iuba 571.4-9; the adjective iubatus, however, is applied to snakes by Plautus and Livy already (Austin on Aen. 2.206).

The combination capit is insignis usually denotes a (regal) crown, cf. e.g. Lucr. 5.1138, Liv. 24.11.7, Curt. 3.3.19 regium capit is insignis, Sen. Ep. 80.10. The combination recurs in book
8 with reference to the crown of Eteocles (8.673-4 *capitusque superbi / insignem fulgore*). Are we invited to connect the Nemean serpent and the king of Thebes? Cf. §6.5.

573. *emicat*: inspired, it seems, by *micare* applied to a snake’s tongue, cf. Geo. 3.439 = Aen. 2.475 *linguis micat ore trisulcae*, Ov. Met. 3.34 *tresque micant linguae*. Sil. 6.223 *micat lingua*; ironically, here it is Capanes’ spear, not the serpent’s tongue, that shoots out. The form *emicat* (or –*uit*) in initial position strikes a Vergilian note (8 times in the Aeneid), although Vergil mostly uses the verb in the specific sense ‘prosilire ad pugnandum’ (*TLL* s.v. 484.3-14). It may be relevant that *emicare* is also often applied poetically to blood gushing forth from wounds (*TLL* s.v. 483.64-74, e.g. Lucr. 2.194-5 *missus corpore sanguis / emicat*, Ov. Met. 1.121 *cruor emicat alte*), and in light of Capanes’ self-assimilation to Jupiter we should also note its application to lightning (*TLL* s.v. 484.48-485.11). In any case, the verb always ‘connotes rapid movement along with a flamelike brightness’ (Tarrant on Aen. 12.327). On the enjambment, the spear ‘shooting out’ from the hexameter as well as the serpent’s crest, cf. 511n. *prominet*.

*et nigri sanie perfusa cerebri*: cf. 8.760 (Tydeus and Melanippus) *effracti perfusum tabe cerebri*. Statius’ inspiration seems to be Aen. 2.221 (Laocoon) *perfusus sanie uittas atroque uenenos* (*nigri* corresponding with Vergil’s *atro*). The allusion points to the inversion: in Vergil a godly man is killed by snakes, in Statius a godless man kills one (cf. 565-79n.).

574. *figitur alta solo*: some MSS read *hasta*, in all likelihood a scribal error resulting from *hasta* in 570. The reading *alta* carries much more weight: ‘deep into the soil’ (transl. SB). For the combination of words cf. Ov. Ars 3.102 *stat segreg alta solo* (although here *alta* means ‘deep’ not ‘high’). For the image cf. 7.801-2 *mutantia fitgunt / tela solo* and its model Aen. 12.130 *defigunt tellure hastas* (see Smolenaars ad loc.). Vergil’s *tellure* suggests that *solo* is ablative, although one could also defend the dative (see Dilke on Ach. 2.61). The verb is taken from the Ovidian model (*Met*. 3.69; see 575-6n.).

574-5. *longus uix tota peregit / membra dolor*: the pain travels from the head, through the long winding body, to the tail; the adjective *longus* is transferred from *membra* to *dolor* (enallage), emphasising the serpent’s suffering. Statius reworks Ov. Met. 3.67-8 *totum descendit in ilia ferrum. / ille dolore ferox etc.* (cf. 575-6n.), but in Ovid it is the spear, in Statius it is the pain that makes its way through the snake’s body. Cf. also 1.493-4 *laetusque per artus / horror itt*, 4.811-2 *longusque uirum super ora cucurrit / clamor*, S. 4.3.62 *it longus medias fragor per urbem*, 6.395 *concurrit summus animosum frigus in artus*, Aen. 2.228-8 *tum uero tremefacta nouus per pectora cunctis / insinuat pauor*.

*peregit*: Lachmann proposed *peredit*, also found in two MSS, and Garrod suggested *peragrat*. Damsté (1908: 387) rightly argues that we should maintain *peregit*: for the usage of *perago* he compares 6.109-10 *non grassante Noto citius nocturna peregit / flamma nemus* (where see Fortgens’ note) and points out that Statius is generally fond of the verb (cf. 543, 8.208, 11.56, Ach. 1.136, 314); see further *TLL* s.v. *perago* 10.1.1181.34-48 (‘spectat ad motum localem’ with an object indicating the ‘locum, spatium percurrendum’).

575-6. *rapido celer ille volumine telum / circumit*: there is much, somewhat pleonastic, emphasis on the swiftness of the snake’s movement (*rapido celer*), contrasting with its earlier sluggishness (549 *piger*, 554 *iacet*). The absence of a connector between the *uix*-clause and the main clause also underscores the rapid sequence of events; one might expect *et* (cf. e.g. 263-4, 479) or *cum inversum* (cf. e.g. 1.447); cf. 6.799 and 7.64-5, where the immediacy is underlined by *iam* and *ecce* respectively, and 12.514.

The line clearly reworks Ov. Met. 3.68-71 (cf. 574-5n.):

*ille dolore ferox caput in sua terga retorsit
uulneraque asperit fixumque hostile momordit,*
*idque, ubi ui multa partem labefecit in omnem,*

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Whereas Ovid’s serpent tears the spear from its back with its mouth, Statius’ serpent – whose mouth is severely wounded – tears it from the ground with its coils; Ovid’s eripuit corresponds with auulsunque (576), while it is echoed in rapido (575). Both Ovid and Statius nod to the epic motif of wounded warriors pulling spears or arrows from their bodies, e.g. Il. 16.504, Aen. 10.486-7, 11.816-7 (Camilla) illa manu moriens telum trahit, ossa sed inter / ferreus ad costas alto stat ulnere macro (Horsfall ad loc. provides more parallels for ‘such trials of direct extraction’); cf. also Midas Dekkers: ‘Een vriend joeg eens een stevige vleespen door het hoofd van een kreeft. Het beestje ontsnapte, en probeerde, al trippelend door de keuken, met één schaar de pen uit zijn hoofd te trekken’ (see König 2011).

For the serpent coiling around the object cf. the snake coiling around Mopsus’ legs in Ap.Rh. 4.1519-21 αὐτὰρ ὁ μάστος / κερκία καὶ μύων, πέριξ ἀδύναμον ἐλιγξίας / σάρκα δακών ἔχάφαζε, and of course the snakes strangling Laocoon in Aen. 2.217-9 (cf. 565-79n.). The scene is monumentalised on Opheltes’ tomb (6.248 marmorea sic uolultur anguis in hasta).

576-7. auulsunque ferens in opaca refugit / templum dei: with Capaneus’ spear in its coils or mouth, the serpent flees to the temple of Jupiter, mentioned in 513 (where see note). As Lewis (1773 ad loc.) and Götting (1969: n. 25) have noted, the scene looks back to Laocoön’s serpents seeking shelter in the temple of their goddess (Aen. 2.225-7). Moreover, auulsunque [sc. telum] ferens is inspired by Laocoön tela ferentem (2.216): the element is transferred from the snake-victim Laocoön to the snake itself (cf. 565-79n.). That the snake takes to its heels – if I may use the expression – also contacts with Geo. 3.422-4 (on the importance of Vergil’s Calabrian snake see §5.3). Livy mentions snakes gliding into the temple of Jupiter at Satricum as an evil omen (28.11.2 Satricanos haud minus terreabant in aedem Iouis foribus ipsis duo perlapsi angues).

templa dei; hic: Müller conjectured templum dehinc magno ‘propter elisionis asperitatem’ (see Hill ad loc.), and we find similar elisions elsewhere in Statius (see Mulder on 2.458, Fortgens on 6.74) and in Vergil (Aen. 3.240 aere cauo. inuadunt). The combination templum dei has a Vergilian parallel in Aen. 3.84 (in the same metrical sedes).

hic magno tellurem pondere mensus: the phrasing recalls Opheltes’ death (534 tam magni pondere fatti), again linking serpent and child. The TLL understands mensus as ‘having traversed’ (see TLL s.v. metior 887.62-3 ‘permetiri, transgredi – transitive – localiter – spatia terrae’), for which one could compare Luc. 9.705 (aspis) metitur harenas (with Raschle’s note). The OLD lists our line sub 1c ‘to measure by extending over or passing through’, cf. SB ‘measuring the earth with its great bulk’.

578. impiorantem animam dominis adsibilat aris: ‘hisses his beseeching life-breath at his master’s altar’ (SB); dominis ... aris is dative with adsibilat (= ad domini aras). The language recalls the expression animam efflare at the brink of death (e.g. 8.325, 9.265, 10.444), which goes back to Homer (e.g. Il. 4.524 = 13.654 ἐφιμω ἀποπνισίον). When a Roman died, his life-breath (anima) was captured by one of his close relatives (cf. 595-6n.): similarly, the serpent breathes – or rather ‘hisses’ (adsibilat) – its final breath towards the altar of Jupiter, in the hope that the god will capture its anima.

As impiorantem (even without explicit object) makes clear, however, the gesture is also a call for revenge from the part of Jupiter (TLL s.v. imploro 647.65-6 ‘sc. uindictam louis’) and thus motivates the god’s reaction in 583-7 below. We will be reminded of this scene in 10.935 extremumque in sidera uersus anhelat, where Capaneus – responsible for the death of Jupiter’s Nemean serpent – ‘breathes his last against the stars’ (where in, unlike ad- here, suggests hostility).

Possibly Statius took his inspiration from Python’s last breath in h.Hom. 3.361-2 λαίπες δὲ ἔφιμον / φοινίκαν ἀποπνιοῦντον. For expiring one’s anima at an altar cf. Ov. Met. 5.103-6 (Chromis decapitates Emathon) ... caput, quod protinus incidit arae / atque ibi semianimi urba

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excercantia lingua / edidit et medios animam exspiravit in ignes. There are also striking
parallels in the visual arts, such as the Lararium in the House of the Vettii in Pompeii, which
shows two serpents approaching a shrine, and the fresco in the House of the Centenary, which
also depicts a serpent approaching an altar (see Toynbee 2013: 233 with more examples).
There is also a vase depicting the Nemean snake devouring Opheltes whilst lying across an
altar (see App. B b).

One could discern a curious echo of our scene in S. 4.4.55 (Statius at Vergil’s tomb) magni
tumulis adcanto magistri, where we also find a servant addressing his divine master’s shrine –
and an artful compound verb.

**dominis:** for adjectival *dominus* cf. 2.119 *dominas ... Mycenas, S. 4.2.6 dominam ...
mensam*, Ov. Am. 2.5.30, Juv. 3.33. Surprisingly, neither *OLD* nor *TLL* mentions this poetic
adjectival usage of *dominus*; see however Lewis & Short s.v. Ilb and Pinkster s.v. II. Cf. the
similar adjectival usage of *amicus* (e.g. the Vergilian *dictis amicis*, Aen. 10.466 *dictis ...
amicis, Ach. 1.79 dictisque ... amicis* with Dille’s note) and *seruus* (e.g. Ov. Fast. 6.558 *serua
manus*). In light of the much-debated relation between Statius’ Jupiter and Domitian, it could
be argued that *dominus* Jupiter hints at *dominus et deus* Domitian (cf. Suet. Dom. 13.2); for
literature on this issue see e.g. Ganiban 2007: 2 n. 10.

**adsibilat:** the verb does not occur in classical Latin before Statius, the other occurrences
being Aus. Mos. 258 and Claud. *De raptu* 2.225, *Carm. mai.* 10.65. Since the serpent is on the
brink of death, Hutchinson has tentatively suggested *exsibilat* (1993: 124 ‘*exsibilat* crosses the
mind’); indepently from Hutchinson – or so it seems – Hall has also conjectured, and even
printed, *exibilat* (Hall 1992: 291-2 and his edition *ad loc.*). However, given Statius’ habit of
coining neologisms in *ad-* (see 517n. *adaestuat* above), there is no need to reject the MSS
reading; it is perfectly analogous with verbs like *adflare* and *adspirare*. *I do not quite
understand Legras*’ (1905: 314, 316) remark that *adsibilat* is ‘un mot spirituel’.

**aris:** Statius may have in mind the enormous altar in front of the Temple of Zeus at Nemea,
which was still in use in the early 2nd century AD (see Miller 2004: 178-81); cf. §7.

579-82. Lament for the serpent

After the epic killing of the serpent, Statius paints an almost bucolic tableau (for Statius’ habit
of creating ‘*in sich geschlossene Szenen*’ see Krumbholz 1955: 247-55), in which the sacred
animal is lamented by Nymphs, Fauns and Nature: the pools (*stagna*) and fields (*ager*) where
it used to live and from which it was born (506 *terrigena*). As a foil to the present grief we are
reminded of happier times, when the Nymphs used to strew flowers and when the Fauns used
to play their flutes. In a dislocated footnote Brown (1994: 214 n. 107) observes that ‘[i]t is a
sign of the moral complexity of this episode that the terrifying monster is itself mourned by
the Arcadian inhabitants of the wood’. The scene forges an important structural link with
Bacchus’ tigresses (7.564-607), whose deaths mark the outbreak of the Theban War itself.

Hutchinson speaks of ‘the new twist by which the snake, killed in return for the child, is
himself made the object of pathos’ (1993: 124). Twisted or not, the lines raise questions about
the nature of the serpent, both epic and pastoral, both monstrous and pitiful (see §§5.3-4, 6.5).
Keith well observes that the scene creates parallelism between Opheltes and the serpent:
‘Statius portrays the serpent, like Opheltes a native of Nemea, at play in the plain of Nemea in
much the same way that the infant cavorts when Hypsipyle abandons him (cf. 791-3). The
poet emphasises the correspondence between the two dead offspring of Nemea by placing
Hypsipyle’s lament for her nursling after the Nemean glade’s lament for the snake and by
applying to the infant the imagery he has already rehearsed in connections with the snake
(5.588-637)’ (2000: 59). The lament also looks forward to book 6, where Nymphs and Fauns
figure prominently in the passage describing the destruction of the sacred grove (6.84-117;
see §5.2).
As Gossage (1972: 219) observes, pathetic fallacy, i.e. the attribution of human feelings to inanimate objects, is "a device dear to Statius’. See Williams on on 10.498 and 503-4. Particularly associated with pastoral poetry, it occurs in epic also (already in Gilgamesh 8.8-20); cf. Aen. 8.91-3 with Gransden’s note, Val. 8.207-11.

Taisne (1994: 332) suggests that Statius took his inspiration from the Hesperids lamenting their serpent in Apollonius Rhodius: ‘La touche pathétique qui clôt l’épisode [...] rappelle la désolation des Hespérides pleurant le Dragon chez Apollonios’ (Arg. 4.1406). Another passage that might come to mind is Val. 2.536-7 Idaeaeque mater / et chorus et summis ulularunt collibus amnes, where Nature laments the sea-monster killed by Hercules to save Hesione (others, including Poortvliet ad loc., read the words as an expression of joy). The striking image of nymphs playing with the monstrous serpent is reminiscent of Ecl. 6.27-8 (when Silenus begins his song) tum uero in numerum Faunosque ferasque uideres / ludere (cf. 580n. below). It might also owe something to Medea’s intimate relationship with the Colchian serpent (Val. 8.92ff.).

Such vignettes of lamentation, with pathetic fallacy, are characteristic of the bucolic genre, popular with Hellenistic poets; cf. e.g. Theocr. 1.71-2, Bion Epitaph. Adon. 31-4, Verg. Ecl. 5.26-7 and 10.13-5 (with Clausen’s notes); also Geo. 4.460-3 and Aen. 7.759-60 te nemus Angitiae, uitrea te Fucinus unda, / te liquidi fleuere lacus, where Horsfall ad loc. notes the ‘mixing of genres’ with ‘distinctively bucolic elements’ entering the epic. Ovid is particularly fond of such vignettes, cf. the Naiads and Dryads lamenting Actaeon in Met. 3.505-7 and esp. the lament for Marsyas in Met. 6.392-5 (Lehanneur 1878: 249 notes the parallel), which deserves full citation:

\[
\text{illum ruricolae, siluarum numina, Fauni et Satyri fratres et tunc quoque carus Olympus et nymphae flerunt, et quisquis montibus illis lanigerosque greges armentaque bucera pauit.}
\]

Within the Thebaid, an important parallel is 7.685-7, the lament for Bacchus’ priest Eunaeus killed by Capaneus (Vessey 1973: 260); cf. also the lamentation over Alcidamas in 10.503-7. In the Achilleid the boy Achilles is lamented by Nymphs, Fauns and Nature when he leaves Thessaly (Ach. 1.237-41). In these passages Statius also makes ample use of apostrophe; our passage is exceptional in that the bereaved, not the dead or the dying, are apostrophised.

**579. cognatae stagna indignantia Lernae:** the swamp of Lerna, home of the Lernaeus anguis (Aen. 8.300) that was killed by Hercules (cf. 2.376-7 ambusta ... sontibus alte / intepet Hydra uadis; cf. also 1.360, 4.711, 9.340-1), is indignant about the death of the Nemean serpent. The word cognatae suggests that the Nemean serpent is akin to the Hydra of Lerna (LP ad loc. notes that the Nemean serpent takes its ‘morum originem’ from the Lernaean Hydra), which puts Capaneus on a par with Hercules; Statius’ identification of Nemea and Lerna serves the same purpose (cf. §4.4 and notes on 499, 748). For indignari applied to inanimate objects see Smolenaaars on 7.318.

**580. floribus et uernis assuetae spargere:** scattering flowers (phyllobolia) essentially expresses affection, sympathy, respect (cf. e.g. Ach. 1.288-9 exierant dare ueris opes diuaeque seueras / fronde ligare comas et spargere floribus hastam, where Deidamia and her sisters scatter flowers over Pallas Athena’s cult statue). Both the idea of nymphs and fauns playing with a monstrous animal and the motif of scattering flowers are bucolic; cf. Ecl. 6.27-8 (when Silenus begins his song) tum uero in numerum Faunosque ferasque uideres / ludere, and Ecl. 9.19-20 quis caneret Nymphas? quis humum florentibus herbis / spargere. However, scattering flowers also carries funereal associations; cf. e.g. [Bion] Epitaph. Adon. 76-7, Prop.
4.7.33-4, Dion. Hal. Antiq. Rom. 11.39.6, Aen. 6.883 (with Austin’s note), 10.788-9 (Menoeceus’ death) hi sertis, hi ueris honore soluto / accumulat artus, and Opheltes’ pyre adorned with gramineis ... sertis (6.57). For the frequent combination floribus ... uernis cf. e.g. Tib. 2.1.49 and 59, Hor. Carm. 2.11.9, Ov. Met. 5.554 cum uernos legeret Proserpina flores.

581. Nemeēs: the Greek form is first attested in Valerius (2.495 Nemees with Poortvliet’s note, 3.511 Nemeen; 8.125 Nemeae), although Man. 3.404 already has the sounding adjective Nemeētius (normally Nemeaeus, e.g. 4.136, 10.499). Statius has nom. Nemeē (e.g. § 3.1.143) as well as Attic Nemeā (e.g. 5.749), gen. Nemeēs (§ 3.1.30) and Nemeae (5.733), dat. Nemeae (5.714), acc. Nemeen (e.g. 4.646). Unsurprisingly, MSS are often divided; see Hall’s orthographical index s.v. Nemea (vol. iii: 309-10), Dilke on Ach. 1.415 Nemea.

reptatus ager: the passive participle of reptare occurs only four times in Latin literature: Statius here coins the form, which is then imitated twice by Claudian (Raf. 2, 180 teneroque annis reptatus Achilli and De quarto consulatu 134 Creta ... tenero reptata Tonanti, which looks back to Theb. 4.789-92) and Pacatus Drepanius (Panegyricus Theodosio Augusto dictus 4.5 geminis Delos reptata numinibus). On such daring passive participles in the Thebaid see Legras (1905: 319, 340); cf. 588n. reptatis ... campis, 4.704 annem ... natatos, 1.341 laboratae obliuia uitae, 1.328 ululata antra (with Heuvel’s note); also Ov. Fast. 4.573 erratae terrae, Val. 4.608 ululata tellus, Tac. G. 34 lacus Romanis classibus nauigatos. For passive forms of intransitive verbs of movement see K-St i.263-4.

Brown (1994: 135) rightly notes that the serpent’s crawling links the monster with its victim (4.802 reptans, 6.245 reptat; 5.612 below); on this parallelism see §6.5 and cf. e.g. 525-6n. and 536n. Hutchinson (1993: 124) speaks of ‘a half-whimsical link with the child in a point that has contrasted him’, which I do not quite understand.

582. siluicolae ... Fauni: the composite adjective siluicola, perhaps inspired by Greek ὑλο-νίμος (Harrison on Aen. 10.551), is already attested in Naevius and Accius, but remains extremely rare in Latin literature. Its application to Fauns goes back to Aen. 10.551 siluicolae Fauno Dryope quem nympha crearat (see Harrison ad loc.); cf. also Buc. Eins. 1.6 fistula, siluicolae munus memorabile Fauni, where we also encounter the Faun’s flute (see following note). One could take the words as nominative or as vocative with gemuisitis (where see note); but I fail to understand how one could read siluicolae as nom. and Fauni as voc. (cf. Hill ad loc.).

Latin poets have coined numerous adjectives in -cola, such as caelicola (e.g. 3.235, Aen. 2.641), undicola (Varro), uiticola (Sil. 7.193). Their champion is Ovid, who seems to have coined monticola (Met. 1.193), Lemnicola (Met. 2.757), amnicola (Met. 10.96), ruricola (e.g. Fast. 1.580; cf. Theb. 9.305), Marticola (Tr. 5.3.22; cf. Sil. 4.222). Vergil has the bizarre Appenminicola (Aen. 11.700), which certainly underlies Sil. 4.225 Anienicola. The tradition continues with words like fonticola (Augustinus), horticola (Apponius), nocticola (Prudentius), paradisicola (Prudentius) and even Christicola (Paulinus Nolanus).

fracta ... harundine: how are we to understand this phrase? (a) the word harundo is sometimes used with reference to the wreaths or crowns of river gods (see TLL s.v. 2542.3-15 ‘de coronis harundineis Neptuno attributis et aliis maris uel fluminum deis’), the first occurrence of the combination fracta harundine being a case in point: squalidus inmissos fracta sub harundine crines / Rhenus (Ov. Pont. 3.4.7-8; imitated by Claudian De raptu 2.136 hunc fracta Cephisos harundine luger). According to the TLL Statius here refers in a similar vein to the Fauns’ wreaths (TLL s.v. 2542.14-5 ‘adde de coronis Faurnorum Stat. Theb. 5.582’). This interpretation is probably based on LP’s note: ‘canna et ferula coronantur Fauni’. However, I do not find parallels for Fauns wearing such wreaths.

(b) It is much more likely that harundo here refers metonymically (pars pro toto) to the pan-pipe, which consists of reed tubes of gradually increasing length (cf. Theoc. Id. 8.18-9, Ecl. 2.32, Tib. 2.5.31 fistula cui semper decrescit harundinis ordo). In poetic language
harundo is often used in that sense (see OLD s.v. 3, where our locus is also listed). But how are we to understand fracta?

(b1) One could take the phrase quite literally: ‘you too, Fauns of the woodlands, broke your reed pipes and made lamentation’ (Ritchie-Hall). Breaking one’s pan-pipe is not without precedent in the bucolic genre, but usually it expresses ‘Unzufriedenheit mit einer literarischen Leistung sowie der Entschluß oder Rat, sich von der Kunst zu lösen’ (Schröder on Calp. Ecl. 4.23 frange, puer, calamos with references). If our Fauns literally break their instruments, however, that must be a sign of mourning. Breaking things to express mourning is unusual, but there is a strong parallel in 7.685 fractis thyris, where the Bacchic world laments the young priest Eunaeus. Smolenaars ad loc. compares Ov. Am. 3.9.8 fractos arcus (Cupido mourning Tibullus’ death) and – with hesitation – Epic. Drusi 177 fractis fascibus. The gesture would be typical of Statius both in its violence and in its ‘Überbietung’ of normal mourning behaviour. At the same time, on a poetic level, the broken pan-pipe could symbolise the disruption of the Nemea’s pastoral world (cf. §5.2).

(b2) Fantham (2009: 182 with n. 41) offers an alternative interpretation. She translates ‘you woodland Fauns laments him in every grove on broken reeds’, to which she adds: ‘A note on fractae [sic] (trans. as “lamented” [sic]): it is not the satyrs’ reeds but the plangent note of their lament which calls for this epithet, a common term of rhetoric for unmanly lament or affectation’. If I understand Fantham correctly, she understands fracta as a transferred epithet, describing the ‘broken’ sounds of the Fauns’ music, which she then interprets as ‘unmanly’ (cf. OLD s.v. fractus 4 ‘(of persons, their gestures, speech, etc.) effeminate, womanish, affected’). If fracta is a transferred epithet, however, I would prefer to take it as reference to the ‘interrimment’ sound of their music, see OLD s.v. fractus 1b and cf. Geo. 4.72 uox [apium] / auditur fractos sonitus imitata tubarum, Sil. 1.532 auditur gemitus fractumque in casside murmur and perhaps Aen. 3.556 fractaeque ad litora uoces (where the idea of ‘breaking’ waves is also present). Perhaps we are to imagine the Fauns intermittently (fracta) playing their pan-pipes (harundine) and heaving sighs (gemuistis)?

gemuistis: what exactly is the scope of the apostrophe? According to Taisne (1994: 92 n. 239) ‘gemuistis [...] désigne les manifestations de deuil des Nymphes et des Faunes aussi bien que du marais de Lerne et du territoire de Némée’. Georgacopoulou takes issue with Taisne and claims that only the Fauns are apostrophised (2005: 50 n. 97: ‘apotheon aux Faunes seulement’); she also claims that ‘Stace choisit souvent d’apostropher seulement le dernier élément dans une série à trois éléments’, unfortunately without providing parallels. Since gemuistis is the only finite verb in the sentence, Taisne is right grammatically; but Georgacopoulou is right in that the apostrophe is felt strongest in connection with the Fauns. In any case, it is a rather weak apostrophe without explicit uos (cf. Hill ad loc., 4.275-6 with Steiniger).

583-7. Jupiter and Capaneus

Jupiter, enraged by the death of his sacred serpent, hurls a thunderbolt to punish Capaneus for his sacrilegious deed; on second thoughts, however, the god decides to spare Capaneus, as the hero deserves grauiora tela; he changes the thunderbolt’s course and Capaneus remains alive. That, at least, is the traditional interpretation of these lines (e.g. Ten Kate 1955: 108 ‘luppiter Capanea ferire vult, sed tamen manum fulmenque retinet, ea sola causa, ut postea eum eo grauius vehementiusque puniti’; Delarue 2000: 323 ‘le dieu résiste à l’impulsion de fourdre le héros, réservant pour un autre temps ce châtiment’). But there are problems.

As has often been observed (e.g. Fiehn 1917: 11, Klinnert 1970: 31, Nesselrath 1992: 125, Dominik 1994: 31-2), the grauiora tela look forward to Jupiter’s enormous thunderbolt that will destroy Capaneus in the final scene of book 10. LP already notes: ‘hic Capaneus
fulminatus non est quia fulminandum in bello est: quando Iouem ipsum est prouocaturus
injuris, tunc merito interibit’. Such ‘sparing’ of a hero for a more gruesome death is a
recurring motif in the poem: Tisiphone saves Polynices from a premature death in the chariot
race (6.513-7) and Eteocles from being killed by Tydeus (8.684-8); and Athena decides to
spare Haemon from being killed by Tydeus, in order to please Hercules (8.527-8). The motif
has precedents, e.g. Aen. 10.436-8 (Pallas and Lausus) ipsos concurrere passus / haud tamen
inter se magni regnator Olympi; / mox illos sua fata manent maiore sub hoste, Sen. Oed. 31
mihi parcit uni? cui reseruamur malo?, Thy. 1033 an beluis seruantur?, Cic. Cat. 1.25.3-5 ad
hanc te amentiam ... fortuna seruauit, Luc. 7.586-96 (Brutus and Caesar). Klinnert (1970: 31
n. 69) rightly connects the motif with the theme of mora that pervades the poem (see §4.1).

The problem concerns the relation between Fate and Jupiter. That Capaneus’ death in book
10 is fated is clear from the beginning: in the necromancy Laius’ shade reveals that deumque /
tela manent (4.639-40), and it is included in the eagle omen: hic excelsa petens subita face
solis inarsit / summisitque animos (3.539-40). But Capaneus’ action in book 10 is not willed
by Jupiter: it will be schemed by Dis and Tisiphone (8.76-7, 11.88-91) in order to displease
Jupiter! We may agree with Ganiban (2007: 120 n. 12) that, at this point in book 5, ‘there is
no evidence [...] that Jupiter has foreknowledge of Capaneus’ death’. In the case of Capaneus,
then, Jupiter’s will and Fate do not coincide. Vessey’s Stoic reading of the poem, in which
Jupiter and Fate are identical, is highly problematic. The same holds for the view that Jupiter
is superior to Fate (e.g. Davis 1994: 476-8).

So we may ask ourselves: is Capaneus servatus by Fate or by Jupiter? Does Jupiter really
decide to spare Capaneus in order to kill him later (even though he does not yet know what
Dis and Tisiphone are going to do in book 8)? In that case, we could read ni minor ira deo [sc.
facta esset]: if Jupiter anger had not diminished, then he would have killed Capaneus; but
Jupiter’s anger subsides and he purposefully changes the course of his thunderbolt. Or does
Fate make the decision? In that case the supreme god simply fails to kill the hero, to the effect
that Capaneus will be killed later. This scenario can also be wrested from the Latin: perhaps
ni minor ira deo means ‘if his anger had not been too small’ (cf. SB ‘but that the god’s wrath
is not great enough’); and grauioraeque tela mereri could be taken as a loosely construed
consecutive infinitive (‘so that he would deserve heavier missiles’). On that reading, Jupiter
does not change his mind, no, his ira is not sufficient to kill Capaneus (in 3.318 Statius refers
to a thunderbolt as ira louis). This interpretation might support Hill’s reading of Statius’
Jupiter as incompetent ruler (Hill 1989 and 1997).

Delarue, for whom Jupiter is the supreme ruler of the universe, who rules fate, naturally
interprets the scene differently. In his view Jupiter is free to decide. That the god decides to
restrain his anger in favour of his Grand Scheme, reflects his ultimate goodness: ‘Le fait que
Jupiter, plutôt que de le venger, donne priorité à son dessein global montre un monde mieux
organisé, qui échappe peu à peu à l’arbitraire divin’ (2000: 323).

In my view, Jupiter is not free to decide at all. The god changes the course of his thunder-
bolt and does not kill Capaneus, precisely because he knows that the hero is fated to die a
different death. That means that Jupiter is omniscient and, as such, closely affiliated with
Fate. At the same time, it shows that Jupiter is not identical with fate: the god has thoughts
and feelings for himself. Jupiter seriously wants to avenge his serpent and to kill Capaneus
right here and now, but even the father of the gods must conform to the will of Fate (cf.
Yaggy 2009: 92 ‘Jupiter began an all-out attack on Capaneus, but he relents once his thoughts
turn to Fate’). On the problematic relations between Jupiter, Dis and Fate see further Feeney
(1991), Dominik (1994: 25-9); important lines include 1.212-3, 705-7, 2.205-6, 3.241-3, 304-
5, 316, 555-6, 6.376, 7.197-8, 215-8, 10.70-1, 11.462.

That Jupiter, at least in the Thebaid, is able to change the course of a thunderbolt after its
release, appears from 7.201-2 (Jupiter addressing Bacchus) ‘quotiens iam torta reponam /
fulmina, quam rarus hic imperet ignis’ (with Smolenaars’ note). For the details, one should like to hear Apollo’s song in book 6, where the god aperit quis fulmen agat, quis sidera ducat / spiritus (6.360-1)! In Theaid 1 hurling thunderbolts is closely associated with Jupiter’s attempt to stop human nefas (1.216-7 taedet saeuri corusco / fulmine).

In order to atone for their killing of Jupiter’s sacred reptile and placate Jupiter’s ire, the Seven will erect a funeral pyre for the serpent in 6.84-117, which, ironically, involves sacrilegious deforestation (see Ganiban 2013: 259-62).

Intertextually, the combination of aura and crista may recall Aen. 12.370 cristam aduerso curru quatit aura volantem, where Turnus’ crest waves in the wind as his chariot speeds on. But the immediate Vergilian model, as Eissfeldt (1904: 386) observes, is Aen. 12.492-3 apicem tamen incita summum / hasta tulit summasque excussit uertice cristas, where Messapus almost hits Aeneas with an arrow.

583-6. The syntax is difficult. After the first two lines, with the pluperfect poposcerat and the imperfect coibant, the reader expects Jupiter to hurl his thunderbolt, after a cum inuersum (or something similar). Instead, the construction breaks off to make place for an irrealis, which is equally incomplete, the apodosis being suppressed: [Capaneus interfectus esset.] ni minor ira deo [sc. fuisset] grauioraque tela mereri / seruatus [sc. esset] Capaneus. The infinitive mereri depends on seruatus. Nesselrath (1992: 125) notes: ‘Griechisch hätte das ἕβην xai ... zi μὴ gelaute’.

For this construction cf. 2.28-31, 11.482-4, Aen. 6.358, 8.522-3 multaque dura suo tristi cum corde putabant, / ni signum caelo Cytherea dedisset aperto (Gransden ad loc. points out that ‘[the ni-clause is the equivalent of an inverted cum-clause: though syntactically subordinate it in fact forms the climax’), 12.731-3 at perfidis ensis / frangitur in medioque ardentem deserit icu, / ni fuga subsidio subeat (i.e. ‘[he would have been helpless] if flight had not come to his aid’, Tarrant ad loc.), Val. 2.313-5 with Poortvliet’s note. The construction is found in prose too, esp. in Tacitus. See further Nesselrath’s 1992 monograph (esp. 123-32 on Statius).

583-4. e summa ... aethra: in 1.217-8 Jupiter takes his thunderbolts from the Cyclopes, whom he seems to locate on Vulcan’s Aeolian islands; in Ach. 1.490 igniferamque ad fulmina posceret Aetnen he summons firebolts from Mt Aetna (cf. Geo. 4.170-3, Aen. 8.416-22), which adds weight to the reading Aetna found in some MSS (J1 S2+). If aethra is correct, Statius follows an alternative tradition: Jupiter takes them from the heavens (cf. S. 2.1.225 quibus instet ab astris, where they are taken from the stars). In Stoic philosophy, the aether was believed to be fiery, the summit of the aether sometimes being equated with the Sun or with God (cf. e.g. Cic. Luc. 126 aether uidetur summus deus; Sen. Nat. 6.16.2 igneus aether, mundi summa pars). For the phrasing cf. Aen. 1.221 Iuppiter aethere summo, 12.853-4 ab aethere summo / Iuppiter. Cf. S. 3.1.186 aetherii ... fulmina patris.

tela poposcerat: echoed in 10.911 tela ... poscit (with the other gods as subject). For telum applied to a thunderbolt Deipiper (1881: 16) compares Ov. Fast. 3.316, Am. 2.5.52; Michler (1914: 33) sees influence of Luc. 7.197 tela louis. The word is already used of thunderbolts in Lucr. 6.398 (for more examples see OLD s.v. 2d). Greek βελος is similarly applied to Zeus’ bolts, see LSJ s.v. 4 and cf. e.g. Pi. N. 10.8 Διος βελος.

584. et Dudum nimbique hiemiesque coibant: cf. 3.435 nimbique hiemiesque. Clouds and stormwinds are a precondition for thunderbolts, as appears nicely from e.g. Sil. 1.253-4 torquentem cum tela Iouem permixtaque nimbis / fulmina et excussos uentorum flatibus ignes. The gathering of clouds also recurs, cf. 10.913-5.

585. ni: = nisi, an archaism frequent in epic poetry.
deo: possessive dative with suppressed fuisset (see 583-6n.).
**grauioraque tela:** looking forward to the enormous thunderbolt that will kill Capaneus in book 10 (see 583-7n.). The comparative *grauiora* may have a metapoetic dimension, as the hero is destined for a sublime death in a properly epic context. Stylistically, cf. 5.65 *maioraque tela*, 6.74 *breuioraeque tela*, always in the same metrical *sedes*.

**mereri:** dependent on *seruatus*; more usual is *seruare* + dat. or *seruare in* + acc. (cf. Galli on Val. 1.462). Whether we should regard *mereri* as a final or a consecutive infinitive is discussed in 583-7n. above.

586-7. **moti ... aura cucurrit / fulminis:** according to Gossage (1972: 219) one of the passages in Statius ‘where a striving for detailed realism results in absurdity’. Capaneus’ crest is not touched by the thunderbolt itself, but by the blast of wind (*aura*) that accompanies it (cf. Brouwer ‘strijkwind’). Alternatively, one could take *aura* in the sense ‘radiation’ (see *OLD s.v. 6b*, *TLL s.v. 1474.62-76*, cf. Var. Men. 139 *solis ... aura* and the notoriously problematic *Aen. 6.204 auri ... aura*); in that case Capaneus’ crest is scorched by the heat of the thunderbolt. The cryptic formulation may hint at contemporary debates on the origins of lightning (cf. Sen. *Nat. 2.16-21*).

The verb *currere* is not normally applied to wind (the closest parallel is Val. 3.152-3 *ut caeca profundo / currit hiemis*), but it is often applied to heavenly bodies, including lightning, cf. Lucr. 1.1003 *suò percurrere fulmina cursu*, Luc. 5.630-1 *nec fulgura currunt / clara* (with Matthews’ note).

587. **summas libauit uertice cristas:** modelled on *Aen. 12.493 hasta tulit summasque excussit uertice cristas* (cf. 583-7n.), replacing *excussit* with *libare*, which Vergil often uses in combination with *summus* (e.g. *Aen. 1.737 libato summo*, *Geo. 4.54-5 flumina libant / summa leues*); the verb describes a light touch, a scarcely noticeable moment of contact (cf. the gloss ‘leviter tetigit’ in *R* and *T*). When Capaneus is fulminated for the second time, lethally, the *cristae* are destroyed first, 10.928 *primae fugere in nubila cristae*. The light touch varies the familiar epic motif of warriors barely escaping death, e.g. Homer. 440 *et summas umeri destringit acumine partes*, Ov. *Met. 10.526*, etc.

We should also bear in mind that Capaneus’ helmet is adorned with the figure of a Giant (cf. 4.175-6), so that, as Klinnert (1970: 31) points out, ‘[d]as von Capaneus okkupierte Schema des Gigantenkampfes [see 565-74n.] ist auch für Jupiter präsent’, as Jupiter’s bolt grazes Capaneus’ little Giant. On Capaneus and Giants see further 565-74n. and Lovatt (2006: 128-39) with references.

We may also recall the grim description of Mars in book 3: the god’s armour is adorned with monster-figures (3.224) and his helmet, in a somewhat obscure phrase, radiates ‘light crested with lightning’ (3.223 *fulmine cristatum galeae iubar*).

588-604. **Hypsipyle finds Opheltes’ remains**

Now that the serpent has been killed, the narrator’s camera swirls back to Hypsipyle (591 *cursum rapit* picking up 544-5 *cursum ... rapit*). Hypsipyle, who has been watching the fight from a distance, traverses the fields and finds Opheltes’ remains, heavily mutilated, on the spot where the serpent lay, until it fled to the temple of Jupiter. She is compared to a mother bird that finds her nestlings killed by a snake.

As I have argued in the Introduction (§6.2), the horrid details – modelled primarily on Lucan (see 596-8n.) – connect Opheltes with the victims of the Theban War, in particular the *mortes immaturae* of Crenaeus, Parthenopaeus and others, while the bird simile forges links between Hypsipyle and other bereaved women in the epic, e.g. Ide who finds her twin sons killed in book 3, and Argia who finds the corpse of Polynices in book 12. There is much emphasis on Hypsipyle’s utter grief and horror (588 *infelix*, 590 *pallida*, 594 *misera*), which is
also shown dramatically in her falling to the ground and speechlessness – a gesture that looks forward to Euridyce’s ‘frantic rush towards Opheltes’ pyre’ in book 6 (Brown 1994: 125).

The scene does not correspond closely with Euripides. In the Hypsipyle Opheltes is killed ante oculos at the spring, after which Hypsipyle enters the stage without the child and, in an anguished amoibaion, tells the chorus what has happened (it has been suggested that Hypsipyle enters the stage with Opheltes’ body in her arms, or that there was a cortège that brought his body on stage, but according to the most recent reconstruction Hypsipyle enters the stage alone; see Cropp on Eur. Hyps. frr. 753d-754b).

Michler (1914: 60-1) has pointed out that the passage reworks Luc. 2.20-8, which lines ‘in describendo dolore maxime iisdem coloribus utuntur’; Lucan’s passage also influenced 6.33-5 and Sil. 9.41-3 (Van Campen on Luc. 2.21-8). Lucan compares the impending doom of civil war spreading through Rome to the shock, grief and disbelief that take hold of a household after someone has died. I quote the passage in full, underlining words that recur in Statius:

\[\text{tum questus tenuere suos, magnusque per omnes erruit sine uoce dolorem, sic funere primo} \]
\[\text{attonitae taquere domus, cum corpora nondum con clamata iacent, nec mater crine soluto} \]
\[\text{exigit ad saeuis famularum bracchia planctus, sed cum membra premit fugiente rigentia uita uoltusque examines oculosque in morte minacess; necdum est ille dolor, nec iam metus: incubat amens} \]
\[\text{miraturque malum.} \]

The verbal parallels are many, primo funere being the most significant. Lucan’s simile describes a woman’s reaction to someone’s death; mater (2.23) suggests that the deceased is her child. Notably Lucan’s simile ‘uses private experience as both symbol of the collective grief and omen of future bereavement’ (Fantham on Luc. 2.21-8), which is exactly the significance of Opheltes’ death in the Thebaid. The allusion also puts the Theban War in the Thebaid. The parallel action has not yet ended, that the events overlap in time (see Smolenaars on 7.105-6 with references). Originally an epic technique, it is often employed in historiography too (see Kraus on Liv. 6.5.1). Unfortunately, Kroon and Risselada (2003) do not discuss this ‘stylistically conventionalised use of iam at the beginning of new narrative episodes’.

\[\text{pererratis ... campis: LP} \]
\[\text{infelix Lemnia: see 500n. Lemnias and 552n. infelix.} \]

\[\text{588. iamque: Statius often begins new narrative passages withiam, iamque or etiam, e.g. 6.249iamque marking the beginning of the games, and 7.105iam pronis Gradius equis marking the beginning of the second half of the epic. iam serves to suggest that the preceding action has not yet ended, that the events overlap in time (see Smolenaars on 7.105-6 with references). Originally an epic technique, it is often employed in historiography too (see Kraus on Liv. 6.5.1). Unfortunately, Kroon and Risselada (2003) do not discuss this ‘stylistically conventionalised use of iam at the beginning of new narrative episodes’.} \]

\[\text{589. liber ut angue locus: sc. est. ‘As soon as the place is free from the snake’. locus could be understood as Nemea generally (cf. e.g. Brouwer ‘de streek waar geen slang meer / huist’), but also as the very spot where the Nemean serpent lay (cf. 549-51): this place is free now that} \]
the serpent has fled away to the temple of Jupiter (574-8). For liber with bare abl. separativus see OLD 4; in Statius also 4.97 liber senio, 5.81-2 libera curis / uirginitas, 6.8, 318, 506, 611. The line is echoed in 6.8 uipereo ... libera nexu / Phocis (Delphi after Apollo has slain Python), which again links the two monstrous snakes (cf. 531-3n. and §3.3).

modico super aggere: alluding to agger in the sense ‘funeral mound’ (OLD s.v. 5); cf. 6.58, S. 2.1.159 with Newlands’ note. The addition of modico may suggest a funeral mound of modest proportions, i.e. funeral mound for a child (in book 6, of course, Opheltes will be given an enormous tumulus). The phrase may wink at historical Nemea, where the Ophelteion ‘took the form of a vast earthen mound rising above the surrounding level of the sanctuary’ (Miller 2004: 127, Fortgens on 6.2 novo busto); on Statius’ engagement with Nemean topography see §7.

590. pallida: a Vergilian adjective, e.g. Aen. 4.644 (Dido) pallida morte futura. The alliteration and metrical placement closely connect Hypsipyle’s pallor with prospicit in 591.

sanguineis infectas roribus herbas: for the expression ‘dew of blood’ Deipser (1881: 22) compares [Verg.] Cul. 181 sanguineae ... guttae. More important are the truly Vergilian precedents, Aen. 8.645 sparsi rorabant sanguine uepres, 11.8 rorantis sanguine cristas 12.339-40 rores / sanguineos and 512 rorantia sanguine, which look back to Il. 11.53-4, where Zeus sends down έéρησα / αύματι μυδάλας; cf. also Aesch. Ag. 1390 βάλλει μ’ ἵραμενη ψακάδι φοινίς δρόσου. The expression found favour in the Silver Age, e.g. Luc. 7.837, Val. 5.76, Sil. 4.165. Statius uses it four more times: 2.673-4, 3.536 rorantes sanguine uentos, 8.7-8 and 9.596. The echo of 3.536 may be significant, since in book 3 the phrase is also used to describe an ominous violent death (the eagles butchering the swans).

Gervais (2008: 37 n. 81) suggests that the dew ‘may also be an allusion to Opheltes’ extreme youth’, since Greek έφηγη and δρόσος ‘may refer metaphorically to young animals’. However, I do not find parallels for ros with an eye on young age.

591. prospicit: the enjambment and sudden diaeresis after the first foot emphasise the shock that Hypsipyle experiences when she discerns Opheltes’ blood on the grass (similarly 8.761 aspicit). Cf. 511n. prominet.

magno ... effera luctu: for the assimilation of extreme grief to madness cf. e.g. 3.125-6, 7.489 luctu furiata, 10.558 Luctusque Furorque, S. 5.5.23 tanta mihi feritas, tanta est insania luctus with Gibson. The combination magno ... luctu links Hypsipyle with Argia, cf. 12.185 magno ... luctu.

cursum rapit: resuming 544-5 cursum / ... rapit, where see notes. Cf. also the Vergilian rapido cursu, e.g. Aen. 12.683, Val. 8.54 rapido per deuia passu. There is also an Apulian krater depicting Hypsipyle running towards Opheltes (see App. B c).

592. agnoscitque nefas: possibly inspired by Mezentius sensing the death of his son Lausus, Aen. 10.843 agnouit longe gemitum praesaga ma. Significantlly, Opheltes’ death is seen as nefas, which reinforces its connections with the many nefarious deaths in the war to come. On the importance of nefas in the Thebaid see Ganiban 2007: esp. 34-5.

terraeque illisa nocenti: the earth is guilty as it is polluted by Opheltes’ nefarious death; cf. 11.134 nocentibus aruis with Venini’s note. For the idea cf. e.g. Cat. 64.397 tellus scelere est imbuta nefando, Aen. 3.60-1 scelerata excedere terra, / linqui pollutum hospitium, Luc. 2.734-6 with Fantham, 7.768-70 ingenuisse putem campos terramque nocentem / inspirasse animas, infectumque aera totum / manibus. In addition, we may remember that the serpent responsible for Opheltes’ death is born from the earth (506 terrigena). The phrase may also allude to the oracle that Opheltes should not be placed on the ground (see §1.4.3).

593. fulminis in morem: ‘like a thunderbolt’; in morem + gen. is Vergilian, e.g. Geo. 1.245 in morem fluminis, Aen. 7.159 castrorum in morem with Horsfall, 12.401 Paenion in morem; cf. ritu + gen. (e.g. Aen. 11.611).
According to Gossage (1962) ‘it would be a gross exaggeration, even for Statius, to compare a woman falling in these circumstances with a thunderbolt’, and he conjectures funeris in morem non uerba in fulmine primo (‘Hypsipyle collapsed to the ground, as though dead, at the first shock’). In support one could addduce 10.618-20, where Creon metaphorically experiences a grandem subiti ... fulminis ictum when he realises that his son Menoeceus is to be sacrificed. Hill takes over Gossage’s conjecture. Hoffmann (2001), however, has convincingly argued that the MSS reading is supported by Aen. 11.615-7 excussus Aconteus / fulminis in morem aut tormento ponderis acti / praecipitat longe; he also compares Val. 2.89-90 ruit ille polo noctemque diemque / turbinis in morem (which reworks Aen. 10.603-4, 11.616 and 12.923-4; cf. also Man. 3.361; see Poortvliet ad loc.) and Ev. Luc. 10.18 sicut fulgur de caelo cadentem.

We may add that the idea ‘fast as lightning’ is traditional and goes back to Homer, cf. (in the metaphorically expressed notable preceding scene) and cf. also Man. 3.361; see Poortvliet ad loc.) and Ev. Luc. 10.18 sicut fulgur de caelo cadentem.

We may add that the idea ‘fast as lightning’ is traditional and goes back to Homer, cf. Il. 4.75-9, 5.6, 22.27, Aen. 5.319 fulminis oior alis, Luc. 5.405 oior et caeli flammis. In the Thebaid speed and lightning are also connected in 1.92 igne Iouis ... citatior, 3.317-8 non ocius alti / in terras cadit ira Iouis, 11.483 caelestil ... oior igni; in the Silvae Statius even uses fulminatus in the sense ‘quick like lightning’ (see Van Dam on S. 2.7.93-7). The poet toys with the association in 10.674-7 fulminis haud citius afflata cupressus / combibit infestas et stirpe et uertice flammas, where it takes an effort to realise that fulminis ... radiis goes with afflata and haud citius with combibit (see Williams ad loc.). Hence I am reluctant to accept Brown’s idea that there is ‘an odd suggestion of Semele’s fate’ (1994: 134).

It is noteworthy that the word fulminis follows closely on fulminis (587), where it is used quite literally. As Snijder on 3.16 notes, ‘Statius often repeats a word within a few lines’; usually, we may add, he repeats the word in a different sense (traductio). This stylistic device is also found in Vergil and other authors (see Austin on Aen. 2.505; Kraus on Liv. 6.3.5 with references). Starian examples include 5.707 geminusque ... Triton ~ 5.713 geminos iiuenes, 2.699 aggere ~ 2.708 aggere, 7.253 rudis Antigone ~ 7.256 rude fulmen; cf. also 3.566 uertice, where it does not mean mountain-top, as one would expect after the preceding scene on Mt Aphaesas.

non uerba ... / non lacrimas habet: Hypsipyle’s speech- and tearlessness again link her with Argia, who reacts similarly when she finds Polynices, cf. 12.317-8 fugere animus uiususque sonusque, / inclusitque dolor lacrimas with Pollmann’s note. Gervais (2008: 37) finds Hypsipyle’s speechlessness notable after ‘her lengthy rehearsal of the horrors on Lemnos’.

The idea that extreme emotion locks one’s speech is a topos; cf. e.g. Cat. 51.9 lingua sed torpet, Aen. 2.774 and 3.48 uox faucibus haesit; 12.47, Ov. Met. 6.583 (Procer) dolor ora repressit, 13.538-40 (with Bömer’s notes), Luc. 2.21 sine uoce dolor, Stat. Theb. 10.820 iam uocis, iam mentis inops, and the lacunose lines in S. 5.5.24-9 (cf. S. 5.5.49-50) where Statius seems to write that it took 30 days before he could find words to articulate his grief over the death of his beloved puer. However, the opposite idea, that grief stimulates speech, is also found, e.g. Eur. Suppl. 78-85.

in funere primo: a difficult phrase that operates on two levels at the same time. (a) In the first place, from Hypsipyle’s perspective, it probably means ‘at first sight of the dead body’ (Ritchie-Hall). As Hoffmann (2001: 112) explains: ‘Für Hypsipyle is das funus, der Tod des Opheltes, erst Realität, als sie ihn vor sich sieht; diesen Moment meint in funere primo’. Admittedly, this puts considerable strain on primo, and one might prefer Van Campen’s interpretation (on Luc. 2.21) ‘het moment waarop de dood zojuist is ingetreden’; see OLD s.v. primus 3b ‘(the first stage or earliest part of (a period, process)’. (b) On a different level, funere primo points to Opheltes as first victim of the war to come, the prima ... funera of the oracle (647), and to his alternative nomen omen Archemorus (on which see §6.3); cf. ‘in the first shock of ruin’ (Mozley), ‘in the first onset of disaster’ (SB).
Some scholars believe that the text is corrupt. Bentley conjectures in uulnere (cf. 6.39-40 ceu noua tunc clades et primo saucius infans / uulnere); Gossage (1962) argues for in fulmine primo (see 593n. fulminis in morem); and Damsté (1908: 387-8) curiously argues that we should read in funera and take primo as adverb corresponding with tandem in line 606, adducing 5.647 prima, Lycurge, dabis Dircaeo funera bello – which supports the MSS reading rather than his conjecture.

Hoffmann (2001) has shown that the phrase alludes to Luc. 2.21 sic funere primo / attonitae taucere domus, cum corpora nondum / conclamata iacent nec mater crine soluto / exigit ad saeuoos familiarum brachia planctus (Michler 1914: 17 already noted the parallel): ‘Die Situation der Mutter und ihr Verhalten, wie sie Lukan in diesem Vergleich darstellt, entsprechen völlig dem Hypsipyles: Beide sind soeben mit dem Tode ihres Angehörigen bzw. Schutzbefohlenen konfrontiert worden, aber die rituelle Trauer, der eigentliche Verarbeitungsprozeß, hat noch nicht eingesetzt.’ On Statius’ highly significant engagement with Lucan here see 588-604n.

We may also compare the 49 soldiers butchered by Tydeus, to whom Statius refers in 2.314 primoque inbutas sanguine gentes. Perhaps the phrase owes something to Aen. 7.542 primae commissit funera pugnae (imitated by Statius in 7.563), which also looks to the beginning of war.

594. oscula: the word denotes non-erotic kissing, often of parent and child; cf. Servius on Aen. 1.256 oscula libauit natae: sciendo dnam religionis esse, sauium uoluptatis, quamuis guidum osculum filii dari, uxor basium, scerto sauium. For kissing farewell to the dead, cf. e.g. 12.417-8 ignem miserae post ultima quaeurnt / oscula, S. 3.3.177 prono fusum super oscula uultu, Ov. Met. 13.424 ossibus oscula dantem, Prop. 2.13.29 osculaque in gelidis pones suprema labellis, Homer. 847-8 (Achilles lamenting Patroclus) et super extincti prostratus membra sodalis / crudeles fundit questus atque oscula figit.

595. incumbens: ‘the characteristic word for a mourner leaning over or lying on a dead person’, as Gibson notes on S. 5.1.201 incumbens, where Flavius Abascantus leans over the corpse of his beloved wife Priscilla. He compares Luc. 2.27-8, which Statius surely has in mind (see 588-604n.), 8.727-8, 9.55-7, S. 3.3.9; one could add Ov. Met. 6.277 corporibus gelidis incumbit (Niobe). For the gesture cf. also Aen. 11.149-50 feretro Pallanta reposto / procubuit super, where Evander bends over his dead son Pallas. The mourning gesture links Hypsipyle with other lamenting women in the poem, cf. 3.128 prociduae, 12.290 incumbens, 12.318-9 corpore toto / sternitur in uultus, where Argia throws herself upon her beloved Polynices (on Hypsipyle and maternal bereavement see §6.4); and esp. with Opheltes’ mother in 6.35-6 lacerasque super procumbere nati / reliquias ardet.

animaeque fugam per membra tepentem / quaerit hians: when a Roman was at the point of death, his closest relative would attempt to catch the last breath with his mouth (cf. 568n. above). For the custom see e.g. Dewar on 9.899. Austin on Aen. 4.684-5 extremus si quis super halitus errat, / ore legam (where Anna tries to catch Dido’s last breath), Ov. Met. 12.424-5 oraque ad ora / admovet atque animae fugienti obsistere temptat (where Hylomena tries to catch the anima of her beloved centaur Cyllarus); for more examples see Esteve-Forriol (1962: 141).

Here, significantly, it is Hypsipyle who performs the task, not Opheltes’ mother or father. The gesture is vain; Opheltes’ last breath has already gone (see 541-3). Not having been able to catch a dead person’s extremum spiritum is suggested by Cicero as a suitable locus communis for a lament (De inv. 55). The vain attempt to catch the dead person’s last breath, in combination with the kisses (594 oscula), again links Hypsipyle with Argia, 12.319-20 animamque per oscula quaerit / absentem.

With respect to the phrasing, note animae fugam for animam fugientem (cf. 10.733 fugam ... cruoris) and the ἐναλλαγῆ in tepentem, which goes syntactically with fugam, semantically
with *membra* (see *OLD* s.v. *tepeo* 1b ‘to have the warmth of a living body’). Not accidentally, perhaps, in that sense the word is used of Linus in 1.585 *membra tepent*.

**596-8.** Statius devotes almost three lines to the description of Opheltes’ mutilated body, reminiscent of the Dionysiac *sparagmos*, revelling in its horror and pathos, inviting the reader to visualise every single detail. As it happens, most details also occur in pseudo-Quintilian’s declamation on cannibalism, where the speaker recalls the horror he felt at devouring human flesh: *nunc mihi illa foeda uidentur, nunc abominanda, laceri artus et nudata ossa et abrepta cute intus cauum pectus, nunc occurrunt effusa prae cordia et liuidae carnes* etc. (12.9). The enumeration of details reaches its climax in the hyperbolic phrase *totumque in uulnere corpus*.

According to Vessey (1973: 189) the description is ‘somewhat grotesque’ – an understatement according to Gervais (2008: 37 n. 82). Surely the detailed description of the child’s mutilated corpse betrays an interest in the aesthetics of violence, which is prominent in imperial literature, esp. Lucan and Senecan tragedies (see Wessels 2013); cf. esp. the messenger’s description of Astyanax’ remains in *Tr. 1110-7*. At the same time, the gruesome details are significant as they forge a symbolic connection between Opheltes and the victims of the coming Theban War, whose slaughtered bodies figure prominently in several aftermath scenes (see §6.3). Mottram (on 6.54-83) notes that there is no description of Opheltes’ remains in book 6 and suggests that ‘[t]he lack of a body is one of the ways in which Opheltes is made symbolic’. That slaughter is the norm in Statius’ disturbing world, is made clear *a contrario* when Argia, unexpectedly, finds the body of her beloved Polynices intact (12.338-9; cf. 2.1.154-7 where, thankfully, Glaucias’ body is still whole and beautiful).

As Cazzaniga has argued (1972: 225; cf. Scaffai 2002: 243), the intertextual model is Lucan’s horrid description of the *seps* (*Luc. 9.762-88*), whose bite reduces the victim to a little pool of putrid corruption: the skin melts away (*Luc. 9.758-9 *nam plagae proxima circum / fugit rapta cutis pallentiaque ossa rexit*), revealing the organs, sinews and bones, which eventually melt away too (including the bones). The *seps* is a notoriously small serpent, but no other snake causes bigger wounds (*Luc. 9.764 *seps ... exiguus, 766-7 parua modo serpens sed qua non ulla cru entae / tantum mortis habet*). In our passage there is a similar big/small contrast, between the enormous serpent and its small victim. There is sophisticated irony in moulding the wounds caused by the giant Nemean serpent on the wounds caused by the smallest serpent in Lucan’s catalogue. Whereas Lucan describes the process of mutilation (with dynamic *fugit* and *rexit*), Statius describes the result (with static *rapta* [sc. *est*] and *patent*). That Opheltes’ corpse, like the victims of Lucan’s *seps*, has become almost liquid, also appears from 5.634 *transfundam*. Opheltes’ dismembered corpse recurs briefly in 5.650-1 *laceras ... exsequias*. On the importance of *Bellum ciuile* 9 for Statius’ Nemean episode generally see Parkes on 4.646-850.

An additional model, which Cazzaniga overlooks, is Ovid’s description of the flaying of Marsyas (*Met. 6.387-90*) –

*clamanti cutis est summos direpta per artus,*

*nec quicquam nisi uulnus erat; cruor undique manat,*

*detectique patent neri, trepidaeque sine ulla pelle micant uenae; salientia uiscera possit et perlucentes numerare in pectore fibras.*

– one of the models that underlie Lucan’s *seps* passage (see Wick on Luc. 9.762-88 §3 ‘Literarische Einflüsse’; add Ap.Rh. 4.1529-31, where Mopsus’ body begins to melt away after he has been bitten by a snake).

In addition, Statius’ audience may be reminded of the fatal wound of Vergil’s Pallas (*Aen. 11.40 leuique patens in pectore uulnus*): the verb *pateo* and the nouns *pectus* and *uulnus* also
occur in Statius’ description of Opheltes’ remains, while the adjective tenvia adds a touch of pathos similar to leui in Vergil. The pathos of savagely wounded youths is popular with Hellenistic poets, cf. e.g. Bion’s lament for Adonis (esp. 7-14).

596. non ora loco, non pectora restant: for the phrasing cf. 7.149 non crines, non sertam loco. The mutilated corpse recalls 3.132 aptam / brachia trunco loco et ceruicibus ora reponunt, where the Thebans attempt to reassemble the bodies butchered by Tydeus.

597. rapta cutis, tenuia ossa patent: directly modelled on Luc. 9.768 fugit rapta cutis pallentiaque ossa retextit. Statius’ rapta has been said to support the variant reading rapta cutis in Lucan (Cazzaniga 1972: 225, accepted by Raschle, rejected by Wick ad loc.), but perhaps the Flavian poet deliberately compresses fugit rapta into rapta, which expresses both the movement of fugit and the violence of rapta (which, to complicate things further, is also found in several MSS here). Ovid has Met. 6.387 cutis est summos direpta per artus. Lucan’s rather ornamental pallentia is replaced with tenuia, which reminds the reader of Opheltes’ age and adds an element of pathos to the description’s horror. One could connect the adjective with the child’s Callimachean poetics (cf. §§3.4 and 4). The verb retextit is replaced with patent, which occurs prominently later in Lucan’s seps passage: pectus et abstrusum fibris uitalibus omne / morte patet (cf. below 597n. nexus) as well as in the Ovidian model (Met. 6.389 detectique patent nerui). Cynthia’s ghost speaks of her mollia ... ossa (Prop. 4.7.80).

tenuia ossa: the scan has raised some eyebrows. Normally tenuia scans as a dactyl (tēnviā): 13 times in Lucretius (e.g. 3.383) and 3 times in Vergil (e.g. Geo. 1.397); Flavian examples are Val. 6.225 and Sil. 4.147. Hence it seems best to treat –u– consonantally, which means that we have to treat –i– consonantally as well: tēnviā ossa. So the word is scanned by Lehanneur (1878: 105), Adrian (1893: 29) and SB (who prints tenvia in his Loeb edition). The unlikely alternative is to treat –u– as a vowel and scan tēnviā ossa, as does Dilke (1949: 51). Either way, of course, the final –a is elided. The problem recurs in 6.196 tenuia ora, where ‘mire poeta coartavit vocabulum quod est tenuia’ (Fortgens ad loc.); Legras (1905: 322 n. 2) even speaks of ‘les fantaisies métriques de Stace’ and scans tēnviā – metrical fantasies on the part of Legras rather than Statius). Cf. also 12.2 cornu tenuiore (Pollmann tēnivōre vs. SB tēnivyore), Ach. 1.239 et tenuior Sperchios, S. 1.4.36 tenuiore lyra. In one manuscript (S) tenuia has been ‘corrected’ into tenera (also Z6), probably in an attempt to do away with the metrical difficulty (cf. 4.697 tenuis / tenuior, 6.196 tenuia / tenera, Dilke on Ach. 1.239). For more metrical oddities in Statius see Dilke (1949).

597. nexus: ‘applied to the sinews or joints of the body’ (OLD 2a), as the models make clear: Luc. 9.770-1 sine ullo / tegmine poples erat, 9.777-80 uinclia nervorum ... patet and Ov. Met. 6.389 detectique patent nerui; cf. also Met. 6.255-6 icus erat, qua crus esse incipit et qua / mollia nervus facit internodia poples (massacre of the Niobids).

597-8. madentes / sanguinis imbre noui: also inspired by Lucan’s tabificus seps (9.723), which completely purifies its victim, including the bones: 9.770 membra natant sanie, surae fluxere, 771-2 femorum quoque musculus omnis / liquitur, 772 nigra destillant inguina tabe, 773-4 fluuntique / viscera, 780-1 manant umeri fortesque laceri, / colla caputque fluunt, etc. Statius has managed to find a verb that does not occur in Lucan’s passage.

For the expression ‘rain of blood’ cf. 1.438 sanguineo ... imbre, 7.408 nunc sanguineus, nunc saxeus imber and 10.479 sanguineus ... imber, where the adjective sanguineus takes the place of the gen. sanguinis, and esp. (with the same verb) 12.603-4 cruento / imbre madent. Precedents include Luc. 6.224 (Scaeva) imbre cruento, Val. 6.186-7 imbres / sanguineos; see further TLL s.v. imber 7.1.423.31-5. For Statius’ daring use of imber cf. 5.619n. Cazzaniga (1972: 226) points to Nic. Th. 273 πέραξαν ... ύετοῖο (‘drops of rain’), which ‘richiamano agevolmente l’imber sanguinis staziano’; cf. also Bion Lament for Adonis 9-10 τὸ δὲ οἱ μέλαν ἐϊδέται αἷμα / χιονέας κατὰ σφαῖρας.
The combination sanguinis ... noui seems an allusion to Juno’s phrase Aen. 7.554 sanguis nouus imbuti arma, aligning the ‘beginning of doom’ in the Thebaid with the outbreak of the war between Latins and Trojans in the Aeneid (cf. 684n. imbuti arma domi).

totumque in uulnere corpus: LP explains ‘totum uulneri uix suffecit corpus’, a gloss that rightly strikes an Ovidian note (cf. Met. 7.613 nec locus in tumulos, nec sufficit arbor in ignes, 3.237 quoted below). The motif also occurs in the seps passage, Luc. 9.769 nudum sine corpore uulnus. However, as Michler (1914: 14), Cazzaniga (1972: 226) and Brown (1994: 152 n. 103) have independently noted, the actual phrase is taken from Lucan’s haemorrhois passage, Luc. 9.814 totum est pro uulnere corpus. Cazzaniga suggests that ‘con in luogo di pro, Stazio abbia voluto attenuare l’audacia della struttura lucianiana’; I am not sure, however, which expression is the more audacious. Michler (1914: 14) also compares Ov. Met. 12.99 uulnere corpus, Lehanneur (1878: 263) adduces Sil. 10.513 toto corpore uulnus, and Duff (1964: 384 n. 1) and Scaffai (2002: 243 n. 66) point to Ov. Met. 15.529 (Hippolytus) unumque erat omnia uulnus (1964: 384 n. 1), which Kroll (1924: 270) seems to regard as regard as Statius’ model too (‘auf den Kopf gestellt’). We may add Met. 3.237 (Actaeon) iam loca uulneribus desunt, 6.388 (Marsyas) nec quiequam nisi uulnus erat, Mart. Spect. 9.5-6 uitiebant laceri membris stillantibus artus / inque omni nusquam corpore corpus erat.

Brown (1994: 115 n. 71) connects the line with the beginning of Hypsipyle’s narrative (5.29-30 immania uulnere, rector, / integrare iubes) and comments: ‘Ironically, the narration of these immania uulnere will end in Opheltes’ physical metamorphosis into ‘wound’: totumque in uulnere corpus’. On the connection between Hypsipyle’s story and Opheltes’ death see 626-7n.

599-604. When Hypsipyle finds Opheltes’ bodily remains, she is compared to a mother bird that returns to her nest and finds her young killed by a snake – ‘una bella similitudine’ (Pice 2003: 245), beautiful both ‘dans le principal et dans les détails’ (Legras 1905: 300). The simile corresponds quite closely to the narrative: the mother bird with Hypsipyle, the snake with the Nemean serpent, and the dead nestlings with Opheltes. Verbal echoes reinforce the parallelism (see notes below). Hough, who praises our poet’s ‘skill with bird material’, speaks of a ‘simile of killing as snakes kill birds in nest’ (1974: 8 with n. 17), but there is more than one tertium comparationis: other crucial points of comparison are the return (redit) of the mother and especially her stupefaction (spetet) upon seeing the bloody remains of her offspring, which is undoubtedly inspired by Lucan (see 588-604n.).

In comparing Hypsipyle with a real mother, Scaffai (2002: 244) points out, the simile adds to her characterisation as Opheltes’ alternative mother (see 605-37n.). cf. 4.789-92 where it remains beautifully unclear whether Berecynthia mater refers to infant Jupiter’s biological mother Rhea or his foster-mother Cybele (cf. Brown 1994: 136; Parkes ad loc.).

As Gervais (2008: 38 n. 83) notes, ‘[t]he bereavement of mother birds forms the basis of several similes of great pathos’ in classical literature, most famously Geo. 4.511-5 (modelled on Od. 16.216-9; cf. also 19.518-24), where Orpheus lamenting Eurydice is compared to a nightingale lamenting its young carried off by a ploughman (Brown 1994: 125 sees an allusion; later, 136 n. 27, she also mentions h.Hom.Cer. 43 where Demeter searching for Persephone is compared to a bird seeking its young), Sen. Ag. 670-85, Homer. 417-20. In particular, Statius may have in mind Soph. Ant. 423-5 η παϊς ωρατα κακαικωνις πηρος / ύρνις διχων φεμαγον, ως ὅταν κενης / ευνης νεοσσιον όρφαιον βλεψη λάχος, where Antigone’s cry upon finding Polynices’ body uncovered is compared to that of a mother bird that finds her nestlings gone. Normally, in bird similes, bird-song parallels lamentation (e.g. Eur. Phoen. 1515-22, Suppl. 1046-7). Here, however, the tertium comparationis is not the lamentation, but (inter alia) precisely the bird’s speechlessness! In that respect, the simile certainly looks back to Luc. 2.20-8 (see above 588-604n.). In 1.339 iam pecudes uolucresque tacent the birds’
silence heralds storm – perhaps our simile looks forward to storm of the Theban War to come?

In combination with the snake, Statius’ bird-simile recalls the famous omen in Aulis (Il. 2.299-332, Ov. Met. 12.12-23, Homer. 147-50), where the Greeks witness a serpent ravaging a nest in a plane tree: the reptile devours eight young sparrows as well as their mother and is then turned into stone. The allusion may be significant: as the omen in Aulis marks the beginning of the Trojan War, so Opheltes’ death marks the beginning of the Theban War. However, as Duncan (1914: 81; discussing another Statian simile) observes, ‘[s]carcely ever does [Statius] reproduce a simile in the exact form in which it appears in the author to whom he is indebted’: Statius has adapted the model simile to the context: the mother bird is not killed, but returns to lament her children torn to pieces; the snake is gone.

The simile also points to the symbolism of Statius’ Nemea as ‘paradise lost’: mother birds feeding their young are symbolic of the pietas, prosperity and fertility of the Golden Age (cf. Zanker 1987: 177-83, esp. the Falerii relief depicting birds feeding their young), while snakes represent the forces that threaten that world. Notably, we also find a snake attacking nestlings on the Ara Pacis, on which Galinsky (1992: 465) comments: ‘Discreet as it may be, the presence [...] of snakes attacking a bird’s nest and of scorpions accords well with Virgil’s reformulation of the Golden Age in the Georgics as one based on unremitting work against harmful obstacles’ (on the ‘georgic’ aspect of Statius’ Nemea see §5.4). Birds fearing snakes also figure in Horace’s first Epode (1.1.19-22), which Knox connects with the scene on the Ara Pacis, reading the simile as ‘reminder of the threats remaining for the new order and the precariousness of the imperial succession’ (2011: 65). Our simile, I believe, looks back to the symbolism of these Augustan snakes attacking birds’ nests, inviting us to view Opheltes’ death as a brutal disruption of a peaceful and prosperous world (cf. §5). For birds’ nests in the visual arts see further Toynbee (2013: 279-80); noteworthy is a silver cup from Boscoreale that depict the following scene: ‘the “baby-sitter” has shockingly neglected its charges and allowed a crab, in the parents’ absence, to drive the nestlings out and occupy the nest, from which the mother, all too late, is vigorously ejecting it: the father, returning with a snake, turns its head to glare furiously at the hunched and shame-faced culprit’ (Toynbee 2013: 280).

There are more bird-similes in the Thebaid, which usually serve to emphasise the pathos of bereavement; cf. 8.616-20, 9.360-2, 12.15-21 and 478-80. Our simile especially contacts with the simile at the beginning of book 12, where the besieged city of Thebes is compared to a doves’ nest attacked by a serpent (12.15-21; Pollmann ad loc. overlooks the intertextual model Aesch. Sept. 291-4). Cf. also Ach. 1.212-6, where Thetis searching for a place to hide Achilles is compared to a mother bird searching for a nest safe from snakes.

On Statius’ use of similes in general see 529-33n. Legras (1905: 298) has listed all bird- and snake-similes in the Thebaid; for more epic bird-similes see Golden 2014: 252 n. 7. On birds in Latin literature see Martin 1914, Hough 1974.

599. ac uelut: in 1.370, 3.22 and 7.436 Statius also introduces a simile with ac uelut; in 1.370 and 3.22 talis picks uelut, but here and in 7.436 there is no such correlative (cf. Smolenaaars on 7.436). Ker (1953: 179) is not pleased with Statius’ syntax: ‘we have neither a main sentence nor a return to Hypsipyle, both of which we have a right, after ac, to expect. [...] I am driven to the conclusion that Statius is here carrying to the limit of endurance his habit of omitting parts of the verb sum, and that we are to suppose, repugnant though it is, that he meant atque <erat> uelut.’ We may point out that Vergil, too, sometimes leaves his similes hanging in the air (see Austin on Aen. 2.626-31, 6.707). The construction is ac uelut aligerae sedem fetusque parentis / cum ... populatus [sc. est] ... serpens, / illa redit etc. The syntax and flow are perfectly analogous with Aen. 2.626-31 ac uelutī summis antiquam in montibus orrum / cum ferro accisam crebrisque bipennibus instant / eruere agricolae
certatim, illa usque minatur / etc., where illa also picks up the noun (with epithet) at the end of the first line.

**aligerae sedem fetusque parentis**: note the word order, the mother bird embracing her nest and young. *Aliger* is a poetic word coined by Vergil (*Aen.* 1.663, 12.249; see Williams [Oxford ed.] on *Aen.* 5.452), but not often applied to birds (see *TLL* s.v. 1581.81ff.). It occurs four times in Statius, the other occurrences being 2.1, S. 3.3.80 (both referring to Mercury) and 10.302 (Somnus). The adjective bestows epic grandness upon the mother bird. For *sedem fetusque* cf. Val. 4.45 *fetumque laremque* with Korn’s note; cf. also 601n. *domus* below.

**600. piger**: one might object that a snake engaged in killing birds is not exactly *piger*. LP explains the word πρὸς ἀντίδιαστολὴν (for a ‘fast snake’ cf. e.g. Eur. *Ion* 1233 ἡδος ἐξίδας). According to Legras (1905: 304 n. 4) Statius simply was not familiar with ‘la natra serpientes’. Finally, it may be worth noting that Statius often applies *piger* to things infernal (see Mulder on 2.2). According to Hall prints Jortin’s conjecture *cum impiger* which is highly unlikely. Squamiger crossed my mind, but *cum* cannot be accommodated elsewhere in the line; *cum impiger* is implausible.

*piger* could be explained as a comment on the nature of snakes in general (cf. Ov. *Am.* 2.13.13 *pigraque ... serpens*) rather than as a comment on the snake’s present behaviour. Significantly, the word recalls 549 *piger* (Brown 1994: 125), reinforcing the snake’s connection with its Nemean counterpart: like other Latin poets, Statius frequently creates such verbal bonds between simile and narrative (see Perkins 1974: esp. 270-3 on Statius; cf. e.g. 11.521 *implicitus* and 528 *implíciti*). Both here and in 549 the word may suggest sluggishness and saturation after eating. Finally, it may be worth noting that Statius often applies *piger* to things infernal (see Mulder on 2.2 *pigrae*).

**umbrosa ... in ilice**: cf. Calp. *Ecl.* 2.12 *umbrosa ... sub ilice*. The lovely bucolic setting, to which the parallel in Calpurnius bears witness (cf. also e.g. *Ecl.* 9.20 *uiridi ... umbra*), contrasts with the not-so-lovely slaughter, as the Nemean landscape contrasts with the horror of Opheltes’ death. In the present context, the word *umbrosa* may have an additional shade – pardon the pun – of meaning, since *umbra* and its cognates also belong to the vocabulary of death. For shade as a typical element of idyllic and bucolic landscapes see e.g. Seelen-tag on [Verg.] *Cul.* 157-8.

**populatus**: note the military overtones. *populare/i* is first used of animals in *Geo.* 1.185 *populatque ingentem farris aceruum / curculio* (with Thomas’ note); cf. *Aen.* 4.403, *Theb.* 9.189 *populatum rura leonem*. We may be reminded of the serpentine monster Poine in the story of Linus and Coroebus, cf. 1.608 *populata penates* (cf. §3).


**querulaeque domus mirata quietem**: ‘wondering at the silence of the twittering home’ (SB). The paradoxical idea ‘sound of silence’ (underscored by the alliteration *querulaeque ... quietem*) nicely expresses the cause of the bird’s wonder.

Ov. Fast. 3.242, Val. 4.45), S. 3.5.58 uernos ... penates. The word adds to the human quality of the birds. The word querulae is also well chosen: primarily it refers to the baby birds’ twittering cries (for quer– of birds cf. e.g. 12.478 queruntur, Ov. Am. 3.1.4 dulce queruntur aues), but in the context one senses the meaning ‘lamenting’ as well; it also echoes Opheltes’ querelis in 542 (cf. also 500n.). Note that the word does not, as usual in bird-similes (e.g. Val. 4.46), refer to the lament of the mother-bird who has lost her young (cf. 599-604n.).

602. iam stupet: MSS and editions are divided between stat super (SB) and iam stupet (Garrod, Hill, Hall). In support of stat super one could adduce 8.618 stantque super nidos, 10.84 stat super, Val. 4.46 it super and perhaps also Aen. 6.17 super asstitit (Daedalus hovering in the air). However, in light of the Lucanian model (see 588-604n.) and Silius’ imitation of it (Sil. 9.42 cum stupet), iam stupet is surely correct: it expresses the shock that the mother (nurse) experiences when she finds her nestlings (nursling) torn to pieces. Moreover, the rather colourless stat super would add little to impendens.

impendens: ‘hanging in the air’. For birds that hover motionless in the air (like hawks), cf. Aen. 6.17 (Daedalus; see previous note), Sil. 11.467-8 positoque volatu / non mota uolucris capitae pependit in aethra (bird captivated by Orpheus’ music), Ov. Met. 8.145 pendebat.

603. excutit ore cibos: corresponding with Hypsipyle’s open mouth (596 hians). For the expression cf. 2.83-4 excussaecaque leonum / ore dapes with Mulder’s note.

603-4. cum solus in arbore paret / sanguis et errantes per capta cubilia plumae: the blood and straying feathers recall Aen. 11.724 tum cruer et uulsae labuntur ab aethere plumae. Cf. also Ov. Met. 6.529 utque columba suo madefactis sanguine plumis, which foreshadows the metamorphosis in 6.670 signataque sanguine pluma est.

paret: i.e. apparet (simplex pro composito); the mother bird is shocked as it becomes apparent what has happened. Hence paret is superior to cara (Hall).

capta: Hall reads rapta, but there is no need for conjecture. On the contrary, capta continues the martial language begun with populatus: the ravaging of the nest is like the plundering of a city (cf. e.g. 4.830 captam ... urbem, 5.302 captas arces). On the urbs capta motif see Parkes on 4.371-3 with references.

605-37. Hypsipyle laments Opheltes

Hypsipyle finally regains control over her voice and delivers a lament of some length (608-35a). In the first part of her speech (608-19) Hypsipyle focuses upon her own sorrows, rather than Opheltes’ tragic premature death itself: the death of her nursling deprives her of the little solace (609 solamen; cf. 617 solabar), joy (610 gaudia) and pride (610 decus) she had left. In retelling the past – Taisne rightly calls the passage ‘une douloreuse rétrospective’ (1994: 272) – the speech bears witness to the intimate relationship between nurse and nursling, their bond exceeding that between Opheltes and his biological mother Eurydice (614-5 murmura soli / intellecta mihi, 617-8 ubera ... iam materna); in Euripides their bond is also affectionate (cf. Brown 1994: 107-8), but Statius goes one step further. In the second part of her speech (620-8a) the focus shifts to the question of culpability. After initially blaming the gods (610-1 qui te ... santes extinxere dei), Hypsipyle in a flash of insight (620 nosco) corrects herself (622 quos arguo diuos?) and takes full responsibility for Opheltes’ death (623 ipsa ego). In her perception Opheltes has died because she had rescued her father Thoas from the massacre on Lemnos. This idea leads to the final part of the speech (628b-35a): Hypsipyle, unable to bear the guilt and overcome with grief, expresses the wish to die, with which her lament reaches climax and closure.

Like other female laments, the passage was popular in the Middle Ages, which relates to the growing interest in the plaint d’amour. In several manuscripts dating from the 12th and 13th centuries, the passage is marked; lines 5.608-16 also appear neumed in the Carmina.
Cantabrigiensia (CC 31), as does Argia’s lament in book 12 (CC 29 and 32). See Battles 2004: 4-6 with further references (on neumation of women’s speeches in the medieval period see Ziolkowski 2004). Lewis 1773 ad loc. speaks of ‘a Masterpiece in the pathetic Way. That of Eurialus’s [sic] Mother in the 9th book of the Aeneid, and of Andromache in the 22nd of the Iliad are the only ones that can stand in Competition with it’. Lehannier (1878: 199) cites 608-19 in his chapter ‘de Statii virtutibus’ and comments: ‘tanta inest ejus dictis gratia ut vix decerni possit utrum magis lector moveatur, an delectetur’.

The essential characteristics of Statian speeches of lament are, as Dominik observes, ‘short syntactic units of expression, parenthetic statements, rhetorical questions, apostrophes and exclamations’ (1994a: 121) – stylistic features that create the impression of spontaneity and sincere emotion. All these features can be found in Hypsipyle’s speech: apostrophe (e.g. 609 Archemore, 615 tibi, 628 tibi, Lemne), some remarkably short phrases (620 nosco deos, 622 quos arguo diuos?); two parentheses, rhetorical questions and exclamations (623 quid ... fateri? and 627 pietas ... fidesque!). Another indication of Hypsipyle’s emotional state are the many interjections (e.g. 608 o, 613 heu). Thus the language underlines the immediacy, spontaneity and sincerity of her words. Frank’s claim that ‘emotional passages in Statius are usually more spondaic than undramatic ones’ (1968: 398) does not hold for Hypsipyle’s speech; nor is the number of elisions much higher than usual (39 per 100 lines in Statius; see Frank 1968: 404-5; on the correlation between elision and emotionality in Latin poetry see e.g. Smolenaars 1991).

The (surrogate) mother lamenting her child has a long literary history, which begins with the laments for Hector in the Iliad. Greek tragedy offers numerous examples, such as Autonoë lamenting torn-to-pieces Pentheus in Euripides’ Bacchae. A Hellenistic highlight is Bion’s poem of lament for Adonis, which may have lingered in Statius’ mind (Taisne 1994: 272). Most important for Statius, however, are the lament of Euryalus’ mother (Aen. 9.481-97) and Pallas’ father (Aen. 11.152-81). He also borrows elements from Hecuba’s lament for Polyxena in Ovid (Met. 13.488-532), which underlies the lament of Menoeceus’ mother in 10.793-814 (Iglesias-Álvarez 2005: 895 n. 1); Hecuba is not only an archetypal bereaved mother, she is also – like Hypsipyle – a queen reduced to slave. In the second half of Hypsipyle’s lament, we are several times reminded of Vergil’s Dido.

Although the scene does not quite correspond with the Hypsipyle (see 588-604n.), various elements in Hypsipyle’s speech look back to Euripides (see notes below). A notable inversion is that in Euripides Hypsipyle comforts Opheltes, whereas in Statius it is the other way around. Note also that, whereas Euripides’ Hypsipyle pleads not guilty, Statius’ heroine considers herself responsible for Opheltes’ death (see 620-8n.).

See further §6.4 on Hypsipyle and maternal bereavement.

605. laceros artus: described in 596-8; cf. also 6.35-6 lacerasque ... reliquias. The combination is frequent, e.g. 9.259, 12.411, Ov. Met. 9.169, Sen. Oed. 442, Luc. 2.165, 177, Sil. 3.433. Opheltes’ mutilated body seen through Hypsipyle’s eyes may recall Euryalus’ remains seen through the eyes of his mother, Aen. 9.490-1 artus auulsaque membra / et funus lacerum. Cf. also 7.213-4 (Pentheus) lacero ... funere.

gremio ... recepit: Hypsipyle takes the dead child onto her lap, a traditional mourning gesture well-known in the Christian tradition too (pietà). The so-called Lasimos krater also depicts a woman with a dead child on her lap, possibly Hypsipyle and Opheltes (see App. B e). The word gremium often captures the bond between woman and child; significantly, here it is Hypsipyle and not his mother Eurydice who takes the dead child to her bosom (cf. 614-5n. soli / intellecta mihi, 618n. iam materna, 632-3n.). The phrasing gremio ... recepit also recalls affectionate scenes of women taking children onto their laps (cf. S. 1.2.260-1 at te nascentem gremio mea prima recepit / Parthenope, Aen. 1.685 cum te gremio accipiet
laetissima Dido, 1.718 gremio fouet): the implicit contrast with such tender scenes adds pathos to Hypsipyle’s gesture. The word gremio rings with 634 gremio (where see note).

miseranda: according to rhetorical handbooks, a lament aims to arouse the pity of the audience (e.g. Cic. Inv. 55 conquestio est oratio auditorum miseris cordam captans). Similarly Ide (3.136 infelix miserandaque) and Argia (12.313) are also called miseranda before they utter their laments.

606. intexitque comis: in an extremely pathetic mourning gesture, Hypsipyle twines Opheltes’ mutilated limbs in her hair. We should probably imagine that she has cut off a hair-lock first. Fortunately, she does not have an elaborate Flavian coiffure (4.750 neglecta comam). Similar scenes are 3.129 haec pressant in tabe comas (Theban women lamenting the soldiers butchered by Tydeus), 5.235 laceros premit in nova uulnera crines (Lycaste lamenting her brother Cydymus), and 12.320-1 pressumque comis ac ueste cruorem / seruatura legit (Argia lamenting Polynices);586 I find only one parallel before Statius, Ov. Met. 13.492 canitemque suam concreto sanguine uellens. The word seruatura in 12.321 suggests that Argia intends to preserve the blood of her beloved Polynices, and thus Snijder ad loc. interprets the mourning gesture of the Theban women in book 3: ‘some steep their hair in the blood of their beloved relatives in an attempt to conserve it’. Cf. also 9.374-5 amida siccat / mollibus ora comis, where the nymph Ismenis cleans the face of her dead son Crenaeus with her hair (cf. Aen. 4.687 atros siccat ueste cruores). The gesture seems an ‘Überbietung’ of the placement of a hair-lock on the deceased (e.g. Petr. Sat. 11.9 ruptusque crines super corpus iacentis imposuit; cf. also N-H on Hor. Carm. 1.28.20), in combination with the staining of one’s hair with soil and dust, a more traditional mourning gesture (e.g. 3.135 squalentem ... comam, 138 canitem impexam dira tellure uolutans, Smolenaars on 7.474 sordentibus ... comis, where the nymph Ismenis cleans the face of her dead son Crenaeus with her hair (cf. Aen. 4.687 atros siccat ueste cruores). The word intexitque of the placement of a hair-lock on the deceased (e.g. Petr. Sat. 11.9 ruptusque crines super corpus iacentis imposuit; cf. also N-H on Hor. Carm. 1.28.20), in combination with the staining of one’s hair with soil and dust, a more traditional mourning gesture (e.g. 3.135 squalentem ... comam, 138 canitem impexam dira tellure uolutans, Smolenaars on 7.474 sordentibus ... canis, Aen. 10.844, 12.611, Il. 18.23-4).

comis: like other epicists (with the notable exception of Ovid), Statius usually prefers comis or crinis over the prosaic capillus (only 3.680). See Axelson (1945: 51).

606-7. tandem laxata dolore / uox inuenit iter: initially Hypsipyle had not been able to speak (see 593-4n. above); now she regains control over her voice, which links her with Menoeceus’ mother (10.792 tandem matri data flere potestas) and, once again, with Argia (12.321 mox tandem uoce reuera). The motif also occurs in the teichoscopias, when memories of Laius silence Phorbas (7.359-62).

The phrase is modelled on Aen. 11.151 et uia uix tandem uoci laxata dolore est (Deipser 1881: 30, Micozzi 1998: 116 n. 81), the impressive line that introduces the lament of Evander over his dead son Pallas. In Vergil laxata goes with uia, in Statius with uox. For the ‘passage of speech’ cf. Lucr. 6.1148 ulceribus uocis uia saepta, Aen. 7.734 uocis iter, Smolenaars on 7.360-1; Val. 2.455 uocis iter originally describes the route of Hesione’s voice travelling to the ears of Hercules and Telamon.

dolore: most editors accept Heinsius’ conjecture dolori. As Håkanson (1969: 169) has convincingly argued, however, there is no need to reject the unanimous MSS reading dolore: both the Vergilian model (see previous note) and later imitations (Just. 42.4 ubi dolor uocem laxuerat, Claud. De raptu 3.179 postquam suspiria tandem / laxaut frenisque dolor) add credibility to the MSS reading. One might argue, against Håkanson, that the phrase, precisely because it is an imitation of Aen. 11.151, requires a dative, and that Statius has replaced Vergil’s uoci (M2-P:R : uocis P2 : uoces M1) with dolori. However, the Vergilian model shows that dolore is at least equally possible, and given the unanimous MSS support dolore is to be maintained.

586 The last line, as Snijder on 3.129 rightly points out, is mistranslated by Mozley (‘pressing the blood from his hair and raiment’); SB also mistranslates (‘pressing the blood from his hair and garment’). The parallels show that the hair and garment are Argia’s.
607. *gemitusque in uerba soluti*: sc. *sunt*. First she could only heave sighs (*gemitus*), now she is able to speak in words. The phrase more or less repeats the preceding clause in different words, a feature of Vergilian style (see Gransden 1976: 47 on ‘theme and variation’); *soluti* continues the metaphor of *laxata*. For the expression cf. 7.489 *clamorem ... resoluit* with Smolenars, S. 3.1.165 *soluentem voces et talia dicta ferentem*, and esp. Ov. *Met. 2.282 uix equidem fauces haec ipsa in uerba resoluo. *608-9. o mihi ... o*: cf. Eur. *Hyps*. fr. 753d.1 ἡε, 4 Ὕ μοι, 14 ὧ ἐγώ, 753e ἐἐ ἐἐ. Such interjections are characteristic of laments (see 605-37n.). For the repetition of *o* see Heuvel on 1.22 and cf. 2.489, 5.33-4, 9.61, 11.468, *Ach. 1.42*. The composition of the sentence is similar to 7.363-4 *o mihi ... / Antigone. *o mihi desertae natorum dulcis imago*: Opheltes naturally reminded Hypsipyle of her own children Thoas and Euneus, whom she had to leave behind on the island of Lemnos, with Lycaste as their nurse (5.465-7; cf. Fortgens 1959: 55 n. 5). The reference subtly prepares for the reunion of Hypsipyle with her sons in 710-30. The dative *mihi desertae* is dependent on *dulcis*. For the phrasing cf. S. 1.2.112-3 *mihi dulcis imago / prosluit*. There seems to be an echo of Vergil’s *Andromache*, *Aen*. 3.489 *o mihi sola mei super Astyanactis imago* (cf. 613n.); Brown (1994: 111-2, 124-5) discusses the similarities between Hypsipyle and Andromache, another former queen unable to escape from her grief and her past. For Opheltes’ sweetness (*dulcis*) Brown (1994: 131) compares Simonides’ γλυκές γυναίκες (see §1.3.1).

*Archemore*: if Opheltes is officially renamed Archemorus by Amphiaraus towards the end of the book (738-9 *nostri signatus nomine fati, / Archemorus*), how does Hypsipyle know Opheltes’ future name? The problem is discussed in §6.3.

609-10. *o rerum et patriae solamen ademptae / seruiiique decus*: Dante translates ‘O consolazione de le cose e de la patria perduta, o onore del mio servigio’ (*Conv.* 3.11.16; see Traglia-Aricò 1980 *ad loc.*); SB renders *rerum et patriae ... ademptae* as ‘my lost estate and country’ (*ademptae* is congruent with *patriae* but also goes with *rerum*). It seems to me, however, that *rerum* includes more than material possessions alone. Perhaps the phrase is best understood as a hendiadys, paraphrased ‘the loss of everything I had in my fatherland’, which would certainly also include her sons. The vocabulary constitutes a bitter echo of 5.125 *decus et solacia patris* (Polyxyo’s sons destined to be killed; see §6.3). In 617 (where see note) it will become clear that Opheltes provided *solamen* not only as ‘substitute’ for her loss, but also as recipient of her Lemnian narrative.


The word *solamen* is a Vergilian coinage; see Harrison on *Aen*. 10.493-4 and cf. e.g. *Aen*. 3.661, 10.859, S. 2.1.1 with Newlands. In combination with *decus* it may recall *Aen*. 10.858-9 (Mezentius and his horse Rhaeus) *hoc decus illi, / hoc solamen erat*; cf. also Evander’s *spes et solacia nostri et mea sola et sera uoluptas* (*Aen*. 8.514 and 8.581, of his son Pallas).

610-1. *qui te ... santes / extinxere dei*: after blaming Opheltes’ death on the gods in general, in 620-8 (where see note) she will explain his death from Venus’ wrath – an interpretation that is nowhere confirmed by the narrator: the role of the gods remains unclear (cf. 534-43n.). The supposed injustice of the gods (Fortuna, Parcae) is a *locus communis* in speeches of lament, often in combination with the concept of divine *inuidia* (see Dominik 1994a: 122 and esp. Esteve-Forriol 1962: 138-9 with references). The closest parallel in the
Thebaid is 10.795 cui tantum inuisa deorum?, where Menoeceus’ mother asks if Menoeceus’ death is the result of divine invidia towards herself. She also resembles Hypsipyle in that she corrects herself six or seven lines later (10.802 quid superos hominesue queror?). Cf. also S. 5.1.22-3 Fataque et inustos rabidis pulsare querelis / caelicolas, 5.3.69-70, 5.5.77-8 (invidia). In Dominik’s reading of the epic, Hypsipyle’s words become an example of ‘raising one’s voice in protest against the iniquities of divine rule’ (Dominik 1994: 75).

mea gaudia: for gaudium applied to a ‘persona quaee gaudium affert’ see TLL s.v. 1712.73-1713.11 and OLD s.v. 3. Frequent in comedy and love poetry (e.g. Pl. Ba. 18, Prop. 1.19.9), such affectionate language is also found in epic, e.g. 10.426 natorum gaudia, Aen. 10.325, Val. 7.2; Evander addresses his son Pallas as care puer, mea sera et sola uoluptas.

quem digressa reliqui: Hypsipyle’s remark raises the question of culpability: a wet-nurse, Hypsipyle should not have abandoned her charge. On a metapoetic level, the verb digressa also alludes to Hypsipyle’s digressing narrative (see OLD s.v. digredior 2 ‘to digress’, TLL s.v. 1154.71-1155.3). In laments the speaker often complains that (s)he was not present at the moment of death (see Esteve-Forriol 1962: 139). The phrase is taken from Aen. 5.650 ipsa egomet dudum Beroen digressa reliqui / aegram.

612. lascium et prono uexantem gramina cursu: recalling the description of Opheltes playing in the grass in 4.793-800, esp. 4.793-5 alto / gramine nunc faciles sternit procursibus herbas / in uultum nitens; in addition to the verbal echoes (underlined), prono picks up in uultum nitens, while the violent uexantem is in accordance with the military overtones of sternit procursibus (see Parkes ad loc.). Opheltes’ playful behaviour links him with Parthenopaues, cf. 4.257 tenero signantem gramina passu (see §6.3). It also links him with the serpent, cf. 525-6n. arua ... radens / pronus adhaeret humo.

McNelis (2007: 92 with n. 51), a little too eager to discover echoes of Callimachus, speculates that the phrase, ‘suggestive of horses racing in a plain, may self-consciously herald the games that will be held in the child’s honour, and this verbal play may derive from the Aetia’.

613. heu ubi: the combination heu ubi occurs five times in Ovid, e.g. Am. 3.8.18, Fast. 3.485 and Ep. 6.41 (Hypsipyle’s letter to Jason), and four more times in Statius (5.350, 8.174, 9.385, S. 3.5.44; cf. also 5.478 heu iterum). As Newlands on S. 2.1.41 o ubi notes, ‘initial hiatus conveys particular pathos’ (although one could pronounce the –u in heu as ‘Gleitlaut’); cf. also Knox on Ov. Her. 1.5 o utinam.

siderei uultus: reference to the deceased’s former beauty is a recurring motif in epicedia and consolationes (see Esteve-Forriol 1962: 132-3); cf. Sen. Ph. 1168-74 Hippolyte, tales intuor uultus tuos / talesque feci? ... heu me, quo tuus fugit decor / oculique nostrum sidus? and 1269-70 haecne illa facies igne sidereo nitens, / inimica flectens lumina? hic cecidit decor? (Taisne 1994: 272), Quint. 6.pr.7 quid gratiae in uultu. Brown (1994: 132) detects an echo of Vergil’s Andromache, for whom Ascanius’ eyes and face recall that of Astyanax, Aen. 3.490 sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora ferebat. The closest Statian parallel is S. 2.1.41-2 o ubi ... candor / sidereique orbes (with Newlands’ note), which also shows that siderei refers to the eyes. In Eur. Hyps. fr. 752f.3-4 ...χον ύς ένόπτερον / ......γραφή των’ α’γαν ‘like a mirror’s (bright?)-lit gleam’, Hypsipyle also speaks about Opheltes’ luminescent beauty, perhaps referring to his eyes (Bond); at that point in the play, however, Opheltes is still alive. Brown (1994: 132 n. 13) suggests that 4.795 nitens ‘also suggests the homonym derived from niteo, “shining”’. For the radiant beauty of a child’s face cf. also II. 6.401 (Astyanax) Ἐκτορίδηθα ἀγαπητόν, ἀλήγιον ἀστέρος καλῶ (Lehanneur 1878: 217), Simonides 543.17 PMG (Danaë to baby Perseus) πρόσωπον καλῶ.\footnote{The fragment is discussed by Brown 1994: 104-6, for whom Statius’ Hypsipyle, like Simonides’ fragment, is also a ‘tantalising fragment requiring interpretation’; when Hypsipyle exposes her father curuo robore clausum (5.287), I would say, the association with Simonides is more appropriate (Brown 1994: 121).}
The poetic *sidereus* first occurs in Vergil (after Homeric *ἄστροφόις*, see Harrison on *Aen.* 10.3; cf. Brown 1994: 183 n. 83). Given the catasterism of heroes and emperors into stars after death (see e.g. Williams on 10.637 and 10.782 where Pietas and Virtus place Menoeceus amongst the stars), the word might be related to Opheltes’ future divinity (cf. also 4.190 and 331 with Lovatt 2005: 156). Perhaps, Ruurd Nauta suggests, *siderei* even suggests an answer to *ubi*? The word creates a significant connection with Linus (cf. 1.577). In addition, there may be a grim echo of 4.767-8 *sidere dextro / crescat onus*, where Adrastus expresses the hope that Hypsipyle’s nursling will grow up under a favourable star. On star imagery in the *Thebaid* see Lovatt 2005: 65-7.

613-4. *ubi uerba ligatis / imperfecta sonis risusque et murmura*: recalling Opheltes’ utterances in 4.795-7 *caram modo lactis egeno / nutricem clangore ciens iterumque renidens / et teneris meditans uerba uincta / praefatione labris*, where the unusual noun *clangor* might anticipate Hypsipyle’s present lament (Parkes *ad loc.*). In book 6 Eurydice also mentions Opheltes’ laughs and language, 6.164-5 *illa tuos questus lacrimososque ... risus / audit et uocis decerpit murmura primae*. At the same time, *uerba ... imperfecta* reminds us of his unfinished last utterance in 541-3.

Brown (1994: 130-2) compares Cat. 61.209-13 *Torquatus uolo paruulus / matris e gremio suae / porrigens teneras manus / dulce rideat ad patrem / semihiante labello*; Parkes on 4.797 adduces Hor. *Ep.* 2.1.126 *os ... pueri balbumque*, Tib. 2.5.94 *balba ... uerba*. Deipser (1881: 20) notes that *uerba ... imperfecta* is borrowed from Ovid (*Met.* 1.526 and *Tr.* 1.3.69). The closest parallels are found in the *Silvae* (Ross 2004: xiii), esp. S. 5.5.81-2 *cuī uerba sonosque / monstrau questusque et murmura caeca resoluens*, 86-7 *cuī nomen uox prima meum*, *ladusque tenello / risus et a nostro ueniebant gaudia uultu* (with Gibson’s notes), and S. 2.1.104-5 *tu tamen et uinctas etiam nunc murmure uoces / uagitumque rudem fetusque infantis amabas*. Augustine remembers the sweet words of his nurses (*Conf.* 1.23 *blandimenta nutricum et ioca adridentium et laetitias adludentium*). Although a biographical approach to literature is no longer in vogue, one cannot help feeling that Statius was fond of little children and their noises, and we may agree with Micozzi (1998: 107 n. 41) that ‘Stazio deve aver sentito profondamente la tenerezza di questo linguaggio infantile’: *quid iucunditatis in sermone* (Quint. 6.pr.7!)

Interestingly, Statius’ formulation suggests that the words are unfinished because the sounds are still constricted or fettered; the idea has a parallel in S. 2.1.104 *uinctas ... uoces* (our *ligatis* warrants the disputed MSS reading *uinctas*). The notable implication is that babies already have words, although they cannot yet articulate them. Augustine writes that, as an infant, he was unable to communicate his wishes, because these were located ‘inside him’ (*Conf.* 1.8 *et ecce paulatim sentiebam ubi essem*, *et voluntates meas uolebam ostendere eis per quos implemur*, *et non poteram, quia illae intus erant, nec ullo suo sensu uolebat introire in animam meam*); later he also uses an expression that contains the idea of ‘fetters’ (*Conf.* 1.14 *in tuam invocationem rumpemab nodos linguae meae*). Lucretius on the origins of language (5.1028-90) does not mention this idea. Does Statius play with the rhetorical terminology of *oratio uincta / soluta* (cf. Cic. *Orat.* 64, Quint. 9.4.19-22, 77)?

**murmura**: Statius is the first extant author to apply *murmur* to a baby’s babble; occurrences in later Latin (e.g. Claud. *carm. min.* 20.254) can be counted on one hand (see *TLL* s.v. *murmur* 1677.18-26, where erroneously *matri*, not *nutrici*, is supplied to our line). Cf. S. 2.7.36-7 *natum protinus atque humum per ipsam / primo murmure dulce uagientem* (baby Lucan), 6.165 *uocis ... murmura primae*, S. 2.1.104 and 5.5.81 (quoted above). We may also recall 4.787-8 *amico murmure dulces / solatur lacrimas*, where it is Hypsipyle who comforts Opheltes, speaking to her nursling in his own *murmura* (for which cf. Lucr. 5.230).

614-5. *soli / intellecta mihi*: ‘understood only by me’ – and not by Eurydice (cf. Brown 1994: 113 ‘an exclusive cognitive bond!’) Hypsipyle’s bond with Opheltes is stronger and
deeper than the bond between Opheltes and his biological mother, cf. 618n. *iam materna*, 632-3 *quamquam haud illi mea cura dolendo / cesserit*, and esp. Eurydice’s words in 6.161-7, one of the most touching passages in the entire poem.

As Taisne (1994: 272) notes, the intimacy between nurse and child has literary precedents esp. in Euripidean tragedy (Andr. 406 ff., Herakl. 454 ff., Med. 1021 ff., Tro. 757 ff. and Hec. 1173-80; also Aesch. Cho. 749 ff.). It is prominent in the *Hypsipyle* too. However, in Statius’ contemporary world, the bond between nurse and nursling was often intimate as well. The troubled relationship between Hypsipyle and Eurydice seems to reflect contemporary debates on whether or not children should be nursed by their biological mother (cf. Newlands 2006: 205, Soerink 2014a: 5). On Statius’ interest in fosterage and surrogacy see now Golden 2014: 258-61.

615-7. *quotiens tibi Lemnon et Argo / sueta loqui et longa somnum suadere querela:* in combination with the unmistakable echo of *longa ... querela* in 500 (where see note), the names of the island and the ship make clear that Hypsipyle has in mind her Lemnian epyllion (5.49-498). The MSS read Argos, but Hypsipyle clearly refers to the ship of the Argonauts, and Gronovius’ *Argo* (Gr. acc. *Ἀργώ*) is beyond doubt. We may note that, in Euripides, the Chorus also uses the names Lemnos and Argo with reference to Hypsipyle’s obsessive storytelling (fr. 752f.19-26; see §2.5 and Soerink 2014: 184-6).

From *quotiens* and *sueta* it is again apparent that Hypsipyle has told her autobiographical story many times before (see 499n. *iterat*). We now learn that she also used her ‘adults-only narrative’ (Brown 1994: 119 n. 83) about the Lemnian massacre to lull her nursling to sleep: ‘a grim lullaby’ (Newlands 2012: 42 n. 175)! This is an ingeniously innovation vis-à-vis Euripides, where she comforts her nursling with more conventional means: musical instruments, toys, and lullabies: fr. 753f.8 ιδοῦ, κτύπος ὀδὲ κορτάλων (‘Look, here is the sound of castanets’; cf. fr. 769, Lucr. 5.229 crepitacillis); fr. 752d.1-2 ᾧςάνωμα[τ]α / ᾧ σὰς [ὁ]δομομον ἕγαληνι ἑφένας (‘toys which [will] calm your mind from crying’, possibly the inspiration for 6.74-5 pharetras breuioraque tela ... insontesque sagittas, as Bond 1963: 58 suggests, contra Vessey 1970: 50); fr. 752f 9-14 οὐ τάδε τήνας, οὐ τάδε καρκίδος / ἰστοτόνον παραμώσια. Λήμνα / Μούσα Θέλει με κράσειν, ὥστι δ’ εἰς ὑπνον / ὡ χάριν ἡ ἥθεπεύματα πρόσφορα / πιαιδί πρέπει νεφό / τάδε μελιοῦδος αἰδίο (‘These are not Lemnian songs, relieving the labour of weaving and web-stretching shuttle, that the Muse desires me to sing, but what serves for a tender young boy, to lull him or charm him or tend to his needs – this is the song I tunefully sing’). For mothers singing babies to sleep cf. Plato *Laws* 790e, Theocr. 24.6-10. According to Pache, the story of Opheltes ‘contains many elements that belong to the lullaby genre’, in which maternal fears find expression (2004: 107-11, citation 107; cf. Warner 1998: 27-9).

*somnum suadere:* the combination, with its soporic alliteration, is Vergilian, cf. *Aen.* 2.9 = 4.81 suadetque cadentia sidera somnos (Deipser 1881: 28) and *Ecl.* 1.55 *somnum suadebit*. In the *Thebaid* Statius imitates the phrase here and twice in the first book, in 1.307 and in 1.585 *suadetque leues caua fistula somnos* (Linus soothed to sleep), which is significantly echoed here. In the *Silvae* he wittily uses both words in one hexameter, while he is saying the very opposite (S. 4.6.13-4 sermo hilarisque ioci brumalem absunmere nocem / suaserunt mollemque oculis expellere somnum).

617. *sic equidem luctus solabar:* for Hypsipyle, re-telling and re-experiencing the traumatic events on Lemnos provided consolation and catharsis (see 500n. *solatur damna*, 609n. *solamen*). The phrase owes something to *Aen.* 9.489 (*Euryalus’* mother) *curas solabar aniles*; cf. also *Aen.* 1.238-9 (*Venus*) *hoc equidem occasum Troiae tristisque ruinas / solabar*. For the phrasing cf. also 4.59 *Inoas Epyhre solata querelas* (where, however, the *querelas* do not provide the comfort). Barth *ad loc.* compares Luc. 8.469 *solacia damni* and Claud. *De raptu* 1.126 *numeri damnum Proserpina pensat*. See further 500n. *solatur damna*.  

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617-8. et ubera paruo / iam materna dabam: for Hypsipyle as Opheltes’ wet-nurse cf. 4.748-9 illi quamuis et ad ubera Opheltes / non suus, Inachii proles inausta Lycurgi, / dependet (the text is problematic, see Parkes ad loc.). 4.795-6 caram ... nutricem, 6.148 (Eurydice speaking) credo sinus fidos altriciet et ubera mando. Breastfeeding Opheltes, she is also reminiscent of Arga, who is breastfeeding Thessander in 3.682-3 parumque sub ubere caro / Thessandrum portabat (on the Epigones see 7.221 with Smolenaars, Götting 1969: 30 n. 45). Admittedly, it is not very realistic that Hypsipyle, whose sons are now twenty years old (cf. 5.466 iam plena quater quinquennia surgunt), is still capable of breastfeeding (Venini 1961: 77 ‘addirittura grottesca’; cf. Vessey 1970: 51, Traglia-Aricó 1980 ad loc., Parkes on 4.746-52). But the Euripidean model dictates that Hypsipyle is the child’s wet-nurse – and not merely his nurse. Simonides already seems to think of Opheltes as a nursling (see §1.3.1). In his Victoria Sosibii Callimachus learnedly refers to the Nemean Games via Opheltes as ‘the one suckling Lemnian milk’ (fr. 384.26 Pf. τὸ Μυριανοῦ τῷ γάλα Ἑρυσσαμένῳ). In Euripides, where Hypsipyle is ‘the slave-woman who nurses my child’ (Hyps. fr. 754c.5 δμωῖς ἡ τρωφῆς τέχνου), we find the same incongruity. Cf. 713n. iuienes.

ubera ... dabam: the expression, which may seem deceptively normal to Dutch speakers (‘de borst geven’), has three parallels in Ovid, Tr. 1.8.44 dedit nutrix ubera, Met. 4.324 dedit ubera nutrix, Fast. 5.466 (cf. also Claud. carm. min. 30.87). The normal expression is alere, sometimes with ubere or uberibus (e.g. Tac. Germ. 20.1 sua quemque mater uberibus alit). In comedy, however, we find mammam dare (Pl. Men. 20, Ter. Ad. 975), which suggests that ubera dare is not particularly elevated diction. We find similar expressions in contemporary Greek, e.g. in Apollodorus (3.105.6 Ἑρυσσὴν ἔδωκα) and unsurprisingly in Soranus’ Gymnæcia (2.36.4. τῷ δὲ καὶ τῷ διδόμει τῷ βρέασι τῶν μαστῶν, 2.39.3, 2.49.6). It is possible, however, that the Latin underlies the Greek rather than the other way around: in Greek the expression does not occur until the first century AD, the sole exception being Fabius Pictor (third century BC), a Roman writing in Greek (fr. 1.21-2 ἔδωκα τὰς Ἑρυσσάς). In earlier Greek we find the verb ἐπέχω, cf. II. 22.82-3 (Hecuba) οί ποτὲ τοι λαδινωδέα μαζον ἔπεχον, Eur. Ion 1492 (Creusa) γάλακτι δ’ οὖς ἐπέσχον, αὐδὲ μαστώ / τρωφεῖα μαστιγός κτλ. The word ubera (etymologically connected with English ‘udder’ and Dutch ‘uier’) is always used with an eye on breastfeeding and motherhood; unlike papilla, it does not have sexual connotations (cf. Smolenaars on 7.524).

iam materna: Hall shows little sensibility in rejecting iam materna as ‘factual error’: ‘the easiest solution,’ he suggests, ‘is non materna, but ceu materna might be worth a moment’s consideration’ (1992: 292). Hall could not be more wrong. In the first place, there is no ‘factual error’, since Hypsipyle is a mother, as we have just been reminded (5.608 natorum). Secondly, this is poetry. As the Euripidean model makes clear, iam materna does not refer to Hypsipyle as a mother of Euneus and Thoas, it rather means that she has developed such an intimate bond with her nursling, that she regards herself as his alternative mother, even though the child is non suus (4.749). Cf. Soerink 2014a: 5.

iam attributes counterpresuppositional focus to materna. The particle is ‘used to focus attention on any element [here the adjective materna] that the speaker may want to highlight or single out, in contradistinction to a certain standard or some more expected alternative [here ubera nutricis], which may or may not be explicitly expressed’ (Kroon & Risselada 2003: §2.4).

Towards the end of her speech, she emphasises that her maternal love for Opheltes is second to none (see 632-3n.). That the bond between Hypsipyle and Opheltes is indeed stronger than the bond between Opheltes and his biological mother, is confirmed by Eurydice’s poignant words in 6.161-7, esp. illa tibi genetrix. This element of Hypsipyle’s characterisation looks back to Euripides, cf. fr. 757.42-4 τοιμών τιθήμητε, ὃν ἐπ’ ἴματιν ἀγκάλαις / πλὴν οὐ τεκτόνα τάλλα γ’ ὡς ἵμων τέκνον / στέργουσ’ ἐφεζῆ, ἤφέλημ’ ἵμοι μέγα (‘my
nursling, whom I fed and cherished in my arms in every way except that I did not bear him – and he was a great blessing to me’), lines that Reussner (1921: 43) links with 5.608-9 above.

The actual phrase seems to be taken from Sen. Herc.O. 926 (nutrix addressing Hercules) ubera ... paene materna; Statius outdoes his model and goes one step further.

Love for foster children is an important motif in the Siluae too, cf. S. 2.6 on the death of Flavius Ursus’ puer dedicatus, S. 5.5 on the death of Statius’ own puer; most explicitly S. 2.1.96 quid referam altricum uictas pietate parentes?

618-9. cui nunc unuit irritus orbae / lactis et infelix in uulnra liquitur imber: another extreme mourning gesture (cf. 606n. intexitque comis), irritus and infelix heavily emphasising the pathos. nunc marks the transition from past pleasures to present plight. As orbae makes clear, the antecedent of cui is ego (implicit in dabam): ‘to whom in my bereavement’.

In 8.654 lacrimasque in uulnra fudit we find Ismene shedding tears into the wounds of her dead lover Aty, which seems inspired by Ovid, cf. Met. 3.130 uulneraque alta rigant lacrimis, 13.490 lacrimas in uulnra fundit. Shedding tears in wounds is a mannered variation of the traditional weeping (e.g. Il. 24.725-45), alluding to the motif of washing the wounds of the dead (e.g. 12.413-5, Il. 24.784-804, Enn. trag. 138, Aen. 9.487 uulnra laui); in 10.715-6 (Creon addressing Menoeceus) liceat misero tremibunda lauare / uulnra et undantem lacrimis siccere cruorem, where the two ideas are combined.

What we have here is a typical Statian ‘Überbietung’: Hypsipyle pours breast-milk, not tears, into Opheltes’ wounds (described in 596-8; the uulnra and imber echo 598). Cf. S. 5.5.15 ardentes restinxit lacte fauillas, where the poet envisages a bereaved mother extinguishing the glowing ashes of her dead child with breast milk. As Gibson on S. 5.5.15 notes, the breast milk, ‘usually given as a means of life’, contrasts effectively with the context of death. Milk was also given as funerary offering to the dead, an idea which might linger in the background.

orbae: in the present context, orbae refers primarily to Hypsipyle’s loss of Opheltes. But we are also reminded of the fact that Hypsipyle has lost her sons. In book 4 she introduces herself as altricem ... orbam (4.778), that is, as a bereaved mother employed as wet-nurse – although at the same time the phrase foreshadows Hypsipyle’s loss of her nursling (cf. Parkes ad loc.).

lactis ... imber: a hyperbolic reference to Hypsipyle’s breast-milk; for imber applied to milk cf. Cic. Div. 1.98 lactis imber. For Statius’ daring use of imber cf. 2.672 (sweat), 4.245 (spittle) and 453 (honey) with Parkes’ notes, 6.235-6 with Fortgens’. Elsewhere Statius more conventionally applies the word to tears (2.235; cf. Cat. 68.56 and Tarrant on Sen. Thy. 950) and blood (598n.).

620-8. In the second part of her speech, Hypsipyle reaches the conclusion that she herself is responsible for Opheltes’ death. As she has told in her Lemnian narrative, she saved her father Thoas from the massacre (5.240-95). We now learn that, ever since, she has been tormented by frightful and foreboding dreams, in which the goddess Venus – who inspired the Lemnian women to their crimes (cf. 5.85-169, esp. 157-8), with Jupiter’s permission (cf. 5.274-7) – appeared to her. In Hypsipyle’s perception, Venus has taken the life of Opheltes, because Hypsipyle had withheld the life of her father Thoas from the goddess during the Lemnian massacre. See Götting (1969: 16-7, 66; cf. Ganiban 2013: 252), who also points to the irony of the fact that Opheltes’ death thus follows from Hypsipyle’s pietas (cf. 627n.). Although Hypsipyle thinks that Venus caused Opheltes’ death, Hypsipyle takes full responsibility, which ‘zeigt ihre moralische Größe’ (Götting 1969: 21 n. 22). For the intricate interplay of divine and human will cf. 5.57-8 dis uisum turbare domos, nec pectora culpa / nostra uacant.

620. nosco deos: cf. Aen. 12.260 agnoscoque deos. Cf. also Hypsipyle’s agnou when she recognises Bacchus in 5.268. Thetis says agnosco monitus et Protea uera locutum (Ach. 1.32)
when she sees Paris’ fleet returning to Troy with Helen and realises that Proteus’ prophecies are about to become reality.

Note the correction of the final -o in noscō (cf. e.g. 1.33 tendō chelyn, 3.378 ibō libens; for more Statian examples see Lehanneur 1878: 103-4). In early Latin correction of final –o is restricted to iambic words (e.g. ēgō > ēgō), but in Silver Latin shortening of final –o in non-iambic words became accepted poetical practice. See Hartenberger 1911, Fantham on Luc. 2.247 Cato.

ο: see 608-9n. Here o is remarkable for its metrical position: in arsi (normally o occurs in thesi) and in the second foot of the hexameter (extremely rare).

dura: some minor MSS read dira (SB), an adjective often applied to Thebes and its exitiale genus (Vessey 1973: 84 n. 5); Müller conjectured uera (Garrod, Hall), which could be defended in the light of 9.631 si uera soper miserae praeasagia mittit and 9.886 si uera ferunt praeasagia curae. However, Hypsipyle does not want to emphasise that her foreboding dreams were truthful, she wants to emphasise the harshness of her fate. The difference in emphasis becomes clear if we compare and contrast Hypsipyle’s numquam impulse per umbras and Argia’s numquam falsa per umbras (2.350; see 5.621-2n. below). In my view, dura here hints at the recurrent idea that fate is pitiless (cf. e.g. 2.249 Lachesis sic dura iubebat with Mulder’s note, 3.205-6 dura Sororum / pensa, 3.491 duris ... Parcis, 6.47-8 fata recensens / resque hominum duras et inexorabile pensum, 6.325 durae Parcae, 9.180 pro dura potentia fati), a topos that goes back to Homer (e.g. Od. 11.292 χαλάπτη ... μοῖρα).

mei praeasagia somni nocturnique metus: foreboding dreams and dream apparitions are a recurrent motif in the Thebaid, e.g. 2.89-133 (Laius’ appearance to Eteocles), 10.324-5, where the narrator speculates that fors illī [sc. Calpetus] praeasagae quies. Hypsipyle’s dreams especially link her with Argia (2.348-51; cf. 5.621-2n.), Iśmie (8.622-35) and Atalanta (9.570-601, 886-7; cf. 4.330-3); see further §6.4. LP connects Hypsipyle’s words with 545-6 iam certa malorum / mentis ab augurio (where see note). The combination praeasagia somni recurs in Ach. 1.22; nocturnique metus may be inspired by Sen. Ag. 765 or Luc. 4.700. On the literary history of symbolic dreams, rooted in tragedy and frequently found in Latin epic, see Grillone (1968) and Dewar on 9.570-601 with references.

621-2. numquam impulse per umbras / attonitae mihi uisa Venus: the wording closely recalls Argia’s disturbing visions in 2.349-51 turbida noctis imago / terret et – a, memini – numquam mihi falsa per umbras / iuno uenit (Grillone 1968: 145 n. 2 and SB ad loc.), modelled on Aen. 4.351-3 and 5.721-45 (Grillone 1968: 143). The parallel surely connects Hypsipyle and Argia (cf. 620n. and §6.4); perhaps it is also an invitation to see analogies between Polynces’ doom and that of Opheltes (cf. §6.3)?

We are also reminded of the speech that Hypsipyle puts in the mouth of Polyxo in the Lemnian episode (5.132-42), in which Polyxo claims to have seen Venus: nec imago quietis / uana meae: nudo astabat Venus ense uideri / clara mihi somnosque super (5.135-6). In the speech that Polyxo, in turn, attributes to Venus (5.136-8), the goddess calls upon the Lemnian women to kill their husbands: ‘quid perditis aeuum?’ / inquit, ‘age auersis thalamos purgate maritus’ (136-7). In recalling this apparition on Lemnos, Hypsipyle’s audience – Argives as well as readers – are reminded that Hypsipyle has not obeyed Venus’ command. In saving her father Thoas, Hypsipyle has incurred the wrath of Venus. And now that Opheltes has been killed, Hypsipyle interprets his death as Venus’ retribution for not following her divine instructions (cf. 620-8n.).

numquam impulse: numquam negates impulse, not uisa: Venus did appear, perhaps more than once, but ‘never without harm’. This applies not, as usual, to the syntactical subject (Venus), but to Hypsipyle (mihi). The wording varies the trite combination non / haud impulse, e.g. Cat. 99.3, Aen. 3.628, Luc. 9.803, Sil. 14.216.

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per umbras: Mulder on 2.350 simply explains per umbras as ‘per noctem, per noctis tenebras’. However, the word umbra is also used of phantoms and shades in the underworld, and in this context per umbras evokes not only darkness, but also an atmosphere of gloom and death. Cf. 600n. umbrosa.

uisa: the standard verb to describe dream visions, cf. e.g. Pl. Mil. 383 hac nocte in somnis mea soror geminast germana uisa, Enn. sc. 36 uisa est in somnis Hecuba, Aen. 2.270-1 in somnis ecce ante oculos maestissimus Hector / uisus adesse mihi (with Austin), Ov. Her. 15.48 metuenda ... noctis opaceae uisa.

quos arguo diuos?: ‘Which gods do I accuse?’ i.e. ‘Why do I accuse the gods?’ As the remainder of her speech makes clear, Hypsipyle does not ask which of the gods she should blame, but why she should blame the gods in the first place. I do not find parallels for this usage of qui for quid, although audacious usage of the interrogative adjective has Vergilian precedents, e.g. Aen. 1.237 quae te, genitor, sententia uertit?

Similarly Argia interrupts herself and blames herself for the death of Polynices: quid queror? ipsa dedi bellum maestumque rogaui / ipsa patrem ut talem nunc te complexa tenerem (12.336-7). Statius seems to have in mind Vergil’s Dido, who also interrupts herself and changes the direction of her speech, cf. Aen. 4.595 quid loquor? aut ubi sum? (cf. notes on 623-4 and 634 below); cf. also Val. 8.158 sed quid ego quamquam immortis incuso querelis?

623. ipsa ego te: one could detect an allusion to Geo. 4.402-4 (Cyrene speaking) ipsa ego te, medios cum sol accenderit aetus, / cum sitiunt herbae et pecori iam gratior umbra est, / in secreta sensis ducam, the only exact parallel. In addition to the appropriate heat and thirst, note that Hypsipyle left Opheltes behind at noon (cf. 4.680-1 tempus erat medi cum solem in culmina mundi / tollit anhela dies with Parkes). In any case, the words have a Vergilian ring; cf. also Aen. 8.57 ipse ego te, 5.846 ipse ego ... pro te.

quid enim timeam moritura fateri?: here for the first time Hypsipyle mentions her resolve to die. She does so in passing, with a syntactically subordinate participle in a parenthesis, as if her death were already settled. In her mind, there seems to be no option except death. Hypsipyle’s words cannot fail to recall Dido’s famous question in Aen. 4.604 quem metui moritura? (Deipser 1881: 30). For the idea that, in the face of imminent death, one has nothing to lose, cf. Pollmann on 12.760 audax morte futura (Creon), N-H on Hor. Carm. 1.37.29 deliberata morte ferocior (Cleopatra), Sen. Ag. 210 morte decreta furens, Luc. 4.533-8. Cf. also the parenthetic question posed by Odysseus in Ach. 1.734-5 metuam quid enim tibi cuncta fateri, / cum Graius notaque fide celeberrimus?

624. exposui fatis: an arresting phrase, beautifully expressing the intricate dialectics between the human and the superhuman: Hypsipyle did not kill Opheltes, but she did allow the circumstances in which fate could strike. As Parkes on 4.787 notes, fatis here is used in two senses, referring both to Opheltes’ death and to Fate. The verb expono is well chosen: the present occurrence is duly listed under OLD s.v. 5 ‘to expose (to dangers, etc.)’, but the sense ‘to expose (children)’ (OLD s.v. 2) is also felt, to the effect that Opheltes is subtly associated with Linus (see §3) and Oedipus.

Moreover, there is a significant allusion to Luc. 9.842-3 corpora fatis / exposii voluuntur humo (the only verbal parallel): immediately after the famous snake catalogue (9.700-838), Cato’s soldiers have to sleep in the desert, prey to the abominable serpents. The allusion accords with the Lucanian intertext of 596-8 (where see note). Statius in turn was imitated by the 15th century poet Horatius Romanus, in his poem on the failed conspiracy of Stefano Porcari (1.72-3 ego te ... / exposui fatis).

quae mentem insania traxit?: again an unmistakable allusion to Vergil’s Dido, cf. Aen. 4.595 (= 12.37) quae mentem insania mutat? (Kulla 1881: 54, Smolenaars on 7.559-60); cf. also Aen. 5.465 quae tanta animum dementia cepit? Statius has replaced Vergil’s mutat with
traxit, for which see OLD s.v. 4 ‘(of abstract forces) To carry along (to a condition, situation, etc.), influence (in a particular direction)’ and cf. e.g. 7.559-60 mutata trahuntur / agmina consiliiis, S. 1.3.38 huc oculis, huc mente trahor. Sometimes we find the emotion as object and the person as subject, e.g. Aen. 4.101 ardet amans Dido traxitque per ossa furorem, which probably underlies Statius’ traxit.

625. tantane me tantae tenuere obliuia curae?: a grim echo of 5.450 infandis uenere obliuia curis, where the Lemnian women forget their cares in the arms of the Argonauts. Hypsipyle, in a sense, is also in the grip of the Argonauts, and thus forgets her nursling.

For πολύππωτον with the addition of an alliterating word cf. e.g. Aen. 3.159-60 tu moenia magnis / magna para. The word pattern almost constitutes a so-called ‘golden line’: first the modifiers, then the nouns, with ‘a verb betwixt to keep the peace’ (in Dryden’s famous formulation; see O’Hara 1997: 243). The form obliuia is poetic (obluiio does not fit the hexameter); the word, always in this metrical sedes, is esp. popular with Ovid.

tantae ... curae: cura has a wide semantic scope: here it refers to Hypsipyle’s responsibilities as a nurse, especially her task to protect Opheltes; at the same time, the word suggests love for her nursling (cf. 632n.).

626-7. dum patrios casus famaque exorsa retracto / ambitiosa meae: Hypsipyle realises that Opheltes was killed while she was ambitiously retelling her Lemnian past, ‘daß sie über ihre Eitelkeit [...] ihre Pflicht vergessen hat’ (Götting 1969: 66). Obsessed with her Lemnian past, she has neglected her duties as as wet-nurse. In a sense, Opheltes has fallen victim to her poetic ambitions (cf. Kenyeres 2001: 26-7) – like Statius’ own puer in Silvae 5.5 according to Ahl (1986: 2905; cf. Brown 1994: 127): ‘While Statius, like Hypsipyle, told epic tales, his boy died. And Statius’ lament [Silvae 5.5] is, like his last epic, the Achilleid, unfinished’...

In most translations (e.g. SB ‘the story of my country’, Lesueur ‘les malheurs de ma patrie’) patrios is understood as representing gen. patriae, but the adjective also represents gen. patris, with reference to the predicament of her father Thoas. The second adjective, ambitiosa, could be taken as acc.n.pl. with exorsa or as nom.f.sg. with the implied subject ego. SB prefers the second option and translates ‘in my vanity’.

As Gibson (2004: 162) has pointed out, the prefix re- in retracto again reminds us that Hypsipyle has told her Lemnian tale many times before (see 499n. iterat and 615n. quotiens above).

The phrase famaque exorsa ... ambitiosa meae is highly significant, as the words can be understood on two levels. In the first place, it refers to her ‘ambitious undertakings’ in saving her father Thoas, a heroic exploit that guarantees her fama as the one Lemnian woman that refused to kill her male relatives (cf. Götting 1969: 16 n. 14 ‘exorsa bedeutet hier “Anfang”, beinahe im Sinne von “Ursache”’). Adrastus in 5.46 refers to Hypsipyle’s saving of her father with laudesque tuas. Valerius several times characterises Hypsipyle’s actions on Lemnos as audacia (cf. Val. 2.242 tuis ... ausis, 2.280 ausi).

At the same time (pace Götting loc. cit.), the words refer to her poetic undertakings, to her ‘ambitious tale’ (5.49-499) and the poetic fame to which her ‘epyllion’ lays claim. Cf. Gibson (2004: 162) ‘notice the phrase famaque exorsa ... ambitiosa meae, not just the mere telling of a story, but an actual attempt at securing her fame as well [...]’. It is striking that when she is faced with the child’s death, Hypsipyle reads in herself a kind of ambition, a concern with fame, which is a poet’s concern.’

The word exorsa (cf. exordium in rhetorical theory) is often used in (epic) proems and other literary beginnings, e.g. Aen. 2.2. orsus, Val. 1.20-1 nunc nostra serenus / orsa iuues, 2.243 orsa feram, Sil. 1.1 ordior arma, Liv. praef.13; cf. also 6.358 orsa of Apollo’s song to the Muses, 12.666 propriaeque exordia laudis (Theseus’ poetic shield, on which see McNelis 2007: 172-3, Pollmann on 12.666-76. It clearly adds to the characterisation of Hypsipyle as
poet figure (Gibson 2004: 158). It recalls the beginning of book 5, when Hypsipyle is about to embark upon her Lemnian tale, 5.29 exorsa and 5.36 longa ... exordia (cf. Geo. 2.46), which are here deliberately echoed (also note the echo of 5.41 casus). On Hypsipyle as poet figure see further §2.5. The phrase may also look back to the invocation at the beginning of the Nemean episode (4.651 nos rara manent exordia famae), on which see §4.2.

627. pietas haec magna fidesque!: ‘this [was] my pietas and fides’, an exclamation loaded with bitter εἰγονία (Götting 1969: 66). Hypsipyle realises that, if the object of her pietas and fides had not been her past troubles but the nursling entrusted to her care, Opheltes would not have died. Kytzler failed to note the irony and thought that ‘Hypsipyle wolle damit sagen, sie habe ihre Geschichte aus Gründen der pietas und fides erzählt’ (Götting 1969: 66 n. 102). A similar ironic exclamation is 2.462 haec pietas, haec magna fides, where Tydeus angrily mocks the pietas and fides of Eteocles. For the pairing of pietas and fides cf. Aen. 6.878, Luc. 5.297, 10.407. In book 11 fides and pietas represent the powers of goodness that are defeated by the powers of the inferno (see e.g. 11.98); Hypsipyle’s fate shows that pietas in one direction (her father[land]) can lead to nefas in another (Opheltes).

exsolui tibi, Lemne, nefas: as Vessey 1973: 189 explains, ‘[w]hen Hypsipyle saved her father, even though her action was prompted by pietas, she had slighted the will of Venus and cheated the goddess of one of the victims demanded by her wrath’ (cf. Dominik 1994: 62, Kenyeres 2001: 79, Gibson 2004: 161 n. 49). For the moment, however, the logic remains somewhat obscure, as Hypsipyle addresses the island of Lemnos rather than the goddess Venus (cf. Melville ad loc. ‘Hypsipyle had decided not to kill her father Thoas, which [...] contravened the policy agreed by the Lemnian women [...] In that sense, therefore, she owes her homeland a debt comprising one life’; the following lines, however, show that it is Venus to whom Hypsipyle is indebted).

It should be stressed that the narrator nowhere confirms Hypsipyle’s interpretation: the narrator only reveals that it was ‘the gods’ that led Hypsipyle to abandon Opheltes (501) – which suggests that Eurydice is right when she accuses the gods (6.143ff.) – but is silent on Venus’ role.

On a different level, Opheltes has fallen victim not so much to Lemnos or Venus, but to Hypsipyle’s Lemnian narrative: ‘Hypsipyle’s narration is responsible for the death of Opheltes’ (Gibson 2004: 161). In support we may note that in 5.615 Lemnon et Argo the names also refer to Hypsipyle’s narrative rather than the actual island or ship.

What has not been noticed, to my knowledge, is that Hypsipyle’s interpretation of Opheltes’ death takes its inspiration from Valerius. In his version of the Lemnian massacre, Hypsipyle is troubled by the idea that she has not obeyed, that she has cheated the Erinys of her victim, cf. Val. 2.280-1 ipsam sed conscious ausi / nocte dieque pauor fraudataque turbat Erinys. Later, when she trusts her father Thoas to a frail vessel, she says 2.294 solui mus heu serum furti scelus! As Poortvliet ad loc. explains, ‘Hypsipyle still “owed” a crime to the Furies (cf. 281 fraudata ... Erinys), and, as Thoas’ chances seem to be practically nil, she has every reason to believe she is “paying” it now’, to which he adds that ‘[t]he remarkable expression scelus soluere was imitated by Statius’. In Valerius, Hypsipyle fears that Thoas will die after all; in Statius, she thinks that Opheltes has died in her father’s stead.

exsolui: tri- or quadrisyllabic; see Fordyce on Cat. 2.13 soluit. The TLL understands our line as a brachylogy and paraphrases ‘exsolvi tibi poenas sceleris mei’ (TLL s.v. exsolvo 1879.41-3 under the heading ‘poenas, supplicia’). However, Hypsipyle does not pay for some crime she has committed, she pays for not having committed the unspeakable crime (nefas) of killing her own father.

tibi, Lemne: for apostrophes to geographical places, rooted in Greek tragedy and frequent in Lucan, see the detailed discussion in Georgacopoulou (2005: 218-28), although her book
confines itself to ‘l’apostrophe du narrateur’ and does not discuss the present example. Another island that has the honour of being apostrophied in the *Thebaid* is Delos (3.438-9).

628b-35: Hypsipyle ends her speech by wishing for death, as does Euryalus’ mother (*Aen.* 9.493-7); in a similar vein Evander, in the final lines of his lament (*Aen.* 11.177-80), implies that he will take his life once Pallas has been avenged and Turnus killed. Parthenopaeus’ mother similarly wishes for death after she has received omens of his death (9.634). The line of thought suggests that Hypsipyle’s death-wish is primarily motivated by the fact that she considers herself responsible for Opheltes’ death, although her grief and bereavement point in the same direction: now that Opheltes is dead, life is no longer worth living.

Newlands (2012: 113) observes that ‘Hypsipyle acts in a manner that is far from the Roman matronly ideal; she begs for death (5.628-35), like the child’s mother, who is maddened by grief (6.174-6). To be sure, this treatment of female mourning derives in part from Statius’ tragic vision; Seneca’s *Troades* for instance’. Cf. S. 2.1.19-25, where Atedius Melior, stricken with grief for his dead foster-son Glauca, must be restrained from throwing himself on the child’s funeral pyre. In that respect, it is instructive to compare Andromache’s reaction to Hector’s death in the *Iliad* with her Romanised reaction in Homer. 1057-60, where she wants to hurl herself into the flames of Hector’s pyre, with Astyanax in her arms; as Scaffai *ad loc.* notes, ‘un atteggiamiento più consono, dopo la Didone virgiliana, alle eroine del teatro sene- cano’; elsewhere Scaffai calls Hypsipyle’s death-wish ‘convenzionale’ (2002: 246).

Hypsipyle’s supplication of the Seven is an inversion of the situation in Euripides, where she begs Amphiaraut to save her life, when Eurydice intends to punish her with death (*Hyps.* fr. 757.57-68); in Euripides she also points to her favour (fr. 757.60 χάριν). More important, on a psychological level, is that Hypsipyle wants to die the same death as Opheltes.

In most editions (Garrod, Klotz, Hill, Lesueur, Hall) there is no question mark; indeed, one could take the phrase with *ferre* in the following line: ‘Take me, gentlemen, to where the deadly snake lies’ (transl. Ritchie & Hall). In my view, however, given the style of Hypsipyle’s lament (see 605-37n.), a short emotional question seems preferable, and I follow SB in printing a question mark after *anguis*: ‘Where is the deadly snake? Bring me [to him]’.

The matter cannot be decided, and the editor’s choice is ultimately a matter of taste.

The combination *letifer anguis* recurs in Amphiaraut’s speech (5.737); cf. also 6.40 *letalis* ... *serpens*. Statius makes ample use of elevated compound adjectives in –*fer* (e.g. *oliuifer*, *rorifer*, *laborifer*, *jumifer*) and –*ger* (e.g. *saetiger*, *corniger*), ‘a feature of Ovid’s epic style adopted by Statius’ (Newlands 2011: 23 n. 167); see Williams on 10.28, Parkes on 4.50-1, also Austin on *Aen.* 1.663.

*ferre*: sc. *me*. Note the wordplay with *letifer* (cf. Parkes on 4.653-4 *armiferos* ... *ferre*). It is possible to see an echo of Eur. *Hyps.* fr. 757.52-3 ἢγετε, φίλων γὰρ οὐδὲν εἴσωσθι πέλας / ὀστῖς με σώσει (‘Take me, then; I see no friend nearby to save me’), where Hypsipyle acquiesces in her death – and then Amphiaraut appears.

629. *duces*: i.e. the Argive leaders, last mentioned in 588; in 5.35 and 454 Hypsipyle also addresses them as *duces*. *Pererratis campis* and *longe* (588-9) suggest that Hypsipyle is at some distance from the Argive troops when she finds Opheltes’ body, but it is not difficult to imagine that her cries and lamentation attracted the attention of the Seven, as in 554-5.

*meriti si qua est mihi gratia duri*: according to the *do ut des* principle, the Argives are in reciprocal debt (*gratia*) towards Hypsipyle, who did the Argives no small favour (*meritum*) by leading them to Langia (cf. 5.20-1) – a favour which she calls *duri* because it led to Opheltes’ death. On such language of obligation see Nauta (2002). The conditional phrasing may recall
Euryalus’ mother (Aen. 9.493 si qua est pietas; cf. 5.630n. below) or Dido (Aen. 4.317 si bene quid de te merui).

**duri**: Hall prints diri, found in one minor MS and translates: ‘my service so adverse in its effect’ (Ritchie & Hall). There is no reason, however, to reject duri, which makes perfect sense: Hypsipyle simply calls her favour duri because it led to the death of Opheltes.

630. *si quis honos dictis*: whose dictis are meant? Her present speech (cf. Hall ‘any respect for what I say’)? Her Lemnian narrative? The words of Adrastus, who had promised to repay for the water (4.768-71)? For the phrasing cf. 12.299-300 (Juno asking a favour from Cynthia) da mihi poscenti munus breue, Cynthia, si quis / est Iunonis honos.

**aut us exstinguite ferro**: recalling Euryalus’ mother asking the Rutulians to kill her with their swords, Aen. 9.493-4 figite me, si qua est pietas, in me omnia tela / conicite, o Rutuli, me primam absumite ferro. Hypsipyle uses the verb extingui, the very verb she has just used to describe Opheltes’ death (5.611 extinxere); it is also the word Anna uses to describe Dido’s death (Aen. 4.682 exstinti te meque, soror). On female suicides and the significance of the sword see Dietrich’s contribution to Brill’s Companion to Statius (forthcoming).

631-2. *ne tristes dominos orbanque inimica reuisam / Eurydicen*: ‘my masters and (in particular) Eurydice’, dominos referring to Lycuragus and Eurydice. Significantly, Hypsipyle characterises Eurydice with the adjective orbae, which she has just applied to herself (5.618 orbae). inimica is rarely used with passive force (see OLD 1e ‘regarded as an enemy, hateful’, TLL s.v.1625.11-8 ‘de eis, qui pro inimicis habentur’). Scaffai (2002: 246) compares Aeneas having to confront Evander after the death of Pallas.

**632-3. quamquam haud illi mea cura dolendo / cesserit**: my cura, Hypsipyle claims, could not yield to Eurydice (illi),\(^{588}\) i.e. my cura could be no less than hers: the nurse in various respects surpasses the biological mother in motherhood (cf. 618n. iam materna). The word cura adumbrates Hypsipyle’s love and affection as well as her grief and bereavement (SB translates ‘my love and grief’; cf. Varro’s famous etymology Ling. 6.46 cura quod cor urat). At the same time, it echoes curae (625), reminding us of her negligence as a nurse. For cesserit see OLD 9 ‘to be inferior (to)’, but after inimicam the verb clearly has military overtones (cf. OLD 3 ‘(of soldiers) to give ground, fall back’).

*quamquam* + subj. is rare in aurea latinitas (Aen. 6.394 quamquam ... essent is a subj. of reported statement; see Austin ad loc.), but it is frequent in Ovid (e.g. Met. 14.465) and in Statius’ days it has become common practice (see K-St i.442). In Statius’ own poetry, however, we usually find quamquam + indic. (with subj. e.g. 11.383, S. 5.1.53 and Ach. 1.467 with Dilke’s note). Here, too, Statius does not deviate from the rules of classical Latin: cesserit is not equivalent to cessit (why would Hypsipyle use the past tense?), but a potential subj. that slightly modifies Hypsipyle’s claim. For potential subjunctive after quamquam cf. e.g. Cic. Tusc. 1.109. For the phrasing cf. 6.637 seris uix cessit cura tenebris.

The gerund dolendo denotes in what respect Hypsipyle’s cura could not be inferior (cf. Joyce ‘though, when it comes to sorrow, etc.’); for the abl. with cedo cf. e.g. Caes. Civ. 1.57.3 quorum nemo Caesoni cedebat magnitudine animi and Tac. Dial. 13.3 ne nostris quidem temporibus Secundus Pomponius Afro Domitio uel dignitate utiae uel perpetuitate famae cesserit (with similar subjunctive). Ritchie-Hall (‘my commitment to mourning’) and Lesueur (who renders cura dolendo as ‘souffrance’) take cura dolendo closely together, which does no justice to the Latin: ‘commitment to mourning’ would be cura dolendi.

**haud**: the negation haud is frequent in the high genres; in elegiac and lyric poetry it is avoided (see Axelson 1945: 91-2).

633. *onus*: Adrastus also refers to Opheltes as Hypsipyle’s onus (4.768). For onus applied to a child being carried cf. Ov. *Met.* 4.530 (Melicertes in the arms of Ino) and see OLD s.v.

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\(^{588}\) TLL s.v. cêdo 724.60-1 erroneously understands illi as Archemoro.
6b. In combination with *matris* and *gremio*, the sense ‘unborn child’ may also be activated; see *OLD* s.v. 1b and cf. e.g. 10.77 *matris onus*, Ov. *Her.* 4.58 (cf. also Smolenaars on 7.166 *pondus* ‘referring to an unborn child’). In that case, Hypsipyle’s imagined gesture of returning Opheltes to his mother’s *gremium* would become almost an inversion of his birth (on the Oedipal desire to return to the mother in the *Thebaid* see Hershkowitz 1998: 271-82). The sense ‘burden of affliction, care, grief’ (*OLD* s.v. 5) also lingers in the background. Cf. Parkes on 4.768. Cf. also 6.69 *ceu grande exsequeiis onus* (Opheltes’ pyre).

**illaetabile**: as Deipser (1881: 10) observes, the rare adjective is borrowed from Vergil (*Aen.* 3.707-8 *Drepani me portus et illaetabilis ora / accipit* and 12.619 *illaetabile murmur*), who may well have coined it, probably after Greek ἀξηατικός and ἀξηατικός. It is imitated once by Seneca (*Tro.* 861 *hymen funestus, illaetabilis*), twice by Statius (the other occurrence being 3.706 *graue et illaetabile munus*).

**transfundam**: an arresting verb, the only occurrence of *transfundam* in Statius’ oeuvre. It suggests that Opheltes’ mangled corpse is something almost liquid (cf. 597-8n.) and perhaps that his little corpse is already in a state of decomposition. Cf. Newlands on S. 2.1.182 *auidus bibit ignis Ophelten*, where she suggests that *bibit* ‘refers to the quantities of unguents poured on Opheltes’ pyre as well, perhaps, to the child’s blood-covered body (*Theb.* 5.596-604)*. Perhaps the gesture recalls the pouring of ashes into an urn (cf. Luc. 8.770 *transfundet in urnam*?). But there are no other indications that *transfundam* is a terminus technicus for that. The verb is applied with some frequency to the transference of non-physical objects, e.g. amorem, laudes or knowledge (Cic. *Phil.* 2.77, *Fam.* 9.14.4, Sen. *Ben.* 6.16.7; cf. *OLD* s.v. 2), and in particular to the transference of legal rights (cf. *OLD* 2b). Perhaps the verb suggests ‘giving up’ the possession of the child, picking up on the possible juridical overtones of *cesserit* (cf. *OLD* 12)?

**gremio**: *OLD* s.v. *transfundam* 1 lists some examples ‘w[ith] abl. denoting receptacle into which liquid is poured’, e.g. Larg. 122 *transfundunturque ... calice nouo; calice nouo*; alternatively, one could take *gremio* as dative, replacing the usual in + acc (cf. 573n. *solo*). On Statius’ bold use of the local abl. see Williams 1951 and cf. e.g. 9.536, 11.639. More importantly, the word rings with Hypsipyle’s *gremio* in 5.605, a further invitation to compare and contrast mother and nurse. Readers might also recall 4.793 *at puer in gremio uernae telluris* (modelled on *Aen.* 3.509, as Deipser 1881: 19 notes), Opheltes in the lap of Mother Earth (cf. Keith 2000: 58). The so-called Lasimos krater depicts a woman with a dead child on her lap, possibly Eurydice and Opheltes (see App. B e).

**634-5. quae me prius ima sub umbra / mergat humus?**: Hypsipyle’s question has raised eyebrows, because ‘exclamationem precatiam contextus flagitat, qua orat ut terra revulsa abscondatur’ (Brinkgreve 1914: 106-7), and editors have tried to get rid of the interrogative *quaer*. Barth conjectures quin (for *quaer*), which is adopted by Hall (1992: 292). Brinkgreve (1914: 106-7) argues for apoposiesis after *quaer*, which is adopted by Traglia-Aricò (1980: 86), Hill and Lesueur. According to Brinkgreve (*loc. cit.*) ‘[a]posiopesis felicissima est. Hypsipyle in eo est, ut sibi fingat, quibus opprobris conviciisque mater misera se cumulatura sit (nam ad matrem pronomen relativum *quaer* spectat), sed antequam verba invenit, imagine matris iratae et calamitate exterritate mentis oculis surgente ita turbatur ut mortem oret.’ When she begins to imagine how Eurydice (*quaer*) will respond, Brinkgreve suggests, she breaks off her sentence and wishes for death.

Admittedly, Statius sometimes employs apoposiesis, cf. 3.87, 280, 8.60 and 10.688 with Williams’ not (on apoposiesis see further Austin on *Aen.* 1.1135 *quos ego*— and Maurach 1983: 38-9 with references). Yet I believe that the MSS reading *quaer* should be maintained and the interpolation not be altered. As Watt (2000: 518-9) has convincingly argued, *quaer* is guaranteed by the Vergilian models, *Aen.* 10.675-6 *quaer iam satis ima dehiscat / terra mihi?* and 12.883-4 *o quaer satis ima dehiscat / terra mihi?*, where we also find ‘a pathetic question


The phrase *mergat humus* echoes 503 *mergit humo*. Lehanneur (1878: 140-1) notes the repetition, which he attributes ‘seu negligentiae, seu ejus [sc. Statii] ingenii siccitati’. In my view, the echo reminds us of Hypsipyle’s negligence rather than that of Statius, as it connects her death (wish) with the fate of Opheltes. Cf. also 628n. *ubi letifer anguis?*

**sub umbras**: although *sub umbras* is found in Propertius already, it naturally recalls Vergil, who famously uses it for the deaths of Dido, Camilla and Turnus (4.660 *sic sic iuuet ire sub umbras*, 11.831=12.952 *uitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras*). The expression is not found in Lucan and Valerius, but Statius and Silius each use it four times (as does Vergil).

### 635. simul haec

*sc. effata* or similar (ellipsis). This speech closing formula, not listed in Dominik’s appendix (cf. 565n. *clamat*), does not occur frequently. Vergil uses it once (*Aen.* 9.644 *simul haec effatus ab alto / se misit*, as do Lucan (6.246 *simul haec effatur*) and Silius (17.565 *simul haec fundebat*). In the *Thebaid* the formula is used two more times (2.659 *simul haec*, also with ellipsis, and 12.92 *simul haec dicencs*; cf. also 6.909 *haec simul*). On ‘die ungewöhnlich große Bandbreite der Formeln, mit denen [Statius] Reden einleitet und beendet’ (Anzinger 2007: 233) see Dominik (1994a: 20, 342-6); on speech closing formulas in Vergil and Silius see Lundström (1971).

### 635-6. terraque et sanguine uultum / sordida:

staining one’s hair and face with dust is a familiar token of mourning (e.g. *Od.* 24.316-7), but the blood – Opheltes’ blood – is quite exceptional (cf. 606n. *intextique comis*). Words in root *sord-* are often used in that specific context; cf. e.g. 2.440 *sordida luctu*, Cic. *Pis.* 36.89 *in sordibus, lamentis, luctu iacuisti*, and see *OLD* s.v. *sordes* 2, *sordidus* 3b.

–*que et* (cf. Gr. τε καὶ), used to closely connect two words or clauses, is archaic and belongs to the elevated poetic style; see K-St ii.37 and cf. e.g. 5.678, 709, 730, *Aen.* 2.5-6 (with Austin’s note). Alternatively, one could take *—que* as connecting the suppressed *verbum dicendi* and *ueritur* (in which case, of course, we should supply a finite *verbum dicendi* like *effatur*, not a participle like *effata*); given the caesura after *simul haec* as well as the close connection between *terra* and *sanguine* that construction is less likely.

### 636-7. magnorum circa uestigia regum / ueritur:

the sentence has been interpreted in three different ways: (a) Mozley translates ‘she turns to follow the mighty chieftains’; cf. Lesueur ‘elle va rejoindre les rois prestigieux’, who adds the comment ‘l’expression équivaut à *quorum uestigia sequitur*’ (cited in Watt 2000: 519); Ross ‘she turned and walked behind / those princes’. This interpretation cannot stand.

(b) ‘Much more convincing’, Watt (loc. cit.) points out, ‘are the older translations: *aduoluitur pedibus illustrium ducum* (Delphin), *elle se roule aux pieds des héros grecs* (Nisard), to which we may add Binnewald ‘Sie ... wälzte ... sich hin vor die Füße der hohen Führer’ and Bos (1646) ‘werpt sy haer voor de voeten / Der vorsten’. On that interpretation, Hypsipyle throws herself at the feet of the Argive leaders in supplication. Emphasising the importance of *pedes in contexts of supplication*, Watt goes on to argue for *uoluitur* (adopted by Hall). He adduces 11.739-40, S. 5.1.112-3, Luc. 7.377-8 *supplex ... uoluerer ante pedes*. In support one could add Apul. *Met.* 6.2 *pedes eius aduoluta et uberi fletu rogans dei uestigia* (SB footnote *ad loc.*) and Liv. 6.3.4 *cui cum se maesta turba ad pedes prouoluisset* with Kraus. Watt’s conjecture is attractive, since it also has MSS support (Rsscr. *Tscr.* U5 Z6).
(c) However, it is quite possible to understand uertitur as ‘turns from one to another’ (SB). The OLD also understands uertitur in this Vergilian sense, OLD 3 ‘to go to and fro, move about (in a place)’; cf. Aen. 7.784, 11.683 and Theb. 9.115 (where it occurs in proximity of uestitia, 9.111). We can imagine Hypsipyle kneeling and turning from one chieftain to the next. Kifel (2006: 216) rejects voluitur on different grounds: voluitur ‘würde einer Frau mit totem Kleinkind im Arm (v. 605) wahrhaft artistische Fähigkeiten abverlangen’!

_magnorum ... regum:_ see 499n. regibus. The addition of magnorum underlines the contrast between the mighty chieftains and the ruined supplicant Hypsipyle.

637. _tacitas ... imputat undas:_ all MSS and editions read tacite: ‘silently claims credit for the water’ (SB). On that reading, after appealing to the Argives with words, Hypsipyle now beseeches them with the silent gesture of supplication; after Hypsipyle’s long narrative and lament, there would be a certain irony in tacite (cf. the pointed me ... tacentem in 5.497). However, there is an unmistakable echo of 4.723 una tamen tacitas, sed iussu numinis, undas, where Langia is first mentioned, and I believe we should read tacitas. Moreover, I believe (pace Parkes ad loc.) that in 4.723 as well as here the adjective should be understood as ‘hidden, concealed, secret’ (OLD s.v. 8) rather than ‘silent’ (4.808-9 sonat ... saxosum ... murmur shows that Langia’s stream is not very silent); for ‘hidden waters’ we may compare the tacitis discursibus of the Nile in Luc. 10.249.

The verb _imputare_ is originally a term from bookkeeping (OLD s.v. 1 ‘(in commerce) to enter as a debt, charge (against a person); also, to enter as a credit’). The word is often used in the context of _amicitia_ with its _do ut des_ conventions of reciprocal favours and obligations. In that sense the verb is used several times in the _Siluae_ (see Coleman on S. 4.pr.15 and esp. Nauta 2002: 241-2). Since Hypsipyle has saved the Argives from death by leading them to Argia, the Argives have incurred a reciprocal debt towards her (cf. 5.20-1). Although Hypsipyle is making the gesture of supplication, she has, in fact, a claim on the Argives, and now she asks them a favour in return – the dubious favour of being killed (cf. 629n. _meriti si qua est mihi gratia duri_). Brown (1994: 90 n. 158) wrongly understands _imputat_ as ‘holds them to blame’ (cf. Brouwer ‘woordeloos wordt hun het water verweten’).

_maerentibus:_ according to Parkes (on 4.759-60 maesta / agmina) the soldiers, who in book 4 were sad because of their thirst, are now sad because of Opheltes’ death. The word also shows, I would add, that they are moved by her lament. Hall conjectures _quaerentibus_, which drastically changes the meaning of the sentence: ‘blaming them in their search for water’ (Ritchie & Hall).

638-49. Lycurgus hears of his son’s death

The scene shifts from Hypsipyle and the Argives to the palace of Nemea. News of Opheltes’ death arrives, just when Lycurgus is returning home from Mt Aphesas, where he has made an ill-omened sacrifice to Jupiter. Lycurgus does not take part in the Theban War, although he does not lack courage: his priestly duties and the oracle (see 645-7n.) hold him back.

Lycurgus has been mentioned in passing twice before (4.749 _Inachii ... Lycurgi, 5.39 uestri ... Lycurgi_), two references that emphasise his being an Argive: the imminent confrontation between Lycurgus and the Seven (650-90) is clearly to be understood as an upsurge of (more than) civil strife. Now we are given some more information about the priest-king of Nemea. Statius sketches Lycurgus’ character with strokes of courage and piety; the colours, however, are dark, as the king is troubled by the oracle and the bodeful sacrifice.

The passage unmistakably recalls book 3, where Amphaiaraus and Melampus in similar fashion receive sinister omens for the Argive expedition (see Fantham, both as _haruspices_ in Argos (3.456-9) and as _augures_ on the very same Mt Aphesas (see 640-1n.), where they witness the eagles-and-swans omen (3.460-551; see Fantham 2006). Lycurgus descending
from the mountain corresponds with Amphiarauts and Melampus’ descent in 3.566-8 (Amphiarauts’ gesture is applied to Lycurgus in 6.30-1). The unmistakable intratextual connection is reinforced by a verbal echo (3.633 Persei ... montis ~ 5.640-1 Persei ... montis).

While as a priest Lycurgus is the counterpart of Amphiarauts and Melampus, as a king he may be compared with Adrastus. The contrast is clear. ‘Whereas Adrastus’ optimism leads to misinterpretation and embroils his kingdom in the Theban war, Lycurgus refuses to participate because omens had warned that his family would suffer’ (McNelis 2007: 94; cf. Vessey 1973: 189). In refusing to partake in the Theban War Lycurgus recalls Nestor in 4.125-7, who had also refused to join the expedition.

While Adrastus is modelled primarily on Vergil’s Latinus, whose opposition to war is also broken down (see Parkes on 4.1-31 with references; add Brown 1994: 166-8), the prime model for Lycurgus is the Arcadian king Evander, whose son also falls victim to war. As has been noted (Eissfeldt 1904: 416, Legras 1905: 73, Vessey 1970: 49), the present scene points clearly to Vergil’s description of Evander learning of the death of his beloved son Pallas in Aeneid 11 (see 638-9n.).

In Euripides Lycurgus is mentioned as priest-king of Nemea (fr. 752h.28 κληροποιούς ἄρτι τούτῳ θεῷ Δίας); Vessey (1970: 50) notes the parallel. He seems to be absent throughout the play (cf. Hyps. fr. 752d.11-2 ἀδίσφρτως μιξών ὅδε ἀγάν κυρσῆν κυρσῆν / ... ...) δῶμ[α]τα, although Cockle (1987: 40, 141) believes that perhaps he makes his appearance towards the end of the play (cf. Soerink 2014: 188 with n. 78).

638-9. et iam sacrifici subitus per tecta Lycurgi / nuntius implerat lacrimis ipsumque domumque: cf. 5.716-7 et protinus ille tyranno / nuntius extinctae miserando uulnere prolis... in the reunion scene. Lycurgus receiving news of his son’s death is primarily modelled on Evander receiving news of Pallas’ death in Aen. 11.139-40 et iam fama uolans, tanti praenuntia luctus, / Euandrum Euandrique domos et moenia replet, with Statius’ lacrimis echoing Aen. 11.150 lacrimans (cf. 638-49n.); Euandrum Euandrique domos has been replaced with ipsumque domumque, which is taken from Aen. 8.490 ipsumque domumque. The Vergilian model may also underlie some of the vocabulary in the ten odd following lines (see notes on 644 templae aaraeque tenebant, 645 uetusti below). In addition, there is an allusion to Aen. 11.447-8 nuntius ingenti per regia tecta tumultu / ecce ruit magnisque urbem terroribus implet (cf. Aen. 11.896-7 saeuissimus implet / nuntius), where Laurentum is stirred by the news that Aeneas is moving to attack.

Intratextually, the lines contact with 4.309 implerat nuntius aures, introducing Atalanta’s reaction to the news of her son’s fatal departure, a passage that also looks back, inter alia, to Vergil’s Evander (see Parkes on 4.309-44). Cf. also S. 5.2.170-1 fama uelocior intrat / nuntius atque tuos implet, Crispine, penates.

638. et iam: see 588n. iamque.

sacrifici: Lycurgus is not only king of Nemea, but also priest of Jupiter (cf. 638-49n.). The rare adjective, which is appropriate as Lycurgus has just made a sacrifice (641 dederat prosecta), was probably coined by Ovid (e.g. Fast. 6.803, Met. 12.249, 15.483); it remains rare in Latin literature (e.g. Sen. Herc.F 893); the sole other occurrence in Statius is 4.552 sacrificum ... parentem (Tiresias).

639. nuntius: one might wonder whether nuntius refers to messenger or message. According to Servius on Aen. 11.896 ‘nuntius est qui nuntiat, nuntium quod nuntiatur’, but a simple glance at the OLD proves him wrong. The word recurs in 5.717. There is also an echo in 6.1 nuntia.

implerat lacrimis: the verb, popular with Vergil (e.g. Ecl. 6.48, Geo. 3.94, Aen. 7.23), normally takes some place as its object (e.g. Val. 2.458-9 impleuit ... auia, Homer. 16 assiduis
impleuit questibus auras), but since Vergil it occurs also with an acc. personae (see Poortvliet on Val. 2.126 implet). Here it takes both ( ipsumque domumque).

The combination implere lacrimis goes back to Aen. 4.30 sic effata sinum lacrimis impleuit obortis (Dido), imitated by Ovid (Her. 6.58, Met. 4.684 lumina ... lacrimis impleuit obortis, 10.419; cf. also Sen. Tro. 765). Here one could understand lacrimis as lacrimation uocibus, under the influence of Aen. 11.274 scopulos lacrimosis uocibus implet. Cf. Smolenaars on 7.493.

639. ipsumque domumque: taken from Aen. 8.490 (see 638-9n.). Repeated -que, derived from –τις –τι in the Homeric epics, is a standard feature of the elevated epic style since Ennius (see e.g. Austin on Aen. 4.83, Poortvliet on Val. 2.14, and esp. Wills 1994: 372-85); it is no coincidence that it figures in Horace’s famous characterisation of the epic genre, res gestae regumque ducumque et tristia bella (A.P. 73). Status is generally fond of repeated -que, esp. in the fifth and sixth foot; examples include 5.687, 6.19, 9.457, 12.153, 317 (see e.g. Smolenaars on 7.111-2, Coleman on S. 2.1.120 with references).

640. ipsum: note the epanalepsis (i.e. ‘Wiederholung nach Satzteil- oder Satzschluß im nächsten Vers’, Maurach 1983: 12). This stylistic figure is especially popular with Hellenistic poets and their followers in Rome, and usually employed to heighten pathos; cf. e.g. 3.62-3 omnes / proculaerum omnes, 7.311-2 seruantur pectora ferro, / pectora, 9.320-1 with Dewar’s note, Cat. 61.8-9, 21-2, 60-1, Aen. 6.162-4 (Misenus), 495-6 Deiphobum uidit, lacerum crudeliter ora, / ora manusque ambas, 10.821-2 (Lausus). The finest Statian example is 7.494-5 inter singula /sc. uerba] matrem, / matrem iterat, where iterat metapoetically calls attention to the repetition. See e.g. O’Hara (1997: 253), Norden on Aen. 6.164, Hardie on Aen. 9.775 with further references.

641. Persei uerite Sancto / montis: i.e. Mt Apesas or Aphesas, nowadays Mt Phoukás (ca. 873 metres high), about four miles north of ancient Nemea; with its characteristic truncated summit it is an important landmark in the Corinthia. The mountain is first mentioned by Hesiod, who has the Nemean Lion roam its slopes (Theog. 331); Callimachus too situates the Nemean lion on the mountain (Aet. fr. 56 Harder). The elder Pliny lists it under the name Apessanta (NH 4.17). Pausanias tells that Perseus was the first to make a sacrifice to Zeus on the mountain top (2.15.3 καὶ ὄρος Ἀπεσαντός ἐστιν ὑπὲρ τὴν Νέμεαν, ἐνδιὰ Περσέα πρῶτον Διὸ ἔσται λέγοντοι Απεσαντίον). Near the eastern edge of the mountain’s summit the remains of an altar have indeed been found. See further Barrington (plate 58 D2); Snijder on 3.461; Wiseman (1978: 106-8 with fig. 143); Harder on Callim. Aet. fr. 56; Miller (2004: 20), and for a comprehensive overview of ancient sources Wiseman’s entry in The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites s.v. ‘Mt Apesas’.

The mountain is given an ecphrasis in 3.460-5, where we learn that, according to the Lernaei coloni, Perseus took wing from the summit of the mountain (3.462-3 inde ferebant / nubila suspenso celerem temperasse uolatu), a scene that is also depicted on Adrastus’ golden cup in 1.545-6 iamiamque uagas – ita uisus – in auras / exsilit.\(^{589}\) The ecphrasis of the golden cup, in turn, is echoed in 502 (where see note).

Perseī: adjective; it also occurs in the form Perseus (3.441); cf. my note on 5.661 Oeneius heros. In the Thebaid, Perseus is closely associated with Argos. The first reference to Perseus occurs in 1.225 Perseos ... Argos, where Jupiter declares his intention to punish Argos and Thebes (1.224-6); he is also depicted on Adrastus’ golden cup in book 1, about to take wing with Gorgo’s severed head (1.544-7, echoed in 3.462-5); from 7.418 Perseos effigiem, where he is mentioned in one breath with Juno, Argive goddess par excellence, we learn that Perseus even has a cult statue, which he had indeed (Paus. 2.18.1 ἔν Μυκηνῶν δὲ ἐς Ἀργος ἱερομένως

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589 Some editors (e.g. Hall) accept Müller’s conjecture and print Apesanta in 3.461, despite the fact that all MSS read Aphesanta. Surely we should maintain the MSS reading Aphesanta (e.g. Snijder, SB), which puns on Perseus’ ἃφεσις (‘starting point’); see Callim. Aet. fr. 56 Harder. See Snijder on 3.461, SB’s footnote on 3.460-5.
the Argive king Adrastus is called Perseius heros (3.441); and in 4.119-20 Persea simply means ‘Argive’.

Heuvel on 1.225 and Steiniger and Parkes on 4.119-20 explain the connection between Perseus and Argos from the fact that Perseus’ grandfather Acrisius was king of Argos. However, in Heuvel’s detailed genealogy, Perseus comes one generation after Adrastus. LP on 3.441 makes Perseus himself king of Argos, and possibly Statius simply thought of Perseus as founding hero of Argos too (Davis 1994: 469 n. 4). Perseus was also associated with Persia, which might explain Adrastus’ invocation of Mithras in the final lines of book 1 (see Ahl 1986: 2856-7).

641. auero ... Tonanti: for the expression cf. 10.71 auersumque Iouem, Hor. Ep. 10.18 auersum ad Iouem (with Watson’s note), Aen. 1.481 diua solo fixos oculos auersa tenebat, 2.170 auersa deae mens. On Tonans see 511n.

prosecta: prosectum or prosicies is a technical term for a severed portion of a sacrificial animal, which would consist of one of the major organs (exta < *ex-secta) with the addition of some flesh (augmenta, magmenta). See OLD s.v. prosectum, Bömer on Ov. Met. 12.152 and cf. LP ad loc. ‘urbo sacrificantum usus est. particulae enim minutae memento omnium prosecta dicuntur in sacris quae inferuntur aris’. Statius deliberately projects Roman practices onto the mythical past (cf. e.g. 4.647 legio, Zissos on Val. 1.231-3). The word is rare in poetry, but it does occur a few times in Ovid (Met. 7.271, 12.152, Fast. 6.163).

642. caput ... quassabat: ‘was shaking his head’ (sometimes the expression means ‘to pound the head’, but then the ‘agens’ must be expressed, see Töchterle on Sen. Oed. 912-3 famulus manu / regius quassat caput). The expression occurs in Plautus (e.g. Merc. 600, Trin. 1169) as well as the high genres (e.g. Lucr. 2.1164, Aen. 12.894). Shaking one’s head is, as Kleywegt on Val. 1.528 notes, ‘a sign of negative emotion’, such as fear, sorrow or anger; see OLD s.v. 1b; cf. Donatus 2.7.47 apertae commotionis signum. In Homer it is a sign of anger (e.g. Il. 17.200, Od. 5.285), in Vergil it rather seems to express sorrow (cf. Aen. 7.291-2 stetit acri fixa dolore. / tum quassans caput etc., Servius Danielis on 12.894 caput quassas ‘luctus animi’, but see Tarrant ad loc.). The two emotions are not mutually exclusive, certainly not in the case of Lycurgus. For more parallels see Keulen on Sen. Tr. 451 quassas caput.

iratis ... ab extis: the adjective is transferred from Jupiter, whose ira is apparent from the sacrificial exta (on which see 641n. prosecta), to the exta themselves. Cf. Luc. 1.616-7 palluit attonitus sacris feralibus Arruns / atque iram superum raptis quaesitum in extis. The daring iunctura is without parallel, although exta is sometimes accompanied by an adjective pointing ‘ad eventum sacrificii’, such as laetus or tristis (see TLL s.v. exta 1964.28-46); cf. 2.348 exta minantia. The word’s placement also suggests ira on the part of Lycurgus, anticipating his outburst of anger in 5.653-61.

643. hic: in the Nemean palace (638 tecta, 639 domunque).

sese Argolicis immunem seruat ab armis: for the expression se seruare there are few parallels, the closest being Pl. Ba. 952 item se ille seruauit dolis; for se seruare with predicative accusative cf. Hyg. 185.1 ea petit a patre ut se uirginem seruaret. Statius is fond of such constructions (cf. 507n. immanem sese uelit). The prepositional clause Argolicis ... ab armis goes both with sese ... seruare and with immunem; in 5.123 we find immunis + gen. and in 6.150 immunis + abl. – parallels that also show that in the Thebaid nobody is immunis. On Argolicus see 554n.

644. animi uacuus: playing with the expression animus uacuus + abl. (e.g. Cic. Q. fr. 3.4.4 etnovotiasq qui non modo tempus, sed etiam animum uacuum ab omni cura desiderat). Here uacuus is applied not to Lycurgus’ animus, but to Lycurgus himself, while animus is used in the specific sense ‘courage’.

templa araque tenebant: recalling 3.573 te pudor et curae retinent per rura, Melampu (Melampus unwilling to reveal the sinister omens to the Argives). templa refers to the temple
645-7. These lines describe an oracle that Lycurgus received at some point in the past – the second reason (645 etiam) why the king refuses to join the expedition against Thebes. The actual text of the oracle in line 647 is preceded by a ‘Trikolon der wachsenden Glieder’, moving from the neutral responsa deum, via the ominous monitus uetusti, to the sounding circumscription uox ex adytis accepta profundis. The oracle is reminiscent of 1.491-2 diuina oracula Phoebi / agnosces monitisque datos uocalibus antris, where Adrastus recognises Tydeus (boar) and Polynices (lion) as his future sons in law.

In earlier versions of the Opheltes myth there is no mention of an oracle (see §1.4.3); in fact, Statius is the first to mention it. Yet we cannot exclude the possibility that an oracle played a role in the earlier literary tradition. The matter is complicated by Hyginus, in whose version we find a different oracle: when Opheltes’ father consults the oracle, responsum erat, ne in terra puernum deponeret, antequam posset ambulare (Fab. 74). The oracle in Statius does not contain an explicit reference to Opheltes, and Lycurgus might naturally think that the oracle’s prima funera refers to his own death (cf. LP on 643-4 ‘ideo a Thebano se abstinet bello nec Polynici ferebat auxilium quia consulenti responsum fuerat Thebanum bellum ipsius sanguine imbuendum, quod tamen contigit morte filii’). It remains unclear why and when Lycurgus consulted the oracle.

Brown (1994: 76-7) erroneously believes that Lycurgus was given the oracle just now, on the summit of Mt Aphesas. Leaving aside that there is no adytum on the mountain, uetusti makes abundantly clear that we are dealing with an old oracle.

645-6. necdum etiam ... / exciderant: the sentence is modelled on Verg. Aen. 1.25-6 necdum etiam causae irarum saeuique dolores / exciderant animo, where Juno remembers the judgement of Paris and the rapii Ganymedis honores. For excidio see OLD s.v. 9b ‘to escape the memory, be forgotten’ and cf. 11.578-9 monstrumque infame futuris / excidat. Normally the verb requires a complement such as Vergil’s animo, which Statius typically omits (as in 3.302 and 7.537): he expects his audience to be able to supplement the Vergilian phrase (cf. Williams 1986: 213 ‘What Statius is particularly adept at doing is taking a bold locution from a predecessor and pushing it to a further extreme of unexpectedness. [...] recollection of the predecessor’s phrase is often required for full understanding’).

responsa deum monitusque uetusti: the combination looks back to Aen. 7.102-3 haec responsa patris Fauni monitusque silenti / nocte datos non ipse suo premit ore Latinus (Horsfall ad loc. notes that Vergil is the first poet to use monitus); for responsa deum cf. Aen. 9.134 responsa deorum, Ov. Met. 13.336 responsa deum. The implicit warning of the oracle is not to take part in the Theban War. For monitus of prophecies and oracles cf. 1.492 (see 645-7n.), Ach. 1.32, Aen. 4.464-5 multaque praeterea uatum praedicata piorum / terribili monitu, Val. 1.29 terrifici monitus. Cf. also 10.188-9 (Thiodamas) magna deum mandata, duces, monitusque uerendos / aduehimus.

uetusti: ‘ancient’ or ‘hallowed by time’, a much more powerful word than uetus; cf. e.g. 4.356-7 ipsa uetusto / moenia lapsa situ (the walls of Thebes), 7.312-3 uetustum / siluarum. Perhaps the word was suggested by the Vergilian model passage (Aen. 11.142 de more uetusto; see 638-9n. above). Its solemn ring befits the oracular context.

646. uoxque ex adytis accepta profundis: as Servius on Aen. 2.115 explains, the ἀδυτον is the ‘locus templi secretior, ad quem nulli est aditus nisi sacerdoti’ (cf. Caes. Civ. 3.105.5 in occultis ac reconditis templis, quo praeter sacerdotes adire fas non est, quae Graeci adyta appellant). The word, attested already in Accius (trag. 624 Ribbeck) and Lucretius (1.737), is
especially frequent in the Aeneid (2.115, 297, 351, 404, 764, 3.92, 5.84 and 6.98 plural, 7.269 singular). One wonders where the *adyta profunda* are to be located. Probably Lycuragus visited the temple of Apollo in Delphi, but it is also possible to think of the Temple of Zeus in Nemea, which contains a sunken *adyton* that may have been used for oracular purposes (see Miller 2004: 163); cf. §1.4.3.

The words are echoed in 7.407 *terrificaeque adytes uoces*, in the enumeration of portents; the connection reinforces Opheltes’ fate as omen for the Theban War. In 2.260-1, during the wedding of Argia and Polyxena and Tydeus and Deipyle, the ill-omened sound of a *tuba* comes from the *adyton* of the temple of Pallas in Argos.

647. **prima, Lycurge, dabis Dircaeo funera bello:** ‘you, Lycuragus, shall give first death to the Theban war’ (SB). This hexameter reproduces the oracle, or at least its purport (LP ‘hoc uerus tenor oraculi continetur’, but oracles were often put in hexameters). Note the intricate pattern of assonance and alliteration. The oracle is ambiguous, as it remains unclear whose *funera* are meant, and how exactly the expression *funera dare* is to be understood (see below).

We can imagine Lycuragus wondering: will I be the first to kill, or the first to be killed, in the Theban war? That the oracle refers to the *funera* of his son, is not the first interpretation that would come to mind (cf. Ganiban 2013: 251). However that may be, Lycuragus senses that the oracle alludes to something terrible; hence his decision not to take part in the *Dircaeaum bellum*. On prophecies and portents in the *Thebaid* see Schetter 1960: 96-101, Brown 1994: 168 n. 28 with bibliography.

The oracle of course alludes to the death of Lycuragus’ son Opheltes, as the echo of 593 *funere primo* (where see note) underlines. There might also be an echo of Vergil’s description of Allecto after she has brought about war between Latins and Trojans, *Aen. 7.541-2 sanguine bellum / imbuit et primae commisit funera pugnae*: as the conflict between the Trojans and the Latin farmers leads to war in the ‘Iliadic’ half of the *Aeneid*, so the death of Opheltes looks forward to the Theban War in the second half of the *Thebaid*. The words *prima funera* also seem to pun on the child’s “new name Archemorus (cf. 5.738-9n.). Opheltes’ *prima funera* may also remind us of Protesilas, who famously died first in the Trojan War (cf. esp. *Ach. 1.494-5 primae ... mortis*).

The expression *funera dare* is Vergilian, cf. *Geo. 3.247 nec funera uulgo / tam multa informes ursi stragemque dedere / per silus*, *Aen. 8.570-1 tot ferro saeua dedisset / funera, 11.646-7 dant funera ferro / certantes, and 12.383 ea dum campis uictor dat funera Turnus*, which underlies Statius’ second use of the expression in 9.778-9 *Amphion ignarus adhuc, quae funera campis / ille [sc. Parthenopaeus] daret*. Dewar ad loc. also compares Val. 3.681 *dare funera, 4.216 dant funera, Aen. 10.602 talia per campos edebat funera ductor, Petr. Sat. 120.135 (Pluto speaking) nostris da funera regnis, to which we may add Sil. 4.216 dumque ea Gallorum populi dant funera campo.*

The expression *funera dare* has been discussed by Frithd (1975: 112-5), in a short article arguing that Corippus *Iohannis 2.108 should read funera seua dedit* (MS reading †iuncta† *seua dedit*). Frithd rightly observes that *funera dare* usually means ‘to cause massacre’, like *edere stragem* (Frithd 1975: 112-3; cf. Tarrant on *Aen. 12.383*); cf. epic expressions such as *leto dare or neci dare*. Indeed, that goes for all instances quoted above, except Petr. *Sat. 120.135 (see below). In Corippus, however, Frithd argues, it is used ‘as a phrase synonymous with *funera pati*’ (*ibid. 113*), perhaps under the influence of *animas dare* and *poenas dare*. As a parallel for *funera dare* in that passive sense of *funera pati* he adduces *Theb. 5.647* (our line) with the following comment: ‘The verse is an oracle (*responsa deum, 5.645*) and is explicitly said to be a warning (*monitus, ibid.*). It is quite clear from the context that Lycuragus takes it to be one (*id cauet, 5.648*) and feels uneasy as he witnesses the preparations of war. Now oracles should be ambiguous, and it is impossible to see any point in this warning, if Statius did not mean that *dabis funera* could be interpreted in both ways.’
In my view Frdh’s argument is not convincing. The point is that the expression *funera dare*, which normally means ‘to cause massacre’, may also be understood à la Petronius: when Pluto says (Sat. 120.135) *nostris da funera regnis* he means ‘provide my kingdom with corpses’. And precisely because it is possible to read the Latin expression in that way too, the oracle is ambiguous.

**Dircaeo**: i.e. ‘Theban’ or ‘Boeotian’ (15 times in Statius), after the Theban queen Dirce, who was changed into a spring (see Heuvel on 1.152, Coleman on S. 2.7.18). In Greek literature, Διρκαεις occurs in the Theban tragedies, e.g. Aesch. Sept. 308, Soph. Ant. 104, Eur. Phoen. 730, Suppl. 637. The adjective makes its first Latin appearance in Ecl. 2.24 and Hor. Carm. 4.2.25 *Dircaem ... cygnum* (Pindar). Statian examples include 9.679 *Dircae ... montis* (Mt Cithaeron), 7.564 *Dircaea ad flumina* (where it actually refers to Dirce, see Smolenaars *ad loc.*), and 10.651 *Dircaea ... turre* (one of the gates, see Williams *ad loc.*).

Statius has numerous adjectives for ‘Theban’, e.g. Agenorean, Cadmean, Echionian, Labdacid, Sidonian and ‘Tyrian. These are not only inspired by *doctrina*, but also ‘point to earlier generations and to Theban origins’ (Davis 1994: 474-5), which is most significant e.g. in the case of Polynices (cf. Lovatt 2005: 34 with n. 34); Lovatt (2005: 179-81) tentatively explores how Statius’ use of names might assimilate the Thebans to Carthaginians (and hence Argives to Romans), and the Argives to Homeric Greeks (and hence Thebes with Troy).


*angit ad lituos*: Lycurgus feels anxiety and vexation (cf. *OLD* 4) at the sound of the trumpets of the Argive army, for in his ears the trumpets herald the dreaded *prima funera* of the oracle. The construction of *angor* with *ad* (‘in reaction to’) is without parallel; normally *angor* goes with abl. causae, *de* + abl. or *quod*-clause (cf. 2.343 *angit*, 6.827 *angunt*). For this usage of *ad* + acc. ‘indicating occasion or cause with a verb of feeling or response’, frequent in Silver Latin, see Zissos on Val. 1.332.

Given the martial context, *lituos* undoubtedly refers to the war-trumpets (*OLD* s.v. 2); cf. e.g. Geo. 3.183 and Aen. 6.167; in Luc. 1.237 and S. 5.3.193 *tubas acres lituosque* the word is paired with the more frequent *tuba*. Trumpets are of course traditional symbols of war (cf. e.g. the hendiadys in 7.172 *tubas Martemque*) and even have metapoetic significance, representing the epic genre (Micozzi on 4.261-3; cf. the trumpet that makes Achilles forfeit his non-epic disguise in *Ach*. 1.874-5).

*periturisque inuidet armis*: a most complicated phrase. We should probably understand ‘wishes the doomed army ill’ (SB), ‘resent the doomed hosts’ (Ritchie-Hall). In the present context, *armis* most likely refers to the Seven against Thebes, with *perituris* pointing to their doom; cf. 2.299 *perituri uatis* (Amphiaraus), 2.524 *peritura cohors* (the Theban soldiers sent to ambush Tydeus), 4.130 *peritura in castra*, 7.779-80 *peritura ... iuga* (Amphiaraus’ chariot), 10.594 *perituraque Thebe*. Lachmann’s conjecture *periturisque* can be safely dismissed: Lycurgus is not destined for death – at least no more than any other mortal.

Ruurd Nauta suggests to me that the *armis* could be Lycurgus’, with reference to his refusal to take part in the expedition: ‘he begrudges them his doomed arms’; see *OLD* s.v. *inuideo* 2 and cf. Aen. 9.655 *paribus non inuidet armis*, where Apollo ‘does not begrudge [Ascanius] equal arms’ (although in Vergil the *armis* belong to Ascanius, not Apollo). On that reading, *perituris* – focalised through Lycurgus – looks back to the oracle: Lycurgus senses that, if he takes part in the war against Thebes, something terrible will happen, and in that sense he thinks his arms are doomed. This interpretation of *perituris*, however, is a little strained, and it seems most natural to understand *armis* as the Argives and *perituris* as their doom.

If *periturisque ... armis* refers to the Argives, how exactly are we to understand *inuidet?* Lycurgus’ *invidia* may involve feelings of jealousy, mortification and hostility. Possibly the
king, being haud animi uacuus (see 644n.), is jealous, regretting that he cannot join the expedition (cf. LP ad loc. ‘quod non iret ad bellum’). In that case there is much tragic irony in the narrator’s addition of perituris, as the king envies an army marching to certain doom (cf. Eriphyle desiring Harmonia’s necklace in 2.303, not knowing that it is cursed). More likely, however, given the oracle and the ill-omened sacrifice on Mt Aphesas, Lycurgus ‘resents’ the Argive hosts: he senses that, with the arrival of the Seven, the enigmatic prima funera are imminent, and therefore wishes them ill. The preceding angitur also points in that direction. According to the TLL, too, inuidet here ‘respicit ad affectum animi exacerbati’ (TLL s.v. inuidio 196.2-3). In 6.43 the Nemeans feel inuidia towards the Argives (Pelasgi), whom they hold responsible for Opheltes’ death. On the complex notion of inuidia see further Kaster (2005).

650-90a. Conflict between Lycurgus and the Seven

The narrator returns to Hypsipyle (5.650-1 laceras ... exsequias picking up 5.605 laceros artus), who now approaches the palace with the mutilated limbs of Opheltes in her arms. From the other side comes Eurydice, leading a throng of mourning women. Then the child’s father Lycurgus dashes forward, with the intention, it seems, of killing Hypsipyle. In order to protect their saviour, Tydeus, Capaneus, Hippomedon and Parthenopaeus confront the angered Lycurgus with their shields and swords, in reaction to which a number of Nemean peasants rush to succour their king. The intervention of the wise Adrastus and Amphiaraurus prevents bloodshed. Amphiaraurus’ words have a calming effect, except on Tydeus. Finally Lycurgus draws in his horns, expressing the belief that one day Jupiter will avenge his priest.

If Adrastus and Amphiaraurus had not arrived in time, the Argive heroes and their allied king Lycurgus would have joined battle: the scene describes the near outbreak of civil war on the Peloponnese. In addition to intertextual indications (see below), this is made explicit in the words of Amphiaraurus (669-71, esp. 670 unus auum sanguis) and Lycurgus (681-9, esp. 683-4 socii ... sanguinis and domi). As such, the passage is intimately connected with one of the central themes of the poem, what Lucan calls bella plus quam ciuilia. Moreover, Lycurgus’ outburst of vengeful ira ‘anticipates Creon’s intention to kill Antigone and Argia’ in book 12 (Vessey 1970: 49).

The introductory lines (5.650-2) create the expectation that Statius, following in the footsteps of Euripides, will offer a dramatic confrontation between mother and nurse – the confrontation of which Hypsipyle spoke with such dread in the final lines of her lament (5.630-5) and which is central to Euripides’ play (cf. Hyps. frr. 754c, 757). Our intertextual expectations are shattered, for it is Opheltes’ father Lycurgus who comes to the fore. The reaction of Opheltes’ orba parens (6.35) Eurydice is postponed to the following book, where she makes an impressive scene in 6.135-92, where 138 hoc Argolidum coetu circumdata matrum looks back to 5.652 femineos coetus here. Statius has rejected his Euripidean model in favour of the epic tradition, which also included a violent confrontation between the Seven and Opheltes’ father Lycurgus. See further §2.6.4 and Soerink 2014: 188-91.

Continuing the engagement with Aeneid 11 in 5.638-49, Lycurgus here is reminiscent of Vergil’s Evander (see 651-3nn.). Allusions to Lucan and to Anchises’ words to Caesar and Pompey in Aeneid 6 make clear that we should understand the near outbreak of violence in terms of civil war (see 650n. fides superum, 669-71n.). The confrontation between the Seven and the rustic supporters of king Lycurgus is reminiscent of the battle between Trojans and peasants in Aen. 7.505-39, which Statius clearly reads as civil war (see 667n.).

650. ecce (fides superum!) laceras: in old editions one finds ecce fides superum: laceras (cf. Bindewald ‘Siehe, wie wahr der himmlischen [sic] Wort!’ and Ross ‘See how the gods
maintain their promises’), but modern editors, with the exception of Hall, rightly put fides superum! in parenthesis: ecce calls attention to Hypsipyle entering the stage with Opheltes’ remains. (Hill ad loc. credits Lachmann with the change in interpunction, but Lachmann 1876: 47-50 does not even mention the line.)

ecce: as Heuvel on 1.76 ecce notes, Statius ‘valde hanc exclamationem amat’; he uses it both with a nominative (e.g. 5.133, 10.160, 12.429) and with sentences (e.g. 3.33, 4.93, here), usually in initial position (5.703 is a notable exception). The originally colloquial ecce, conspicuously absent in e.g. Lucretius and Catullus, became part of epic style with Vergil, who also uses it with exclamatory nom. as well as complete sentences (e.g. Aen. 6.46 ‘deus ecce deus’ and 2.57-9 ecce ... trahebant). The interjection – usually translated as ‘see! behold! look!’ etc. – is commonly held to call attention to something visible (cf. OLD 1). Here too ecce seems to invite the reader to visualise Hypsipyle carrying the dismembered corpse of Opheltes, adding to the dramatic quality of the scene. As Dionisotti (2007) shows, however, ecce is not that simple: the word is not etymologically related to any uerbum uidendi, and the ancient commentators explain it in terms of suddenness and impending evil rather than visibility (cf. Tiberius Donatus on Aen. 2.57: ‘aliaquod malum et insperatum significat’; Servius on Aen. 2.203: ‘ex improviso’). TLL s.v. states: ‘ecce pro particula demonstrativa animi attentionem dirigit ad apparentiam aut praesentiam sive hominis sive rei [...]’, idque ita fere ut aliquid novi aut gravioris inducat momenti’. ecce is often used to mark the (unexpected) entrance of a character (cf. και μὴν καὶ δῆ in Greek tragedy, on which see Van Erp Taalman Kip in Bakker & Wakker 2009); in drama cf. e.g. Sen. Ag. 388, 586, Her.F. 329, Oed. 838, in epic e.g. Aen. 2.76, 8.228, Theb. 1.401, 2.613, 4.93, 6.340, 9.86, 12.349 (cf. Austin on Aen. 2.57: ‘ecce marks a sudden interruption, in a manner familiar in Comedy when a character unexpectedly appears’). This usage might be related to ecce introducing new items in an enumeration. See further Dionisotti (2007), who discusses its various usages and argues that ecce essentially expresses ‘immediacy’ and ‘engagement’.

fides superum: the gods show fides as the oracle has come true (cf. Lesueur ‘les dieux n’avaient pas menti!’). Brown (1994: 77 n. 102) notes that the phrase is ‘heavily ironic: the Thebaid’s gods are scrupulously faithful in fulfilling their curses upon their uates (Adrastus, Amphiaraus, and now Lycurgus)’. The phrase alludes to Luc. 2.16-7 quantis sit cladibus orbi / constatura fides superum (the sole verbal parallel), where the gods show similar fides in that the portents they sent are followed by disaster indeed; Lucan’s fides ‘inverts the normal sense of a promise kept, to become a threat fulfilled’ (Fantham on Luc. 2.16). The allusion aligns the death of Opheltes with the prodigia in Lucan’ epic, and by implication the Theban War is put on a par with the bella plus quam ciuilia between Caesar and Pompey. LP connects fides superum with Hypsipyle’s words nosco deos (5.620): there is no direct connection, but both Hypsipyle and Lycurgus have received warnings from the gods.

comitata: syntactically the participle can be taken in a passive as well as an active sense: (a) ‘accompanied’ by the Argives, balancing the femineos coetus plangentiave agmina that follow Eurydice; (b) ‘attending’ Opheltes’ remains. The latter is preferable, not only because there is no constituent expressing Hypsipyle’s comites, but also because the verb is often used in the sense ‘to attend (a funeral procession)’; see OLD s.v. 1b and cf. Aen. 11.52 iuuenem examinum ... comitamur (with Horsfall’s note), Plin. Nat. 11.63 comitantur exequias, Tac. Ann. 2.32 ne imago Libonis exequias posterorum comitaretur, Homer. 1036 (Priamus addressing Achilles) saltem saeua pater comitabor funera nati.

Thoantis: i.e. θοατίς ‘daughter of Thoas’ (and not, as elsewhere, e.g. Aen. 10.415, the latinised genitive of Thoas); in this form the patronymic is unique to Statius, the only other occurrence being 5.700 Thoantida. Ovid in Hypsipyle’s epistle has Thoantias (Ep. 6.163), after Apollonius Rhodius (1.637 θοατίς Τυψιπλεία, 713 θοατίς ... Τυψιπλή). Yet θοατίς is the more natural form (cf. Σ Ap.Rh. 1.713: θοατίς ἀντί τοῦ θοατίς). Hypsipyle first
identifies herself as Thoas’ daughter in 5.38 claro genera Thoante. The patronymic suits Hypsipyle, whose identity hinges on her relation to her father (Brown 1994: 118–9).

650-1. aduehit: Statius’ choice of verb is remarkable, since adueho is usually applied to the transportation of goods (e.g. Sen. Ep. 114.9 aduectis trans maria marmoribus, Cato Agr. 138 boues aduehant ligna, fabalia, frumentum, and even 5.602-3 aduectos ... cibos above); its application to a woman carrying a dead child in her arms is quite grim. Perhaps Statius took inspiration from Val. 3.68-9 umeroque Learchum / aduehit. Gronovius conjectured aduenit, adopted by Hall (‘arrives attending the mangled remains’), but there is no reason to suspect the verb: similarly harsh is transporto in 11.696-7 (Oedipus speaking) ‘an refert quo funera longa measque / transportem tenebras?’ In 1.503 [Nox] aduehis alma fidem and 10.188-9 monitusque uerendos / aduehimus the verb is remarkable for a different reason, namely its combination with an abstract object.

651-2. contra subit obuia mater, / femineos coetus plangentiaque agmina ducens: as Deipser (1881: 20), Legras (1905: 73 without ref. to Deipser) and Vessey (1970: 49 n. 56 without ref. to either Deipser or Legras) have noted, an allusion to Aen. 11.145-6 contra turba Phrygum ueniens plangentia iungit / agmina, immediately followed by a description of the Latin matres. There might also be a bitter echo of Val. 2.550-2 obuia cui contra longis emersa tenebris / turba Phrygum parumque trahens cum coniuge natum / Laomedon (modelled, inter alia, on the same Vergilian line; see Poortvliet ad loc.): when Hercules has killed the sea-monster, Laomedon enters the scene with his wife and little son. In Statius, however, the parents’ child is dead. Cf. also the entrance of Clite in Val. 3.313-4.

subit obuia: see 566n.

femineos coetus: an addition to the Vergilian model; the combination has one (accidental) parallel in Ov. Ars 1.253-4 quid tibi femineos coetus uenatibus aptos / enumerem? (Deipser 1881: 20), where the iunctura strikes a mock-epic note: the adjective femineus, replacing gen. feminarum, is highly poetic (Axelson 1945: 14). For coetus applied to mourners cf. 12.466 coetumque gementem. The line is echoed in the first line of Eurydice’s impressive speech in 6.138 (cf. 650-90n.).


magnanimo: in Statius’ oeuvre the epithet magnanimus is probably best known as the opening word of the Achilleid. It occurs frequently in the Thebaid (18 times), as it does in the Aeneid (12 times). Statius applies it to numerous warriors, such as Tydeus, Capaneus and Menoeceus, and notably to Domitian in 12.814 (see Dewar on 9.547, Pollmann on 12.814, Dominik 1994: 31 with n. 44, Lovatt 2005: 137 n. 69). Formed after Homeric μεγάλεμος and μεγαλήτωρ (see Norden on Aen. 6.308, Scaffai on Homer. 228), it occurs already, (in)famously, in Cat. 58.5 (Lesbia) glubit magnanimos Remi nepotes.

654. fortior ille malis: perhaps ‘made more formidable by his misfortunes’ (Ritchie-Hall; cf. Brouwer ‘de smart verhardt hem’), taking malis as abl. of cause. It seems more natural, however, to take malis as abl. of comparison (‘stronger than his misfortunes’); this interpretation finds support in what follows, as the king is ‘stronger’ than his tears. We may compare the Sibyl’s famous advice to Aeneas: tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito (Aen. 6.95; cf. Sen. Ep. 82.18). SB conjectures illa (= pietas), claiming that ‘[t]he son’s death makes the father’s love stronger’ (2000: 467 my italics), which I do not find convincing (cf. Kivel 2006: 216).

lacrimasque insana resorbet / ira patris: cf. 2.315 magna lacrimas recluserat iva, where Mulder compares 12.318 inclusitque dolor lacrimas. Lycurgus’ tearlessness mirrors that of Hypsipyle in 594 non lacrimas habet. The phrasing may be influenced by [Sen.] Her.O. 1285

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fletum uirtus saepe resorbet; Lehanneur (1878: 264) compares Sil. 12.594 fletumque resor-bent.

insana ... ira: alluding to the well-known Stoic idea that ira is, or easily turns into, insaniasa; cf. the philosophical discussions in Cic. Tusc. 4.23, esp. 4.23.53 an est quicquam similis insaniae quam ira? quam bene Ennius ‘initium’ dixit ‘insanias’, and Seneca’s De ira (esp. 1.1.2, 2.36.4; also e.g. Ep. 18.14.57 inmodica ira gignit insaniam), Hor. Ep. 1.2.62 ira furor breuis est. In 661 below Lycurgus is furens.

655. longo rapit arua morantia passu: again mirroring Hypsipyle in 591-4. On the phrasing see Pollmann on 12.219-20 magno Megareia praeceps / arua rapit passu (Argia); cf. also 545n. rapit. On the surface, the ‘the fields that stay him’ (SB) refer to the spatio-temporal obstacles between Lycurgus and Hypsipyle: the king wants to avenge the death of his son as soon as possible, but first he has to make his way through the arua morantia. At the same time, morantia alludes to the Nemean mora (on which see §4.2). Vergil also uses the participle with an eye on narrative mora, cf. Aen. 4.568 te ... morantem (Mercury addressing Aeneas in Carthage), 7.620-1 tum regina deum caelo delapsa morantis / impulit ipsa manu portas (Juno).

longo ... passu: the iunctura is Vergilian (Aen. 11.907 longis ... passibus). The two words are more often paired, rather differently, to describe distances (e.g. Caes. BG 5.47.4 tria milia passuum longe).

656. uociferans: the participle occurs five times in the Aeneid, always suggesting violent emotion (e.g. Aen 7.389-90 where frenzied Amata cries ‘ehoe Bacche’ ... uociferans; Aen. 12.92 introducing a speech by the mtrialy frenzied Turnus). In Statius uociferans occurs four times as opening formula (here and 3.348, 6.819, 7.663). The verb is by no means confined to poetry, however, occurring frequently in e.g. Livy and Cicero as well.

656-60. Lycurgus’ speech is spontaneous and emotional, as appears from the ‘stage direction’ uociferans (see previous note); note the short clauses, the question marks, and the non-epic faxo. Pace Dominik (1994a: 283) the speech is not really addressed to the Argives, although they might overhear his words; Lycurgus rather addresses his attendants (658 comites) and himself, while he rapit arua morantia. In his anger the king cries that Hypsipyle does not care much about his son’s death, suggesting that she might even take pleasure in harming her master. Although Lycurgus does not make his intention to kill Hypsipyle explicit, the implication of his question uiuitne? and the words faxo ... exciderint leave little room for doubt, and Dominik (1994a: 283) rightly classifies the speech as ‘threat’. Interestingly, Lycurgus suspects the cause of Opheltes’ death: Hypsipyle’s proud (659 tumidae) retelling of her Lemnian past, in particular her saving Thoas (658-9 omnis fabula Lemni / et pater). Lycurgus does not believe Hypsipyle’s claim of divine lineage, and the word mendacia even casts doubt on the rest of her story. Similarly Dido, in her anger, doubts Aeneas’ parentage (Aen. 4.365 nec tibi diua parens generis nec Dardanus auctor). We may also compare Euridyce’s reaction in 6.146-53, where ‘Eurydice suggests that her belief in the story was a reason for entrusting Opheltes to Hypsipyle’ (Gibson 2004: 163), but now that Opheltes is dead she finds it difficult to believe Hypsipyle (6.152 et creditis ausae?). Since Opheltes’ death is caused by Hypsipyle’s poetic ambitions (cf. 5.626-7), ‘Lycurgus’ revenge is couched in terms of poetic destruction, though that destruction would obviously be effected by violence against the person of Hypsipyle’ (Gibson 2004: 162).

656. illa autem ubinam: autem is sometimes said to be a non-poetic word, and one might be tempted to interpret its occurrence here as an indication of emotional, spontaneous diction. However, in combination with ille (or another demonstrative), ecce and contra it is quite frequent in Vergil. In post-Vergilian poetry it also occurs mostly in these combinations. See Axelson 1945: 85-6.
Lycurgus accuses Hypsipyle of regarding the death of paruus Opheltes as parua ... damna (cf. Tydeus’ sarcastic quanti ... funeris in 674 below), or even taking pleasure in it (laetaue). cruoris ... mei may remind us quite literally of Opheltes’ remains (cf. 598 sanguinis imbre noui), but Lycurgus uses it as a metaphor for his son, his flesh and blood. Moreover, the reference to Lycurgus’ (royal) blood may remind us that Lycurgus is not only a father who has lost his son, but also a king who has lost his heir; dynastic succession is an important issue in the Thebaid.

laetaue: Hall conjectures lentaue, translating: ‘Where is the woman for whom the loss of my flesh and blood is a small matter, or an indifferent one?’ Leaving aside that lentus does not normally mean ‘indifferent’, Lycurgus’ words are not implausible from a psychological point of view: Hypsipyle has lost her sons, Lycurgus might (subconsciously) reason, and may therefore begrudge Lycurgus his son.

uiuitne?: this is simple language, straight from the heart, as the parallels from the Roman stage may illustrate (e.g. Pl. Cap. 282, 989, Ter. He. 660). Although Statius often produces complicated sentences, he understands that sometimes less is more (cf. e.g. 548 nusquam ille).

657-8. impellite raptam / ferte citi, comites: echoing Vergil’s Dido, Aen. 4.593 ‘ferte citi flammas, date tela, impellite remos!’ Like Dido, Lycurgus intends to attack the visiting army; like Dido, he will change his mind (5.680-90).

citi: the MSS are divided between adjective citi (P) and adverb cito (o). In light of Aen. 4.593 (see previous note), 9.37 ferte citi ferrum, date tela, ascendite muros, / hostis adest, heia!, and 12.425 arma citi properate uiro! the reading citi is surely correct (cf. also Ov. Met. 3.562 ite citi). The adjective is predicative, with adverbial sense. In general, Latin poets prefer adjectives over adverbs: ‘In poetry, although they [i.e. adverbs] are not so hard to find in Lucretius, the growing refinement of poetic taste developed a distinct dislike for all but the commonest like longe, alte, late, which were virtually unavoidable’ (Eden on Verg. Aen. 8.299); cf. Smolenaars on 7.368.

658-60. faxo ... exciderint: faxo is an archaic sigmatic form of facio that functions as a future equivalent to faciam. – Es steht stets im Hauptsatz und drückt aus, daß der Sprecher in Zukunft die im Nebensatz vorgestellte Handlung vornehmen wird (‘ich sorge dafür’) oder daß er dafür einsteht, daß das im Nebensatz vorgestellte Ereignis eintreten wird (‘ich stehe dafür ein’)’ (Rix 1998: 622). Followed by a paratactic subjunctive (i.e. without ut) it is frequent in Plautus and Terence. Since it belongs to colloquial language, faxo is rare in the high genres of epic and tragedy, occurring twice in Vergil (Aen. 9.154 and without subjunctive in 12.316), twice in Ovid (Met. 3.271, 12.594), once in Seneca (Med. 905), and four times in Valerius (4.191, 220, 5.654, 7.177) and Silius (1.479, 4.812, 7.115 and with ut in 17.235), always in emotional direct speech and often, as here, in sentences that express threats. See e.g. Hardie on Aen. 9.154, Costa on Sen. Med. 905; for the linguistic details see Rix (1998); cf. also Oakley on Liv. 6.41.12.

I do not find parallels for faxo with perfect subjunctive: probably exciderint is a syntactical liberty (cretic excidant does not fit the hexameter). On Statius’ liberties with the subjunctive see Currie (1985: xxi).

omnis fabula Lemni / et pater et tumidae generis mendacia sacri: referring to Hypsipyle’s story about her vicissitudes on Lemnos, in particular her saving of Thoas (pater) and her divine lineage (generis ... sacri), which she has been obsessively retelling time and time again (see 499n. iterat) to Opheltes, to Eurydice and – apparently – to Lycurgus, before telling it to the Seven (5.49-499).

fabula: the word is often used pejoratively for ‘nonsense’ (see OLD s.v. 3). On a metapoetic level, fabula hints at the tragic background of Hypsipyle’s narrative (see OLD s.v. 6 ‘a play, drama’): we should not forget that it was the subject of various (lost) tragedies (see e.g.

**tumidae:** dative with *excederint*, cf. 541 *attonito* ... / *excidit*. The word applies to Hypsipyle, but in proximity to *fabula* it is laden with metapoetical significance, as *tumidus* is often used to describe the ‘swollen’ epic style (see *OLD* s.v. 6 and cf. *e.g.* Cat. 95.10 *tumido* ... *Antimachos*). On Hypsipyle as epic poet see further §2.5 and 626-7n.

**mendacia:** after *fabula*, the word *mendacia* makes abundantly clear that Lycurgus does not believe a word of Hypsipyle’s autobiographical narrative. Did he believe her story until now? It is not implausible, psychologically, that the death of Opheltes has deprived Hypsipyle of her credibility – apparently the woman cannot be trusted. Notably, it was precisely Hypsipyle’s *pietas* towards her father which, in the eyes of Eurydice, made her a trustworthy wet-nurse for their infant son (6.148-9 *credo sinus fidos altricis et ubera mando*; *quidni ego? narratat servatum fraude parentem / insontesque manus*; 152 *et creditis*); now that her son is dead, Eurydice no longer buys Hypsipyle’s stories. Brown 1994: 113 writes that ‘Hypsipyle’s *fabula Lemni* has always presented a threat to the family’, but it seems that her *fabula Lemni* was precisely why they thought she was *pia* and could be entrusted with their son (as Brown herself recognises in a different context (1994: 117).

**generis ... sacri:** LP explains: ‘propter Liburum, patrem Thoantis, cuius filiauisse dicitur Hypsipyle’. The meaning ‘damned’ or ‘detestable’, frequent in Plautus, is also heard (see *OLD* 2c; Fordyce on Cat. 14.12, Horsfall on *Aen.* 3.57 *auri sacra fames*). Amusingly, some scribes have ‘corrected’ *sacri* into *falsi*.

660. ibat letumque inferre parabat: for the expression *letum inferre* cf. [Sen.] *Her.O.* 534 mortemque lassis intulit membris sapor. Plin. *Nat.* 27.4.4 constat omnium uenenerorum ocissim esse aconitum et tactis quoque genitalibus femininis sexus animalium eodem die inferre mortem. It is common in later Latin, *e.g.* pseudo-Quint. *Decl. min.* 292.1 is *enim causa mortis argui debet qui mortem intuit* and the writings of Augustine.

661. ense ... raptō: one might expect a post-Vergilian poet to write *ense stricto* (cf. *e.g.* *Aen.* 12.175 *stricto* ... *ense*, 278 *gladios stringunt*, 288 *strictis ensibus*, etc.); in the present scene, which is full of swords, Statius playfully uses Vergil’s verb differently (666 *praestringsunt*). For *rapere* of a sword there are few parallels: *Sen.* *Con.* 1.2.18 *raptum gladium in pectus stupratoris meritis*, *Sil.* 10.428 *rapit oculus ensere*, *Tac.* *Hist.* 1.80.2 *rapta arma, nudati gladiī* (*Theb.* 9.560 *ensem galeamque rapit* is no parallel, as it describes the taking of spoils); suggesting sudden and violent motion, the verb is absolutely favourite with Statius. Other poetic variants are 665 *rectoque ... ense*, 7.549 *nudabunt enses*, 7.614-5 *aperto / ense*.


The form *Oenēus* is unique in Latin literature, the normal form being *Oenēs* (2.469 *Oeneae ... Dianae, *Ov.* *Met.* 8.281 *Oeneos ... per agros*, *Sil.* 15.308 *Calypodis ... Oeneasque domos*); its Greek counterpart, however, is once attested in Antimachus (fr. 7 *Wyss* Οἶνως Τῳδην). Cf. 12.545 *Capanēïa* and 12.681 *Thesēïa* (also in the fifth foot) versus *Capanēus* and *Thesēus* (see Pollmann *ad loc.); more such adjectival pairs, *e.g.* *Phoebēus* / *Phoebēus*, are listed by Bömer on *Ov.* *Met.* 15.296. More often Statius uses the patronymic *Oenides* (e.g. 3.392, 4.113, 9.38; *Oeniden* in 5.405 refers to Meleager), which goes back to Homer (*e.g.* *Il.* 5.813 Τzőνες ... *Οἰνιδαο*). Cf. also 5.640n. *Persei*.

For the combination of (patronymic) adjective + *heros*, always at the end of the hexameter, cf. 1.673 *Ismenius heros*, 2.142 *Acheloius heros*, 6.442 *Thessalus heros*, 7.492 *Cadmeius heros* (with Smolenaars), 12.588 *Neptunius heros*. Such periphrases are particularly frequent in the *Ilias latina* (*e.g.* 131 *Pelopius heros*, 690 *Thetideius heros*). Despite the Homeric ring,
however, they are not quite Homeric: when Homer has ἕρως in the sixth foot, the word either comes alone (often in the formulaic ἄντρος ὢ γ’ ἕρως, e.g. II. 5.308, 327 etc.) or in combination with a proper name (e.g. II. 2.844 Πήδρος ἕρως, 6.35, 11.819, etc.). Baebius and Statius rather look back to Ovid (e.g. Met. 2.676 Philyreus heros, 5.1 Danaeius heros, 13.625 Cythereius heros, etc.), who in turn took his inspiration from Vergil (Aen. 10.584 Troius heros, 12.723 Daunius heros). Cf. also epic combinations such as Aen. 12.456 Rhoetius hostis, Val. 7.287 Minoa uirgo.

662. *impiger obiectā proturbat pectora parmā*: the harsh alliteration of p’s and the hissing t’s underline the aggressive collision of the two heroes. The violence also appears from the verb proturbo (‘to drive or push out of the way’), which is typically used to describe charges on the battlefield (e.g. Aen. 9.440-1, Liv. 5.47.5, Caes. Gal. 7.81.2, Homer. 448). For obiecta ... parma cf. 2.602 clipeum objectans, 9.472 (Hippomedon) obiecta dispellit flumina parma; the combination occurs also in Livy (2.46.5, 4.38.4). The phrasing might be influenced by Ov. Met. 3.80 obstantes proturbat pectore siluas, a passage that was perhaps still lingering in Statius’ mind.

Parkes on 4.267 explains the difference between parma and clipeus. Tydeus’ parma also figures in his aristeiai in books 2 and 8 (2.584 hostili propugnans pectora parma, 644, 8.524, 731). His troops carry wicker shields with metal (4.110 aeratae ... crates).

Some MSS read perturbat (Gac? F M2 M3 M4 S4 t), and Barth suggested protentat. Lewis (1773 ad loc.) curiously notes that “[t]he Commentators have puzzled themselves to find out a Supplement to the Line *impiger obiecta ---- pectora parma*, but modern editions do not report a lacuna.

663. *ac simul*: Axelsson (1945: 82-3) observes that elegiac, lyric and bucolic poets avoid ac, apart from fossilised combinations (ac ueluti etc.) or to avoid kakophonia (e.g. Ecl. 4.9 desinet ac to avoid –et et). In the high genres ac occurs more often, although et, atque and –que are more frequent (Aen. 156 times, Val. Arg. 94 times, Theb. 87 times).

infrendens: LP nicely comments: ‘infrendere est dentes dentibus quaterere, ut Vergilius dentibus infrendere’, referring to Aen. 3.664 (Polyphemus), 8.230 (Hercules) or 10.718 (wild boar). As Harrison on Aen. 10.718 notes, the normal expression is dentibus frendere, but Vergil poetically has dentibus infrendere. Statius, in turn, keeps infrendens and omits dentibus (as he does in 2.477); he expects his readers to be able to supplement the Vergilian expression (cf. note on 5.645-6 needum etiam ... exciderant). Grinding one’s teeth is, of course, symptomatic of anger. It features often in descriptions of angered persons, in both Greek and Latin, cf. e.g. Ar. Ra. 927, Callim. Hec. fr. 133 Hollis ἐπιρύσσων ὀδόντως.

663-4. *siste hunc, uesane, furorem*: duly listed in the OLD s.v. sisto 8 ‘to prevent from continuing, put an end to, stop, (an activity or process)’, but the meaning ‘to cease moving, stand still, halt’ (OLD s.v. 6c) is also felt. Lycurgus is frenzied indeed (654-5 insana ... ira, 661 furens), but Tydeus’ words are rude even by Dutch standards.

664. *quisquis es*: Tydeus may not know Lycurgus, but the words are offensive nonetheless. The words occur two more times in the Thebaid: in 1.462 Tydeus addresses them to Polynices, in 2.697 to Maeon. The colloquial expression, frequent in comedy (e.g. Pl. Men. 278, Mil. 454), was introduced into the epic genre by Vergil: Priam famously speaks Aen. 2.148-9 quisquis es ... noster eris to Sinon (alluding to the formula by which Roman generals admitted deserters into their midst, see Servius and Austin ad loc.); cf. also Aen. 1.387, 4.577, 6.388.

664-5. *acerque reducto / affuit Hippomedon rectoque Erymanthus ense*: Gaymann (1898: 27-8) has suggested that Statius had in mind the famous statue group of Harmodios and Aristogeiton (now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples): ‘Diese eigentartige Stellung der beiden Helden stimmt unverkennbar überein mit jener der Tyrannenmörder des Kritios und Nesiotes. Die erhaltenen Kopien dieser Gruppe beweisen uns dass letztere in Rom bekannt war; Statius erwähnt nun freilich die beiden Künstler nirgends; aber wenn er auch die
Künstler nicht kannte, so ist es doch möglich, dass er dieses Werk sah und in Erinnerung daran die genannten Verse dichtete.’ Legras (1905: 269-70, 274\textsuperscript{590}) seems inclined to accept Gaymann’s suggestion: ‘Ainsi peut-être connaissait-il le groupe des tyrannicides, comme le conjecture Gaymann: en tout cas il reproduit bien les gestes, mais il les attribue à Hippomedon et à Parthenopée s’élançant contre le dragon qui a tué Ophèlètes.’ (my italics mark Legras’ uncharacteristic mistake as to the context). Gaymann’s suggestion is discussed at some length by Duncan (1914: 45-7), who sensibly concludes: ‘Statius may or may not have had this particular group in mind, but certainly the effect of a sculpture group is given’. Surprisingly, the aforementioned scholars fail to observe that, in addition to their poses, Harmodios and Aristogeiton also correspond with Hippomedon and Parthenopaeus in age: the elder one, holding back his sword, is bearded, while the younger one, prepared to strike, is not. On the other hand, if Statius wanted us to remember the two statues, why did he add a third figure (Cappaneus)? For a similar case cf. Ov. Met. 8.31 with Hollis’ note. On Statius and the visual arts (an important theme in his Silvae) see further Duncan 1914, Vessey 1973: 10-1, Newlands 2012: 5-6 with n. 34, 69 and (on ecphrasis) 73-86 with references.

\textbf{reducto ... rectoque ... ense:} Hippomedon and Parthenopaeus have both drawn their swords, but the latter eagerly holds it forth, whereas Hippomedon holds it back (SB ‘sword drawn back the one, levelled the other’). For reducto cf. 12.724 armisque reductis (on which Pollmann is silent) and Gell. 5.9.3 gladium reductit.

\textbf{rectoque:} MSS are divided between rectoque and rectorque. The confusion goes back to antiquity, as appears from LP: ‘quidam rectorque Erymanthius legunt, sed male [...] recto ense: protenso gladio’. Most editors follow LP, but Hall prints rectorque. Admittedly, the phrase recto ense is without parallel, and the epithet Erymanthius seems to require a noun. I follow the majority of editors in printing rectoque, not least because Statius never applies rector to the Seven, with the exception of their chief commander Adrastus (5.29, 6.316, 8.138, 147); it is also used of Eteocles (2.482, 7.374, 11.242), Dis (4.457, 8.122, 194, 11.421), Creon (11.748) and Phaethon (1.219), all characters invested with imperium.

\textbf{Erymanthius:} i.e. Parthenopaeas. The Erymanthus is a mountain range in Arcadia, homeland of Parthenopaeus and haunt of the famous boar slain by Hercules (cf. 4.298 monstribum Erymanthon; for the story see Ov. Met. 8.260ff.). The learned antonomasia comes after two earlier references to the Erymanthus in the catalogue of the previous book (4.298, 329); at the end of the Thebaid the adjective is applied to Parthenopaeus’ mother Atalanta (12.805 genetrix Erymanthia). Other forms of the adjective are Erymanthēs (Val. 1.374) and feminine Erymanthis, -idos (e.g. 9.594, Ov. Met. 2.499) and, unique to Statius, Erymanthias, -ados in 4.329-30 Erymanthiadum ... nympharum. Usually applied to the savage boar (e.g. Soph. Trach. 1097, Cic. Ver. 4.95, Tusc. 2.9.22, Hyg. 30.4, Diod. Sic. 12.4.1), the adjective accords well with Parthenopaeus’ aggressive behaviour (recto ... ense).

\textbf{666. ac iuuenem multo praestringunt lumine:} the Argive heroes dazzle Lycurgus (iuuenem) with their flashing swords (multo lumine). The verb praestringere can mean ‘to blunt’ the edge (acies) of a weapon; since acies can also be said of eyes, the verb sometimes means ‘to dazzle’, i.e. ‘to blunt the acies of the eyes’ (see OLD 3 and cf. e.g. Pl. Mil. 4 praestringat oculos aciem, Lucil. 1094 praestringat oculorum aciem splendore micanti); in later Latin the metaphor becomes trite and the word acies is no longer required (cf. e.g. Sen. Ep. 48.11 ut non magis auri fulgor quam gladii praestringat oculos meos). Statius’ use of the verb is a fine example of his mannered style: the swords are not blunted, they are blunting; and lumine does not (as one might expect) refer to the eyes being blunted, but to the light that blunts them! As the Argive heroes are aggressively stopping the Nemean king, the more

\textsuperscript{590}With the amusing remark that ‘l’absence de couleur’ in Statius’ description also points in the direction of marble statues. In 1905 classicists did not yet know that ancient sculpture was, in fact, brightly coloured.
literal meanings ‘to constrict’ (cf. OLD 1) and ‘to scrape (OLD 2) also linger in the background.

Occurrences of the verb in Latin poetry can almost be counted on one hand: 6.459, Ov. Met. 10.495, Sen. Ag. 533, and in the sense ‘to dazzle’ Luc. 1.154 terruit obliqua prae-stringens lumina flamma (which LP adduces as a parallel, as does Michler 1914: 29), Laus Pis. 101 insigni praestringit imagine uisus, Sil. 1.358-9 qualis sanguineo praestringit lumina crine / ad terram caelo decurrens ignea lampas (meteor).

at inde: for the unusual line ending at inde cf. 3.340 with Snijder, Ov. Met. 2.359, 5.448, Luc. 8.444. The abrupt pause makes the following words hang in suspense for a moment, and thus sharply contrasts the two parties.

667. agrestum pro rege manus: throughout the Nemean episode (and before), the population of Nemea are characterised as peasants, shepherds and farmers, e.g. 512 agricola, 2.378 pastoribus, 4.715 pastorum, 6.353 agricoli; this is also implicit in e.g. 525 arua, 4.702-4 culmi ... seges ... pecus ... armenta. In Euripides’ Hysipyle Nemea is inhabited by πομάδες (fr. 754a.5; see 505-33n.). The emphasis on the rurality of Nemea assimilates the situation to the outbreak of war between Trojans and Latins in Aen. 7.505-39: like the Trojans in the Aeneid, the Seven have arrived in a tranquil pastoral and georgic world, and like the arrival of the Trojans in Latium, the incursion of the Seven brutally disrupts that world of peace and quiet (see §5). The perversion of pastoral figures in the proem already, where Cadmus sowing the teeth of Mars’ serpent is called ‘farmer’ (1.8 agricolam infandis condentem proelia sulcis).

For substantival agrestis (‘countryman, peasant’) see OLD s.v. agrestis2; cf. e.g. 4.99, Geo. 1.10, Ov. Met. 14.635. The combination agrestum ... manus may be inspired by Valerius (1.684 and 2.461 agrestum manus), although there are similar Vergilian precedents in Aen. 7.681 (Caeculus in the catalogue) hunc legio late comitatur agrestis, 10.310 turmas ... agrestis.

667-8. quos inter Adrastus / mitius: Adrastus and Amphaiarus prevent bloodshed. Without their intervention, Legras (1905: 214) suggests, Tydeus would have killed Lycurgus. The intervention of Adrastus was part and parcel of the epic tradition of the Seven against Thebes; unfortunately we cannot assess if and how Statius reworks Antimachus or the Cyclic Thebaid in this particular scene (see §2.6.4).

We are reminded of 1.428-81, where king Adrastus puts an end to the fight between Tydeus and Polynices. In 699-709 below the Argive king will again intervene, between Argives and Nemeans. His last intervention, between Etocles and Polynices in book 11, will not be successful.

Throughout the poem Adrastus is characterised as a good-hearted, peace-loving and mitigatory king, although he lacks determination and is swayed by others to march against Thebes, against his better judgement (e.g. 4.440 uix sponte). On Adrastus see Ten Kate (1955: 26-37), Venini on 11.110, Lovatt (2005: chapter 6, esp. 291-5). He is repeatedly characterised with the epithet mitis (1.448 ‘rex o mitissime Achiuum’, 467 mitis Adrastus, 7.537 and 11.110). This quality of character also plays a central role in book 12, in the context of clementia and humanitas, which – in my reading of the poem – are suggested as the best response to the nightmarish realities of civil war. It is illustrative that mitis (and humanus) also figures prominently in Priamus’ appeal to Achilles in the Ilias latina (1028-42), and Nestor’s intervention earlier in the same poem (144-5 tandem sollertis prudentia Nestoris aeuo / compres-sam miti sedauit pectore turbam).

mitius: some secondary MSS read mitior, which according to Hall (1992: 292) ‘would be appreciably better than mitius’. Although poets generally prefer adjectives over adverbs (see 658n. citi), there is no compelling reason to change mitius.

sociae ueritus commercia uittae: ‘respecting the possession of the fillet which they had in common’. Amphaiarus, who is also a priest, does not want his fellow Argives to treat his
Nemean colleague in such a disrespectful manner (for Lycurgus’ *uitta* cf. 6.30-1 *sedet ipse exatus honoro / uittarum nexu genitor*). For *ueritus*, which has often been misunderstood (see below), see *OLD* 1 ‘to show reverence or respect for’). For *commercia* in the sense ‘the possession or use of a thing in common’ see *OLD* 6; cf. Sil. 2.506 *nemo insons, pacem servant commercia culpae*; for more parallels see *TLL* s.v. 1877.70-1878.6. Originally a financial term (< *merx*), the word is no stranger in Latin epic (see Harrison on *Aen.* 10.532); it is especially frequent in Lucan (8 times, e.g. 6.493, 701, 8.312); in Statius also 2.512 *commercia linguae*, 7.544 *commercia natum*, S. 1.3.3 *sociae commercia ripae* (also with *socius*).

Hall (1992: 292) conjectures *conuicia* (‘reluctant to quarrel with a fellow-priest’): ‘for *commercia*, which is senseless in this context, we could do much worse than write *conuicia*. It is pertinent that Mozley translates, ‘“fearing the strife of kindred fillets”’; pertinent also that Markland had jibed, not at *commercia*, but at *ueritus*, for which he proposed *meritus*, perceiving indeed that there was a target here for the emender, but missing it by one word’. Mozley, Markland and Hall all fail to understand that *uereri* is used in the sense ‘to respect’.

**Occupant** MSS are divided between *uittae* and *uitae*. The confusion goes back to antiquity itself, for both readings were known to LP, who does not make a choice (*uittae* ‘quia omnes Argui erant, siue quia *commercia uitae* communes sunt irruentes casus excipere’ or *uittae* ‘quia sacerdos erat Apollinis’). The reading *uittae* is surely correct, if only because corruption of *uitae* into *uittae* is hard to imagine.

### 669. Amphiaraus † ait ne quaeso † absistite ferro: most editors (including Hill, Lesueur, SB) read *Amphiaraus ait* ‘ne, quaeso! absistite ferro’. Although there are parallels for *quaeso* in Latin epic (e.g. 3.389, 6.171, 12.305, *Aen.* 8.573, 12.72-3, Val. 7.478, 8.280), the elliptical ‘ne, quaeso!’ is extremely awkward and without parallel.

In an attempt to produce one fluent sentence, Hall conjectures *adsistite*: ‘Do not, I pray, make your stand with the sword’ (on *ne* with imperative, a feature of Old Latin which in classical Latin was rejected by prose authors but frequently used in poetry, see e.g. Eden on Verg. *Aen.* 8.39). However, *ne ... adsistite* is extremely unlikely in the light of *Aen.* 11.307 (Latinus speaking) *nec uicii possunt absistere ferro* (Deipser 1881: 27 notes the parallel); cf. also *Aen.* 6.259 *totoque absistite luco*, Val. 3.451 *absistite bellis*.

In my opinion, the text is corrupt. In addition to the awkward *ne, quaeso!’, the word *ait* cannot stand: the speech formula *ait*, like *inquit*, is always inserted after the commencement of the speech; it is always preceded by at least one word in *oratio recta* (for Statius’ speeches with *ait* see Dominik 1994a: 342-6). An alternative to *ait* does not easily present itself. There seems to be no other *uerbum dicendi* that fits the hexameter. Sometimes Statius omits the *uerbum dicendi* (see Dominik 1994a: 19; cf. e.g. 4.832): could that be the case here? In some MSS we find *agit*, which does not make sense. Perhaps *adit* (cf. 10.205)? That seems unlikely after the preposition *inter* (667). *ne* seems to be warranted by *neue* in the following line (and by the Vergilian intertext; see following note). Perhaps a line has fallen out?

### 670. unus auum sanguis: ‘the blood of our ancestors is one’ (for *aues* ‘ancestor’ see Fortgens on 6.67). Nemea not only belongs to Argive territory, Lycurgus and the Seven have the same blood running through their veins. LP names Perseus as their common ancestor (‘a Perseo enim, Danaee filio, omnes Graeci originem ducunt’); on the difficulties surrounding this genealogy see 5.640n. According to Pausanias 3.18.12 Lycurgus’ father Pronax is a brother of Adrastus (cf. §1.1). Cf. also 4.755-6 *propinquus / gentibus* (which Götting 1969: 35 n. 54 curiously misunderstands as references to the ‘göttlicher Abstammung’ of both the Seven and Hypsipyle).

Amphiaraus’ words are an implicit warning: armed conflict between Argives and Nemean would be an instance of nefarious civil war; cf. Lycurgus’ words in 5.683-4 *pergite in exci*
diurn, socii si tant uoluptas / sanguinis, imbuite arma domi. For the reasoning cf. Hector’s words to Ajax in Homer. 627 ‘absistamus’ ait ‘sanguis communis utrique’.

Ironically, Amphiarus’ words are equally applicable to the Argives’ expedition against Thebes, not only because Eteocles and Polynices have unus sanguis (cf. 4.397-8 similes uideo concurrere tauros; / idem ambobus honos unusque ab origine sanguis), but also because Argos and Thebes have unus sanguis, namely Jupiter’s (cf. 1.224-6, reworking Aen. 8.142 sic genus amborum scindit se sanguine ab uno).

As Deipser (1881: 30; cf. Parkes on 4.836) has observed, the lines are modelled on Aen. 6.832-5, from the ‘Heldenschau’, where Anchises calls upon Caesar and Pompey to cease their civil war – Caesar first of all (Aen. 6.832-5):

ne, pueri, ne tanta animis adsuescite bella
neu patriae ualidas in uiscera uertite uiris;
tuque prior, tu parce, genus qui ducis Olympo,
proice tela manu, sanguis meus!

In addition to the verbal echoes (underlined), the passages correspond in that both Amphiarus and Anchises have knowledge of the future. As Parkes (on 4.836) rightly notes, the allusion underscores that the near violence between Argives and Nemeans is like the civil war between Caesar and Pompey.

**neue indulgete furori:** LP explains indulgete as ‘permitte seu operandate’, comparing Aen. 6.135 iuaat indulgere labori. Here it rather means ‘(with dat.) to allow free play (to one’s own or another’s) feelings, desires, etc.’ (OLD s.v. 3); in that sense it is often found with various emotions, cf. e.g. Ov. Met. 9.595-6 amori, Liv. 3.53.7 iare.

671. **tuque prior:** directed at Tydeus, who was the first to confront Lycurgus (661-4). The words are taken directly from the Vergilian model, where Anchises addresses Caesar (see 670n.).

**sed non sedato pectore Tydeus:** LP explains sedato pectore as ‘patienti’, adding the Stoic comment: ‘magna enim uirtus est quae irasci non nouit’. The phrase is borrowed from Aen. 9.740 olli subridens sedato pectore Turnus (cf. 12.18 olli sedato respondit corde Latinus).

672. **subicit:** see OLD s.v. 6 ‘to interpose, put in (a remark)’, usually introducing direct speech. Cf. Aen. 3.313-4 uix pauca furenti / subicio (Aeneas addressing Andromache), Val. 2.659, Ach. 1.154. The speech formula is omitted from Dominik’s list of Statian speech formulae (1994a: 342-6).

672-9. Tydeus flings Amphiarus’ words to the winds and continues his furious speech addressed to Lycurgus, picking up on lines 663-4. He points out that Hypsipyle has saved the Argive troops (672-3), and that she is the granddaughter of Bacchus himself (675-6). These are quite reasonable arguments in themselves. Yet Tydeus’ presentation is far from diplomatic, and seems intended to provoke further hostilities. Even if Tydeus should be right that the death of a child is nothing in comparison with the thousands of lives that Hypsipyle has saved, the sneering sarcasm of the phrase quanti pro funeris ultor shows little goodwill. Moreover, Tydeus’ words contain the implicit warning that, should Lycurgus proceed to kill Hypsipyle, he will soon find himself in trouble as well (673 ingratis coram tot milibus). He also accuses Lycurgus of lacking the courage to participate in the expedition (676-8), and his last words are clearly aimed below the belt (cf. Scaffai 2002: 248 ‘[Tideo] non rinuncia ad umiliare Licurgo’). Tydeus’ speech thus confirms Statius’ qualification of Tydeus as rudis fandi pronusque calori (2.391). On the revelation of Tydeus’ ‘hostile and aggressive personality’ in his speeches see Dominik (1994a: 223-5), who interprets the present speech as ‘evidence of his loyalty to his friends and allies’. His bitter speeches in 2.393-467 and 7.539-59 are particularly revealing.
672-3. ducem seruatricemque cohortis / Inachiae: the two substantives should be taken closely together, almost as hendiadys: by leading them to Langia (ducem) Hypsipyle saved the Argives (seruatricem). Cf. 4.785-6 ne tarda Pelasgis / dux foret.

seruatricemque: cf. 12.606. Lehanneur (1878: 72) claims that ‘[n]ulla quidem Statio (quamvis eruditissimus esset) priscorum verborum affectatio fuit’, quoting seruatrix as a rare example of archaic vocabulary in Statius (cf. Ter. Hec. 856, Cic. Fin. 5.26, CIL 2.145 Proserpinae seruatriici and 7.296 Fortunae seruatriici). Such archaisms in –trix (and –tor), however, became a productive feature of elevated epic diction, used both substantivally and adjectivally (e.g. Aen. 1.319 uenatrix, 493 bellatrix, Luc. 4.655 miratrix, Val. 7.190 speculatrix); Statian examples include turbatrix (4.369), simulatrix (4.551), hortatrix (5.103, 9.717), cultrix (10.174 where see Williams’ note) and the neologism praedatrix (S. 1.5.22).


Inachiae: see 511n.

673 ingratis coram tot milibus: ‘in the presence of so many thankless thousands’. ingratis has raised eyebrows: why would the Argives be ‘thankless’? LP comments: ‘si Hypsipylam occidis, ingrata (i.e. irata) erit cohors’. What he seems to suggest is that the adjective should be understood proleptically: the Argives would be ingrateful if they let Lycurgus kill their saviour. This is also the interpretation of SB ad loc.: ‘They would be thankless if they let it happen’. Cf. also Thetis’ sarcastic Ach. 1.70 gratae ... alumnae (i.e. Venus). Hence there is no need for Lachmann’s gratis (Hall).

Tydeus’ reference to the number of soldiers, tot milibus, is an implicit threat: if Lycurgus attempts to kill Hypsipyle, Tydeus suggests, the Argive soldiers will protect her. Secondly, tot milibus contrasts with quanti pro funeris: it would be disproportional, Tydeus suggests, to avenge the death of one little child while, at the same time, Hypsipyle has rescued thousands of soldiers from death.

audes: G P d and S5 read ausus (Lesueur), which is syntactically impossible (Lesueur translates ‘tu oserais’, which renders Kohlmanns’ ausis, not ausus). To reconcile ausus and the majority reading audes Kohlmann suggested ausis (Hill ‘fortasse recte’; on ausis see Fordyce on Cat. 66.18). Apart from the fact that ausis is an extremely rare verb form, the straightforward audes better suits the tone of Tydeus’ speech.

mactare in tumulos: Tydeus suggests that Lycurgus wants to sacrifice Hypsipyle on his son’s tomb. Hence one might think of the human sacrifices for Pallas in Aen. 10.517-20 and 11.81-2, for Patroclus in Il. 23.175-7, or the sacrifice of Polyxena on Achilles’ tomb in Euripides’ Hecuba. The reasoning, however, has more in common with Aeneas’ famous words in Aen. 12.948-9 Pallas te hoc ulnere, Pallas / immolat: Aeneas views his killing of Turnus, who is responsible for the death of Pallas, in sacrificial terms; similarly Lycurgus, Tydeus suggests, may want to ‘sacrifice’ Hypsipyle, who is responsible for the death of Opheltes. Tydeus also seems to sneer at Lycurgus being a priest, as priests make sacrifices.

tumulos: cf. 679 tumulis; poetic plural. Opheltes’ tumulus is given an ecphrasis in 6.242-8 (esp. 246 tumuli); cf. also 6.925 tumulis. The word thematically links Opheltes’ tomb with the (missing) funeral pyres of the victims of the Theban War; cf. e.g. 1.36-7 tumulisque carentia regum / funera.

quanti pro funeris ultor: ‘in vengeance for what a mighty death!’ (SB), spoken with derision and scorn. In Tydeus’ opinion, killing the saviour of a whole army is too high a price for the death of a mere infant (cf. Brown 1994: 90). The deeper irony is that, in fact, Tydeus speaks the truth: Opheltes’ death is an event of the greatest importance for the expedition against Thebes.

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pro: for the interjection pro with nominative see OLD s.v. prō² 2b; it also occurs with vocative, accusative, statement or question. Statius has pro with nom. in 1.77, 2.92, 3.308, 370, 5.324, 674, 9.14, 180, 10.270, 874, 11.655 and 12.382. As Dewar on 9.14 notes, ‘such powerful interjections are rare in Virgil (only at Aen. 4.590 pro luppiter) but much commoner in the mannered and emotional Thebaid’. We may add that that the Thebaid builds on Lucan, where the interjection pro is also very frequent (e.g. 4.321-2 pro dira pudoris / funera, 5.57 = 6.305 = 7.411 pro tristia fata, 10.47 = 10.77 pro pudor).

cui regnum genitorque Thoas et lucidus Euhan / stirpis auus: as an additional argument, Tydeus reminds Lycurgus of Hypsipyle’s royal status as former queen of Lemnos, and of her descent from Bacchus (Euhan) — that Bacchus is in fact allied with their Theban enemies does not trouble him. Hypsipyle mentions her kingdom in her first speech (4.780 regnum), in which she also mentions caelestis origo (4.776). The details follow in her Lemnian narrative; in 5.265-6 she reveals that Bacchus (Thyoneus) is her grandfather. Thus Adrastus’ suspicion (4.753: te uultusque pudorque / mortali de stirpe negant) appears to be correct. In choosing genitor instead of the more prosaic pater, Tydeus underscores the loftiness of Hypsipyle’s birth. The reference to Bacchus also serves to prepare the ground for the reunion of Hypsipyle with her sons (5.710-30), which is also part of Bacchus’ scheme (cf. 5.712 tu gentis conditor Euhan, 4.746 sic Euhius ipse pararat).

lucidus: the epithet is remarkable, since it is more naturally applied to Apollo or Jupiter than to Bacchus. Garrod suggests Lydius, comparing S. 3.3.61; but Lydius adds little, whereas lucidas highlights the greatness of Bacchus, of which Tydeus wants to remind the king. There is a parallel in Sen. Oed. 405-7 lucidum caeli decus ... Bacche (where see Töchterle’s note). Most importantly, Tydeus has in mind Hypsipyle’s description of Bacchus’ apparition earlier in book 5, where Bacchus multa subitus cum luce refusit (5.267), and lights up Hypsipyle’s and Thoas’ path (5.286 iter longae clarauit limite flammae).

Euhan: Greek εὐών, a ritual cry of the bacchantes and a cult-title of Dionysus (cf. Euhius and εὐών; see Mulder on 2.72 tener Euhie, Parkes on 4.746 Euhius). In Latin its first attestation is Enn. scen. 125 (not Lucr. 5.743, as Newlands on S. 2.7.7 claims). Rare in Latin literature (e.g. Ov. Met. 4.15), it is favourite with Statius (e.g. 2.616, S. 1.2.17, 4.3.155), always in the sixth foot of the hexameter.

676-7. timidone parum: ‘isn’t it enough for you coward, that ...’; timido is congruent with implied tibi. Some minor MSS read tumido, perhaps under the influence of 659 tumidae, but Tydeus clearly accuses Lycurgus of cowardice, not arrogance, as the remainder of his speech shows. The accusation is false, since the narrator has explicitly informed us that Lycurgus is haud animi uacuus (644).

gentibus actis / undique in arma tuis: all chieftains in the Argive sphere of influence are under arms; Lycurgus alone refuses to take part in the expedition against Thebes (cf. 643-9 above). gentibus ... tuis does not mean ‘your tribes’ in the sense that Lycurgus possesses them, but ‘the tribes to which you belong’, as the Nemeans are one of the Argive gentes, although some Nemeans have indeed joined the expedition (4.159-64). Tydeus’ addition undique is not without truth (Parthenopaeus, for instance, comes from Arcadia, Tydeus himself from Calydon); more importantly it is a rhetorical exaggeration in order to stress that only Lycurgus and his Nemeans do not take part in the expedition.

The expression in arma agere is first attested in Liv. 6.15.7 (where see Kraus); cf. Luc. 2.254 egit in arma. Similar variations are 7.173-4 in arma / ducat, Aen. 6.814 mouebit ... in arma; for more see TLL s.v. arma 595.79-596.28.

677-8 inter rapidia agmina pacem / solus habes?: Tydeus’ words contrast not only war (agmina) versus peace (pacem), but also turmoil (rapida) versus calm (pacem), the Argives’ collective enterprise (agmina evoking great numbers) versus Lycurgus’ individual refusal to join the expedition (solus, emphatically enjambed). For rapida agmina cf. S. 1.2.221
(Bacchus’ followers), Luc. 2.490, Sil. 14.638, 15.208-9, Tac. Hist. 2.30.1; cf. also 7.145-6 rapidum glomerare cohortes ... iter. The common expression pacem habere is often used in opposition to warfare, e.g. Sal. Cat. 31.2 neque bellum gerere neque pacem habere, Liv. 6.18.7.

678. habes? habesque: on the repetition of verbs with modified tense or mood see Wills (1996: 290-310); a Statian example is 2.429 teneo longumque tenebo (cf. 8.509). The present case is not unlike the pattern ‘question-imperative’: ‘a rare syntax ... used by the ritual tradition’ (ibid. 306-7; cf. Servius on Aen. 10.228-9 uigilasne, deum gens, /Aenea? uigila etc.). Is Tydeus parodying religious language?

—que et: see 635n.

678-9. te uictoria Graium / inueniat: Tydeus does not seem to doubt that the expedition will be successful and that the Argives will return home. His confidence is not without tragic irony. We are reminded of Tydeus’ promise to erect a temple for Athena upon his return home in Calydon (2.725-43; cf. also Adrastus’ promise in 4.768-71). Tydeus, of course, will see neither Nemea nor Calydon ever again, as he will meet his death in book 8.

uictoria Graium is an ingenious allusion to Aen. 11.289 uictoria Graium, where the words are on the lips of ‘Tydeus’ son Diomedes, speaking about the sufferings of the Greeks during the Trojan War and during their νῦστος earlier in his speech Diomedes has mentioned that he did not see his wife or Calydon ever again (Aen. 11.269-70). Like his son, Tydeus will never see Deipyle or Calydon ever again – he will not even survive the war. The father could learn a lesson from his son – or did Diomedes fail to learn the lesson from his father?

Graium: see 536n.

tumulis etiamnum haec fata gementem: unlike Tydeus, Statius and his audience know that Opheltes’ death will lead to the foundation of the Nemean Games, which reenact the child’s funeral games. In a sense, then, Opheltes is still (etiamnum) bewailed in Statius’ days. The expression fata gementem may be inspired by Catullus (65.14 fata gemens) or Ovid (Fast. 3.862, Tr. 3.4a.37); cf. also Homer. 688, Sil. 10.406.

680-90. Despite Tydeus’ taunts, Lycurgus wisely keeps himself in check; when his initial anger has subsided, he addresses the Seven with bitter sarcasm. We may paraphrase his speech as follows: ‘Did you think that you had arrived at Thebes already or what? If you like shedding allied blood, be my guest! You could as well set fire to Jupiter’s temple, if you really think it is outrageous for a king to punish a slave-woman who has killed his son. But know this: Jupiter is watching, and sooner or later you will pay!’

680. dixerat: a speech closing formula frequent in Vergil (e.g. Aen. 2.152, 621, 705, 4.238, 331) and later Latin epic; Statius uses it 13 times (Dominik 1994a: 342-6). Although we should not read too much into the pluperfect, which in poetry is frequently used as a conventional and metrically convenient equivalent of dixit (e.g. Homer. 44 dixerat rendering Il. 1.43 ὄφος ἑφαρ’), the tense may suggest a silence after the speech, since the pluperfect implies that not only the speaking, but also the ‘having spoken’ belongs to the past (note that tandem also suggests a silence); moreover, as a backgrounding tense, it looks forward to what follows. See Adema (2008: 120-1). Other Statian examples where these ideas are applicable include 2.173 audierant, 410 dixerat, 8.80 dixerat atque illi iamdudum.

et tandem cunctante modestior ira / ille refert: Ritchie-Hall translate ‘now that his rage had at last come under control’, taking tandem with cunctante ira and mistranslating cunctante. It seems more natural to take tandem (before the caesura) with modestior ... refert (‘and finally ... he replies with more moderation’). cunctante ... ira means that Lycurgus’ anger (i.e. Lycurgus in his anger) hesitates how to respond to Tydeus’ offensive speech.

681. refert: refero in the sense ‘to reply’ is confined to poetry (see OLD s.v. 12d and cf. 1.250, 7.195, Aen. 1.94 talia uoce refert, 4.31 Anna refert, Ov. Fast. 6.354, Met. 2.35, 11.352.
681-2. equidem non uos ad moenia Thebes / rebar et hostiles huc aduenisse caterua:
the correct reading and interpretation are disputed. Hill maintains the majority reading (which is given here) and offers the following interpretation: ‘sensus est: credebam non uos adesse Thebas adgressuros, sed alias et hostiles caterua Nemeen adgressas’, as suggested by Klotz (on 681 ‘ex aduenisse supplenda est eundi notio’). Against this interpretation one could raise two objections. First, the unlikely adversative et (‘I thought that not you, but hostile troops had arrived’). Second, the uncomfortable separation of ad moenia Thebes and aduenisse, which leaves ad moenia Thebes hanging in the air (‘I thought that not you, [who are marching] against the walls of Thebes, but hostile troops had come hither’). This reading is also favoured by Traglia-Aricò (1980: 86). In order to remove the first problem, Barth conjectured at, which does not solve the second problem, however.

Håkanson (1972: 35-6), followed by SB, argues for Thebas (R Cac; cf. Sandström’s Theben). In combination with a different interpunction (comma after moenia) that gives the following: ‘For my part I did not think it was you outside the walls, but that Thebes and her hostile troops had come hither’. The conjecture is ingenious and solves both problems mentioned above. Yet the interpunction between moenia and Thebas is most unlikely. Håkanson’s interpunction leaves moenia (which then would refer to the walls of Nemea) without specification. It is uncomfortable to take Thebas in the sixth foot with the following line: although syntactically possible the diaeresis goes against all prosodic intuition. The last and most serious objection is that one cannot break down ‘the walls of Thebes’, famously built by Amphion’s music (see Williams on 10.873-5; Reitz 2013: 173-98): the moenia Thebes are proverbial (e.g. ll. 4.378 ἵππα τὰς πεδία Θήρης; Man. 3.16 moenia Thebarum) and have a perfect parallel in 9.294 ad moenia Thebes. Hence the separation of fifth and sixth foot does not convince (Kißel 2006: 216 calls Håkanson’s conjecture ‘verfehlt”).

Taking a different approach, Bährrens proposed to read nunc uos instead of non uos. His suggestion is taken over, slightly modified, by Hall, who prints uos nunc and translates: ‘I believed that you were now at the walls of Thebes and that it was an enemy host which had come here’ (Ritchie-Hall).

I believe that we should understand the sentence as follows: ‘For my part, I did not think that here you had arrived at the walls of Thebes and its hostile troops’. With bitter sarcasm Lycurgus suggests that the Argives erroneously thought they had arrived at Thebes with its hostile troops, whereas in fact they had arrived at Nemea with its friendly Nemeans. ‘Perhaps you thought you’d come to Thebes and its enemies’, we might paraphrase, ‘but I didn’t think so.’ On this reading, both moenia Thebes and hostiles ... caterua are governed by ad.

equidem non ... rebar: for the phrasing cf. 1.285 equidem haud rebar, 2.156-7 non equidem ... rear, Sen. Her.F. 348 non equidem reor. ‘Von den zahlreichen Ausdrücken, die die Prosa für “glauben” und “meinen” besitzt, haben die Dichter die meisten ausgeschieden, um sich hauptsächlich mit credo, puto und reor zu begnügen, wobei das letztgenannte, archaisch gefarbte Wort aber vorzugsweise dem episch-tragischen Stil angehört’ (Axelson 1945: 64).

Thebes: Greek genitive, cf. 4.610 and 9.255. Singular Thebe is common in poetry, both Greek and Latin; see Dewar on 9.255 and cf. 1.680 (with Heuvel’s note), 4.676, 5.745, 6.515 and 10.594. Cf. also 581 Nemees, 4.56 Mycenes.

hostiles ... caterua: see OLD s.v. caterua 2 ‘A band, squadron of armed men (usu. dist. fr. the regular Roman formations)’; it occurs 15 times in the Aeneid, always in final position, and is also frequent in Lucan, Silius and Statius. As the OLD notes, the word evokes disarrayed crowds rather than disciplined ranks. The combination with hostilis might be inspired by Lucan (2.308 and 7.337), as Michler (1914: 27; cf. Van Campen on Luc. 2.308) suggests.

683-4. pergite in excidium, socii si tanta uluptas / sanguinis: my interpunction follows SB and Hall; others (e.g. Klotz, Hill, Lesueur; Parkes on 4.836, Scaffai 2002: 248) punctuate pergite in excidium socii, si tanta uluptas, / sanguinis. It seems most congenial to Statius to
place the comma after *excidium*, which produces enjambment and an oxymoronic combination of *uluptas* and *socii sanguinis*; cf. the conditional clauses in 10.431-2 *regem si tanta cupidō / condere* and 11.433 *sceptri si tanta cupidō est*, where we find similar features: postponed *si*, enjambment, and a generative or epexegetic infinitive that specifies *cupido* (for which cf. also 7.22 *ferrique insana uluptas, 10.266-7 uluptas / caedis*).

Consciously or subconsciously, Lycurgus’ words are heavily ironic, for the expedition of the Seven is of course the result of Polynices’ lust for *socius sanguis* (cf. 1.130 *sociis ... regnis*). The conflict between Lycurgus and the Seven is clad in the same vocabulary as the fraternal strife between Eteocles and Polynices, in order to emphasise that it is an instance of civil, even intrafamilial, war. In book 6, there is *excidium* after all, when the Seven hew down the sacred grove (6.97 *excidium*); the echo also suggests that the deforestation symbolises war (cf. §5.2).

**pergite in excidium:** for *pergo + in* see *TLL* s.v. 1429.27-57, which differentiates between ‘in locum’, ‘in personam’ and (including our line) ‘in varias res, maxime actiones’; cf. e.g. Cic. *Cat.* 1.23 *in exilium*, (Tac. *Ann.* 11.32.2 *in complexum*. Unlike English ‘to go on’, however, which can be used figuratively (e.g. ‘go on with your story’), *pergo* always seems to imply physical movement.

*excidium*, etymologically connected with *ex(s)cindo*, suggests large-scale ‘military destruction’ (*OLD*), usually of entire armies, cities or peoples (e.g. Aen. 1.22 *excidio Libyae*, Tac. *Hist.* 4.61 *excidium legionum*. If our interpunction (see previous note) is correct, Statius here uses the word ‘nude’ (see *TLL* s.v. 1232.63-82), although one could take *socii ... sanguinis ātō xoroī* with both *uluptas* and *excidium*. The word is echoed in 703.

**684. imbute arma domi:** an unmistakable allusion to the outbreak of the civil war in the *Aeneid*, cf. Aen. 7.554 *sanguis nouus imbuti arma, 541-2 sanguine bellum / imbuti*. An abl. ‘with blood’ is easily supplied from the preceding *sanguinis* (cf. 3.219 *imbutas sanguine gentes, 6.350 imbuti sanguine currus*). In book 11 Oedipus taunts Creon in similar language (11.685 *f eros ausidus quin protinus imbuisses*). Lycurgus’ *domi* hammers down the same point as *socii* in the preceding line: Nemea and Argos are allies (*domi* does not refer primarily to Lycurgus’ palace or *olios*, as in 5.639, but to the ‘domestic sphere’ as opposed to ‘foreign affairs’; cf. expressions like *domi* vs. *foris, domi militiaeque*).

**684-5. haec inrita dudum / templum Iouis (quid enim haud licitum?):** the parenthesis explains why Jupiter’s temple (and hence Jupiter himself) is ‘unavailing’ (*inrita*). From the priest’s perspective, one might expect a reference to his god’s failure to protect Opheltes, but the generality of the parenthesis seems to link the temple’s being *inrita* with the sinfulness of the human race in general; one is reminded of Jupiter’s programmatic tirade against all *terrarum delicta* in the first book (1.214-47). Ritchie-Hall translate ‘only now unresponsive’: perhaps they think that Lycurgus refers to the ill-omened sacrifice (641-2)? On the temple of Jupiter in Nemea see 513n.

**685. quid enim:** parenthetic questions are frequently introduced by *quid enim*, cf. 2.431, 5.623, 6.156, 8.48 and 100, Aen. 12.798 *quid enim sine te Iuturna ualeret?* In that form they are also frequent in Cicero and Ovid (e.g. *Met.* 7.167). On *enim* in Latin epic see Axelson (1945: 122-3).

**ferat impius ignis:** the fire is *impius* as it destroys Jupiter’s sacred temple. For *ferat* Deipser compares *Ecl.* 9.51 *omnia fert aetas;* see *OLD* s.v. 35 ‘to take with one, carry away’, esp. 35d ‘(of death, destruction, etc.)’ (cf. *LSJ* s.v. *φερω* VI); for its application to consuming flames cf. Man. 4.68 *flammam quaes templum ferebat*. Like *excidium* (683) the word suggests military devastation, cf. Aen. 2.374 *feruntique Pergama* with Austin’s note.

**686-7. uilem:** Lycurgus had purchased Hypsipyle as slave woman from pirates (see 5.497-8 *me praedonum manus ... abripit et uestras familam transmittit in oras*). But the adjective *uilem* means more than ‘cheap’ in the literal sense. Lycurgus also uses *uilem* to contrast the
inferior social rank of Hypsipyle, a slave woman, with his own status as ‘master and ruler’ of Nemea; and the word also shows that he considers Hypsipyle’s fate of little importance in comparison to the fate of his son Opheltes (the word order underscores the contrast, *uilem tanti*).

**tanti premerent cum pectora luctus**: for the idea of ‘pressing’ grief or mourning cf. e.g. Cic. *Att.* 3.22.3 *premor luctu*, Tusc. 2.6.16 *cum premeretur summis doloribus*, [Sen.] Oct. 104 *maerore pressa*. The word *pectus* figures frequently in the context of mourning and grief, sometimes, as here, as ‘sedes animi et affectuum’ (cf. *TLL* s.v. *pectus* 914.47-59), sometimes more literally ‘in maeroris demonstratione’ (*ibid.* 10.1.912.25-47). Lycurgus’ *tanti ... luctus* counter Tydeus’ sarcastic *quant i pro funeris ulterior* (674).

**in famulam ius**: technical legal language, see *OLD* s.v. *ius*² 13 ‘rights over others, authority, jurisdiction (conferring by law)’. In such contexts *ius* usually takes a genitive, but *in* + acc. is also possible (e.g. Sen. *Con.* 7.4.4 *pater nullum ius in filium habeat*, [Sen.] Oct. 961-2 *ius in nos / fortuna dedit*).

**dominoque ducique**: the phrase may be read as hendiadys, although *domino* refers to Lycurgus’ authority over Hypsipyle as ‘master’ of the household, whereas *ducit* points to his power as military commander. For the combination of words cf. Val. 5.377 *ducem dominamque caturae* (Medea). On repeated –que see 5.639n.

688. *sed uidet haec, uidet ille deum regnator*: cf. 9.21-2 (Eteocles’ speech after Tydeus’ cannibalism) *sic pergant rabidi claraque hac laude fruantur, / dum uideas haec, summe pater*. Readers know that Lycurgus should not place too much trust in Jupiter; cf. esp. Oedipus’ indignant words in 1.79-80 *et uidet ista deorum / ignauus genitor?* In 1.239-41 *meruere tuae, meruere tenebrae / ultorem sperare Iouem* Jupiter decides to avenge Oedipus, but in the meantime Oedipus’ *peruersa uota* have already been anwered by Tisiphone, *igne Iouis ... citatior* (1.92). Cf. also Dis’ ironic 8.74 *iuuet ista ferum spectare Tonantem*.

Ganiban 2013: 263 completely misunderstands the text when he claims that Lycurgus here ‘bitterly question[s] Jupiter’s power and the morality of his world, since the god had both allowed his son to die and watched the Arachne’s criminality without acting (5.688-9)’. The priest expresses confidence in his Jupiter, even though this confidence is undermined by the echo of Oedipus (which Ganiban rightly notes).

**ille deum regnator**: both *deum* (*deorum*) and *regnator* (*rex*) have an archaic ring; cf. Naev. fr. 15 *Morel summe deum regnator*, Acc. trag. 32 *deum regnator*, Aen. 4.268-9 *ipse deum tibi me claro demittit Olymipo / regnator*, Sen. *Ph.* 671. For the use of *ille* see Austin on Aen. 2.779 *ille ... superi regnator Olymipi*, who suggests that *ille*, deictic in origin, reflects ritual formulaic language (cf. Aen. 7.558, 10.875 *pater ille*, Liv. 1.24.8 *ille Diespiter*, Ov. *Met.* 2.848 *ille pater rectorque deum*); here it could be deictic, Lycurgus pointing towards the temple or the mountain-top.

688-9. *et ausis, / sera quidem, manet ira tamen*: for the idea that divine retribution, however late, comes nonetheless, cf. Tib. 1.9.4 *sera tamen tacitis Poena uenit pedibus* (with Maltby’s note), Ov. *Met.* 6.542-4 (Philomela after being raped by Tereus) *si tamen haec superi cernunt, si numina dianum / sunt aliquid, si non perierunt omnia mecum, / quandocumque mihi poenas dabis*, Liv. 3.56.7 *et dum pro se quisque deos tandem esse et non neglegere humana fremunt et superbiae crudelitatis eti seras, non leues tamen uenire poenas*, Val. *Max.* 1.1.ext.3 *lento enim gradu ad uindictam sui diuinam procedit ira tarditatemque supplici gravitatem pensat*, Eur. *Ion* 1614-5 (Athena speaking) *αἰτὶ γὰρ ὄν / χρόνα μάλ γὰρ τῶν ἑαυτοῦ πως, εἷς τέλος δ’ ὡς ἀντίκειται*. It is discussed in Plutarch’s *treatise* Περὶ τῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ βραβεῖος τιμωρουμένων (*De sera numeris uindicta*) in *Moralia* 548a-68a. Juvenal wittily inverts the topos in *Sat.* 13.100 *ut sit magna, tamen certe lenta ira deorum est* (which Kulla 1881: 6 adduces as parallel). Cf. also Williams on 10.836. For the frequent pairing of *serus* and *tamen*
cf. 5.181 *sera tamen mundo uenerunt astra*, Coleman on Ecl. 1.27, N-H on Hor. Carm. 1.15.19-20.

The lines are quoted by Enea Silvio Piccolomini in his letter to cardinal Zbigniew Olesnicki (1453 AD); see Martels & Goldsteen 2011: 245.

**ausis**: SB translates ‘your deeds’, cf. *OLD* s.v. *ausum* 2 ‘a presumptuous act, crime, outrage’; Deipser (1881: 14) seems to understand *ausis* in the same way, as he compares Aen. 2.535 *pro talibus ausis*, Ov. Met. 2.328 *magnis ausis*. But Jupiter’s (imaginary) wrath does not target the Seven’s deeds, it targets the Seven *themselves*, and one could take *ausis* as a participle with active force; it is not difficult to supply the preceding *haec* as its object: ‘[Jupiter] sees these things ... and his anger ... awaits those (or you) who have dared [these things]’. Ritchie-Hall take *ausis* as an active participle, but strangely supply *iram* as its object (‘his wrath ... waits on those who challenge it’). The word echoes and corrects Tydeus’ *audes* (673): not Lycurgus, the Seven are guilty of *audacia*!

**manet**: see *OLD* s.v. *maneo* 4 ‘(of events, fates, etc.) to be in store for, await’, *TLL* s.v. *maneo* 290.71-291.10. The verb normally takes an acc., but cf. Cic. *Phil*. 2.11 *cuius ... tibi fatum ... manet*, Cat. 8.15 *quae tibi manet uita?*, [Verg.] *Cul*. 39 *tibi ... maneat locus* (with Seelevantag). *CIL* VI.6592 *si qua manent obitis ... praemia sub terris*.

**689. sic fatus**: as Smolenaars on 7.390-1 notes, ‘Statius frequently employs the sequence *sic fatus* (sc. *est*) with a paratactic clause in the present tense’. The closing formula occurs nine times in the *Thebaid* (e.g. 1.510, 3.496). For the various opening and closing formulas in the *Thebaid* see Dominik (1994a: 342-6).

**689-90. et arces / respicit.** SB understands *arcos* as a reference to Mt Aphesas (see 640-2n.): ‘So he spoke and looked to the heights’, to which he adds two footnotes claiming that *arcos* refers to ‘[t]he mountain and Jupiter’s temple from which he had just come down’ and *illic* to ‘the city’, with the addition that ‘*illic* after *arcos* is misleading and has caused confusion’ (2003: 320 with nn. 63 and 64). Similarly Joyce translates ‘He looked back at the heights and notes (on 5.638-709) ‘King Lycurgus, coming home from Jupiter’s temple on Mount Aphesas’).

In the first place, there is no temple on Mt Aphesas: Jupiter’s temple is located in the valley (see 513n.); on the mountain, where Lycurgus has made his sacrifice (637-42), there is merely an altar (see 640-1n.), which perhaps inspired Garrod’s conjecture *aras*. Secondly, despite the fact that *arcos* often means ‘peak’ or ‘height’ (see *OLD* s.v. 5, Hor. *Carm*. 2.6.21, Horsfall on Aen. 7.696.), SB’s interpretation is untenable, for the simple reason that *illic* must refer back to *arcos*: *illic* clearly refers to Nemea, so *arcos* must refer to Nemea too. Admittedly, one might expect Lycurgus to cast his eyes in the direction of Jupiter’s mountain when he mentions *ille deum regnator* (668), but the king clearly looks away to Nemea town. Perhaps he glances at Jupiter’s temple, perhaps – I would suggest – he turns his eyes to Nemea because he overhears the tumultuous riots (691 *tecta fremunt*).

The word *arcos* may suggest an acropolis (cf. Ritchie-Hall ‘he looks back towards his citadel’; cf. Lovatt 2005: 300) with Lycurgus’ palace (Valpy *ad loc. ‘contemplatur regiam’*), but it seems to be used loosely to include the whole town (cf. Lesueur ‘vers la cité’, Ross ‘looked back at his city’, Klotz ‘ad tecta respicit’; cf. also 2.383-4 *arcos ... Agenoreas*). Turning his eyes to Nemea, Lycurgus also makes clear that, in his opinion, their conversation is finished.

Perhaps there is influence of Aen. 12.671 *magnam respexit ad urbem*, where Turnus looks back to the city of Laurentum which is in danger (reinforced by the echo of Aen. 12.656 *iamque faces ad tecta uolant* in 695 below).

690b-709. Hostilities in Nemea town
While the Seven and Lycurgus are disputing the fate of Hypsipyle, the swift Argive cavalry have already arrived in the city of Nemea. Rumour arrives that Hypsipyle has been – or is about to be – killed. The soldiers, who owe their lives to Hypsipyle, are furious and begin to attack the palace. Adrastus arrives just in time to prevent the riots getting out of hand: he shows them Hypsipyle still alive. His intervention is compared to Neptune rebuking the storms and calming the sea.

The hostilities in Nemea and the intervention of Adrastus double the near shedding of allied blood and the intervention in the preceding scene. The scene is echoed in the near outbreak of civil war in 6.618-20. The role of Fama is noteworthy: on the basis of misinformation the conflict almost escalates into large scale fighting (on Fama see Hardie 2012). Dominik (1994: 54), not very sensitive to Statius’ personifications (on which see Feeney 1991), simply reads Fama’s action as an indication of divine malice.

Although the narrative is dense, what happens is clear. Yet some critics believe that not only the Argive troops, but also the Nemean population rise against king Lycurgus. Lovatt (2005: 300) suggests that there is a ‘slippage between a mutiny among the troops and an uprising of the citizens’. Similarly Joyce (2008: 377 on 5.638-709) thinks that the Argives ‘are perhaps joined by a faction of Nemeans who wish to overthrow the king in the confusion’; in another note she talks about ‘Nemean townsfolk who feel Hypsipylē deserves death for allowing Archemorus to die’ (ibid. 378 on 5.693). The confusion (Scaffai 2002: 249 calls the passage ‘una fase caotica’) seems to stem from a misunderstanding of sic meritam (694, where see note), in combination with some textual difficulties (see esp. 692n.).

The scene engages two Vergilian models. In the first place, as Lewis (1773 ad loc.) and Lovatt (2005: 299-301) have observed, it inverts the first simile of the Aeneid, which famously compares Neptune rebuking the winds that shipwrecked Aeneas’ fleet to an authoritative Roman politician (Aen. 1.148-53; cf. 5.816-26):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ac ueluti magno in populo cum saepe coorta est} \\
\text{seditione saeutque animis ignobile uulagus} \\
\text{iamque faces et saxa ulolant, furor arma ministrat; } \\
\text{tum pietate grauem ac meritis si forte uirum quem } \\
\text{conspexere, silent arrectis auribus astant; } \\
\text{ille regit dictis animos et pectora mulcet.}
\end{align*}
\]

Vergil’s simile ‘illustrates nature by the behaviour of man, instead of the reverse process’ (Austin ad loc.). Statius, in turn, inverts Vergil’s inversion: whereas in Vergil the god is compared to a mortal, in Statius the mortal Adrastus is compared to Neptune (as in Sil. 7.254-9). Lewis (1773 on 5.704-9) already notes: ‘This Simile is taken from Virgil, though the Comparison in the Thebaid is the thing Compared in the Aeneid’. Statius’ iamque faces (695), taken from Vergil’s simile, recurs in the main narrative, while various elements of Statius’ simile echo Vergil’s storm (see 704-9nn.). One effect of the allusion is that the authority of Vergil’s Neptune and pietate grauem ac meritis ...uirum (whom Quintilian 12.1.27 quotes as ideal orator and statesman) come to bear on Adrastus, whose auctoritas is thus considerably reinforced. Often weak and indecisive, here Adrastus ‘brings certainty and truth in the face of panic and rumour’ (Lovatt 2005: 300), ‘quale deus ex machina’ (Scaffai 2002: 249) – arguably his finest moment in the Thebaid.

What has not been observed, to my knowledge, is Statius’ engagement with another Vergilian passage, namely the transitional lines between Dido’s nouissima uerba and Anna’s speech, which describe Fama spreading the news of Dido’s suicide through Carthage (Aen. 4.665-71; cf. Il. 22.409-11):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{concussam bacchatur Fama per urbes.} \\
\text{lamentis gemituque et femineo ululatu}
\end{align*}
\]
Again there is a simile involved: the Carthaginians’ panic in reaction to Dido’s suicide is compared to their imagined reaction to an invading army (immissis ... hostibus), a simile that foreshadows the fate of Carthage. Not accidentally, the incursion of troops into a city is precisely what happens in Statius: the Argives are intertextually ‘contaminated’ by Vergil’s hostibus, as allies become enemies. The fire is also present in both texts. The Vergilian context of mourning is most appropriate given the death of Opheltes and the imminent death of Dido-like Hypsipyle.

It is also worth comparing Baebius’ Romanised description of the Trojans breaking into the Greek camp in Homer. 762-71, where we find similar motifs; cf. esp. 765 iaciunt ignes, 771 telaque crebra iact; resonat clamoribus aether.

690. illic: i.e. in the town of Nemea (see 689-90n. arces / respicit).

alio certamine belli: cf. 4.666 belli in certamina (with Parkes). The phrase belongs to the high epic style; perhaps it was coined by Ennius as an equivalent to Homer’s νείμως πολέμοι (e.g. Il. 13.271). See Harrison on Aen. 10.146, Fordyce on Cat. 64.394, Lyne on Ciris 358, Scaffai on Homer. 526.


691-2. uolucres equitum praeuerterat alas / Fama recens: ‘recent rumour had outrun the swift detachments of horsemen’. For the motif that Fama flies ahead cf. 3.426-7 Fama ... anteuolat currum, Val. 2.128-9 (Venus addressing Fama) praecurrere ... bella soles.

Fama’s locus classicus is Aen. 4.173-97, which underlies inter alia Ov. Met. 9.136ff., Val. 2.116ff. and Theb. 2.205-13, 3.425-31 and 6.1-2. The present image, however, is different; as Lewis (1773 ad loc.) points out, ‘What we value it the more for is, that it is an Original, and has nothing in Common with that celebrated Description in the 4th book of the Aeneid’, on which see now Hardie 2012.

The combination uolucres ... praeuerterat is furnished by Aen. 1.317 uolucremque fuga praeuerititur Hebrum (cf. 7.807), which also underlies Ach. 2.111 uolucres cum iam praeuertere ceraus (in combination with Cat. 64.341 praeueret ... uestigia cerae).

According to Håkanson (1973: 37-8; cf. Traglia-Aricò ad loc.) the text is ‘rather curious’. Leaving aside his nonsensical objection that ‘Hypsipyle and the Argive leaders are approaching on foot’, he claims that ‘uolucris ala can not mean anything else than a wing (of a bird or the like)’. To support his claim, Håkanson points to Val. 7.398-9 se profugam uolucri Thaumantias ala / sustulit, where uolucri ... ala refers to the wings of Iris. And then Håkanson conjectures: uolucres etiam ... auras (which he supports with 4.312 pernicior alite uento, 6.602 rapida puer ocior aura, S. 3.1.156 uolucres Zephyros praeecedere), a conjecture that does not turn uolucres ... alas into Fama’s wings, but removes alas altogether.

Admittedly, in the presence of Fama one might expect uolucres ... alas to refer to wings (cf. e.g. Aen. 9.473-4 pauidam uolitans pin mata per urbem / nutia Fama ruit). I believe that Statius deliberately uses uolucres ... alas in an unexpected sense (see following notes); the addition of equitum, however, makes it very clear how we should understand the phrase.

uolucres: for uolucer in the sense ‘swift’ applied to horses cf. Val. 3.20, Stil. 16.447 and in Statius 6.595-6 uolucres ... equi, 10.228 uolucrum ... equorum and also 2.724 and 6.285 (chariot).
equitum ... alas: see OLD s.v. *ala* 6b ‘a unit or squadron of cavalry’; it occurs frequently in the historiographers (e.g. Liv. 2.49.10, Nep. *Eum.* 1.6, Tac. *Ann.* 14.26.2) as well as in the *Aenid* (see Tarrant on *Aen.* 12.551) and elsewhere (e.g. Homer. 795 *Agamemnonis alae*). Cf. also 10.740 *cornua* ... *equitum*.

praeverterat: in the sense ‘to outstrip, outrun’ (*OLD* s.v. 2) the verb is confined to poetry; cf. e.g. Cat. 64.341 *qui praeverret* ... *uestigia ceruae*, Sil. 8.557 *ipse pedes praevertit equum* (Scipio Africanus), Stat. *S.* 3.2.125. The pluperfect indicates that the rumours had already arrived in Nemea before the end of the preceding scene.

692. recens: Barth has *repens*, which Hill deems ‘fortasse recte’; one could addduce 5.638-9 *subitus* ... *nuntius* in support. Yet there are only two instances of adjectival *repens* in the *Thebaid* (9.857 *tremor* ... *repens*, 10.160 *ecce repens* ... *horror*), and the MSS all read *recens*, which makes perfect sense.

geminos alis amplexa tumultus: ‘embracing twin tumults with her wings’; the double tumults are explained in the following clause (*illi* ... *illi* ...). For Fama’s embrace cf. 10.626-7 *iam Fama sacratam / uocem amplexa uolat*; cf. also 3.426 *Fama ... uanos rerum succincta tumultus*. Silius similarly applies *amplexa* to Fides, Sil. 6.131-2 *mentemque amplexa tenebat*.

(a) Traditionally the phrase is understood as a reference to, on the one hand, the quarrel between Lycurgus and the Seven about Hypsipyle and, on the other, the *alia certamine belli* in the town of Nemea; cf. Valpy *ad loc.* ‘id est, et ubi erat Adrastus, ceterique duces, ac Lycurgus, et ubi era[n]t equitum primum agmen, quod longe processerat’, SB *ad loc.* ‘One being Lycurgus’ confrontation with the “Greek” leaders outside the city, the other (imminent) in the city itself’. (b) Håkanson (1973: 37; cf. Traglia-Aricò *ad loc.*) rejects this interpretation, because ‘the first quarrel was not caused by Fama, who had nothing to do with it’; he proposes that ‘the simple solution is that we have here a hypallage and that the expression means the same as *Fama geminis alis amplexa tumultus* (which would, besides, have given an awful homoeoteleon)’.

(c) In my view, *geminos ... tumultus* is explained in the following clause (*illi* ... *illi* ...): some think that Hypsipyle is still alive, others that she is dead already; cf. Sen. *Tr.* 642 *animum distrahit geminus timor*: / *hinc natus, illinc coniugis cari cinis* (Andromache fearing for both Astyanax and Hector’s tomb). The double tumults are a variation on the traditional ‘doublesness’ of Fama; cf. e.g. 3.430 *facta infecta loqui*, Val. 2.117 *digna atque indigna canentem*, 2.121 *auditam* (sc. *Famam*) *sperrnutque Jouentitque*; in 3.344 *geminatque acceptos Fama pauores Fama* ‘redoubles’ the rumours which she has received, so that the news spreads exponentially. The combination of ‘embrace’ and ‘twins’ also subtly anticipates the reunion of Hypsipyle with her twin sons Euneus and Thoas (cf. 713 *geminos iuuenes*, 721 *complexibus*). Cf. also 4.668 *biforem ... tumultum* (‘blare of the double pipe’).

alis: the word has been suspected – ‘with reason’ according to SB (2003: 321 n. 65) – in light of *alas* in the previous line. Lachmann conjectures *agilis*; Garrod (1904: 260) proposes *aulis* in combination with a different interposition: *tecta fremunt* (*uolucris equitum praeverterat alas* / *fama recens*), *geminos aulis amplexa tumultus*, thus making *amplexa* congruent with *tecta*. Most daring is undoubtedly Burmann’s *geminisque suis* (sc. *alis*): ‘Fama had outstripped the swift “wings” of the horsemen, and embraced the twofold rumours with her own’. But there is no reason for suspicion. In the first place, as Damsté (1908: 388-9) points out, *alas* and *alis* are used in two different senses, so that the repetition was perhaps not noticed or at least not felt to be inelegant (Damsté 1908: 389 ‘nescio an propter significationes vocabuli prorsus diversas ista repetitio poetam aut fugerit aut non offenditer’). Secondly, Fama is traditionally a winged figure, so that *alis* seems appropriate. Finally, there are good parallels for *alis amplexa*: in addition to *Ach.* 1.620-1 *totis ubi Somnus inertior alis / defluit in terras mutumque amplexcitur orbem* (Damsté 1908: 389), one could addduce *Aen.* 8.369 *Nox ruit et fuscis tellurem amplexcitur alis*, *Ov.* *Met.* 6.707 *Orithyan amans fuluis amplexcitur alis*.
(Boreas abducting Pandion’s daughter), 11.736 amplexa recentibus alis (Alcyone, just changed into a bird, embracing Ceyx).

693. illi ad fata rapi atque iam occumbere leto, / sic meritam, Hypsipyle iterant: explaining geminos ... tumultus (692): some think that Hypsipyle is about to be killed, others that she is dead already. The difference between ad fata rapi and iam occumbere leto is gradual; the Argives do not doubt Hypsipyle’s death; the difference of opinion is whether or not the execution has already taken place. The tumult is reflected in the metre, as line 693 has four elisions (the Thebaid contains 35 lines with three elisions; four elisions only here, 12.561 and Ach. 2.80). On elision in Latin poetry see e.g. Smolenaars 1991.

ad fata rapi: for the expression cf. Aen. 4.678 eadem me ad fata uocasses, Prop. 2.13b.39 tu quoque si quando uenies ad fata, [Sen.] Her.O. 772 ad fata et umbras adque peiorem polum.

iam occumbere leto: cf. 1.595 imperat (infandum!) cupientem occumbere leto, where the Argive king Crotopus orders the execution of his own daughter Psamathe, who wishes for death (cupientem), as does Hypsipyle (628-35). On the intratextual relation between the two episodes see §3. For the expression occumbere leto Michler (1914: 19) compares Luc. 2.198; see further Austin’s extensive note on Aen. 2.62 occumbere morti; in Val. 1.633, curiously, the expression is also used in combination with iterant (see Kleywegt ad loc.).

sic meritam: like meriti in 629 (where see note), meritam refers to the favour which Hypsipyle has bestowed upon the Argives by leading them to Langia. The participle must be understood with concessive force: the Argive troops believe that Hypsipyle has been – or is about to be – killed, ‘although she had acquired a claim to their gratitude’ (see OLD 6b). SB nicely translates ‘their benefactress’. Unlike 6.168 sic meritam, here the phrase does not mean that Hypsipyle deserves death (cf. Joyce ‘They’re dragging Hypsipylê off to her fate! / already – and deserved it’): if they thought that Hypsipyle deserved death, why would they assault Lycurgus’ palace? Peyraredus has conjectured immeritam and Damsté (1908: 389) argues that we should understand sic meritam ‘ironice’: both fail to understand that meritam refers to Hypsipyle’s favour.

iterant: see 499n. Perhaps the word alludes metapoetically to the repetitions of the passage, which replays the conflict between Lycurgus and the Seven on a larger scale (see 690-709n.); we also find repetitions within the passage (691 alas – 692 als, 691 fremunt – 696 fremunt).

694-5. creduntque nec irae / fit mora: Statius toys with the topos that time sooths anger, for which cf. Ov. Ars 1.374 ut fragilis glacies, interit ira mora, Met. 3.693 ut ira mora uires absumere posset, Trist. 4.4a.48 tempore cum fuerit lenior ira, and most extensively Trist. 4.6.1ff. There is a nice sententia in the collection of Publilius Syrus: rei nulli prodest mora nisi iracundiae. Seneca plays with the idea in the Phoenissae, where Antigona says that Oedipus’ anger ‘has not been broken even by the interval of time’ (186-7 iras, temporum haud ipsa mora / fractas). The word mora may be an allusion to the Nemean mora, with the additional irony that now there is no mora in Nemea.

695. iamque faces et tela penatibus instant: reworking Aen. 1.150 iamque faces et saxa uolant (see 690-709n.), which also underlies 6.535-6 (Kulla 1881: 54). The religious penatibus, central to the Aeneid, makes the Argives’ attack on the Nemean palace a sacrilegious act.

696. uertere regna fremunt: echoing fremunt in 691, where see note. For uerto see OLD s.v. 5 ‘to overturn, knock down; (b) (transf.) to subvert, ruin, confound (a country, institution, etc.)’ and cf. 1.262 exscinde Mycenas, uerte solo Sparten (Jupiter), Aen. 2.625 ex imo uerti Neptunia Troia.

raptumque auferre Lycurgum: unknowingly, the Argive soldiers echo Lycurgus’ own furious words in 657-8 impellite raptam / ferte citi comites.
697. cum Ioue cumque aris: Valpy (1824 ad loc.) understands Ioue as ‘the temple of Jupiter’; SB (ad loc.) more likely thinks of his cult statue. Cf. Val. 2.179 stragemque deum, which Poortvliet explains as ‘the destruction of the gods’, i.e. of their temples and/or statues’. Statius has in mind the Temple of Zeus and its enormous altar (see 578n.). I am tempted to see an allusion to the fact that, in Statius’ days, the cult statue of the Temple of Zeus in Nemea was missing (see §7).

697-8. resonant ululatibus aedes / femineis: modelled on Aen. 4.667-8 lamenti gemituque et femineo ululatu / tecta fremunt, resonat magnis plangoribus aether (see 690-709n.); the word aedes may be inspired by Aen. 2.487-8 plangoribus aedes / femineis ululant. For ululatibus ... femineis Deipser (1881: 20) compares 7.677, Aen. 4.667 and 9.447.

698. uersusque dolor dat terga timori: i.e. the timor of the women in the palace (which is being attacked by the Argives) is stronger than their dolor (for the death of Opheltes). The expression terga dare (‘to flee’) is common in epic and historiography (see Dewar on 9.460), and favourite with Vergil (e.g. Aen. 12.463, 645, 738). Usually, however, the phrase is used quite literally; for its unusual figurative use (‘substitution du concret à l’abstrait’, in the words of Legras 1905: 334) cf. S. 2.6.93 quid terga dolori, / Vrse, damus?, Sen. Phoen. 189-90 malis / dare terga. Note also that, normally, one flees out of fear, not away from fear. The addition of uersus is slightly pleonastic, but has precedents, esp. Aen. 9.686 uersi terga dedere, 12.462-3 uersique uicissim / puluerulenta fuga Rutuli dant terga per agros; cf. also Aen. 8.706 uertebant terga.

699. alipedum curru ... sublimis: ‘aloft in his chariot of wing-footed horses’. The image corresponds with Neptune in his chariot in Aeneid 1 (see 690-709n.); cf. esp. Aen. 1.147 atque rotis summas leuibus perlabitur undas, 156 flecit equos curruque uolans dat lora secundo. While the swiftness of Adrastus’ horses is legendary, alipedum also underscores the swiftness of his intervention. In the catalogue of troops his chariot is drawn by uolucres ... equos (4.42-3), one of them the divine horse Arion (cf. II. 23.346-7 Αἰγίνα διὸν ... / Αἴρηστω ταχύν ἵππον, Paus. 8.25.7-10, Prop. 2.34.37; chariot race 6.296 passim, see Pavan index s.v. Arione), as befits the king of ἵπποβοτος Argos. However, the mention of Adrastus’ horses might also bring to mind his flight from the battlefield (11.439-46), already part of the story in the Cyclic and Antimachean Thebaid (see Venini on 11.441 fugit).

alipedum: not found in prose (Wilson 1896: 9), the compound adjective is first attested in Lucretius (6.765 alipedes ... cerui), who might have coined the word, perhaps after Gr. ἀστρόπως (‘storm-footed’, e.g. II. 8.409). Since stags are not literally ‘wing-footed’, in Lucretius the word must be understood as ‘moving with the speed of flight’. Vergil applies it to horses (Aen. 12.484 alipedum ... equorum; cf. h.Ven. 217 ἵπποισιν ἀστροπόθεσιν, Pl. N. 1.6 ἀστρόπωδον ... ἵππων, Ov. Met. 2.48, Val. 5.183), and he is also the first to use it pro substantivo in that sense (Aen. 7.277 instratos ostro alipedes; cf. iugalis in Aen. 7.280). It remains rare in later literature: Valerius and Silius use it three times each; Statius uses it seven more times, mostly as a substantive (e.g. 3.428, 4.351, 6.298, 9.206 with Dewar’s note; adjectival 6.558). Cf. also sonipes, quadrupes, ignipes, cornipes, flexipes, properipes, pennipes, tardipes, aeripes, anguipes, and Juvenal’s mock-epic segnipes and planipes.

Though the MSS are unanimous, Jortin (1790: 437-8) has conjectured alipedi (printed by Hall) on the basis of Val. 5.61[1] alipedi ... currum and Sil. 7.700 alipede ... currum; he also compares Pind. P. 4.18 (31) δίφωρος ... ἀστρόπως, O. 5.3 (6) ἀκαμαντόπως τ‟ ἀπήνας, Geo. 3.181 currus ... uolantes, Hor. C. 1.34.8 uolucræmuque currum and Ov. Met. 5.360 (Pluto) curræque atrorum uectus equorum (for more parallels see N-H on Hor. C. 1.34.8). The Ovidian parallel, Jortin admits, supports the MSS reading alipedum. In my view, given Statius’ habit of using alipes substantively and Vergil’s use of alipedum at the beginning of the hexameter (Aen. 12.484), there is no reason for conjecture.
curru ... sublimis: for the combination cf. 4.214 (Amphiaraus) celsus equis, 273 sublimis 6.326, Aen. 7.285 sublimes in equis, 624-5 arduus altis / equis, Sen. Her.F. 195 curru sublimis, Homer. 496 rex Danaum sublimis equo. The image may bring to mind the appearance of Roman magistrates; cf. Liv. 28.9.15 irtel alter consul sublimis curru, Juv. 10.36-7.

sed enim: Quintilian (9.3.14) mentions sed enim as an archaism (it is attested in Cato ap. Gell. 6.3.16) favoured by Vergil; he quotes Aen. 1.19-20 progeniem sed enim Troiano a sanguine duci / audierat, to which we may add e.g. Aen. 2.164, 5.395, 6.28. After Vergil sed enim is frequently found in poetry (esp. in Silius); in the Thebaid e.g. 3.601, 6.756, 9.22, 583. See Austin on Aen. 2.164 or 6.28. The fact that sed enim was felt to be archaic, however, does not mean that the particles are used incorrectly; in some commentaries sed enim is said to mean little more than ‘but in fact’ (e.g. Anderson on Ov. Met. 1.530-2). Here, at any rate, both sed and enim are functional: sed marks the interruption of the preceding scene, while enim connects Adrastus’ arrival and the end of the turmoil. For a comprehensive discussion see Fontenrose (1944); see also Kroon (1995: 173 n. 2).

700. secum ... portans: a perfectly normal expression (e.g. Liv. 28.20.3, Caes. BG 1.5.2), it would be fanciful to see an allusion to Dido’s indignant Aen. 4.598 quem secum patrios aiunt portare penates.

ante ora uirum fremibunda: in order to stop his soldiers’ behaviour, Adrastus shows them Hypsipyle, very much alive, right in front of their eyes, thus proving the rumours false. The adjective fremibunda, which picks up fremunt in 691 and 696, is extremely rare; it is attested only four more times, in 5.244 (with Mauri’s note), Acc. trag. 392, Ov. Met. 12.128 and Sil. 3.463 (Homer. 404 reads furi bundus). For uirum see OLD s.v. 5a ‘(usu. pl.) a fighting-man, soldier’; the word is used in contrast with Adrastus their leader. In combination with fremibunda the word ora (‘faces’) suggests mouths, in combination with ante we rather think of the eyes.

Thoantida: see 5.650n.

701. it medius turmis: Adrastus does not move between the Argives and the Nemeans, he moves through the ranks of his own troops (see TLL s.v. medius 582.50-8 ‘pertinet ad multitudinem’): the turmis are the Argive cavalry mentioned in 691 uolucres equitum ... alas (cf. Lovatt 2005: 300); see OLD s.v. turma ‘a small troop or squadron of cavalry’; the word has Roman overtones, especially since Augustus organised the equestrian order into turmae (see e.g. Suet. Aug. 37; Williams on Aen. 5.550, 560 should have noted this).

‘parcite, parcite!’: ‘hold off [from fighting]’ rather than ‘spare [them]’; cf. Tarrant on Aen. 12.693 parcite iam, Rutuli, et uos tela inhibete, Latini’, to which one might detect an allusion: Turnus also hurries to a city (Laurentum) and also calls upon his own troops to stop fighting (cf. 689-90n. arc es / respicit). The verb may also be inspired by Anchises’ Aen. 6.834 tu parce, to which Amphiaras alludes in the earlier confrontation between Lycurgus and the Seven (see 670-71n.). Adrastus’ appeal is echoed in 11.576 iam parcite, diuae.

Adjacent repetition of an imperative verb is common in comedy, tragedy and oratory, but extremely rare in other genres. It is found three times in Augustan poetry (Hor. Epod. 6.11, 17.7, Verg. Ecl. 3.79) and four times in argentea latinitas (Pers. 6.68-9, Juv. 5.112-3, 6.279-80); in Persius and Juvenal the imperatives are separated by line boundary, whereas here – unique in Silver literature – we have adjacent repetition within a hexameter, which creates a most dramatic effect. See Wills 1996: 89-91.

Non-adjacent repetition of imperatives is much less rare, cf. 4.677-8 illum, illum tendite campum / tendite, 4.692-3 ıte uolentes, / ıte in operta soli, 12.378 unje, age, unje fidem, where the repetition also conveys urgency (cf. Parkes and Pollmann ad locc.), Ach. 1.143-4 duc, optima, quaeso, / duc, genetrix.

clamat: see 565n.
702. nil actum saeue: i.e. contrary to the rumours, Hypsipyle is still alive and the conflict between the Seven has been resolved. Would it be pedantic to read actum as an allusion to the dramatic background of the episode (cf. OLD s.v. ago 25)? Cf. e.g. the metapoetic overtones of Medea’s agit in Ov. Her. 12.212 (see Nauta 2013: 244-5).

meritus nec tale Lycurgus / excidium: ‘Lycurgus has not deserved such destruction’, tale ... excidium, which echoes 683 excidium (where see note), referring to the soldiers’ attack on Lycurgus’ palace and Jupiter’s temple as described in 695-7 above. meritus echoes 694 meritam (where see note), where the word is applied to Hypsipyle.

703. gratique inuentrix fluminis: cf. the equally sounding circumscription in 672-3 ducem seruatricemque cohortis / Inachiae. The word inuentrix is applied to Minerva in Geo. 1.18-9 oleaeque Minerua / inuentrix. Adrastus of course refers to the fact that Hypsipyle guided the Seven to Langia (4.782), called flumina in 4.850 (cf. e.g. 4.821, 5.1 fluvio, 4.807 amne).

ecc: see 5.650n.

704-9. The simile compares Adrastus calming his horsemen in Nemea to Neptunus calming the tossing waves. As elsewhere (cf. 599-604n.), verbal echoes tie the simile to the narrative (704 maria euertere ~ 696 uertere regna, 707 sublimis equis ~ 699 alipedum curru ... sublimis), which did not find favour with Lehanneur (1878: 141).

Storm is a traditional metaphor for battle, the warring winds often corresponding with the clashing warriors (see Smolenaars on 7.560-1, N-H on Hor. Carm. 1.3.13, Harrison on Aen. 10.356-61, Val. 3.90-4). In the Thebaid there is a strong strand of storm imagery, e.g. 1.139-44, 379-81, 3.22-30, 10.246-8, 12.650-5; see Vessey (1973: 94 with n. 1).

As has been pointed out (699-709n.), the simile is modelled on Neptune calming the storm in the first Aeneid, while the preceding description of Adrastus’ intervention is informed by Vergil’s simile. Like Vergil’s narrative, Statius’ simile ‘foregrounds the winds as the cause of storm’ (Lovatt 2005: 300 n. 47). An additional model is Ov. Met. 1.330-42 (which also looks back to Aen. 1.124-56), where Neptune is assisted by Triton (mentioned only in passing in Aen. 1.144), whose description in turn is much indebted to Aen. 10.209-12 (see 707-9n.). Cf. also Statius’ description of Neptune in Ach. 1.51-60. In addition, Statius’ audience would be reminded of visual representations of Neptune and Triton – modern readers might think of the Fontana di Trevi at Rome, for instance.

In the Thebaid Neptune is conspicuously absent, which reinforces the dualism between his brothers Jupiter and Dis, heaven and hell (Feeney 1991: 350; cf. McNelis 2007: 130 n. 12). However, the god appears in similes (also 3.432); and in book 12 he is mentioned several times in connection with Theseus (12.588, 665, 730).

704. sic ubi: not in Vergil, Statius frequently uses sic ubi to introduce similes (1.131, 4.24, 705, 5.330, 6.578, etc.). sic goes with the main verbs in 706-9 (uenti etc.), while ubi governs euertere; it seems best to place pulsa dies regnantque hiemes in parenthesis.

diuersis maria euertere procellis: with their blasts from opposite directions the winds overturn the sea. Lovatt (2005: 300 n. 47) notes that procellis is taken from Aen. 1.85 (also at the end of the line); cf. also Aen. 1.102-3 procella / ... aduersa. The adjective may be provided by Aen. 1.70 diuersos. Statius’ simple maria euertere – corresponding with 696 uertere regna – compresses Vergil’s elaborate descriptions in Aen. 1.84-5 incubuere mari totumque a sedibus imis / ... ruunt and 106-7. For divergent winds cf. e.g. Lucr. 5.646 diuersis ... uentis, Sen. Nat. 5.13.4.

705. hinc Boreas Eurusque, illinc niger imribus Auster: there seems to be a clash between, on the one hand, the winds from the north (Boreas) and the east (Eurus), on the other the winds from the south (Auster), hinc ... illinc explaining diuersis in the previous line. Elsewhere we find Boreas and Eurus fighting each other; cf. 1.193 hinc gelidus Boreas, hinc nubifer Eurus, Sil. 4.321 Boraeas Eurusque. In an attempt to create a simple clash between
north and south, Hall conjectures *Boreas furiis*; palaeographically ingenious, but there is no reason to suspect the MSS reading. Lovatt (2005: 300-1) speaks of ‘two opposing winds’, which she connects with the ‘two opposing rumours’. The pattern seems inspired by *Aen.* 1.85-6 *una Eurysque Notusque ruunt creberque procellis / Africus*, where we also find three winds, the third with similar amplification; *Notus* and *Africus* are replaced with *Boreas* and *Aurus*. The actual phrasing, however, is taken from Luc. 9.320 *niger imbribus Auster* (Michler (1914: 17).

**niger imbribus Auster**: for the Auster’s dark clouds cf. Statius’ wonderful description of the storm in book 1, esp. 350-2 *sed plurimus Auster / inglomerat noctem, tenebrosa volumna torquens / defunditque imbres*, looking back to *Geo.* 3.278 *nigerrimus Auster* (Deipser 1881: 20) and *Aen.* 5.695-6 *ruit aethere toto / turbidus imber aqua densisque nigerrimus Austris*. The epithet *imbribus* is first attested in Vergil (e.g. *Aen.* 2.419 and 10.212 with Harrison’s note).

**pulsa dies**: as Lovatt (2005: 300 n. 47) notes, recalling *Aen.* 1.88-9 *eripiunt subito nubes caelumque diemque / Teucrorum ex oculis; ponto nox incubat atra*. For the expression *pulsa dies* cf. *Ov.* Fast. 6.472 *pulso nox ... die*, Ep. 19.34 *pulso sidera clara die*.

**regnantque hiemes**: inspired by *Aen.* 1.122 *uiict hiems*. The verb is well chosen, as it calls attention to the winds’ illegitimate behaviour: it is *rex* Neptune who rules the waves. Vergil’s storm episode is also much concerned with *regnum* (cf. e.g Neptune’s indignant *Aen.* 1.144 *clauso venturam carcerre regnet*).

**706-7. uenit aequoris alti / rex**: Heinsius, familiar with Statius’ style, found the combination *aequoris alti* suspiciously normal and conjectured *alti* (‘from the depths of the sea’; the plural could be supported with *Aen.* 9.81 *pelagi ... alta*). But the combination has parallels in Lucr. 3.784 *aequore in alto*, *Aen.* 7.6-7 *alta quierunt / aequora*. There is much emphasis on Neptune’s kingship, the monosyllabic *rex* emphatically enjambed (cf. previous note).

**sublimis equis**: corresponding with 699 *alipedum curru ... sublimis*. The horses, taken from *Aen.* 1.156 (see 699n.), are used metonymically for Neptune’s horse-drawn chariot.

**707. geminusque**: i.e. half man, half fish (cf. *Aen.* 10.212 *semifero*); Statius expresses himself more clearly in *S.* 3.2.35 *hinc multo Proteus geminoque hinc corpore Triton / prae- natet*. The use of *geminus* in the sense *biformis* is rare; see *TLL* s.v. 1748.19-31 and cf. *Ov.* *Met.* 2.555 *geminus ... Cecrope* (half man, half snake), 2.630 (Chiron), 8.169 (Minotaur). The word *geminus* also subtly anticipates the appearance of Euneus and Thoas (cf. notes on 5.692 and 713).

**Triton**: presumably Statius’ description would remind his audience of the visual arts (see *Paus.* 2.1.7, Macr. 1.8.4, *LIMC* s.v.); in literature, Triton’s *loqui classici* are *Aen.* 10.209-12

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hunc uelit immanis Triton et caerula concha
exterrens freta, cui laterum tenus hispida nanti
frons hominem praefert, in pristim desinit alius,
spumea semifero sub pectore murmurat unda
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and its model in Apollonius’ *Argonautica* 4.1610-6 (see Harrison ad loc.); Statius also has in mind Ovid and, perhaps, Valerius (see following notes). Originally there was only one Triton, son of Poseidon and Amphitrite (Hes. *Th.* 930-3), but in later literature their number increases. One should like to believe Pliny the Elder, who reports that a real Triton was seen in a cave near Olisipo (Lisbon) in the reign of Tiberius (*NH* 9.9)!

**ad spumea ... frena natans**: although *spumea* and *natans* recall Vergil’s description of Triton (see previous note), the bridles are inspired by *Val.* 1.679-80 *fluenta Triton frena tenet* (cf. also *Val.* 1.639-54), while the combination ‘foamy bridles’ looks back to another Vergilian passage, namely *Aen.* 5.817 *spumantia frena* (Deipser 1881: 23). The epithet *spumeus* is first attested in Vergil (e.g. *Aen.* 2.419 and 10.212 with Harrison’s note), who might have coined the word. For *natans* cf. Pavan’s note on 6.307-8 *natantibus ... equis*. 224
pelago dat signa cadenti: Triton’s action is inspired by neither Vergil nor Valerius; it is modelled on Ovid’s imitation of Vergil’s Neptune in Met. 1.333-5, where Neptune caeru-leum Tritona uocat conchaeque sonanti / inspirare iubet fluctusque et flamina signo / iam reuocare dato. The instrument with which Triton gives the signal, so we must infer from the Ovidian model, is his traditional shell (concha), for which see e.g. Austin on Aen. 6.171 or Harrison on Aen. 10.209.

The participle cadenti should be understood proleptically (like sonanti in Ovid): cadenti describes the result of the action pelago dat signa, that is, Triton gives a signal so that the waters fall. For such proleptic use of the participle cf. e.g. Aen. 3.236-7 tectosque per herbam / disponunt ensis et scuta latentia condunt. A notable example of (adjectival) prolepsis in a strikingly similar context is Aen. 10.103 premit placida aequora pontus, which may be no coincidence.

et iam plana Thetis: daughter of Nereus, wife of Peleus and mother of Achilles (passim in Statius’ Achilleid), Thetis is here used metonymically for ‘sea’, possibly in imitation of Ecl. 4.32 temptare Thetim ratibus (Deipser 1881: 17). Heuvel on 1.39 lists Statian parallels for Thetis in the sense ‘sea’ (9.362, S. 3.2.74, 4.6.18, 5.1.36), also mentioning Lyc. Alex. 22 παρθενοκτόνων Θέτις, which might have been Vergil’s inspiration; one could add e.g. Mart. 10.30.11. For the metonymic use of the name of a sea divinity cf. Nereus in the sense ‘sea’ in e.g. 5.49, 8.230, Ov. Met. 1.187.

For planus ‘de aquis non turbidis’ see TLL s.v. 2335.55-60 and cf. Cic. Ac. fr. 3 quid tam planum uidetur quam mare?, Sen. Nat. 4.2.6, Mart. 5.1.4. At the same time, it seems, Statius invites us to imagine a ‘smooth nymph’, which in my case brings to mind Corinna’s planus sub pectore uenter (Ov. Am. 1.5.21); similarly Vergil’s temptare Thetim also plays with temptare in an erotic sense (cf. e.g. Prop. 1.3.15).

montesque et litora crescunt: ‘depressis scilicet fluitibus’ (Valpy 1824 ad loc.); as the sea subsides, the shores grow larger (horizontally) and the mountains grow higher (vertically). Lehanneur (1878: 246) well observes that the line is informed by Ov. Met. 1.345 et crescunt terrae iam decrescentibus undis; cf. also Luc. 4.429 iamque relabenti crescebant litora ponto (with Esposito’s note). While Ovid and Lucan provide an explanation in des crescentibus undis and relabenti ... ponto respectively, Statius typically expects his readers to understand the phrase intertextually.

I fail to see how this line should ‘préfigure l’apparition des fils d’Hypsipyle et sa «joie inattendue»’ (Georgacopoulou 2005: 130).

que et: see 5.635n.

710-30. Hypsipyle reunited with her sons

After the gruesome death of Opheltes and its violent aftermath – the conflict between Lycur-gus and the Seven (650-90) and the hostilities in Nemea (690-709) – the penultimate scene of book 5 takes an unexpected turn and tells the joyful reunion of Hypsipyle with Euneus and Thoas, her twin sons with Jason (cf. Helm 1892: 174 ‘terribili igitur illi scaenae poeta finem addit laetum et placidum’); inopina and the oxymoron gaudia maestae in line 711 underscore the unexpected change of mood. As Georgacopoulou (2005: 131 n. 62) points out, this is ‘le seul épisode de la Thébaïde qui finit par «des larmes différentes», à savoir dans la pure joie et le bonheur’. The joyful atmosphere at the end of book 5 might explain why Thomas Stephens’ 1648 translation goes no further (Newlands 2012: 106-7).

Although we cannot be sure whether Opheltes’ death was part of Bacchus’ scheme or not (see 534n.), without his death the recognition would not have taken place, or at least not in this fashion (cf. Brown 1994: 125 ‘While she had Opheltes, Hypsipyle’s lost babies remained
babies. Ironically, it is his death which breaks the spell and facilitates the reunion with her adult sons’.

The reunion comes as a surprise for the narratees as well as for Hypsipyle, who has abandoned all hope that Bacchus will come to her rescue (cf. 5.496 sed non iterum obiuit Euhan). Similarly, when she entrusted her father Thoas to the sea, she scarcely believed that her divine grandfather would indeed save his life (5.292 uix confisa Lyaeo, Ganiban 2007: 84); later, however, we learn that Thoas is safe and well in Chios (5.486-7). But it is not without reason that Hypsipyle non audet credere diius (724): as Ganiban (2007: 83) points out, the god had promised to attend to her cares (5.284 succedam curis), but he did not protect his granddaughter from enslavement. In the end, however, ‘als das Unglück der Hypsipyle gänzlich ausweglos zu sein scheint’ (Götting 1969: 14), Bacchus lives up to his words after all.

The passage reworks the corresponding recognition and reunion in the Hypsipyle. Statius’ engagement with Euripides in the reunion scene is discussed in §2.4 (cf. Brown 1994: 64, Soerink 2014: 180-4). After ‘summarising’ the prologue of Euripides’ play (713-6a), Statius necessarily deviates from his Euripidean model, where the recognition somehow follows from the brothers’ participation in the Nemean Games. Instead, Statius makes the brothers support Lycurgus in his conflict with the Seven (716b-19a). When they hear ‘Lemnos’ and ‘Thoas’, they realise that the woman, whom Lycurgus wants to execute, is actually their mother; they rush forward and embrace her (719b-22). Hypsipyle is stupefied; when she sees their faces and the tokens of recognition, she faints with joy (723-8). The reunion is confirmed by celestial signs from Bacchus (729-30).

The passage has always been read as an illustration of familial pietas, the loving brothers Thoas and Euneus contrasting with the sons of Oedipus. Thus Vessey (1973: 190) writes that ‘[t]he of fraternal unity and maternal joy is strangely piquant, when we think of Jocasta and her sons’, while McNelis (2007: 92-3) claims that ‘the Nemean episode illustrates positive fraternal relationships’ and that Hypsipyle’s sons ‘display exemplary devotion to one another as they compete in the running race (6.433-5)’ (cf. Brown 1994: 218 n. 123 ‘ideal pair’, Kenyeres 2001: 90-1 ‘foils to Eteocles and Polynices’, Scaffai 2002: 251 ‘un exemplum di solidarietà fraterna’, O’Gorman 2005: 43 ‘a model of the perfect relationship of twins’, Lovatt 2005: 26 ‘the positive paradigm ... the good brothers who love each other’). This positive interpretation finds support in 6.343-5 (see 725n. et uultus), 6.475-8 and esp. 6.433-5 iuxta gemini, nunc Euneos ante / et nunc ante Thoas, cedunt uinctumque, nec umquam / ambitiosa pios collidit gloria fratres, to which McNelis refers. Like the sons of Thespius (2.629-43) and the Dioscuri (5.437-40), it seems, Euneus and Thoas contrast with the gemini tyranni (1.34) Eteocles and Polynices, throwing into relief the unnatural hatred between the Theban brothers (cf. also the loving gemini fratres in Aen. 7.670). Yet in the present scene their brotherly pietas is seriously contaminated by disturbing intra- and intertextual echoes (see 721-4nn.). Moreover, we should remember that the twins have been raised by Lycaste (a name that might echo Acaste, nurse of Argia and Deipyle, cf. 1.529-31), who killed her twin brother (cf. 5.226-35, 467), although O’Gorman (2005: 42) gives an optimistic interpretation: ‘The twin driven to fratricide by the Lemnian tradition also fosters twins in a new generation of harmony’.

The reunion scene was depicted on the west side of the monument for Apollonius at Cyzicus, which Attalus and Eumenes of Pergamum erected for their mother. The inscription accompanying the relief is included in the Anthologia Graeca (3.10) and deserves full citation:

Ἐν δὲ τῷ κατὰ δύσιν πλυσθῶ ὄστιν ἐν ἄρχῃ τοῦ ι’ πίκακος Εὐνοος γεγλυμένος καὶ Θάσας, οὗς ἐγένεσθαι. Τῷ πόλει, αναγγειώθημοι τῇ μητρὶ καὶ τῷ χρήση διενυόντες ἁμέλους, ὅπερ ἦν αὐτοῖς τοῦ γένους σύμβολον, καὶ ὑμέναι αὐτῶν τῆς διὰ τὸν Ἀρχεμόρον Ἰανατόν παρ’ Ἐφυδίκῃ τιμωρίας.

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On the west side, at the beginning of the tenth plaque are carved Eunous and Thoas, the sons of Hypsipyle, making themselves known to their mother and displaying the golden vine which was their family’s emblem, and rescuing her from the vengeance of Eurydice prompted by the death of Archemorus.

Reveal, Thoas, this plant of Dionysus; thus you will rescue your mother from death, the slave Hypsipyle, who endured Eurydice’s wrath when the serpent, offspring of the earth, killed helpless Archemorus. And you too go on your way, leaving Asopia’s rich land to bring your mother to holy Lemnos.

In all likelihood, the golden vine in the Cyzicene epigram derives from Euripides’ Hypsipyle. The corresponding recognition scene in the Hypsipyle is lost (apart from fr. 765a, see 721-2n.), but we know that one or more tokens played a role; cf. Hyps. fr. 762 εύφορα [éýφορα Valckenaer] καὶ τὰ καὶ κατασφαγμένα (‘auspicious [well-marked] and safely kept and stamped with a seal’), which probably ‘described the well-preserved recognition-tokens which identified Euneos and Thoas’ (Collard-Cropp-Gibert ad loc.), and fr. 759a.111 (Euneus speaking) καὶ Ἰ Θόαντος σώματον βότνων (‘... Thoas’ (?) wine-dark grape-bunch’), which may refer to ‘a gold ornament used as a recognition token’ (Collard-Cropp ad loc.); perhaps also fr. 765 οὐνάξια τρέφει τὸν ἐρυάνον βότνων ‘the vine-shoot nourishes its sacred cluster’.

In Statius’ version, the tokens of recognition are very different (see 725-6). Possibly the swords and cloaks allude to Valerius. In his Argonautica, when Hypsipyle bids Jason farewell, she gives him two gifts (Val. 2.408-21): in the first place, a cloak in which she has woven the rescue of her father Thoas and the rape of Ganymede (2.409 chlamydem textosque labores; the scenes are ephrasisised in 2.410-17), and secondly her father’s sword, decorated with his royal emblem, which Thoas once received from Vulcan himself (2.418 ensem notumque ... insignem Thoantis). Valerius, in turn, looks back to Apollonius’ version, to the tunic and spear which Jason carries as he goes ashore on Lemnos (1.721-67 and 769ff.) and to the cloak which Hypsipyle gives to Jason when he leaves the island (3.1204ff., 4.422ff.), while at the same time Valerius reworks the cloak which Dido had given to Aeneas (Aen. 11.72-7).

To be sure, the tokens by which Hypsipyle recognises her sons in Statius cannot be identical with the sword and cloak in Valerius: Jason gives his cloak away as a funeral gift to Cypiscus (Val. 3.340-1); the decorations are very different; in Statius we find two swords and two cloaks; and how would the objects have come in their possession? In Euripides’ version, Jason takes his sons on board of the Argo when they were ‘just lately weaned from my breast’ (fr. 759a 94); but in Valerius’ and Statius’ versions Jason leaves them behind (in Valerius Hypsipyle is pregnant when he leaves, Val. 2.424, cf. Ov. Her. 6.56-62; in Statius the Argonauts seem to leave after approximately one year; cf. 5.468-85 with Ganiban 2007: 88 n. 68).

Yet Statius’ choice for swords and cloaks, in favour of Euripides’ golden vine, seems to recognise the importance of Valerius. On the other hand, as Poortvliet on Val. 2.408-9 notes, the combination of cloak and weapon is ‘more or less conventional’; cf. Aen. 4.261-4, 8.166-8, Val. 3.8-14, 5.511-4; cf. also 5.313-5 where Hypsipyle burns her father’s sceptrum, arma and notas regum uelamina uestes on his fake funeral pyre.

We may note that in Statius the tokens do not themselves trigger the recognition (the worst type of ἀναγνώριση according to Aristotle; cf. Poet. 1452a29-b8, 1453b27-54a8 and 1454b19-55a21); they merely confirm the identity of Hypsipyle’s sons. Although we cannot be completely sure, probably the same holds for Euripides’ recognition scene.
The ‘recognition scene’ has a long literary history that does back to various such scenes in the second half of the *Odyssey* (on which see Richardson 1983). It is also found in Greek tragedy; in addition to Euripides’ *Hypsipyle*, we may mention his *Ion*. Statius’ audience, however, would be reminded primarily of the comic genre, New Comedy – which was much influenced, in this respect, by Euripides (Goldberg 1980: 59-71, Duckworth 1994: 34-5, Quint. 10.1.69) – as well as Roman comedy (cf. Legras 1905: 155 n. 3). In the ‘comedies of errors’ of Plautus and Terence a recognition scene often ‘solves the complications and brings the comedy to its happy conclusion’ (Duckworth 1994: 217). That ancient readers had associations with comedy is confirmed by LP, who notes (on 5.718-9) that the poet ‘eleganter more comediae contigit agnito filiorum’ and who adduces a parallel from Terence (see 728n.). The emphasis on the *τὐχη* and *Σάμυα* (714 *mirandaque fata*, 718 *pro fors*) is also typical of such scenes in the theatre.

What happens after the reunion Statius does not tell. Euneus and Thoas figure a couple of times in the Games (see above) – and then they just disappear from the poem. The same holds for Hypsipyle. In Euripides’ *Hypsipyle* Dionysus appears as *deus ex machina*: probably his divine intervention enables Hypsipyle and her sons to return to Lemnos. That, at least, is suggested by the epigram (see above); it would also make Euripides’ version compatible with Homer – in the *Iliad* Euneus figures as ruler of Lemnos, assisting both Greeks and Trojans, sending wine-laden ships to the Achaeans (*Il. 7.468-9*) and later buying freedom for Priam’s son Lycaon (23.746-7) – as well as with the Cyzicene epigram, in which Euneus is asked to bring back their mother to Lemnos (3.10.5-6, quoted above). Cf. also Brown 1994: 117 with n. 77. Perhaps the question is not very relevant to Statius, but with Euripides – and the comedies – in mind, his Roman audience would probably imagine Hypsipyle and her sons going back to Lemnos, living happily ever after; alternatively, Hypsipyle’s sons may join the Argive expedition, but the poet does not mention them again (cf. Scaffai 2002: 252).

Dante Alighieri uses Statius’ reunion scene in a simile illustrating the meeting of Dante and the poet Guido Guinizelli in *Purgatorio* 26: ‘Quali ne la tristizia di Licurgo / si fer due figli a riveder la madre’ (26.94-5; see Nolte 1968: 28 n. 4). The simile is problematic for various reasons (e.g. Guinizelli is not Dante’s mother, he is not even female; Dante does not save Guinizelli; the flames prevent them from embracing each other). For an interpretation of the passage, reading Guinizelli as ‘the laudably maternalized male, the poetic father who mothered Dante’s literary existence’, see Schibanoff 2006: 136-42.

### 710-2. *quis superum* etc.: the passage begins with an ‘expository question’: the narrator asks a question in order to answer it himself (cf. LP *ad loc.* ‘inuenit poeta, quod primum dubitabat’). This device, frequently used to introduce new passages (e.g. 534, Val. 8.259), is as old as Homer, cf. *Il*. 1.8-9 *πίς τ’ ἄρ’ σωμα ζεύν ἐρνίδι ξυνέκε μαξεθάι; / Λητοίς καὶ Δίός νός*, which also parallels *quis superum* (cf. also 6.142 *cui superum*, 372 *quisnam ... deus*, *Ach. 1.283 quis deus*, *Aen. 9.77 quis deos*). On such questions see Van Emde Boas (2005: 56-62). Although Statius combines the device with apostrophe elsewhere (see 534n.), I find few parallels for the scheme ‘who? – you!’ (Sen. *Con. 9.3.11 quis adhibuit uim? tu tibi*).

*solatus funera:* in reuniting Hypsipyle with her sons, Bacchus gives Hypsipyle solace for the death of Opheltes (cf. 593 *funere*, 647 *funera*). We are reminded of Hypsipyle’s lament, where she calls Opheltes her *natorum dulcis imago* and *rerum et patriae solamen ademptae* (609); cf. also 617 *luctus solabar*. The tables are turned: Opheltes used to provide solace for the loss of her sons; now the sons provide solace for the loss of Opheltes. Cf. also 500n. *solatur*.

*tanto ... uoto:* Valpy (*ad loc.*) glosses ‘successu’; SB translates ‘with an answer to her great prayer’. However, although Hypsipyle clearly wishes to be reunited with her sons, no such prayer has been mentioned explicitly. It seems best to take *uotum* in the general sense ‘desire,
hope’ (OLD s.v. 3); cf. Lesueur ‘ses vœux les plus chers’, Götting (1969: 14) ‘durch die Erfüllung ihres innigsten Wunsches’.

**pensait lacrmas**: see OLD s.v. 4 ‘(usu. w. abl.) to counterbalance, compensate, make up (for)’. On Statius’ fondness for weight imagery see 534n. magni pondera fati.

**inopinque gaudia maestae / rettulit Hypsipylae**: reunions traditionally come unexpectedly, cf. e.g. Soph. Oed.Col. 1104-5 προσέλθετ’; ó ψαί, πατη, καί το μηδαμά / ἐλπιδέχεσαν ὀξείν σώμα βαστάσαι δότε, 1120 ἀζλπτα (Oedipus reunited with Antigona and Ismene). Hypsipyle had abandoned all hope that Bacchus would come to her rescue again (cf. 5.496 sed non iterum obuius Euhan). On a metapoetic level, inopinaque also calls attention to the unexpected turn of the narrative. Note the oxymoron gaudia maestae, which highlights Hypsipyle’s dramatic change of fortune (μεταβολή); cf. Eur. Hyps. fr. 759a.60 ἐπι φόδον ἐπι [τε] χάριν (‘now towards fear, now towards gladness’; Kenyeres 2001: 81 notes the parallel) and fr. 761 ἀζλπτον οὐδέν, πάντα δ’ ἐλπίζειν χρείον (‘nothing is beyond expectation, one should expect everything’; probably from the recognition scene). For the phrasing cf. 10.330-1 satis haec inopina Pelasgis / gaudia, S. 1.2.46-7 sed quae causa toros inopinaque gaudia uatis / attulit. The adjective inopinus (cf. necopinus) is a Vergilian coinage (see Williams [Oxford ed.] on Aen. 5.857). The latinised dative –ae in Hypsipylae, replacing Greek –η, is extremely rare in Latin literature (cf. 4.456 Hecatae).

**712-3. tu, gentis conditor, Euhan: cf. 675-6n. Euhan / stirpis auus. As Georgacopoulou observes (2005: 130), gentis conditor is not merely ornamental, but also shows Bacchus’ motivation: ‘Il s’agit d’une réponse qui porte également sa propre justification: Hypsipyle est favorisée par Bacchus, parce qu’elle est sa petite-fille’. The normal expression is gentis auctor (e.g. Suet. Claud. 25.3 Iliensibus quasi Romanae gentis auctoribus tributa in perpetuum remisit); Statius’ variation is probably inspired by Aen. 1.33 tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem; cf. also Tac. Germ. 2.3 et filium Mannum originem gentis conditoresque Manno tres filios adsignant, Hist. 5.4.4 conditores gentis.

**713. geminos iuuenes**: i.e. Thoas and Euneus, Hypsipyle’s twin sons with Jason (cf. Ov. Her. 6.121 prolemque gemellam, 143 fetu ... gemello), mentioned in 4.778-80 and 5.463-7. The word geminus occurred twice in the preceding scene (692 geminos, 707 geminus), which creates a sense of continuity (cf. 593n. fulminis in morem).

Their names are first given (and commented upon) in 6.340-5: Thoas is named after his grandfather (6.342 nomen auo gentile Thoas), Euneus after his father’s famous ship (6.342-3 omine dictus / Euneos Argoo, from σῶ ‘well’ and ναῦς ‘ship’); cf. Brown 1994: 121. While Hypsipyle in her mini-epic alludes to Thoas’ name (5.465 nomen au renouo), she nowhere mentions Euneus: O’Gorman (2007: 40 n. 30) suggests that his name would remind her of the man who raped her (5.454-6, 463). In Apollonius Rhodius and Valerius Flaccus their names are not mentioned at all; Thoas the Younger is called Nebrophonos in Apollodorus, in Hyginus his name is Deipylus.

**iiuuenes**: a notoriously elastic term, but Hypsipyle herself informs us that her sons are 4 × 5 = 20 years of age (5.466-7 iam plena quater quinquennia surgunt / si modo Fata sinunt aluitique rogata Lycaste). Ganiban (2007: 77 n. 27; cf. 2013: 252 n. 11) rightly notes that ‘[w]e do not know exactly how much time has elapsed since Hypsipyle’s flight from Lemnos and capture by pirates (5.497-8)’, but it seems that Euneus and Thoas were still babies when Hypsipyle left them behind (4.778-80 altricem mandati ceronis orbam / pignoris; at nostris an quis sinus, ubeaque ulla, / scit dei). Admittedly, this is not very realistic (cf. Hartman 1916: 352 ‘Hysipyle ... nutrix est infantes Ophthalae, sed ipsa duos habet filios plus viginti annorum. “Étonnante nourrice” hic Legras [1905: 153 n. 2] exclamation et sic bonum nostrum Stainum deridendum tradit posteris’; cf. also Götting 1969: 15 n. 20, Delarue 2000: 129 n. 58, Scaffai 2002: 244). Like other myths, the story plays tricks on chronology; the inconsistency is inherent in the Euripidean plot. On chronological problems in the Aeneid see e.g. Williams’

713-4. **Leeni de litore uectos / intuleras Nemeae:** in Euripides’ *Hypsipyle*, Euneus tells that he and his brother were taken by Jason on the Argo’s journey to Colchis (Hyps. fr. 759a 93); after Jason’s death, Euneus continues, Orpheus had taken them to Thrace, where he had been trained as musician, his brother Thoas as warrior (fr. 759a 95-100; cf. Amphion and Zethus). When Hypsipyle asks how they had travelled from Thrace to Lemnos, Euneus replies ῥόας Ἰλιάμειξε σῆς πατήρ + διοῦν τίκνυ τῷ (fr. 759a 105). Although the line is corrupt, it is clear that Thoas senior somehow helped his grandchildren to return to Lemnos. When they found their mother missing, they left Lemnos for the second time in search of their mother. In the remaining fragments of the *Hypsipyle*, there are no explicit indications that it was Bacchus who guided them to Nemea, although the god may have claimed credit for the reunion in the lost finale, where he appears *ex machina*.

In Statius’ version, Euneus and Thoas do not accompany their father to Colchis, and they seem to have left their island now for the first time (cf. 710-30n.). In this respect, Statius’ version is more similar to Apollonius Rhodius, Ovid and Valerius Flaccus, although in their versions Euneus and Thoas have not even been born when the Argonauts set sail again. In Apollonius, Hypsipyle bids Jason farewell saying 1.897-8 ἠλπίε δ’ ἤμιν ἐπος, τό κεν ἔξανόσαμι / πρόφρον, ἤν ἄρα δὴ με θεοὶ δόξοσε τεκέσθαι; if I do not return from Colchis, Jason replies, and if you give birth to a son, then please send him, when he has grown up, to Iolkos to take care of my old parents (1.904-9); whether Hypsipyle does indeed send her sons to Iolkos, Apollonius does not tell. Ovid nicely picks up on Apollonius in *Heroïdes* 6: in her letter to Jason Hypsipyle writes that she had toyed with the idea of sending her children to their father, but refrained from doing so because of Medea (Ep. 6.125-6). In Valerius’ *Argonautica*, as in Apollonius, pregnant Hypsipyle refers to ‘this Jason in my womb’ when she bids Jason farewell (Val. 2.422-4 ‘ι, memor, i, terrae, quae uos amplexa quieto / prima sinu; refer et domitis a Colchidos oris / uela per hunc utero quem linquis Jasona nostro’), alluding not only to Apollonius, but also to Dido’s *paruulus Aeneas* in Verg. Aen. 4.327-30 (which itself looks back to Apollonius as well). Cf. also Dante *Inf.* 18.88-96.

*mirandaque fata parabas:* normally the fates are the subject, not the object, of such preparations, cf. Luc. 6.783-4 quid fata pararent / hi fecere palam (Michler 1914: 21), 2.68 fata parabant, Sen. Oed. 28 iam iam aliquid in nos fata moliri parant, but cf. Ov. *Met.* 14.213 fata parari (where the fata are much less joyful). It does not follow that Bacchus controls fate; the god rather operates within its limits. Cf. 4.739 *sic Euhius pararat*, where Bacchus contrives the Seven’s encounter with Hypsipyle. The emphasis on fate and wonder, τύχη and ἰδαία, is traditional in reunion scenes (cf. e.g. Arist. *Poet.* 1454a, 1460b). According to LP, the ‘wondrous’ resides in Hypsipyle’s change of fortune (‘de seruitio ad regnum redire’). Like *inopina* (711), *miranda* may be understood as a self-conscious allusion to the wondrous twist of the narrative (cf. Georgacopoulou 2005: 132 n. 69).

715. **causa iuae genetrix:** cf. 2.390 *causaque iuae*, Ach. 1.734. The combination *causa iuae* first occurs in Aen. 9.376 state, uiri. quae causa iuae? It is used several times by Ovid, famously in *Met.* 10.23 (Orpheus speaking) *causa iuae est conium*, which seems to be echoed here. One could argue that Euneus’ and Thoas’ search for their mother is intertextually aligned with Orpheus’ quest for his beloved Eurydice, perhaps suggesting oedipal desires (often suggested for Eteocles and Polynices and their mother, see Hershkowitz 1998: 271-82, 4.88 with Parkes, 7.499 *teris* with Smolenaros).

715-6. **nec inhospita tecta Lycurgi / praebuerant aditus:** summarising the prologue of the *Hypsipyle*, in which Hypsipyle welcomes Euneus and Thoas – without recognising them as her sons – into the house (fr. 752d-e). As Deipser (1881: 20) notes, the words are provided by Ov. *Met.* 15.15 *nec inhospita tecta Crotonis*; cf. also Ov. *Met.* 1.218 *et inhospita tecta*
tyranni, Val. 4.58 hospita moenia Troiae. The expression aditum or aditus praebere is fairly common (e.g. Liv. 25.36.5, Ov. Her. 3.3.91, Sen. Ben. 1.9.2, Tac. Ann. 13.4.2).

716-7. et protinus ille tyranno / nuntius extinctae miserando uulnere prolis: after the arrival of Thoas and Euneus, news of Opheltes’ death had reached the palace of Nemea, as we have been told in 638-9 et iam sacrifici subitus per tecta Lycurgi / nuntius implerat lacrimis ipsumque domumque, to which ille ... nuntius clearly refers back. In the new context, the word nuntius may also remind us of the Euripidean messenger who brings about the reunion in the Hypsipyle (cf. Soerink 2014: 183; cf. OLD s.v. 3).

Eden (1998: 324 n. 13) quotes nuntius extinctae ... prolis as an example of Statius’ bold usage of the objective genitive; the TLL does not yet include nuntius, but the syntax does not strike me as unusual.

et: Hall conjectures cum. Admittedly, after the main clause (with pluperfect praebuerant), Statius could have continued with a cum inuersum. But the MSS clearly read et, not cum, and in Latin poetry paratactic et (or atque, -que etc.) are often used to the same effect as cum inuersum, especially in Vergil. See K-St ii.166-7, 340 and cf. 8.760 atque (where Hall conjectures ecce), Aen. 2.692-3 uix ea fatus erat senior, subitoque fragore / intonuit laeuum, 2.705-6 dixerat ille, et iam per moenia clarior ignis / auditur, 4.663-4 dixerat, atque ... aspiciant.

tyranno: Greek τίφασμας is not equivalent to ‘tyrant’ in the modern sense, but in Roman times tyrannus is associated more and more with cruel kings (see OLD s.v. 3); thus Ovid ‘limits its use to genuine ‘tyrants,” Thracian monsters like Tereus, fearsome gods like Dis of the Underworld, and rulers who, in their context, are behaving violently’ (Anderson on Ov. Met. 1.218-9). Despite that development, however, in poetry the word can still be applied neutrally to kings of the Heroic Age, as Statius does here; in 3.570 it is applied to Adrastus. In the Thebaid it occurs seven times, and is also applied to the truly tyrannical Eteocles (3.82 trucis ora tyranni). Valerius similarly uses tyrannus of both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ kings (see Kleywegt on Val. 1.244).

miserando uulnere: described in gruesome detail in 596-8.

718-9. ergo adsunt comites ... regique fauent: Thoas and Euneus are amongst Lycurgus’ companions, mentioned in 5.658 comites, and support the king in his conflict with the Seven. They do not know, of course, that the woman whom Lycurgus want to punish is, in fact, their own mother (cf. Von Moisy 1971: 35 ‘Die Söhne Hypsipyles ... ergreifen ..., ohne die tieferen Zusammenhänge zu durchschauen, gegen ihre eigene Mutter die Partie ihres Gastgebers’). Scaffai 2002: 249 speculatively suggests that the sons’ support for the execution of Hypsipyle may be ‘un residuo’ of Euripides’ play.

pro fors et caeca futuri / mens hominum!: the parenthesis points to the tragic irony of the situation, as Euneus and Thoas support Lycurgus in his attempt to kill their mother (cf. Georgacopoulou 2005: 132). Von Moisy (1971: 35) writes that ‘die Betrachtung über die Blindheit des Menschengeschlechtes [ist] an keiner für das ganze Epos oder doch größere Teile auszuschlaggebenden Stelle eingefügt, sie soll nur einen paradoxen Zug des Einzelgeschehens unterstreichen’. Blindness, however, literal (Oedipus’) and metaphorical (e.g. 2.116 caecumque cupidine regni, 489-90 o caeca nocentum / consilia, 7.48 caecumque nefas), runs through the poem like a scarlet thread and has thematic relevance ‘für das ganze Epos’ (cf. e.g. Lovatt 2005: 93).

For the topos of human ignorance cf. 2.92-3 pro gnara nihil mortalita fati / corda sui, Aen. 4.65 heu uatum ignarae mentes, 8.730 miratur rerumque ignarus imagine gaudet and 10.501 with Harrison’s note. Paradoxically, humans with knowledge of the future tend to be blind (see Graziosi 2002).

As Michler (1914: 21) has noticed, Statius’ immediate model is Luc. 2.14-5 sit caeca futuri / mens hominum fati, which itself reworks Aen. 10.501 nescia mens hominum fati sortisque
viturae, which in turn incorporates the Lucretian combination mens hominum (see Harrison ad loc.). Whereas Lucan perverts Vergil’s phrase into a wish, Von Moisy (1971: 35 n. 1) points out, Statius’ ‘Anwendungsart’ has more in common with Vergil, who similarly pities his characters.

**fors**: Hall reads sors, which is found in one primary and a few secondary MSS (the letters are often confused, esp. ß and f in Gothic minuscule script). The parallel in 12.382 pro fors ignara (where the MSS are unanimous) supports fors; in support of Hall’s conjecture one might point to Aen. 10.501 nescia mens hominum fati sortisque futurae. And although the two words are not quite synonymous, it is difficult to decide which word is to be preferred.

**719-20. sed Lemnos ad aures / ut primum dictusque Thoas**: ‘but as soon as the saying of “Lemnos” and “Thoas” [had reached] their ears’. The clause is elliptical, which accords well with the rapid sequence of events, and we must supply something like peruenit (cf. e.g. Val. 8.134 uenit ... ad aures); dictus is a dominant participle used ἀπὸ κοινοῦ with both Lemnos and Thoas. Alternatively, one might connect ad aures with dictus [sc. est] (‘as soon as “Lemnos” and “Thoas” [had been] spoken to their ears’).

Although it would not be difficult to imagine Euneus and Thoas catching the names in the tumultuous crowd, ‘Lemnos’ and ‘Thoas’ indeed occur in direct speech in the confrontation between Lycurgus and the Seven (650-90), where the names are spoken by Lycurgus and Tydeus respectively (658 faxo omnis fabula Lemni and 675 genitore Thoas)! It is precisely these words, then, which Hypsipyle’s sons overhear.

Once upon a time Hall (1992: 292-3) conjectured latusque for dictusque, but in his 2008 edition he wisely rejects the idea (‘Hall olim’).

**per tela manusque / irruerunt**: when Euneus and Thoas hear the names and begin to understand the bizarre situation in which they find themselves, they immediately force their way through the crowd of armed soldiers. The phrase tela manusque is Vergilian (cf. Aen. 6.57 and 10.433); Statius uses it also in 1.655; Michler (1914: 21) compares Luc. 1.681 tela manusque. The wording lends their movement the air of a martial exploit; the verb also associates violent motion.

irruerunt: the MSS reading irruerant has rightly raised eyebrows. After the ut primum clause, one expects a perfect or historical present, in line with the preceding adsunt (718) and fauent (719) and the following diripiant and mutant (722). Therefore I follow Gronovius’ conjecture irruerunt (perfect), as does Hall. There are numerous parallels for the scansion – ērun (e.g. Aen. 2.774 with Austin, Ecl. 4.61 with Coleman, Ov. Met. 6.617 abstulērun), also in Statius (e.g. 3.302, 5.274, 7.801 with Smolenaars, 10.688 with Williams, 12.167 with Pollmann). Originally there were two different endings, –ērun and –ēre, which were combined in classical –ērun.

**721-2. matremque auidis complexibus ambo / diripiant**: although embraces are natural enough in reunion scenes (see Collard-Cropp-Gibert on Eur. Hyps. fr. 765a), it follows the Euripidean model, cf. Hyps. fr. 765a παξικαλλ’, ὁ τέκνον, ὕλενας, which ‘must belong to Hyps[ipyle] in the reunion-scene’ (Collard-Cropp-Gibert ad loc.).

The embrace is seriously troubled by auidis and especially the violent diripiant (‘tear apart’). It is typical of Statius that even affectionate gestures contain the seeds of violence and aggression; cf. 3.294 laedit in amplexu, where Mars ‘does harm to Venus even when he gets sexy with her’ (Hershkowitz 1997: 46; cf. Feeney 1991: 370), the embrace of Jocasta and Polynices in 7.493-6 with the ‘rather drastic expression’ raptam (Smolenaars ad loc.), and Ganiban’s (2007: 207-12) argument that Argia’s and Antigone’s embraces of Polynices in book 12 are contaminated with furor. And does auidis have erotic overtones, suggesting oedipal desires in Hypsipyle’s sons (cf. 715n. causa uiae genetrix and the erotic overtones of teris in 7.499)?
For the *iunctura of auidis complexibus* cf. Lucr. 2.1066 and 5.470 *auido complexu*; cf. also *Ach*. 1.172-3 (Achilles embracing his mother Thetis) *exceptamque auidis circumligat ulnis, / iam grauis amplexi iamque aequis uertice matri.*

**722. alternaque ad pectora mutant**: an example of Statius’ ‘curiously strained form of expression’, according to Duff (1964: 394 with n. 7), but his translation (‘they hold exchange of breasts’) is even more curious. The Latin simply means ‘and they take her to their breasts in turn’; the object is still *matrem* (cf. Legras 1905: 321 ‘inter se amplexentur’). Statius is fond of the verb *mutare*, which he uses with notable freedom (see Damsté 1908b, Smolenaars on 7.206 *mutare animas*).

The phrase is disturbingly reminiscent of Eteocles and Polynices in 1.138-9 *alterni placuit sub legibus anni / exsilio mutare ducem*; cf. also 2.444 *mutent*, 10.800-1 *alterni ... Oedipodionii mutent diademata fratres*, McNelis 2007: 43 on 1.708 *quae mutent sceptrum*). Traditionally, Euneus and Thoas are interpreted as good and loving brothers, as ‘anti-Oedipodionii’ (e.g. McNelis 2007: 92-3), but the echo undermines such an interpretation. Perhaps Hypsipyle’s sons, eager to hold and unable to share, are not so different from Eteocles and Polynices after all?

**723-4. illa uelut rupes immoto saxea uisu / haeret**: the rock simile is closely modelled on two Vergilian similes, which both look back, ultimately, to *Il*. 15.618-20. The first is *Aen*. 7.586-90: when Latinus offers ‘passive resistance to [the] mass verbal assault’ (Horsfall *ad loc.*) of his people, who demand war against the Trojans, he is famously compared to a motionless rock (*Aen*. 7.586-90):

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ille uelut pelago rupes immota resistit,
ut pelago rupes magno ueniente fragore,
quae sese multis circumlatrantibus undis
mole tenet; scopolui nequiquam et spumea circum
saxa fremunt laterique inlisa refunditur alga.
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The second is *Aen*. 10.693-6: when Mezentius is under attack from the Etruscans, he is compared to a rock in a simile that has much in common with the first one:

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ille (uelut rupes uastum quae prodit in aequor,
obua uentorum furiiis expostaque ponto,
uii cunctam atque minas perfert caelique marisque
ipsa immota manens) prolem Dolichaonis Hebrum
sternit humi
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These two similes also underlie *Theb*. 9.91-4, where Hippomedon is compared to a rock (see Dewar *ad loc* with more parallels). On the literary background of the Vergilian similes and their interrelation see Harrison on *Aen*. 10.693-6.

The Vergilian models are disturbing in as much as they suggest that Hypsipyle is somehow ‘under attack’ from her sons. Strictly speaking, of course, the *tertium comparationis* is the immoveability of Hypsipyle, but the martial contexts of the intertexts contaminate our happy reunion scene with overtones of violence (cf. 721-2nn.).

Peter Heslin has suggested (Statius Workshop, University of Nottingham, January 2010), in the context of his argument that *Thebaid* book 5 should be considered a self-contained Callimachean ‘epyllion’ within the epic, that the simile looks back to Cat. 64.61 *saxea ut effigies bacchantis*. Given Statius’ unmistakable allusion to Vergil, the idea carries little conviction.

Statius’ slightly pleonastic addition of *saxea* may be inspired by Luc. 4.157 *saxea rupes*; note also *saxa in Aen*. 7.590 (see above). For *haeret* (also in the related simile in 9.90) see OLD s.v. 8 ‘to be unable to move’.

**expertis non audet credere diuis**: I cannot improve upon LP’s note: ‘incredula enim diu sunt uota laetitiae. tarde enim fidem adhibemus, cum quae optamus eueniunt’. The reason for
Hypsipyle’s non audet is fear of disappointment, cf. Liv. 32.11.5 cum magis uellet credere quam auderet, mixtunque gaudio et metu animum gereret, Sil. 12.735-6 quod credere magno / non audent haerente metu, where the Romans dare not believe that Hannibal is really gone. One might also read the words as a metaphorical comment on the unlikelihood of the whole situation (cf. e.g. Ov. Met. 6.561 uix ausim credere).

expertis ... diuis: literally ‘the gods whom she has experienced’. But how exactly are we to understand the phrase? That depends on how we read the participle expertis. (a) concessive: Hypsipyle cannot believe what is happening ‘although she has experienced the gods’, that is, although the gods have just reunited her with her sons; (b) causal: Hypsipyle cannot believe, ‘because she has experienced the gods’, that is, because in the past the gods used to bring nothing but misfortunes (cf. Lesueur ‘[Hypsipyle] n’ose pas se fier aux dieux qu’elle ne connaît que trop’). Personally I would prefer the first interpretation, which suits Statius’ taste for paradox; but the matter cannot be decided. For experior with ‘gods’ as object see TLL s.v. 1675.77-76.5 and cf. Ov. Trist. 3.2.27 di quos experior nimium constanter iniquos (which might support the second interpretation).

725. ut uero: like other epicists Statius uses uero almost exclusively in formulaic combinations with monosyllables as tum, cum, ut etc. (see Axelson 1945: 86-7 and cf. 656 illa autem); an exception is 7.207.

et uultus: the elliptical sentence lacks a verb, so that it is unclear how exactly lines 725-6 should be construed. Sandström conjectures ad uultus: ‘when the swords and the cloaks [came] to her eyes’, i.e. ‘when she saw’. Admittedly, uultus sometimes means ‘the face (as the part involved in looking)’ (see OLD s.v. 3), but in the present context it undoubtedly refers to the faces of Euneus and Thoas. It seems best, therefore, to maintain the MSS reading et and supply something like apparent ei: ‘when both their faces and their tokens [became clear to her].’

We are invited to imagine Hypsipyle taking a closer look at her sons, perhaps recognising features of their father in their faces. In her Ovidian letter to Jason, Hypsipyle writes that Euneus and Thoas are like him, with one significant exception: si quaeiris, cui sint similes, cognosceris illis. / fallere non norunt; cetera patris habent (Ov. Hor. 6.123-4). Sons resembling their fathers is something of a topos in classical literature, cf. 7.291-308, Hes. Op. 235, Cat. 61.214 sit suo similis patri, cf. Sen. Herc.F. 1016-7, Ph. 646-7, Tr. 461-8 (Astyanax and Hector), esp. 464-5 hos uultus meus / habebat Hector (cf. 647-8). Readers may wonder whether the two brothers look identical (as e.g. the twins Amphion and Zethus in Val. 1.367-8 quos edidit Hypso / nec potuit similis uoluitue ediscere uultus); in 6.343-4 geminis eadem omnia: uultus, / currus, equus, uestes we learn that that is indeed the case.

725-6. et signa Argoa relictis / enibus: ‘the signs of the Argo on the swords left behind’, i.e. the swords left behind by Jason when he left Lemnos (his departure from the island is described in 5.476-85). The signa are probably to be imagined on the hilt (cf. Cic. Fat. 5 has ... in capulo quadrigulas, Val. Max. 1.8 ext. 9 Pausanias in capulo gladii ... quadrigam habuit caelatom, and the sword that identifies Hippolytus in Sen. Ph. 899-900 regale patriis asperum signis ebur / capulo refulget), although one might also think of the sheath or the sword-belt (cf. Heracles’ τελαμών in Od. 11.609-14). The phrase signa Argoa is most naturally interpreted as a depiction of the ship itself, although it could, more loosely, refer to any depiction relating to the Argo(nauts), or even simply the name Argo in letters. On the literary background see 710-30n. Brouwer curiously mistranslates enibus as ‘schilden’ (shields).

Argo: cf. Eur. Med. 477 Αργοῦν σιάρος, Andr. 794 Αργών δοράς; unsurprisingly the adjective occurs repeatedly in Apollonius Rhodius, e.g. 2.211 Αργψῆς ὑπὶ νηρός. In Latin it is first attested in Prop. 3.22.13 qua rudis Argoa natat inter saxa columba; cf. also Hor. Ep. 16.57 non huc Argoo contendit remige pinus, [Verg.] Cul. 137 Argoae naut, Val. 3.3 Argoa manus, 6.116 Argoaque uela (with Wijsman’s note). Statius will use it again in 6.342-3 omine dictus /
Euneos Argoo; cf. also S. 4.6.42 Argoos ... remos and Ach. 1.156-7 olim equidem, Argoos pinus cum Thessala reges / hac vehetur.

726. atque umeris amborum intextus Jason: Damsté (1908: 389) convincingly argues that umeris is used metonymically for the cloaks hanging from their shoulders (‘pro tota veste’), comparing 6.835-6 terrificos umeris Aetolus amictus / exuitur, 10.648 perdere Sidonios umeris ridebat amictus; cf. Scaffai 2002: 250 ‘i mantelli’. Woven into these these cloaks is an image of Jason; cf. Ganymede on Cloanthus’ cloak in Aen. 5.252 intextusque puer (one of the models of Theb. 1.544-51; see Newlands 2012: 76). Alternatively, one could imagine the letters of his name, as does Georgacopoulou (2005: 132 n. 66 ‘inscription brodée sur les vêtements’); for text embroidered on a cloak cf. the carmen miserabile that Philomela embroiders on the cloak for her sister Procne in Ov. Met. 6.576-82, esp. purpureasque notus filis intexuit albis, / indicium sceleris (in Eur. Ion 1146 ἐνθ’ ὑπανταὶ γράμμασαι τοιαὶ’ ὑφαί the word γράμμασαι does not denote letters). Augoustakis (2010: 57) imagines ‘the name of Jason tattooed on their shoulders’; my knowledge of tattoos (both ancient and modern) is limited, but intextus hardly allows such an interpretation. In Val. 3.275-6 a mother recognises her (dead) sons by their cloaks.

For embroidered clothes cf. 7.225, 352, Aen. 5.249-57, 9.582, Val. 2.408-17, Sil. 15.425-32. For twin cloaks cf. Castor and Pollux in Val. 1.427-32. Since weaving is a well-known metaphor for poetic composition, the cloaks may also call attention to Statius’ poetic ‘interweaving’ of the stories.

cesserunt luctus: cf. S. 2.7.133 cedat luctus. See OLD s.v. cedo 4c ‘(of abstr. subj., esp. feelings, desires) to pass away, depart’, cf. e.g. 5.426-6 postquam tumour iraque cessit / ululabatur. The words correspond with 710-2 at the beginning of the passage (ring composition).

727-8. turbataque munere tanto / corruit: munere tanto rings with tanto ... uoto in 710. For Hypsipyle’s fainting under the weight of emotions cf. e.g. Ach. 1.537 tremefactus corruit, Cic. Q.fr. 2.8.2 paene ille timore, ego risu corruui. In the epic genre, characters usually collapse under the weight of grief, e.g. Andromache watching Hector’s body being dragged away by Achilles in Il. 22.466-76, Evander saying farewell to Pallas in Aen. 8.584 famuli conlapsum in tecta ferebant or Jason’s mother in Val. 1.348-9 ille suo collapsam pectore matrem / sustinuit.

atque alio maduerunt lumina fletu: LP ‘quae paulo ante luctu flebat, nunc gaudio. alio ergo fletu scilicet gaudio’; interestingly, he then gives a parallel from comedy (Ter. Adelph. 409 lacrimo gaudio); cf. 710-30n. The motif recurs in 7.493 lacrimis gaudentibus, when Jocasta meets Polynices (see Smolenaaars ad loc.). For tears of joy cf. S. 5.2.10, 5.3.217, Curt. 7.8.4 laeti ergo et manantibus gaudio lacrimitis, Liv. 27.17.16 lacrimantibus gaudio, Eur. Hel. 645 (Menelaus reunited with the real Helen) ἐμὲ δὲ χαμονᾶς δάκφα, and the Dutch tv-show Spoorloos. On fletus for ‘tears’ see Smolenaaars on 7.528-9. Lehaneur (1878: 112) notes that the clausula lumina fletu(s) has precedents in Cat. 64.242, 68.55, Ov. Met. 4.674, Val. 7.483 (cf. also 9.601, 12.49, S. 5.132), and suggests (ibid. 17) that our line underlies Claud. De raptu 1.268 maduerunt fletibus ora.

729-30. In reaction to the reunion, Bacchus sends ‘bacchisches Jauchzen und Pauken-donner’ (Götting 1969: 14), maenadic cries, drums and cymbals, as ‘a sign that it is his hand that has produced the miracle’ (Vessey 1973: 190). The Bacchic lines correspond with 712 tu gentis conditor Euhan at the beginning of the passage, creating ring composition. The vocabulary also echoes the description of the riots in 5.690-8 (ululante ~ 697 ululatibus, tumultu ~ 692 tumultus, terga ~ 698 terga, although the word is used in a different sense): the cries of fear and grief have become cries of joy and celebration, not unlike Hypsipyle’s tears have become tears of joy (728 alio ... fletu). Götting (1969: 14) connects the lines with Bacchus’ epiphany in 5.265-86. Georgacopoulou (2005: 132 n. 700) discerns ring compo-
sition with the ‘epiphany’ of Hypsipyle towards the end of book 4, where the Seven erroneously mistake Hypsipyle for a goddess, while she also regards Bacchus’ ‘epiphany’ as a double of the ‘epiphany’ of Euneus and Thoas (ibid. 131). In my view, the lines rather constitute an inverted echo of 4.668-9 aerae tympanaque et biforem reticere tumultum / imperat, attonitas qui circum plurimus aures, where Bacchus orders his followers to be silent: here his thiasos makes music again. On Bacchus’ celestial signs as epic equivalent to Dionysus’ appearance ex machina in Euripides’ Hysipyle, marking the completion of the Euripidean plot, see §2.3 (cf. Soerink 2014: 178-9). Certainly Bacchus’ appearances structure the Nemean episode, which ends with Bacchus and Jupiter in book 7, so that the Nemean episode as a whole is ‘umrahmt von dem Auftreten des Gottes’ (see Götting 1969: 11, 128).

We are not told whether Hypsipyle, her sons or the Argives recognise the god’s signals. According to Brown ‘the Argives fail to recognise the god, and remain unaware that he has contrived the retardation’ (1994: 60; cf. Georgacopoulou 2005: 131).

On the intertextual level, we may recall Val. 2.259-60 voces tholus et trieterica reddunt / aera sonum fixaetque fremunt in limine lynces, where the sounds ‘symbolize Bacchus’ promise to help Hypsipyle and Thoas’ (Poortvliet ad loc.). Götting 1969: 14 n. 11 sees influence of Aen. 8.523-6 ni signum caelo Cytherea dedisset aperto. / namque improuiso uibratus ab aethere fulgor / cum sonitu uenit et ruere omnia uisa repente, / Tyrrenhusque tubae mugire. For divine reactions to human (re)unions more generally, we may also compare Athena prolonging the night after the reunion of Odysseus and Penelope in Odyssey 23, or the celestial signs during the ‘marriage’ of Aeneas and Dido in the cave in Aeneid 4.

addita signa polo: sc. sunt. ‘In addition there were signs in heaven’. It seems best to take polo as ablativeus loci, rather than dative with addita. For polus in the sense caelum see Hevel on 1.29.

laetoque ululante tumultu: for ululare as an expression of joy cf. Ov. Met. 3.528 Liber adest, festique fremunt ululatibus agri, Luc. 6.261 laetis ululare triumphis and perhaps Val. 2.536-7 ulularunt (where the interpretation is disputed; see Poortvliet ad loc.). The word might recall the famous cries of the nymphs after the union of Dido and Aeneas (Aen. 4.166-8, esp. summoque ulularunt uertice Nympheae). For tumultus of music cf. 4.668 and 7.631. Augoustakis (2010) 57 suggests that ‘[t]he word pairing of ululante tumultu […] anticipates Eurydice’s lament in 6.137 longis … ululatibus, as the cries of joy and of grief set off one another in the context of Opheltes’ death and of Hypsipyle’s reunion with her sons’.

tergaque et aera: i.e. drums (tympana) made of an animal’s hide and cymbals (cymbala) – or perhaps castanets (crotala) – made of copper or bronze. Like the double pipes (cf. 4.668), these are traditional instruments of Bacchus’ thiasos, e.g. Eur. Cyc. 205 κρόταλα χαλκοῦ τωμ-πάνων τ’ ἀγάμματα, Ov. Met. 4.29-30 in pulsaque tympana palmis / concavaque aera sonant longoque foramine buxus, Val. 2.266-7 aeraeque …/ tympanaque. For the metonymic use of aes see OLD s.v. 6 ‘instrument made of copper or bronze’, e.g. Lucr. 2.637 in numerum pulsare aeribus aera; for tergam ‘drum’ see OLD s.v. 7b, e.g. Cat. 63.10 quatien … terga tauri tennis cauda digitis.

The pairing of aera and terga first occurs in Ovid’s Fasti, in the passage on the origins of the Megalesia: to drown the cries of baby Jupiter, the Curetes and Corybantes made music with their helmets and shields, Fast. 4.211-3 res latuit, priscique manent imitamina facti: / aera deae comites raueaque terga mouent. / cymbala pro galeis, pro scutis tympana pulsant (Deipser 1881: 15 notes the parallel). Whereas Ovid clarifies aera and terga in the following line, Statius’ audience are expected to understand the metonymy without help. Statius is rather fond of the combination, cf. 8.221 gemina aera sonant Idaeaque terga, Ach. 1.714-5 aera … Bacecheaque terga, 828-9 quater aera Rheae, quater enthea pulsant / terga manu. Cf. also 2.77-8 where it is said that the cymbals (aera) drown the sound of the drums (taurinos … pulsus); see Mulder ad loc. for more parallels.
motas crepuere per auras: the participle motas should be understood proleptically (see 708n. cadenti); cf. Ov. Met. 8.202 motoque pependit in aura.

731-53. Amphiaraurus’ speech

After the reunion of Hypsipyle and her sons, book 5 ends with a ‘brief but uplifting’ (Vessey 1973: 190) speech of Amphiaraurus, who explains the events in Nemea from the grand scheme of things. Mouthpiece of Apollo, the seer proclaims that the drought and Opheltes’ serpentine death are no accidents, but momentous events destined by fate and willed by the gods, with the implication that Hypsipyle is not to blame. He explains that Opheltes’ death is connected with the fate of the Seven against Thebes; this connection is articulated in Opheltes’ nomen omen Archemorus (see §6.3). His speech thus ties the events in Nemea to the plot of the epic and reminds us of the expedition against Thebes (Fiehn 1917: 8 compares the end of book 6 ‘quo exitu poeta a ludis ad bellum reducit’ with Adrastus’ ominous arrow). To honour the child, who has died in their token, he proclaims that games must be held. These games will delay the expedition, which leads Amphiaraurus to utter the wish that Apollo may cause ever more mora (cf. §4.1). Turning to Opheltes’ parents, the seer bids them not to shed tears: their son has become an immortal deity! Opheltes’ deification provides consolation for his parents, as the reunion with Thoas and Euneus has provided consolation for Hypsipyle (Helm 1892: 174). How the Seven and Opheltes’ parents respond to Amphiaraurus’ words, Statius does not tell: with finierat (753) his speech ‘remains hanging in the air’ (Markus 2004: 116; cf. Ganiban 2013: 251), as nightfall wraps the book in darkness.

Legras (loc. cit.) rightly connects the end of book 5 with the ends of books 1, 2 and 4, which are all rounded off with ‘une prière sonorant et brillante’ (ibid. 155): Adrastus’ prayer to Apollo in book 1, Tydeus’ prayer to Minerva in book 2, and the prayer of the anonymous Argive chieftain at the end of book 4. These speeches constitute a clear pattern of closure in the first half of the epic, as the subsequent deaths of Amphiaraurus, Tydeus, Parthenopaeus, Capaneus and Oedipus’ sons structure its second half. The end of book 3 is connected through various central themes, such as delay and consolation (cf. 3.712-21).

Within the Nemean episode, Amphiaraurus’ speech, which precedes and motivates Opheltes’ funeral and the games in book 6, has a structural counterpart in the speech of Adrastus that closes the Nemean episode (7.90-104 with Smolenaars) – where, curiously, Adrastus ‘seems to suggests that Opheltes’ worship as deus is not guaranteed but is contingent upon the Argives’ victory in the coming war’ (Ganiban 2013: 251). Our passage also picks up 4.725-9 (also the first occurrence of the name Achemorus) and 5.536-7, which anticipate the foundation of the Nemean Games in the child’s honour.

Pace Legras (1905: 283) Amphiaraurus’ speech is neither a prayer nor an ‘oraison funèbre’: the seer does not address Apollo, the god addresses the Seven and Opheltes’ parents through his seer. According to Pache (2004: 112) Amphiaraurus ‘relates a prophecy given to him by Apollo’ (my italics). However, no such prophecy has been mentioned, and the present tense manifestat (734) suggests that the god explains things hic et nunc. What underlies the word ‘prophecy’ is Pache’s idea that Amphiaraurus’ speech is ‘very much reminiscent of Herakles relating the prophecy given to him by Athena’ in Callimachus’ Victoria Berenices (fr. 54i Harder), because both ‘concern the foundation of the Nemean Games’. I should like to point out that the similarities stop right there. On Callimachus and Statius’ Nemean episode see §§4 and 5.

The scene clearly reworks Euripides’ Hypsipyle, where Amphiaraurus also gives an interpretation to the child’s alternative name Archemorus. The context, however, is different, as it is integrated in the long agōn between Hypsipyle and Eurydice. Unfortunately, the corresponding lines are damaged (fr. 757.109-19):
... the seer is traditionally the son of Oeclides and Hypermnestra (e.g. Statius took his genealogy see further). Amphiaraus' wish for delay ad infinitum is a variation on the old epic tradition? It is also conceivable, of course, that Statius took his inspiration from Bacchylides directly.

Amphiaraus’ wish for infinite mora may also have roots in the literary tradition. In Bacchylides (see §1.3.2), Amphiaraus tries to persuade the Seven to go back to Argos, which may be an element taken from the Cyclic Thebaid. Perhaps Amphiaraus’ wish for delay ad infinitum is a variation on the old epic tradition? It is also conceivable, of course, that Statius took his inspiration from Bacchylides directly.

731.  tunc pius Oeclides: although an alternative tradition makes him the son of Apollo (Hyg. Fab. 70.1 Amphiaraus Oeeei,uel ut alii auctores dicunt Apollinis, 128.1 Amphiaraus Ooeeli uel Apollinis filius), the seer is traditionally the son of Oecles and Hypermnestra (e.g. A. Th. 609 ν’ν Οικλέως, Eur. Suppl. 925 τον Οικλέως τον γεγενναον τόκον); in Euripides he introduces himself to Hypsipyle as πατέρος Οικλέως .......Ι Αμφιάραως (fr. 752h.42; cf. fr. 757.47). Amphiaraus’ (great)grandfather is Melampus (cf. 3.45 3 iam senior ... Melampus). On his genealogy see further Ten Kate (1955: 63-4).

The patronymic is attested a few times in Greek poetry (e.g. Hes. fr. 197.6 W-M Αμφιαράων Οικλείδαο άνακτος, Pi. N. 10.9 μάντιν Οικλείδαον, Aesch. Th. 382, Bacch. 9.16); in Latin it is first attested in Ovid (Met. 8.316-7 adhuc a coniuge tutus / Oeclides with Bömer, Ars 3.12-3 si scelere Oeclides Talaioniae Eryphylea / uius et in uius ad Styga unen equis). Statius uses it at 3.470, 620, 6.445, 518, 8.146.

For Amphiaraus’ pietas cf. 6.374 (Amphiaraus and Admetus) ambo pii carique ambo, 378-9 hic tripodum comes et pius artis alumnus / aetheriae. In Vessey’s Stoic reading Amphiaraus becomes a figura of ‘priestly piety’ (1973: 66), which is problematic in Masterson (2005).
For Amphiaraus’ background and role in the poem see further Ten Kate (1955: 63-81), Smolenaaers on 7.690-823.

tunc pius + molossic name echoes Vergil’s tum pius Aeneas (Aen. 5.26, 685, 10.783, 12.175; cf. also Ov. Met. 13.640 tum pius Anchises, Val. 4.438 tum pius Oeagri), which might be a reason to prefer tum (Hall) over tunc (see Hall’s orthographical index s.v. tum).

ut prima silentia uulgi / mollor ira dedit: ‘as soon as the softening of the crowd’s anger gave silence’. The adjectival mollior is best taken as a dominant adjective, as it is the softening of their ira, not their ira itself, which produces the silence. For the adverbial use of prima cf. 4.95 ut primae strepueere tubae (with Parkes’ note), where it is not used metri causa (cf. also 658n. citii). It seems best to take uulgi – the genitive goes ἄγα ταυνά with both silentia and ira – as a reference to the Argive troops: now that Hypsipyle has been saved, their ira (cf. 694 irae) subsides (for uulgis applied to soldiers cf. e.g. Ov. Met. 13.1; cf. also 700n. uirum); the word is deliberately vague, however, and may include the population of Nemea as well. The silence of the mortal multitude throws into relief the divine message of Apollo (for uulgis in a similarly religious contrast cf. Hor. Carm. 3.1.1 odi profanum uulgus). The subsiding of anger recalls 680 cunctante modestior ira, where Lycurgus’ ira makes place for a more controlled reaction.

placidasque accessūs ad aures: ‘and [as soon as there was] approach to their tranquil ears’; see TLL s.v. accessus 288.66-82 ‘facultas, occasio accedendi’. The collocation placidas ... aures is attested once before, Ov. Pont. 1.2.127 ergo tam placidas orator missus ad aures, where the reference is to the ears of Augustus.

MSS are divided between accessit and accessus; the latter is certainly correct: accessit would leave –que hanging in the air, and accedo is not itself used as uerbum dicendi (cf. Cic. Ver. 3.133 si tibi aliquis ad aurem accessisset et dixisset etc., Petr. 25.1 cum haec dicercet, ad aurem eius Psyche ridens accessisset, et cum dixisset nesio quid, ‘ita, ita’ inquit Quartilla ‘bene admonuisti’). Moreover (pace Wilson 1896: 14) accessus has a strong parallel in S. 5.1.18-20 sed cum plaga recens et adhuc in uulnere primo / nigra domus, miseram quis tunc accessus ad aurem / coniugis orbati? Note also the similar use of aditus (e.g. Cic. Dom. 3 aditum ad aures, Quint. Inst. 4.1.46 aditum ... ad aures); the two words are combined in Sen. Clem. 1.13.4 sermone adfabulis, aditus accessuque facilis. The error accessit might be explained as an attempt to furnish the main clause with a verb, although ellipse of uerba dicendi is common enough.

733-4. audite, o dactor Nemeae lectique potentes / Inachidae: the first part of the speech is addressed to Lycurgus and the Seven. The spondaic rhythm and elevated vocabulary create an atmosphere of ceremonious solemnity. The wording is highly Vergilian. For audite o + vocative cf. Aen. 3.103 audite, o proceres and 9.234-5 (Nisus’ speech) audite o mentibus aequis, / Aeneadae with similar enjambed patronymic. For lectique potentes cf. Aen. 8.119-20 lectos ... duces, 179 lecti iuvenes, 10.213 lecti proceres and 9.146 sed uos, o lecti. The poetic dactor is also frequent in Vergil (23 times); attested only once in Accius (fr. 522) and once in Lucretius (1.86), it has an unmistakable archaic ring (‘sonantius est quam duces’, Servius notes on Aen. 2.14); see Smolenaaers on 7.375-6, Austin on Aen. 2.14, Harrison on Aen. 10.185, Zissos on Val. 1.164.

Nemeae: on the various forms of the name see 581n. Nemees.

734. Inachidae: ‘sons of Inachus’, i.e. the Argives (cf. 511n. Inachio). In Latin Inachides is first attested in Ov. Met. 1.753 (Epaphus, son of Io, daughter of Inachus); in Greek e.g. Eur. IA 1089, Callim. Aet. fr. 54a.2 Ταγίδαμος with Harder’s note. Statius often uses Inachidae to refer to the ‘Argives’ in the limited sense of the Seven against Thebes, although sensu stricto not all of them are Argives; cf. e.g. 3.366, 4.648, 6.3 (with Fortgens), 7.520, 9.3. Such sounding patronymics, a hallmark of the epic style (witness e.g. Plautus’ parodic Mil. 14 Bumbomachides Clutomestoridysarchides), often occur in enjambed position.
quaes certus agi manifestat Apollo: the seer Amphiaraus presents himself as mouthpiece of his god Apollo, who has foreknowledge of the future (cf. 1.705-7); certus makes clear that his audience should not doubt the revelation that follows. For the iunctura cf. Hor. Carm. 1.7.28 certus enim promisit Apollo (with N-H). In combination with Apollo, manifestat recalls 1.494-6 sensit manifesto numine ductos / affore, quos nexis ambagibus augur Apollo / portendi generis ... ediderat, where Adrastus recognises Polynices and Tydeus as his future sons-in-law (alluding to Aeneas as future son-in-law of Latinus, cf. Aen. 11.232 manifesto numine). Here, again, a prophecy (cf. 647) is fulfilled. Translators understand agi as an infinitive dependent upon manifestat, e.g. SB ‘what sure Apollo manifests for us to do’ (my italics); if correct, agi might pun on the games (ἀγίς) that Apollo wants them to celebrate (cf. OLD s.v. ago 30). However, I do not find parallels for such an infinitive after manifestare, and manifestat is not synonymous with imperat. I believe that we should take quae ... agi as an acc. and inf. construction (so OLD s.v. manifesto 2, TLL s.v. 306.49-50): ‘what sure Apollo reveals is happening’ (cf. OLD s.v. ago 19e ‘(pass.) to be done, happen, come to pass’, e.g. Met. 3.527 responsaque uatis aguntur).

735. iste quidem ... luctus adest: translations tend to obscure adest in favour of the participle haud olim indebitus (e.g. SB ‘This sorrow is owed to Argive arms from time long past’); Amphiaraus’ Latin, however, emphasises the fact that the grief and mourning, which had been foretold in the oracle (645-7), have now become reality. iste is not pejorative, but simply connects luctus with Amphiaraus’ addressee Lycurgus.

Argolicis haud olim indebitus armis: on the connection between Opheltes’ death and the Argive expedition see §6.3. We are reminded of the oracle in 647 prima, Lycurge, dabis Dircaeo funera bello; the antiquity of the oracle (645 uetusti monitus) is here expressed in olim.

The financial metaphor of debits and credits is often applied by Vergil to fate (which here follows immediately in recto descendunt limite Parcae); cf. Aen. 6.66 (see following note), Servius on Aen. 6.714 ‘deberi enim dicuntur quae fato certissime euentura sunt’, Aen. 9.107-8 ergo aderat promissa dies et tempora Parcae / debita complerant, where ‘Fate is thought of as creditor’ (Hardie ad loc.), 12.794-5 (with Tarrant), and esp. Eden’s extensive note on Aen. 8.374-5 dum bello Argolicis uastabant Pergama reges / debita, who also notes the post-Vergilian usage of debitus for fataliter debitus (cf. Heuvel on 1.80).

Argolicis: see 554n.

haud: see 632n.

indebitus: cf. 2.428-9 non indebitus annis / sceptra dicauit honos, with similar litotes, after Aen. 6.66 non indebita posco / regna meis fatis. The word indebitus is probably a Vergilian coinage (see Norden and Austin ad loc.).

736. recto descendunt limite Parcae: Amphiaraus stresses that Opheltes’ death was fated (cf. 4.787 sic Parcae uoluerue), with the implication that Hypsipyle is not to blame. The verb descendunt is curious: the spatial metaphor suggests that the Parcae are situated in heaven (cf. 739 demissa), whereas in book 8 they are located in the underworld (8.11-3, 59, 118-9 etc.). Götting (1969: 20 n. 21), for whom the Parcae and Jupiter are identical, compares 1.224-5 nunc geminas punire domos ... descend (Jupiter). In 11.462 saeuaunque Iouem Parcasque nocentes the Parcae are indeed closely associated with Jupiter, which may suggest a Stoic worldview (cf. Götting 1969: 18 n. 16a), but the exact relation between fate and gods in Statius remains problematic (cf. 583-7n.). The verb descendere is also used in connection with the Parcae in Sen. Apoc. 4 aurea formosu descendunt saeula filo (cf. Gil’s conjecture below).

The combination recto ... limite seems a standard expression (‘straightaway’), cf. Ov. Met. 7.782, Tr. 2.477, Luc. 4.613, 7.363, 9.712. Since limes is also used with reference to the course and confines of the epic’s narrative (cf. 1.16 limes mihi carminis esto / Oedipodae
confusa domus, S. 5.3.236-7 labat incerto mihi limite cursus / te sine), we could also detect an allusion to the importance of Opheltes’ death for the poem’s plot (on *limes* in Statius see further Newlands 2012: 47-52), perhaps in combination with *descendo* in the sense ‘to proceed, pass on to (in speech or writing)’ (*OLD* 14). The combination recalls 2.61 *recto decedit limite caeli*, where Sopor deviates from his celestial path to make room for Mercury and the shade of Laius (see Mulder *ad loc.*).

Gil (1967: 107-8) conjectures *stamine* ‘*recto limite* es expresión que aparece también en 2.61. Así y todo, al ser *descendere* un verbo empleado en la hilanza (Sen. *Apoc.* 4), propongo *recto stamine*. In Kiißel’s opinion (2006: 217) this conjecture ‘hat als abwegig zu gelten’. However, Sen. *Apoc.* 4 parallels both the verb *descendere* and the Parcae, and we find the *stamina* of the Parcae also in 5.274-5, 7.774-5 and 8.13 – which makes *stamine* not unattractive.

737-8. Amphiarauts artfully summarises the events in Nemea in a *tricolon decrescens*, its *cola* (introduced anaphorically with *et*) three, two, one words long – although the single word *puer* immediately leads to the emotional outburst *heu ... Archemorus*. In the presence of his parents, the seer avoids direct mention of Opheltes’ death, which is veiled under the hendiaptic ‘the lethal snake and the boy’, reducing death to an epithet. In 5.30-3 Hypsipyle adumbrates the son of Lennnos which she is about to narrate with a similar polysyndetic enumeration (*Furias et Lemnon et artis / arma inserta toris debellatosque pudendo / ense*), as does Adrastus in 5.46 *negas laudesque tuas gemitusque tuorum*. This way of indicating the contents of a narrative may be rooted in the paratactic *arma uiramque*.

*et sitis interitu fluiorum*: the word *sitis* includes both the ‘drought’ and the resulting ‘thirst’ of the Argives (see Parkes on 4.699). For the *interitus fluiorum*, ordered by Bacchus (4.684-96), see esp. 4.697-710. There seems to be slight personification in *interitu*, a word usually applied to animalia (e.g. Laius 4.611 *cuius ab interitu*) when the word is applied to inanimate things, it is usually cities, states or peoples (e.g. S. 2.1.213).

*et letifer anguis*: echoing Hypsipyle’s suicidal 628 *ubi letifer anguis*? (where see note).

*et puer*: throughout the Nemean episode, there is much pathetic emphasis on Opheltes’ premature age; cf. e.g. 534 *parue*, 741 *infans*, 4.793 *puer*, 6.9 *puerile*, etc. On the importance of his *mors immatura* see §6.3.

738-9. *heu nostri signatus nomine fati, / Archemorus*: the speaking name Archemorus and the symbolic connection between the child’s death and the fate of the Seven, which the name articulates, are discussed at length in §6.3. Göttting (1969: 23-4, 128) nicely points out that the name frames the Nemean episode (4.726 *Archemorus*, 7.93 *Archemori*).

*signatus nomine*: for the phrasing cf. 2.71-2 *dies noto signata Tonantis / fulmine* (annual Bacchic celebration of Jupiter scorching Semele), *Ov. Fasti* 2.861-2 *iure uenis, Gradiae: locum tua tempora poscunt, / signatusque tuo nomine mensis adest* (the month March), Luc. 2.645 *at uos, qui Latios signatis nomine fastos*, Mart. 9.16.4.

739. *cuncta haec*: ‘all these things’, resuming the aforementioned events in Nemea as well as their symbolic significance. *cunctus* is an artificial literary word, not often found in prose (see e.g. Kraus on Liv. 6.6.16).

739-40. *superum demissa suprema / mente fluunt*: in addition to the *Parcae* (736), the gods are involved also; cf. 501n. *sic di suasitis*. Here fates and gods seem to be nearly identical (so Göttting 1969: 18 n. 16; cf. Dominik 1994: 27). One might ask, however, which gods Amphiarauts has in mind. Not Bacchus, Göttting argues (1969: 11-2, 18-20; *contra* Kytzler): although Bacchus sets the events in Nemea in motion (cf. 4.746 *sic Euhius ipse pararat*) and although it is Bacchus’ drought that induces the serpent’s *furor* (cf. 518-28), there are no indications that the child’s death is part of Bacchus’ scheme. It should be noted, however, that Opheltes’ death causes considerable *mora*, which is the very aim of Bacchus’ intervention (4.677 *nectam fraude moras*). See further 534n. *quis ... deus?* For Göttting, (1969:
20) superum ... suprema / mente represents ‘die Wille des Jupiter’; in his interpretation this is confirmed by the fact that it is Jupiter’s serpent that kills the child. However, one could also argue that Jupiter is completely ignorant (see 539n. ignaro serpente).

How exactly we should understand the (inter)relation between gods and fate in the Thebaid is subject to debate (cf. 583-7n.). The abstract suprema / mente is suggestive of a Stoic worldview, in which god’s mind and fate are identical (cf. e.g. Aetius 1.7.33 = 1.1027 Von Arnim νοῦς ἐν αἰτίας; cf. Mars’ apologetic words to Venus in 3.304-5 sed nunc fatorum monitus mentemque suprimei / iussus obire patris, where fate also seems to be identified with the mens of supreme Jupiter; also 3.575-6 suprema Tonantis / iussa. On the other hand, the plural superum belongs to the world of epic poetry, not Stoic philosophy.

As Mozley (ad loc.) notes, ‘the metaphor is probably of a river-channel’. See OLD s.v. fluo 11 ‘to originate, derive, proceed (from a named source)’; cf. 1.226 Aonias fluit hic ab origine Thebas, where the metaphor is applied to genealogical bloodlines, and esp. 6.934 quis fluere occultis rerum neget omina causis? Cf. also Cic. Div. 2.101 ista duo [genera diuinationis] quae a mente libera fluere uiderentur. The participle demissa suits the metaphor, as it can be used both literally of rain, rivers etc. and metaphorically ‘de origine’ (see TLL s.v. 492.30-6; cf. e.g. 2.613 Tyrri demissus origine Cadni, Aen. 1.288 a magno demissum nomen lulo).

740. differt animos: ‘hold your anger’ (SB) or ‘put aside your animosities’ (Ritchie-Hall), but also ‘postpone your courage’, with the implication that the Argives will need their animos in the war to come; cf. 6.765 differt animum. The verb also alludes to the Nemean mora; cf. the clearly metapoetic 6.365 (Apollo) differt auidas audire Sorores. Other occurrences of the verb with an eye on poetic mora include 7.613 ‘num saltem differre nefas potuitue morari?’, 8.686-7 crudelis Erinys / obstat et infando differt Eteoclea fratri, 11.608-9 sic iurgia paulum / distulit atque ensem, quem iam dabat ira, repressit.

740-1. festinaque tela / ponite: echoed in 7.100 nunc festina cohors, in Adrastus’ speech that concludes Opheltes’ funeral and games. The adjective conveys the Argives’ eagerness for battle, which corresponds on a metapoetic level with the poem’s teleological pulse (see McNelis 2007). Cf. also S. 1.5.8-9 paulum arma nocentia, Thebae, / ponite.

741. mansuris donandus honoribus infans: ‘the infant must be given abiding honours’. The honoribus are the Nemean Games founded in his honour. The future participle mansuris – which is often used sub specie aeternitatis (e.g. Aen. 3.85-6 da moenia fessis / et genus et mansuram urbem. Ov. Met. 15.621 mansura per aeuum) – indicates that these games are to be perpetuated for centuries to come (Bos 1646 even translates ‘die hem in eeuwicheyt doet leven’); cf. 536 and 747 per saecula, 4.729 ludus ... trieteris. The phrasing owes something to Ecl. 5.78 (Daphnis) = Aen. 1.609 semper honos nomenque tuum laudesque manebunt, a passage that underlies 748-9 (where see note).

742. et meruit: Opheltes deserves these honours, because his fate is closely connected with the expedition of the Seven against Thebes. The Argives are also indirectly responsible for his death, since Hypsipyle put her nursling on the ground in order to guide them to Langia as fast as possible.

742-3. det pulchra suis libamina Virtus / manibus: ‘let Valour make fair libations to her own shade’ or ‘let fair Valour make libations to her own shade’; the latter is more likely in light of 4.128 pulchrae ... uirtutis amorem, S. 4.8.58 pulchrae studium uirtutis (cf. also S. 5.2.52 uirtutis ... pulcher amor). The libations (see following note) surely point to the funeral rites for Opheltes (manibus), while Virtus is probably a metonym for the uirtuosi Seven (cf. 6.3-4 ludumque super, quo Martia bellis / praesudare paret seseque accendere uirtus, where Martia uirtus also refers to the Seven). In what sense Opheltes’ shade is suis is open to discussion (see note on suis below). Holland (1976: 86) notes the bitter irony of uirtus in this context: ‘This first innocent death of the war ironically becomes the occasion for the Seven to demonstrate their prowess’. Most editors (e.g. Hill, SB, Hall; cf. Delz 1998: 596, White 2007:
libamina: these libations to Opheltes’ shade will be poured by Adrastus after the celebration of the games, in 7.92  unā solo fundens (cf. the animal sacrifice in 6.220-1 preceding the games). In the Ophelteion in Nemea, drinking cups that were used for libations to Archemorus have been found (see Miller 2004: 36), which confirms that libations were also part of his cult. Amphiaraurus here uses libamina for the Nemean Games, which could be regarded, metaphorically, as an offering to Opheltes’ shade.

The word libamen can be traced back to Vergil (Lehanneur 1878: 227 n. 1), who coined it as an innovation for libamentum (see Austin on Aen. 6.246 libamina prima). Since Vergil, poets use libamen (e.g. Ov. Fast. 3.733, Luc. 4.198, Val. 1.204), prose authors libamentum (e.g. Val. Max. 2.5.5, Sen. Ep. 84.5); Statius alone uses libamentum too (12.88, S. 3.1.164). The word carries associations with ‘beginning’ (cf. Gr. ἀπαγγέλλω), which is significant as the Argives are about to found the Nemean Games. Perhaps, in Statius’ bilingual world, libamen would also be associated with ‘ending violence’ (cf. Gr. σπονδή in the sense ‘truce, treaty’), which would also be appropriate after the near violence between Argives and Nemeans.

suis: problematic, for in what sense does Opheltes’ shade belong to uirtus (the Seven)? Several interpretations and conjectures have been proposed.

(a) Mozley translates ‘let virtue make fair libation to a virtuous soul’ (Mozley; cf. Gossage 1972: 204), but in what sense is Opheltes’ shade virtuous? Aricò translates ‘il coraggio offra una bella libagione all’anima che gli appartiene’; Lesueur similarly translates ‘que la vaillance accorde de glorieuses libations à des mânes qui sont à elles’ and comments: ‘cet hommage est surprenant; l’enfant ne peut être comparé, pour la uirtus, aux terribles guerriers argiens; la métonymie semble plutôt indiquer qu’il est de la même race qu’eux, qu’il aurait montré la même vaillance s’il avait vécu jusqu’à l’âge d’homme’. According to Lesueur, then, Opheltes belongs to uirtus in the sense that, had he not died, he would have been a courageous warrior too (for citations see Delz 1998: 596). Ingenious, but why would Amphiaraurus remind his audience of the valiant warrior Opheltes would have been, if death had not overtaken him?

(b) According to Poynton (1953: 145), the text is corrupt. He proposes to read sui (taken over by Hall): ‘If the funeral games had been in honour of a warrior, suis manibus would be intelligible – ‘let valour pay tribute to a valiant ghost’ – but Archemorus is a baby. The correct reading is surely sui – ‘let valour make an offering of itself’, i.e. the valour, soon to be shown in the battle, is now to show itself in sport.’ He supports his conjecture with 6.3-4 quo Martia bellis / praesudare paret seseque accendere uirtus. One could add the reflexive formulation in 10.673 sesque in corde reliquit, where Virtus ‘leaves itself behind’ in Menoeceus’ heart. Moreover, he could have added, it is Statius’ habit to use libamen (or libamentum) in combination with a genitive (or ab + abl.) to denote its substance (1.542 tepidi libamina sacri, 4.462 frugum libamine, 6.224 suis libamen ab armis, 12.88 tui noua libamenta triumphi, 12.489 maestarumque super libamina secta comarum; cf. also 6.146 primitias ... lacrimarum). And for the bold figurative usage of libamen Poynton could have compared Ov. Her. 4.27 libamina famae, Sil. 4.827, 10.551 and 11.15.262 libamina belli.

(d) Delz (1998: 596) rejects Poynton’s sui as ‘eine reichlich verschrobene Aussage’. Instead he conjectures sacrās, comparing S. 3.3.199-200 assiduas libabo dapes et pocula sacrās / manibus. Our line looks back, Delz argues, to 4.729 sacrum ... Ophelten and 5.536 sacer, which anticipate Opheltes’ divinity. Admittedly, sacrās gives smooth sense, but palaeographically it is problematic.

(e) In book 7, shortly before his ‘katabasis’, Amphiaraurus kills numerous Thebans as ‘a sacrifice to his own shade’: innumeram ferro plebem ... immolat umbris / ipse suis (7.709-10). In his note ad loc. Smolenaars claims that ‘Statius uses the same device in Amphiaraurus’
address to Archemorus, *Th. 5.742-3*. In his opinion, it seems, Amphiaraurus means that the Seven (*virtus*) should make a libation to their own shades, as they will soon die in the coming Theban War. But in the present context, *manibus* must surely refer to the shade of Opheltes? Is it possible that Amphiaraurus, knowing the doom that awaits the Seven (including himself), deliberately expresses himself ambiguously?

(f) SB (2000: 467) connects *suis* with the Seven’s obligation to honour the child, who in some sense has died in order to save the Argives: ‘*suis* recalls that the army (metonymically *Virtus*) was indirectly responsible for the child’s death; it was to aid them that his nurse had left him alone in the forest. The honors to be paid him were due (*et meruit*) as an atonement’.

(g) White (2007: 333-4), blissfully ignorant of all the above (or so it seems), offers the following comment: ‘the honours to be paid to Opheltes’ *manes* were well deserved by him’, to which she adds in a footnote: ‘*suis* [...] presents problems: these problems are eliminated if we realize that *suis* means *eius* (“his *manes*”), with reference to *OLD* s.v. *suus* A2b (*’suus used with reference to a subject in another clause or sentence’).

(h) In my view, *suis* expresses the close connection between the Seven and Opheltes. His *manes* do not belong to the Seven in terms of ‘possession’ or ‘control’, nor in the sense that Opheltes shares in their *virtus*, but in the sense that his fate is closely tied up with the fate of the Seven in the Theban War, as Amphiaraurus has just explained. Symbolically, Opheltes is one of them.

743-4. *atque utinam plures innectere pergas*, / *Phoebe, moras*: Amphiaraurus appeals to Apollo and wishes the god to add further delay; *atque* closely connects the idea of *mora* with Opheltes’ *honores*, the *mora* that is book 6 (on Nemean *mora* see §4.1). Amphiaraurus’ wish is partially fulfilled, as the funeral and games in book 6 provide further delay (note Apollo’s prominent role in the chariot race, 6.296-7, 355-88). Ultimately, however, his prayer goes unheeded, as the Argives will march on to Thebes (6.914-9, 7.100-3). Unlike the other Argives, the seer knows what fate has in store (cf. *LP ad loc.* ‘sciebat enim adversa denuntiata, ne pugnarent. ideo <in>nec<te> ... *moras*’), not least from the auguries which Melampus and he have taken in book 3; Amphiaraurus is also fully aware that he is destined to die in the Theban War himself (cf. 3.546-7, 623-4; see Fantham 2006).

Is Amphiaraurus’ god Apollo able to meet his seer’s request? Although it was Bacchus, not Apollo, who produced the Nemean delay, Apollo helped Bacchus by scorching Nemea with his rays (4.689-90 *adiuavit ipse / Phoebus*). Perhaps we are reminded of his contribution as Amphiaraurus addresses Apollo as sun-god (*Phoebus*)? On a poetic level, moreover, Apollo is very much responsible for the Nemean *mora*, witness the invocation at the beginning of the episode (4.649-51 *quis iras / flexerit, unde morae, medius quis euntibus error, / Phoebe, doce*). In that light, his appeal to Apollo is makes sense also.

*innectere ... moras*: Amphiaraurus’ use of the poetic weaving metaphor suggests that he is metaleptically aware of the poem in which he lives, ‘a figure of knowledge and prophecy, a follower of Apollo, who knows the plot before it unrolls’ (Lovatt 2005: 31; cf. Masterson 2005: 290 with n. 7, Fantham 2006; on metalepsis see Nauta 2013); in that vein, *pergas* could be connected with the continuation of the narrative (cf. *OLD* 2b, 3b). As Feeney (1991: 339 n. 89) notes, *innectere ... moras* rings with 4.677 (Bacchus speaking) *nectam fraude moras* (echoed and ‘undone’ in 7.170 *nectere fronde comas*). Parkes (on 4.650 *unde morae*) extends the ring composition to the invocation of Apollo in 4.649-51 (cf. McNelis 2004: 270). I should like to add that Amphiaraurus’ words also echo his similar appeal to Jupiter in 3.495 *si prohibes, hic necte moras* (before the taking of the auspices). The expression goes back to *Aen. 4.51 causasque innecte morandi* (Deipser 1881: 24, Brown 1994: 56; cf. also *Aen. 9.219, Val. 3.374-5 an sibi nectunt / corda moras?*), which in turn looks back to Homer’s Penelope (see Starr 2009). Cf. also §2.5.
745. semperque nouis bellare uetemur / casibus, et semper, Thebe funesta, recedas: outdoing his previous wish for plures ... moras, Amphiaraurus would that ‘we might always be forbidden to wage war by new incidents, and that you, deadly Thebes, might always recede’. He knows that the course of fate cannot be changed, only delayed (cf. Aen. 7.315 moras tantis licet addere rebus); but infinite delay would amount to cancellation of the war. Note the emphatic anaphora of semper. The passive uetemur might recall Juno’s famous Aen. 1.39 quippe uetor fatis – an echo that would remind us of Juno’s inability to alter fate as well as her attempt to moras ... addere.

Thebe: Augoustakis (2010: 45 with n. 36) comments: ‘The seer’s wish to delete Thebes from the landscape of this war begins with his diminution of the noun from plural to singular, in an exorcism of sorts’, to which he adds that ‘[p]erhaps the singular after all equates the two cities, Thebe and Argos’. An extremely far-fetched idea: singular Thebe is used frequently throughout the poem (see 681n.), while Argos is more often Latin plural Argi (37 times, e.g. 1.225) than a Greek singular Argos (6 times, e.g. 4.672); cf. Fortgens on 6.15 Argos.

funesta: the perfect adjective to describe Thebes: deriving from funus its basic meaning is ‘of or concerned with death or mourning’ (OLD 1); it is used both in a passive sense ‘lamentable, grievous’ (OLD 2) and in an active sense ‘fatal, deadly, destructive’ (OLD 4), at the same time evoking the idea of pollution (OLD 3): all this is applicable to Thebes. Jupiter speaks of Thebes’ exitiale genus in 1.243; Oedipus calls himself funestus in 1.79; Maeon calls Eteocles funestus in 3.72; Menoeceus’ mother, comparing herself to Jocasta, says 10.797 nec nato peperti funesta nepotes. The word also suits the context of Opheltes’ funus, which prefigures the funera at Thebes.

recedas: the MSS are divided between recedat (Hill, recedas ‘fortasse recte’) and recedas (Klotz, Hall, Götting 1969: 22, Gossage 1972: 204). If the latter is correct – and I am inclined to believe it is – Thebe funesta is vocative and Amphiaraurus apostrophises the city of Thebes: ‘may you, deadly Thebes, recede ever further’. Given the frequency of apostrophes in Statius (see Georgacopoulou 2005), recedas is perfectly possible. Moreover, it seems to be the lectio difficultior: if we ask utrum in alterum abiturum erat, the corruption recedas > recedat seems more likely than vice versa. On the other hand, one could argue that the apostrophe is slightly odd immediately after the apostrophe of Apollo, and that recedat has been corrupted under the influence of pergas in 743.

Statius’ narrator apostrophises two cities: Eleusis in 2.382 and – if the text is correct – Amyclae in 9.769 (see Georgacopoulou 2005: 223, 226). In direct speech, Thebes is apostrophised by Tiresias in 10.594-6 ‘te tamen, infelix,’ inquit, ‘perituraque Thebe, / si taceam, nequeo miser exaudire cadentem / Argolicumque oculis haurire uacan’ immediately followed by an apostrophe to Pietas, which seems to counter the argument that two apostrophes is too much), and again by Argia in 12.256-60 urbs optata prius, nunc tecta hostilia, Thebae etc.

It is instructive to compare Aen. 2.56 Troiaque nunc staret, Priamique arx alta maneres, where MSS are similarly divided between stares and staret, and between maneres and maneret (see Austin ad loc.).

746-52. Although Lycurgus was included in his first address (733 ductor Nemeae), Amphiaraurus now turns to the king and queen of Nemea specifically and ‘offers an optimistic interpretation of the child’s personal destiny’ (Brown 1994: 216). He comforts Opheltes’ bereaved parents by proclaiming the deification of their son: the momentous death of their son will make them famous forever, and Opheltes himself would not have preferred a long life on earth over his present existence as a deity. Amphiaraurus also bids them to stop weeping, since gods and rituals do not brook tears. The proclamation of the child’s deification thus takes the form of a consolation (cf. Crusius 1745: 385 ‘om hen te troosten over hun verlies’). However, as Ganiban observes, Lycurgus and Eurydice ‘are never shown to accept it [sc. Amphiaraus’
interpretation], in contrast to Euripides’ play, in which Eurydice accepts the seer’s explanation and decides to spare Hypsipyle (2013: 252-3).

The deification of Opheltes might allude to ‘the infant son of Domitian, who was deified after his premature and unexpected death’ (Vessey 1973: 188). His deification is attested in S. 1.1.97-8, Mart. 4.3, Sil. 3.629 and depicted on a Flavian denarius (see Brown 1994: 131 n. 9). The allusion would align Lycurgus with Domitian. Unfortunately, we know very little about Domitian’s son (see Desnér 1979). Newlands (2006: 207) connects the prominence of mors immatura in Statius’ epic with the problematics of dynastic succession in Flavian Rome more generally. Valpy on 750 ne plangite diuos notes that [s]ic Hephaestone inter Deos relato capitale fuit eum lugere’. Scott (1933: 258) follows suit and speaks of a ‘form of adulation, peculiar to the imperial cult’, which he connects with the laus Domitiani in 1.24-31 and various passages in the Siluae. Indeed, there are some striking parallels between our passage and S. 4.3.139-62 addressed to Domitian, esp. parens deorum (139), the Parcae (146 Sorores), the longevity of Nestor and Tithonus (150-1), and the trope “X as long as Y” (155-64).

746-7. at uos magnorum transgressi fata parentum / felices: the line has been read as a reference to the death (fata) of the king’s or queen’s parents (cf. Bos.1646 ‘gy die so wel te pas / Wvs ouders droeve lot te boven sijt gekomen’), but what would be the point? Amphiarua rather says that the deceased Hesperides and Eurydice (uos) are fortunate in that they outshine (transgressi) the less spectacular fates (fata) of their ancestors (magnorum ... parentum), who cannot pride themselves on an immortal son. magnorum ... parentum includes not only the parents of the royal couple, but also earlier generations; cf. 6.268 magnanimum series antiqua parentum, 662 pudor et magna teneure parentes, Luc. 10.194 magnorum ... secreta parentum (cf. also maiores ‘ancestors’). SB ad loc. takes magnorum ... parentum as a reference, not to the ancestors of Lycurgus and Eurydice, but to ‘illustrious parents in general’, but in light of the aforementioned parallels ‘ancestors’ is the most natural interpretation.

That there is a drawback to their being felices, is made clear through the intratextual echo of Hypsipyle’s words in 4.777-8 mortales utinam haud trangressa fuissem / lucribus! (‘Would that I had not surpassed mortals in my sorrows!’). Perhaps Opheltes’ parents would prefer a happy life, with their son, in the shadow of their ancestors. One could discern an echo of our line in 6.94-5 nec solos hominum transgressa uetermo / fertur auos.

For the striking metaphorical use of transgressior see OLD s.v. 3 ‘to surpass (a person) in achievement’ and cf. 6.94 nec solos hominum transgressa uetermo / fertur auos; cf. also Vell. 2.40 Pompeius ... per omnia fortunam hominis egressus, Luc. 7.595 (Caesar) egressus ... fatis. 747-9. As long as nature will hold her course in the Argolid, Amphiarua asseverates, your names will be celebrated. As LP observes, an unmistakable imitation of Aen. 1.607-9 (Aeneas addressing Dido):

\[
\text{in freta dum fluuii current, dum montibus umbrae} \\
\text{lustrabunt conuexa, polus dum sidera pascet,} \\
\text{semper honos nomenque tuum laudesque manebunt}
\]

which reworks Ecl. 5.76-8 (Aen. 1.609 = Ecl. 5.78). Like Vergil, Statius has triple dum (‘Trikolon der wachsenden Glieder’) in combination with future tenses. Vergil’s fluuii are appropriately specified as Lernaea palus and pater Inachus (their pairing recalls 4.711-2), while the shadows are brought down from Vergil’s montibus and spread out over the Nemean campis. Verbal borrowings are underlined; dotted lines mark words that recur elsewhere in our passage (737 fluuiorum, 744-5 semper, 741 mansuris ... honoribus). Ecl. 5.76-8 is also relevant, as Eclogue 5 is also about a deified pastoral figure (Daphnis).

Parkes (on 4.711-5) notes that Amphiarua’s claim is ‘somewhat ironic’ because ‘it is the failure of these rivers which indirectly causes Opheltes’ death through the thirst-maddened snake’. Brown (1994: 157), reading Opheltes’ death as an inversion of Herakliskos killing.
Hera’s snakes, notes that both _Lernaea palus_ and _Nemea_ are reminiscent of Hercules’ achievements; ‘Wunderkind’ Opheltes did not live up to such expectations.

On a metapoetic level, both Vergil’s and Statius’ lines could also be understood as articulations of their own poetic fame; cf. Parkes on 4.725-9 ‘the idea may also point at Statius’ own contribution to Langia’s fame’, _Aen._ 9.446-9, Val. 2.244-6.

For the trope “X as long as Y” see the examples listed in _TLL_ s.v. _dum_ 2216.33-53 ‘de aetermitate vel longaevitate’; for the specific variant “X as long as nature will hold her course” cf. S. 1.193-4 _stabit, dum terra polusque / dum Romana dies, _1.699-102, 3.1.180-1, Tib. 1.4.65-6 _quem referent Musae_._ _uiuet, dum robora tellus, / dum caelum stellas, dum uhe_ _et amnis aquas._ _Luc._ 1.189-93, and the elaborate examples in Seneca’s tragedies, _Herc.O._ 1576-81, _Med._ 401-7, _Oed._ 504-8.

_747. longum quibus hinc per saecula nomen:_ sc. _erit_. Opheltes’ parents will be famous for centuries to come; cf. Parkes on 4.725. For _longum_ see _OLD_ 10c ‘(of a name) long lived’.

For the phrasing cf. 2.486-7 _sanctum populis per saecula nomen / legatum and S. 1.1.8 notum per saecula nomen_, which also look back to _Aen._ 6.235 (Misenus) _aeternumque tenet per saecula nomen_; cf. also _Luc._ 7.589 _per saecula nomen_; _Michler_ (1914: 12) adds _Sil._ 3.441, 10.71, 15.553, _CIL_ III 6423.

_Lernaea palus:_ cf. 2.376 _Lernaea palus, 5.579n._ _stagna ... Lernae pater Inachus:_ the most important river in the Argolid (cf. 4.118-9 _fluuiorum ductor Achiu_ _um, / Inachue with Parkes_), nowadays called the Panitsa, as well as the first king of Argos (cf. 511n. _Inachio_); he is emphasised in 2.217-8 and 6.273-5, where he is also called _pater_ (also in 10.767). On that title, appropriate to river-gods (cf. e.g. _Aen._ 8.540 _Thybi pater_), see _Horsfall on Aen._ 7.792 _pater Inachus_, _Mulder_ on 2.217-8; cf. also _Ov._ _Met._ 1.651, Val. 5.209.

_ibi:_ for _ire_ applied to the flowing of rivers see _TLL_ s.v. _eo_ 644.53-84 ‘de aquis, fluvius (saepae personatis), aliiis liquoribus’; cf. e.g. 4.785 _ire_ (Langia), _Hor._ _Carm._ 1.2.13-5 _Tiberim ... ire detectum monumenta, Aen._ 8.726 _Euphrates ibat, Ov._ _Met._ 2.456 _cum murmure labens ibat ... riuus._

_Nemea:_ note the long –ā ( _Nemēā_); on the various forms of the name see 581n.

_tremulas campis iaculatur umbras:_ commentators on _Aen._ 1.607-8 _dum montibus umbrae / lustrabunt conuexa_ are divided: does Vergil have in mind the shadows of woods or the shadows of the _montibus_? Since _Nemea_ is full of woods, here we must imagine the first; cf. 5.45 (_Nemea_) _obtenta comis et ineluctabilis umbra_. If we think of trees casting their shadows, we also understand _tremulus_: as the wind stokes the branches and the leaves, the trees cast ‘quivering shadows’. For modern readers that expression might bring to mind Romantic horror scenes (e.g. Bram Stoker _Dracula_ ‘... an antique silver lamp [...] throwing long, quivering shadows as it flickered in the draught of the open door’), but here it is undoubtedly meant to evoke the idyllic landscape of _Nemea_ (cf. the bucolic parallel in _Calp._ _Ecl._ 5.101 _dum uiret et trumulas non excxit Africus umbras_). The collocation _tremula umbra_, however, is rare, the only other parallel being _Silius_’ beautiful description of light reflected in water in _Pun._ 7.143-5 _sicut aquae splendor, radiatus lampade solis, / dissolutat per tecta, uaga sub imagine ubrans / luminis, et tremula laquearia uerberat umbra_, which betrays the Vergilian origins of Statius’ image: _Aen._ 8.8.9 _aspirant aurae in noctem nec candida cursus / luna negat, splendet tremulo sub lumine pontus_, which confirms that we have to imagine _aurae_. For ‘throwing shadows’ cf. _Plin._ _Nat._ 36.72 _alias enormiter iaculante apice [sc. umbran], Veg._ _Mil._ 4.30 _cum sol obliquus umbram turrium murorumque iaculatur in terram_, but the verb is far more often used for throwing light(ning).

_750. ne fletu uiolate sacrum:_ with reference to the familiar ritual silence; cf. e.g. Aeneas’ call for silence at the tomb of Anchises in _Aen._ 5.71 _ore fauete omnes_ with _Williams_ (Oxford ed.), _Hor._ 3.1.2 _fauete linguis, Prop._ 4.6.1 _sacra facit uates, sint ora fauentia sacris_, and the Greek _εἰσφορέως_. To break the silence was seen as ‘violation’ of the ritual’s sanctity. For the

**ne plangite diuos:** the closest parallel seems to be Soph. *Oed. Col.* 1751-3, where Theseus, after Oedipus’ mysterious supernatural disappearance, bids Antigone, Ismene and the Chorus to cease their lamentations (*παύστε δρήφων, παίδες· ἐν ὦς γὰρ / χάρις ἡ χειρόν πάλαι ἀπόκται, / πενθεῖ νῦν χρής νόμισος γὰρ*): lamentation is inappropriate, because Oedipus’ transformation is something to be grateful for. Similarly, in our passage, Opheltes’ parents should not lament their child because Opheltes has become a *deus*; and, as Valpy *ad loc.* notes, ‘dii enim flendi non sunt’. Cf. Bos’ translation ‘Ontheylicht door geweeen dees heylige godtsdienst niet, / Beschreyt geen goden, die en lijden en verdriet / Ontworstelt sijn’; cf. also Vondel’s poem *Kinderlijk*: ‘Constantijnje, ’t zaligh kijntje, / Cherubijntje, van om hoogh, / D’ydelheden, hier beneden, / Vitlacht met een lodderoogh. / Moeder, zeit hy, waarom schreit ghy? / Waarom greit ghy, op mijn lijck? / Boven leef ick, boven zweef ick, / Engeltje van ’t hemelrijck’.

**751. nam deus iste, deus:** Opheltes’ deification has been foreshadowed in 4.725-6, 727-9, the similes in 4.789-91 and 801-3, and in 5.536-7; cf. also 5.613n. *siderei*. For the repetition of *deus* cf. *Lucr.* 5.8 *deus ille fuit, deus, inclyte Memmi* (Epicurus), *Aen.* 6.46 *deus, ecce, deus*. It may be ritualistic in origin (Norden on *Aen.* 6.46), cf. *Ov. Met.* 15.677 *en, deus est, deus est*, where Aesculapius’ priest addresses the worshippers, who *uerba sacerditis referunt geminata*. After the echo of *Ecl.* 5.76-8 in 747-9, we are reminded especially of the deified Daphnis in *Ecl.* 5.64 *deus, deus ille, Menalca*, also a figure of pastoral and lament (Ganiban 2013: 250 n. 4 notes the parallel), *Brown* (1994: 158-9), reading Opheltes against Herakliskos, compares the statuette of Hercules in *S.* 4.46.36 *deus ille deus*; she also connects his enormous pyre with Hercules’ cremation on Mt Oeta (*Brown* 1994: 198). Cf. also *Val.* 1.245 and 3.271 *deus haec deus*. Whatever its religious and intertextual background, the *geminatio* is surely an index of heightened emotions (see Gibson on *S.* 5.1.237); Adrian (1893: 20) has collected examples, including *S.* 5.1.237 *domus ista domus*, 5.5.69 *mesus ille mesus*, *Ach.* 1.528 *mesus iste mesus*.

Gervais (2008: 36 n. 75) discerns an echo of 5.133 *deus hos, deus ultor in iras / apportat*, where Polyxo claims that it is a god, an avenging god who brings the men of Lemnos back home. Whereas Gervais suggests that the echo ‘confirms Polyxo’s claim that the Lemnian massacre was divinely ordained’ (2008: 47), I would suggest that the echo casts an ominous shadow over Opheltes’ deification: ‘beginning of doom’, he also inaugurates a massacre (cf. §6.3).

**iste:** the demonstrative is in no way contemptuous or pejorative; Amphiarus simply uses it because Opheltes is the son of his addressees, Lycurgus and Eurydice (cf. *KS* i.619 ‘iste [...] deutet auf einen Gegenstand, der sich in dem Bereiche oder in der Gegenwart des Angeredeten (2. Person) befindet’ and i.621 ‘Iste’ wird oft da angewendet, wo mit Verachtung auf einen Gegenstand hingedeutet wird. An und für sich zwar drückt dieses Pronomen den Begriff der Verachtung nicht aus’).

**751-2. Pyliae nec fata senectae / maluerit, Phrygiis aut degere longius annis:** Opheltes, Amphiarus claims, is content with his premature death, because it gives him eternal life as a deity; he would not prefer to live as long as Nestor or Tithonus (or Priam), whose longevity is proverbial (see following notes). Cf. *LP* ‘amborum annos dicit debere contemni: neuter enim post mortem est consecratus’. Curtius (1948: 90-1) rightly points to the contrast between ‘Kurzlebigkeit’ and ‘Langlebigkeit’. The poet plays with parents’ natural and conventional wish that their babies live to old age (e.g. *Ov. Met.* 3.346-7). Although Achilles was not deified, we may be reminded of his famous dilemma; cf. *Sen. Tro.* 211-3 (Pyrrhus speaking of his father Achilles) *fugere bellum iussus et longa sedens / aeuum senecta ducere ac Pylli senis / transcendere annos*. 

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Note the artful structure of the sentence: two clauses, governed and separated by *maluerit* (potential subjunctive), introduced by the assonant adjectives (*Pyliae, Phrygiis*) placed before the connectives (*nec, aut*); at the same time there is syntactical variation, as *maluerit* first takes an accusative (*fata*), then an infinitive (*degerere*) as its object.

**Pyliae ... senectae:** referring to Nestor, king of Pylos, whose longevity (and eloquence) is proverbial, esp. in Silver literature. See Otto 1890 s.v. Nestor\(^1\) and cf. Sil. 15.456 *Pyliae ... senectae*, Mart. 8.2.7 *Pyliam ... senectam*, 4.1.3 *Pylioque ... aeuo*, 10.38.12-14 *ex ilis tibi si diu rogatam / lucem redderet Atropos uel unam, / malles quam Pyliam quater senectam* (also paralleling “preferring something over a long life”), [Verg.] *Maec.* 139, *Ov. Pont.* 2.8.41-2 *(Deipser 1881: 29)*. There several parallels in the *Siluae* (often, as here, at the end): *S.* 1.3.110 *Nestoreae ... senectae, 1.4.127 Nestoreosque situs, 2.2.108 annos Pylii senis, 3.4.104 Pylios annos, 4.3.150 annos quos fertur placidos obisse Nestor, 5.3.114 *Pylii senis* – *Lehanneur (1878: 146)* indignantly exclaims: ‘Quotes Nestoris senectutem [...] commemorat!’ The ultimate source is Homer, e.g. *II.* 11.637 *Νάστωρ δ’ ὁ γάμφων, 14.39-40 *γηραίος / Νάστωφ, Od.* 3.436 = 3.445 *γάμφων δ’ ἵππηλάτα Νάστωφ, 4.209-10 γηρασκέμεν. The combination *fata senectae* may be inspired by Prop. 2.13b.46-7 *Nestoris est uisus post tria saecla cinis: / cui s<t> tam longae[uae] minuisset fata senectae.*

Legras (1905: 153) points out that the reference to Nestor’s *senecta* is incongruous with 4.126-7 *nondum nota Pyllos iuuenisque aetate secunda / Nestor, where Nestor is still in the prime of his life, a witticism that may be inspired by *Ov.* Met. 8.313 *primis etiamnum Nestor in annis* (cf. Sil. 7.596-7; on Nestor’s three ‘ages’ see Parkes on 4.126-7). Inconsistencies in the poem – being *bissenos multum uigilata per annos* (12.811) and *multa cruciata lima* (S. 4.7.26) – are rare, but cf. the incongruity of 3.198 and 6.124-5 (fourteen and twelve Niobids respectively) and the chronological impossibility of Hypsipyle’s sons being twenty years old (see 713n. *iuuenes*). On inconsistencies in Latin poetry see O’Hara 2007.

**752. Phrygiis ... annis:** the first name that comes to mind might be Priam (so LP ‘Phrygios autem annos Priami dixit’ and SB *ad loc.*), whose old age is one of his defining characteristics from Homer onwards (cf. e.g. *Il.* 24.487 ὁλοκ ὑπὶ γῆρας οὐδῦ, 508 γῆροντα, 516 πολύν τε κάρη πολύν τε γάννου, Pl. *Ba.* 933 *o Priame ... senex, Prop.* 2.28.54 *Priami ... senis, 4.1.52 longaeum ad Priami ... caput*).

However, LP suggests another possibility, namely Tithonus: ‘alii uero Tithonum dicunt, Laomedontis fratrem [Hyg. *Fab.* 270.2 makes him Laomedon’s son], quem Aurora dicitur adamasse’; cf. the glosses on our line recorded in Anderson (2009: vol. 1 MSS nr. 2 and 500): ‘id est annis Titoni mariti Aurore qui eam diuixit, ipse mutatus fuerit in cicadam’ and ‘id est annis Thitoni fratris Priami quid adeo uixit quod in cicadam versus est’. Although Tithonus is perhaps best-known as husband of Aurora (cf. e.g. 6.25, *Il.* 11.1-2, *Aen.* 8.384 *Tithonia ... coniunx*, Val. 3.1), his longevity was proverbial in antiquity: see Otto 1890 s.v. *Tithonus* and cf. S. 4.3.151 *Tithonia ... senectus, Hor. *Carm.* 2.16.30 *longa Tithonum minuit senectus, Prop.* 2.18a.7 *non Tithoni spermens Aurora senectam*, Prop. 2.18a.15 *senis Tithoni, Arist. *Ach.* 688-9 *Τιθώνον ... ὁ δ’ ὑπὸ γῆρας μασταρζεῖ* (not Pl. *Ba.* 854, which reads *Titanum, see Gratwick *ad loc.*). For the story of Aurora and Tithonus see *Hom. h.* 5.218-38 and the much discussed Sappho fr. 58 (see De Jong 2010).

Traglia-Aricò mentions both possibilities, to reject Tithonus in favour of Priam. On closer inspection, however, Tithonus is certainly the more likely candidate, for we find combined references to Nestor and Tithonus in Propertius, Ovid, Seneca and, most importantly, in Statius himself (Prop. 2.25.10 *siue ego Tithonis siue ego Nestor ero, Ov. *Am.* 3.7.41-2 *ilius ad tactum Pylius iuuenescere possit / Tithonosque annis fortior esse suis, Sen. *Apoc.* 4.1 *uin cunt Tithoni, uin cunt et Nestorisi annos, and Stat. S.* 4.3.148-51 *natis longior abnepotibusque / annos perpetua geres iuuenta / quos fertur placidos adisse Nestor, / quos Tithonia computat senectus*). Therefore I suspect that Statius had in mind Tithonus. An additional
argument may be that, if we take Phrygius ... annis as reference to Priam, we would have yet another anachronism, since the expedition of the Seven against Thebes takes place one generation before the Trojan War (cf. note on Pyliae ... senectae above).

However, Priam cannot be ruled out completely, witness S. 5.3.255-6 Pylias aeui transcendere metas / et Teucros aequare senes, where Statius’ plural senes suggests that Troy knew more than one famous senex (cf. also Priap. 57.4 Tithoni Priamique Nestorisque and 76.4 Tithonum Praimunque Nestoremque). We simply cannot be absolutely sure whom the poet had in mind, and readers are free to think of Tithonus or Priam or both. Other such loci that allow more than one interpretation are Stat. S. 2.2.108 Mygdonii Pylique senis (Van Dam ad loc. ‘closes down’ the text and argues for Tithonus), 3.4.103-4 per annos / Iliacos Pylios simul, Ov. Pont. 4.16.18 Phrygium ... senem, [Verg.] Catalepton 15-6 carmina quae Phrygium, saeclis accepta futuris / carmina quae Pylium uincere digna senem.

753. finierat: the rare closing formula (not included in Dominik’s index 1994a: 342-6) occurs a dozen odd times in Ovid, e.g. Met. 1.566, 5.662, 13.123, Fasti 1.227, 5.53; cf. also Luc. 10.193 (Michler 1914: 6), Tac. Dial. 42.1 finierat Maternus. Statius uses it twice more, in 1.283 and S. 1.2.103. It is no coincidence that the word occurs in the final line of the book, as a metapoetic explicit (cf. e.g. the final line of Aeneid 3: conticuit tandem factoque hic fine quiuuit). In book 6 Statius marks the end of Opheltes’ funeral with finis erat (6.234), ‘a formal closure on the episode’ (Brown 1994: 212); in book 7 he marks the end of the games with finierat (7.90). On the pluperfect see 680n. dixerat.

caeloque cauam nox induit umbram: book 4 ended with the arrival of the Argives in Nemea at noon (4.680-2); book 5 ends with nightfall; the mo(u)rning after dawn in 6.25-7. Nightfall is a traditional closural event since Homer, or at least since the Alexandrian scholars responsible for the book-division of the Homeric epics (on which see e.g. Griffin 1995: 17-8); cf. the endings of Iliad 1, 7 and 9, Odyssey 1, 3 and 7. We find it in other genres too, esp. in pastoral (Theoc. Id. 1, 5, 18, Ecl. 1, 2, 6, 9 and 10, often with umbra), but also in prose (e.g. Cic. Or. 3). The Aeneid does not end with nightfall, but it does end with umbras. In the Thebaid, only books 5 and 11 end with nightfall; darkness usually comes in the middle of a book (1.336-46, 2.527-8, 3.407-17, 677, 5.177-80 and 12.228-9); book 3 even ends with sunrise, which usually marks the beginning of epic books (e.g. Aen. 11). On nightfall and closure see further Curtius (1948: 99-101); on book endings more generally see Fowler (2000: 251-9).

The final line takes its inspiration from Aen. 2.360 nox atra cauam circumuolat umbram. The phrase cauam ... umbram (cf. 4.478 caua sub nocte, Sil. 13.894 Erebieque cauis se reddidit umbris) is food for thought. Initially, I thought of enallage, cauam going syntactically with umbram but semantically with caeloque, with reference to the concave form of the sky (cf. e.g. Aen. 4.451 caeli conuexa). TLL s.v. cauam 718.57 quotes the scholiasts: LP gives two different interpretations: cauam, he notes, means either ‘obscurem’ (‘omne enim, quod cauam, obscum <est>’) or ‘inanem’ (with reference to Aen. 2.360); the first interpretation accords with Servius on Aen. 2.360: ‘naturale [...] est, ut obscurum sit omne concauum’. Austin on Aen. 2.53 insomuere cauae gemitumque dedere cauerneae (wooden horse) argues that ‘cauae implies “enveloping”’, with reference to e.g. 10.636 nube caua; on Aen. 2.360 he translates cauam ... umbram as ‘enveloping shadow’. Here in Statius, too, ‘enveloping darkness’ is the most attractive interpretation (cf. 1.498 Nox ... amplexa, 11.761 nox fauet et grata profugos amplexitum umbra; Aen. 8.369 nox ruit et fuscis tellurem amplexitum alis). The idea of “enveloping” suits the verb induit and its implied idea of “clothing” (for which cf. 2.527-8 coeperat umenti Phoebum subtexte palla / Nox et caeruleam terris infuderat umbram, 3.415-6 Nox subiit ... nigroque polos inuoluit amictu). Wilson (1896: 18) compares such English expressions as “Night’s sable mantle”, “the silver mantle of the moon”, which are seen in Milton and elsewhere’ (e.g. Paradise Lost 4.609). Accordingly dawn can be con-
ceptualised as ‘unclothing’, cf. Val. 3.1-2 _tertia iam gelidas Tithonia soluerat umbras / exueratque polum._

Brown (1994: 171 n. 38) suggests a connection with 1.664-5 _nostro mala nubila caelo / diffugiunt,_ at the end of Adrastus’ narrative of Linus and Coroebus, when Apollo’s plague is gone. While Adrastus’ words convey that ‘the seemingly endless chain of violence is broken’, she suggests, 5.753 ‘may be interpreted symbolically as an inversion of Adrastus’ optimistic conclusion’; she also suggests that ‘[t]he darkening of the sky following Amphiaraus’ optimistic words is indicative of his prophetic failure’ (1994: 216 n. 114). She also reads the line in contrast with ‘the dazzling vision of the apotheosised hero’ in Pindar’s first _Nemean_ (1994: 151; cf. §4.4).

Finally, it is worth noting that Ross misinterprets _umbram_ as Opheltes’ shade: ‘Dark veiled the infant’s _shade._ The night descended’. Painful mistake or poetic licence of the translator, readers may intuitively feel a connection between Opheltes’ death and the nightfall that closes the episode. Night, shadow and death, after all, are intimate friends (see e.g. Haefliger 1903: 104). In any case, book 5 ends in the token of the war’s first victim, foreshadowing the fates of the Argive heroes that will dominate the ends of books 7-11.
Appendix A. The mythographical evidence

(a) Ps.-Apollod. Bibl. 3.6.4

paragrapheis de eis Neméas, ὡς ἐβασίλευε Λυκόφρος, ἕζητων ὕδωρ, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἄρχατο τῆς ἑτοὶ κρήνην ὅδου Τύπιθηλη, νηπίου παῖδα οὕτω Ὀφέλετον ἀπολύουσα, ὅν ἔτερεν Εὐρυδίκης οὕτα καὶ Λυκόφρον. ἀνέδειξεν γὰρ αἱ Λύξπειν Παιδά σεσωμοίῳ ἕκειν μὲν ἔκτεινα, τὴν δὲ Τύπιθηλην ἀπομόλυναν διὸ ἐπελάτειν παρὰ Λυκόφρον. δεικνύοντες δὲ τὴν κρήνην, ὁ παῖς ἀπολείπεται ὑπὸ δράκοντος διακαθετεῖ. τὸν μὲν οὖν δρακόντα ἐπιφανεῖται ὁ μετὰ Λαφαστοῦ κτείνον, τὸν δὲ παῖδα Ἱάνπουν. Ἀμφιάραος δὲ εἶπεν ἕκειν τὸ σημεῖον τὰ μέλλοντα προμαν-

(b) Σ Clem. Alex. Protr. 2.34 Stählin

ὅτε οἱ ἐπὶ Ὡθᾶς σὺν Ἀδράστῃ καὶ Πολυεικὴς ἀστρατεύοντα, παρέδωκαν αἰς τὴν Νεμέαν τότος δὲ ὡς τοῦ Ἀργος. ζητοῦντες δὲ ἱδρύσεται συνέτοιχος Ὡτίπιθηλη τὴν Θανάτου δυνατή τρεφοῦσα παῖδον Ὀφέλτην καλομενον Εὐρήτων καὶ Εὐρυδίκης· ἡ δὲ ἀποδείκνυται τοῦ παιδίου ἀπῆλθεν αὐτοῦ ἱδρύσεται συνετοῖχος, δρακόντων δὲ ἐν τοσούτω περίπεσον τῷ παιδίῳ ἔκειν ταῦτα. δὲ ἐπανελθούσα ἔδροι. Ἀμφιάραος δὲ ὁ μάντης, εἰς ὑπὸ τῶν ἑπτὰ, ἀπὸ τοῦ συμβάντος τῆς Ἑλλησ Σάλατον προ-

(c) Hyg. Fab. 74.1-3


(d) Σ Pind. Nem. hypoth. a (vol. iii 1 Drachmann)

Τὸν ἄγαρα τῶν Νεμέων τις μὲν ὄφ’ Ἡρακλεός τεσσαφείναι φασιν ἐπʼ τῇ τοῦ λέοντος ἀναίρεσι, οἱ δὲ ὡς ὑπερώτους, ἄλλα καὶ ιστοριαν τίνα λέγουσιν ἐπί αὐτῷ ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ Ὀφέλτου, μὲν πρότερον, νῦν δὲ Λυκόφρον, ἀπὸ τοῦ μαντεύσεται τοῖς ὑπὸ Ὡθᾶς αἰσθητεύσων διὰ τοῦ ἱδοῦ Σάλατος. ὁ δὲ ἄγιον ἐπίταφων, καὶ γὰρ ὡς ὑπὸ τῶν Ομηρικῶν δεικνύουσιν, ἔξω ὃν οὐδὲννυκῆσαι υπὸ στεφάνου εἰςάγεται, οὔδε Ὁστόρα τῷ πολλάς νικώς ἐκατο τοῖς πολλάκις ἐξεγονόμνευς καὶ φασιν οὔδὲ ὠμον τῷ στεφάνῳ εἰδέναι τὸν ποιήτην, ἀποδεικνύτες ως οὐδαμον παρὰ τῷ ποιήτῃ εἴρηται στεφάνας μὲν γαρ λέγει, στεφάνος δὲ οὐ τῶν οἱ μὲν καλὰς στεφάνος εἶχον.

(e) Σ Pind. Nem. hypoth. b (vol. iii 1-2 Drachmann)

οἱ ἐπά τοῦ Ὁθᾶς παραδοθέντες τῇ Νεμά διψάντες συνέτοιχον Τύπιθηλη τῇ Λημνίᾳ φερούση τὸν Λυκόφρον τοῦ τοῦ Δίκες ἱερᾶς καὶ Εὐρυδίκης παῖδα Ὀφέλτην· ὁ δὲ αὐτοῦ ἄρχησατο εἰς τῶν προχρόνες, καταλύσασα τὸ παῖδα ἐν τριν λειμαίνον ὁ δράκων περιπέλητες ἤ Ἰλισσίς οὐκέτι εἰςλειπεσαν. οἱ δὲ ὑποστρέφειται καὶ τῶν πάθων ἑπεησάμον τοῖς δράκοντας ἀνείλου καὶ ἀγώνων, ἐγκάλεσαν ἀπὸ τὸ τοῦ δρακόντος πλῆθος σφάγματος φεύγει. ὁ δὲ γενικός καὶ ἁμα, οὐκ ἄλλος οὐδὲ κέλευς, ἔνοχος δὲ οὕτως Τύπιθηλη ἐν Νεμή. ὕμειραν παρὰ τῶν Λημνίαδων πάν τὸ ἄργον ἀναίρεσι πάντως, ἐκ παῖδος Τύπιθηλη τοῦ πατέρα, Ὀθάντα, ἑνείβασι καὶ ἑκταὶ φιάλες· ὕποτρεφεῖ δὲ κατὰ τῆς Τύπιθηλης Σάλατον· ἢ δὲ μακρόσφασε φεύγει. ἐν τοσοῦτο οὐδὲ κρίνεις, περικυκλοῦσα τὴς Λυκόφρον, κατ’ ἔκεινον δὲ τοῦ καρφῷ κατὰ χρήσην ὅτι ταύτης
παιδίς Θασα καὶ Εὐνοίων παρέβαλον ἐν Νεμέα, Εὐφυδίκης δὲ τῆς Λυκοῦργου γυναικὸς θυλαμένης διά τὸν Ὀμέλτον ζῶσαντο ἀνελαίη τὴν Τυπίλην, διὰ τούτο τέ ἐν τῷ τόπῳ λαδραίᾳ κατακλεισάς, Ἀμφιάρας μακενσάμουν δείκνυσι τοῖς παισὶ τὴν Τυπίλην· ὥς δὲ τῷ εὐνυχέσας παρεκάλει τοὺς ἱρῶν χρών ποιοicker· οἱ δὲ επὶ τῷ Ταλαοῖ παιδί. Ἀδραστοὶ δὲ ἀδελφοὶ, εἰς δὲ τις οἱ καὶ παλαιότερον ειλαί τῶν ἄγων τοῦ Θησαῦροι πόλιον. ἠξίλησαν δὲ ἐν αὐτῷ περὶ στεφάνι μόνῳ, οὐκ ἠλπίσαντες διωροδεικτε, ἐν τιμῇ καδιστάτης τῶν ἀγώνων· ὑπερέχοντο δὲ τίς τῶν λαμψίων ὑποστήσαστες ἀρρητὴν τῷ ἄνθρωπῳ ποιοῦται.ς, διὰ τούτου στεφάνος προτότο εὐκαλή, προεστάθη δὲ τῶν ἄγων καὶ Ἀργεῖοι καὶ Κορίνθιοι καὶ Ἀλέοντες· ὑπεράσαντες δὲ ταῖς σπείραις διεκδίκασαν τὸν Νεμέα τοῦ παιδί, ὥστε καταγωγοῦσαν, αὐτῶν ἀνορθωσάμενοι, καὶ Διὸς τοὺς ἀγωνιζόμενους ἀνορθωσάμενοι, καθ' ὃν καὶ τοῖς τῶν Ἀργείων λοχαγῶνς θάψας ταῖς νεμομένοις, διεστάθη τῷ ἑτέρῳ καὶ ἐκάλεσεν, ὥστε τοῖς φοβοῖς ἀρχὴ μόρου ἐγένετο ὁ τοῦ παιδὸς θάνατος. Θηβαῖοι δὲ ταῖς κατακλεισάσεις τοῦ τοῦ παιδὸς, οἱ δὲ πάντες τῶν Ἀργείων θάσας ταῖς νεμομένοις, διεστάθη τῷ ἑτέρῳ καὶ ἐκάλεσεν, ὥστε τοῖς φοβοῖς ἀρχὴ μόρου ἐγένετο ὁ τοῦ παιδὸς θάνατος. Θηβαῖοι δὲ ταῖς κατακλεισάσεις τοῦ τοῦ παιδὸς, οἱ δὲ πάντες τῶν Ἀργείων θάσας ταῖς νεμομένοις, διεστάθη τῷ ἑτέρῳ καὶ ἐκάλεσεν, ὥστε τοῖς φοβοῖς ἀρχὴ μόρου ἐγένετο ὁ τοῦ παιδὸς θάνατος.
Appendix B. Visual representations of Opheltes

Vases

(a) Attic red-figure white-ground stemless kylix, attributed to the Sotades painter, ca. 475-450 BC; British Museum, London. Man with cap attacks a serpent that exhales smoke; we also see a female figure. The identification is problematic: it could be one of the Seven attacking the Nemean serpent, but ‘Gesicht, Tracht und Kampfweise des Mannes’ are not heroic (Pühlhorn); the woman might be the nymph Nemea. See Pache 2004: 115-7 fig. 19; Smith 1999: 136 with n. 59 plate 11c; LIMC s.v. 11.

(b) Paestan red-figure chalice krater (fragment), ca. 360 BC, Bari. The serpent, lying across an altar, devours the child’s arm; the child has a ‘quer über die Brust laufende Amulettband’, which suggests that he is an ephebe, not a baby; he turns away from the snake and stretches his other arm towards a female figure; on the ground lies a hydria. Ogden nicely notes that ‘[t]he baby’s configuration closely resembles that in which he is represented in a small Hellenistic bronze votive discovered at the site of Nemea itself: he kneels and raises an arm in alarm, but this time his right one.’ See Pache 2004: 117-8 fig. 20; Simon 1979: 37 Abb. 5; LIMC s.v. 2; Ogden 2013: 56 with fig. 1.7.

(c) Apulian red-figure volute krater from Ruvo, Lykourgos Painter, ca. 350 BC; St Petersburg. Lower register: dead Opheltes on the ground in the middle, Hypsipyle running towards him from the left, female figure (Nemea?) standing on the right. Upper register: crested serpent coiled around tree in the middle, attacked by two warriors (spear, stone) from the right and one warrior (sword) from the left; a fourth warrior (Amphiaraus?) stands in the upper-left corner, observing (Pache) or proclaiming ‘das Todesschicksal der Sieben, dessen Vorläufer Archemoros ist’ (Simon). See Pache 2004: 118-20 fig. 21; Simon 1979: 37; LIMC s.v. 8; Ogden 2013: 57.

(d) Apulian red-figure amphora from Ruvo, Dareios Painter, ca. 340 BC. Upper register: in the middle a naïskos with Hypsipyle, Eurydice, Amphiaraus (identified with inscriptions); Amphiaraus is speaking to Eurydice; on the left Dionysus and, below him, Euneus leaning on spear; on the right Zeus and Nemea and, below them, Capaneus and Parthenopaeus. Lower register: mourning scene (prothesis) with Opheltes on bier, on the left a woman holding a parasol over his head, and behind his bier a veiled old woman crowning the corpse with a garland; on the right stands a paidagogus (inscribed) with a lyre; further right two figures carrying plates with offerings (Pache) or prizes for the Nemean Games (Simon). See Pache 2004: 120-2 fig. 22; Simon 1979: 36-7 Abb. 2-4; LIMC s.v. 10

(e) Apulian red-figure volute krater, ‘Lasimos krater’, ca. 340 BC; Louvre, Paris. Lower register: seated female figure with dead child (wound on chest) on her lap, her right hand raised in mourning; on the right an armed warrior addressing her; on the left two young men. Identification disputed, but possibly Hypsipyle or Eurydice with dead Opheltes, flanked by Amphiaraus on the right and Euneus and Thoas on the left. Amphiaraus is speaking, perhaps ‘dem Kind Opheltes den Namen Archemoros gebend’ (Pühlhorn). See Pache 2004: 122-3 fig. 23; LIMC s.v. 9.

Frescoes

(f) Wall-painting from Herculaneum, first century AD (Vespasian); Naples. Two warriors (one of them equipped as hoplite) attacking an amphisbaena with their spears; Hypsipyle

591 Ogden 2013: 55.
standing on the right; hydria on the ground. See Cockle 167 plate 1.9; Pache 2004: 123; Simon 1979: 37-8 Abb. 6; LIMC s.v. 3.

(g) Wall-painting from the Casa dei Dioscuri at Pompeii, showing two *dramatis personae*, both with tragic masks: the first figure is holding a vase, the second is a woman holding a baby in her arms. The scene has plausibly been interpreted as Amphiaras’ encounter with Hypsipyle. See Cockle (1987) 41-2, 147-8, plate 1.5. However, the scene has also been interpreted as Auge and a nurse carrying little Telephus (see Vessey 1970: 50 n. 69).

**Marble reliefs**

(h) Attic sarcophagus, ca. 160 AD; Corinth. On the long side the Seven against Thebes are depicted. On the short side Opheltes ‘mit entsetzt erhobener Hand’ (Simon) is strangled by the snake, while from the left a warrior with a sword comes to his rescue; on the right Hypsipyle watches the scene in horror. On the corner a female figure, according to Simon (1979: 45) ‘die Ortsnympe Nemea’. The pose of the child, with his right hand upwards, shows striking similarity with the cult figures that have been found in Nemea.592 The other two sides of the sarcophagus are lost.593 See Pache 2004: 124-6 fig. 24; Simon 1979: 38-43; LIMC s.v. 7.

(i) Grave altar from Nicephorus, late first century AD (Flavian); Detroit. Surrounded by a garland we see, on the right, the serpent attacking Opheltes, whose body is upside-down; in the middle stands a cloaked warrior, with a fallen *hydria* at his feet; on the left Hypsipyle flees away. See Pache 2004: 123 fig. 25; Simon 1979: 45 Abb. 11-12; LIMC s.v. 4a.

(j) Marble relief, second century AD (Antonine); Palazzo Spada, Rome. On the right Opheltes (again upside-down) is being strangled by the serpent, which is attacked by two warriors with spears,594 a fallen *hydria* at their feet; on the left is Hypsipyle, fleeing away, looking back in horror; in the background we see a building, probably the temple of Zeus.595 See Pache 2004: 123-4 fig. 26; Cockle 166-7 plate 1.10 and 11; LIMC s.v. 5; Roscher s.v. Archemoros.

(k) Marble relief on Attic sarcophagus (fragment), ca. 150-160 AD. Baby with serpent, bearded man with sword behind him. According to Simon and Pache the scene depicts the death of Opheltes, but one might prefer the traditional interpretation: baby Hercules killing the snakes sent by Hera, as the baby seems in control of the situation. On the other hand, only one snake can be discerned. See Pache 2004: 124-6 fig. 27; Simon 43-4 Abb. 10a-b; LIMC s.v. 6.

**Other**

(l, m, n) Three Roman coins from the Peloponnese, second century AD, depicting Opheltes being strangled while Hypsipyle enters from the right (l); Opheltes flat on the ground below the towering serpent, flanked by a warrior on the left and Hypsipyle on the right (m); Opheltes lying on an altar with the coiled serpent on the left (n). See Pache 2004: 126-9 fig. 28-30.

(o) Roman contorniat, fourth century AD. We see Herakles strangling the two snakes on the left and on the right Hypsipyle (name inscribed) holding Opheltes. See Pache 2004: 129 fig. 31.

592 For these small cult figurines see Miller 2004: 35-7.

593 Simon 1979: 38-9 plausibly suggests that these sides depicted related events, e.g. funeral games for Archemorus (foreshadowed in the *stele visible beside Hypsipyle* or Dionysian themes.

594 One of the spears may be a wrong restoration.

595 Punzi 1910: 176 ‘in fondo un edificio, il tempio di Zeus nemeo e vicino ad esso, a sinistra, un albero che spande un ramo sul tetto’.
Bibliography

Abbreviations of ancient authors and works mostly follow the conventions of OLD and LSJ, sometimes with a little expansion (e.g. Aesch. for A.); deviations are self-explanatory (e.g. Ov. Her. instead of Ov. Ep.). Vergil’s poems do not deserve to be reduced to one letter; they are referred to as Ecl., Geo. and Aen. Periodicals are cited as in L’année philologique.

Commentaries on classical authors are not, in principle, included in the bibliography. Students of the Thebaid may be expected to understand references such as ‘Horsfall on Aen. 7.593’ or ‘Mastroarde on Eur. Phoen. 226’.

I have provided a complete list of commentaries on Statius’ Thebaid, including commentaries in preparation. The lists of editions (some of them with translation) and translations, however, are not complete; I have confined myself to the works I have consulted.

The best Statian bibliographies currently available are Kibé 2004 and Harald Anderson’s website <http://viastazio.com/stazio>.

An asterisk (*) marks works that have not – or not yet – officially been published.

Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ANRW</td>
<td>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt (Berlin 1972-).</td>
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<td>CIL</td>
<td>Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum (Berlin 1863-).</td>
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<td>Neue Pauly</td>
<td>H. Cancik and J. Schneider (edd.) Der neue Pauly (Stuttgart 1998-).</td>
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<td>TLL</td>
<td>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae (Leipzig 1900-).</td>
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Editions

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<tr>
<td>Barth</td>
<td>C. Barthius [= Barth] (1664) Publuii Papinii Statii quae extant. Ad P. Papinii Statii Thebaidem animadversionum pars altera (Cygneae [= Zwickau]).</td>
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<td>Valpy</td>
<td>A.J. Valpy (1824) P. Papinii Statii opera omnia ex editione Bipontina cum notis et interpretatione in usum Delphini, 4 vols. (London)</td>
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Book 1  H. Heuvel (1932) *Publii Papinii Statii Thebaidos liber primus, versione Bataua commentarioque exegetico instructus* (Zutphen).


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**Book 7**  

**Book 8**  
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**Book 11**  

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**Book 12**  


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Nederlandse samenvatting

1. Inleiding
Dit proefschrift is gewijd aan het verhaal van Opheltes alias Archemorus in de *Thebaïs* van Publius Papinius Statius, die als dichter actief was tijdens het bewind van keizer Domitianus (81–96 n.Chr.). De *Thebaïs*, zijn *opus magnum*, is een episch gedicht in twaalf boeken over het conflict tussen Oedipus’ zoons, Eteocles en Polynices, en de oorlog tussen de Griekse steden Argos en Thebe die hieruit voortvloeit; deze ‘broederoorlog’ (*Theb.* 1.1 fraternas acies) bereikt zijn climax in boek 11 met een bloedstollend tweegevecht, waarin beide broers de dood vinden. De mythe, die te boek staat als ‘de Zeven tegen Thebe’, wordt tegenwoordig vooral geassocieerd met de Griekse tragedie, bijvoorbeeld Euripides’ *Phoenissae* of Sophocles’ *Oedipus Coloneus*, maar was in de oudheid ook een geliefd episch thema. Statius’ *Thebaïs* is de enige epische versie die bewaard is gebleven.

In de 19de en 20ste eeuw is Statius’ *Thebaïs* dikwijls bekritiseerd vanwege haar vermeende gebrek aan literaire eenheid. Het laatste boek, bijvoorbeeld, zou enkel geschreven zijn om aan de Vergiliaanse norm van twaalf boeken te voldoen; een ander veelgehoord verwijt is dat Statius een aantal verhalen, die ogenschijnlijk weinig met de Zeven tegen Thebe te maken hebben, in zijn *Thebaïs* heeft ingevoegd. Dat geldt niet alleen voor de twee ingebetelde verhalen over Linus en Coroebus (*Theb.* 1.557-672) en de Lemnische mannenmoord (*Theb.* 5.49-498), die beide door een personage worden verteld, maar ook voor het verhaal van Opheltes, dat de rode draad vormt van de zgn. Nemeïsche episode, die meer dan twee boeken van het epos in beslag neemt (*Theb.* 4.646-7.104). Dit proefschrift onderzoekt de achtergrond en betekenis van het verhaal van Opheltes in Statius’ *Thebaïs* en maakt duidelijk – soms expliciet, soms impliciet – dat het op allerlei manieren verweven is met het epos als geheel, dat *multiplex et unum* genoemd zou kunnen worden. Naast een uitvoerige inleiding, waarin verschillende aspecten van het verhaal van Opheltes worden belicht, biedt dit proefschrift een wetenschappelijk commentaar op de tweede helft van boek 5, waarin het verhaal van Opheltes zijn climax bereikt (*Theb.* 5.499-753).

Om duidelijk te maken welke bijdrage mijn proefschrift aan de *Statiusforschung* hoopt te leveren, moeten we eerst kort de inhoud van de eerste helft van het epos in herinnering brengen, met bijzondere aandacht voor de complexe Nemeïsche episode, waarin verschillende verhalen met elkaar verweven zijn.

2. Synopsis
Na het *proëmium* (*Theb.* 1.1-45), waarin de dichter zijn koers bepaalt en het woord richt tot de keizer, neemt Statius ons mee naar de duistere wereld van Oedipus. Deze heeft zich na zijn anagnorisis met zijn vingers van het zicht beroofd en leidt nu een getormenteerd bestaan in de krochten van het koninklijk paleis; de troon van Thebe is in handen gekomen van zijn zoons – tevens halfbroers – Eteocles en Polynices. De blinde Oedipus richt zich tot de helse Furie Tisiphone en spreekt een huiveringwekkende vloek uit over zijn zoons. In reactie op Oedipus’ bede vergiftigt Tisiphone hun harten met blinde machtswellust, waardoor zij elkaars aanwezigheid niet meer kunnen verdragen. De broers besluiten daarop om niet langer samen, maar beurtelings de scepter te zwaaien, telkens ieder een jaar lang. Ondertussen maakt Jupiter in een godenvergadering zijn besluit bekend om de steden Argos en Thebe in een oorlog te gronde te richten, naar eigen zeggen om een einde te maken aan het toenemend verval der zeden.

Door zijn broer uit Thebe verbannen, raakt Polynices verzeild in Argos, een stad op de Peloponnesus, waar hij door koning Adrastus wordt herkend als de schoonzoon die hem door een orakel was voorspeld. Polynices trouwt met Adrastus’ dochter Argia. In een laatste
poging het conflict tussen de broers zonder bloedvergieten op te lossen, reist Polynices’ vriend Tydeus naar Thebe om Eteocles op andere gedachten te brengen, maar zonder succes. Met behulp van zijn schoonvader brengt Polynices vervolgens een leger op de been om Thebe op zijn broer te veroveren. Deze krijgsmacht wordt aangevoerd door zeven helden: Polynices, Tydeus, Amphiaräus, Hippomedon, Parthenopaeus, Capaneus en opperbevelhebber Adrastus. Samen trekken zij vanuit Argos ten strijde: de Zeven tegen Thebe.

Nauwelijks hebben de Zeven Argos achter zich gelaten – en hier begint de Nemeïsche episode (Theb. 4.646-7.104) die in dit proefschrift centraal staat – of de soldaten worden getroffen door overweldigende hitte en dorst. De god Bacchus, die als zoon van de Thebaanse prinses Semele natuurlijk aan de kant van Thebe staat, wil de expeditie van de Zeven namelijk zoveel mogelijk vertragen en veroorzaakt een verschrikkelijke droogte: op zijn bevel verdwijnen alle beken en rivieren van Nemea, behalve de stroom van Langia. Op zoek naar water – en ook dit is onderdeel van Bacchus’ plan – stuiten de Argivers op een een vrouw met een baby in haar armen. Deze vrouw blijkt Bacchus’ kleindochter Hypsipyle te zijn, die eens als koningin heerste over het eiland Lemnos, maar nu als slavin in dienst is van Lycurgus en Eurydice, de koning en koningin van Nemea. De zuigeling in haar armen is haar voedsterkind Opheltes, het zoontje van Lycurgus en Eurydice. Wanneer Adrastus vraagt of zij misschien een bron weet te vinden waar zij hun dorst kunnen lessen, leidt Hypsipyle de Argivers naar Langia. Daarbij maakt zij echter een noodlottige vergissing: om de soldaten zo snel mogelijk naar Langia te kunnen leiden, laat zij Opheltes achter in het gras.

Terwijl de Argivers bij Langia vertoeven, waar Hypsipyle hun in geuren en kleuren vertelt over de huiveringwekkende mannenmoord op Lemnos en haar affaire met Jason (Theb. 5.49-498), wordt de kleine Opheltes per ongeluk gedood door een reusachtige slang – en daarmee zijn we aangekomen in de episode die in dit proefschrift wordt becommentarieerd (Theb. 5.499-753). Op de drempel des doods slaakt het kind een laatste kreet, die door Hypsipyle wordt gehoord. Met angstig voorgevoel spoedt zij zich naar de plek waar zij haar voedsterkind heeft achtergelaten, maar in plaats van Opheltes vindt zij de slang, wat ook aan haar een ijselijke kreet ontlokt. De Argivers snellen te hulp. Na een vergeefse poging van Hippomedon om het monster met een rotsblok te verpletteren, treft Capaneus de opengezette bek van de slang met een speer. Dodelijk verwond vlucht het dier naar de tempel van Jupiter, waar het zijn laatste levensadem uitblaast. De oppergod is woedend om de dood van zijn slang en bijna verzengt hij Capaneus met een bliksemflits. Hypsipyle heeft ondertussen het verminkte lichaam van Opheltes gevonden en uit een aangrijpende jammerklacht; aan het einde daarvan vraagt zij de Zeven om, in ruil voor de gunst die zij hun verleend heeft, een einde aan haar leven te maken.

Wanneer het nieuws over de dood van Opheltes het paleis van Nemea bereikt, ontsteekt Opheltes’ vader Lycurgus in blinde razernij. Hij stormt naar Hypsipyle met de bedoeling om zijn onverantwoordelijke slavin te straffen voor de dood van zijn zoontje. Maar de Zeven, die hun leven aan Hypsipyle te danken hebben, houden hem tegen. Het scheelt weinig of het conflict tussen de Argivers en hun Nemeïsche bondgenoot ontaardt in bloedvergieten: Adrastus en de ziener Amphiaräus weten de gemoederen slechts met moeite tot bedaren te brengen.

Ondertussen zijn er ook in de stad Nemea onlusten uitgebroken: de voorhoede van het Argivische leger, reeds in de stad aangekomen, verneemt valse geruchten dat hun weldoener Hypsipyle door Lycurgus zou zijn gedood en de soldaten richten hun woede op het paleis van de koning. Wederom ontaardt het conflict bijna in bloedvergieten, maar de komst van Adrastus, die Hypsipyle met zich meevoert, ontkracht de geruchten en de opperbevelhebber slaagt erin de orde te herstellen.

In het gevolg van Lycurgus, te midden van de Nemeïsche boeren die schreeuwen om de dood van Hypsipyle, bevinden zich ook twee jongemannen: Euneüs en Thoas, de
tweelingzoons van Jason en Hypsipyle. Deze zijn vanuit Lemnos naar het Griekse vasteland gereisd om hun moeder te zoeken. Door een wonderlijke samenloop van omstandigheden, waarin hun goddelijke overgrootvader Bacchus de hand heeft, zijn zij min of meer gelijkvrij met de Zeven in Nemea aangegaan. Wanneer Euneüs en Thoas in het tumult rond Hypsipyle de namen ‘Lemnos’ en ‘Thoas’ (de naam van hun grootvader) opvangen, realiseren zij zich dat de vrouw in kwestie niemand minder is dan hun eigen moeder. Moeder en zoons vliegen elkaar om de hals; Bachische hemeltekens bekrachtigen hun hereniging.

Het vijfde boek eindigt met een speech van de ziener Amphiaraüs, waarin Apollo bij monde van zijn priester de gebeurtenissen in Nemea duidt. Alles, aldus Amphiaraüs, was door het lot en de goden voorbeschikt. Ook articulateert de ziener de betekenis van Opheltes’ alternatieve nomen omen Archemorus, waaraan de titel van dit proefschrift is ontleend (‘Beginning of Doom’): de dood van Opheltes symboliseert het lot dat de Zeven in de strijd om Thebe te wachten staat. Verder geeft Apollo de Argivers opdracht om Opheltes, wiens droeve lot zo nauw met het hunne verbonden is, met een luisterrijke begrafenis en lijkspelen te eren. Ten slotte richt Amphiaraüs het woord tot Opheltes’ ouders: hij maant hen om niet te treuren om de dood van hun kind, want hun zoontje is onsterfelijk geworden! Wanneer Amphiaraüs is uitgesproken, hult de nacht het vijfde boek van de Thebaïs in duisternis.

Het zesde boek staat in het teken van de crematie en begrafenis van Opheltes en de lijkspelen te zijner ere: de eerste editie van de Nemeïsche Spelen. Aan het begin van het zevende boek maakt Jupiter een einde aan het oponthoud in Nemea en de Argivers marcheren verder naar Thebe. De rest van de Thebaïs laat ik hier buiten beschouwing.

3. Proefschrift
Zoals de ondertitel aangeeft, bestaat dit proefschrift uit drie delen: inleiding, tekst en commentaar. De inleiding van dit proefschrift bestaat uit acht hoofdstukken van wisselende lengte, waarin een aantal belangrijke aspecten van de episode onder de loep worden genomen. Aan de tekst en commentaar wordt aan het einde van deze samenvatting aandacht besteed.

3.1. Inleiding
Het eerste hoofdstuk is gewijd aan de mythe van Opheltes-Archemorus in de klassieke literatuur vóór Statius, vanaf de eerste vermelding van zijn naam op Myceense kleitabellen tot de vroege Romeinse keizertijd. Het betreft een aitiologische mythe, die een verklaring geeft voor het ontstaan van de Nemeïsche Spelen, die overigens dikwijls ten onrechte aan Hercules worden toegeschreven (§1.1). In oude literatuur vindt men de theorie dat de Nemeïsche Spelen geworteld zijn in een rituele cultus rond dood en vruchtbaarheid: de chthonische slang en de naam Opheltes zouden in die richting kunnen wijzen. Het feit dat de naam Opheltes in het Lineair B wordt aangetroffen als naam van gewone stervelingen, maakt deze theorie echter minder aannemelijk (§1.2).

In de derde paragraaf (§1.3) passeren alle dichters vóór Statius die gewag maken van Opheltes-Archemorus de revue; de belangrijkste auteurs in dezen zijn Bacchylides, Euripides, Antimachus en Callimachus. Uit een epinicische ode van Bacchylides blijkt duidelijk dat de mythe van Opheltes reeds in de eerste helft van de vijfde eeuw v.Chr. met de mythe van de Zeven tegen Thebe verknoodt was: de dood van het kind en zijn nomen omen Archemorus worden ook door Bacchylides verbonden met het lot dat de Zeven te wachten staat. Overigens doet Amphiaraüs volgens Bacchylides een poging om de Argivers op andere gedachten te brengen, wat vermoedelijk ten grondslag ligt aan Theb. 5.743-5, waar Amphiaraüs zijn god Apollo vraagt om de expeditie tegen Thebe oneindig uit te stellen. Ook in Euripides’ tragedie Hypsipyle zijn beide verhalen met elkaar verstrengeld. Euripides heeft met de rol van Hypsipyle als voedster van Opheltes een cruciale bijdrage geleverd aan de ontwikkeling van het verhaal (vgl. hoofdstuk 2). Niet veel later dan Euripides’ Hypsipyle is de epische Thebaïs
van Antimachus. Hoewel van dit gedicht slechts enkele fragmenten bewaard zijn gebleven, zijn er sterke aanwijzingen dat het verhaal van Opheltes ook in deze Thebaïs inbegrepen: de dood van Opheltes is niet alleen vereist als aanleiding voor de spelen, ook een gedicht van de Augusteïsche dichter Propertius doet vermoeden dat de dood en begrafenis van het kind deel uitmaakten van Antimachus’ epos. Overigens is er geen enkele reden om aan te nemen dat Statius onbekend was met Antimachus’ epos, zoals in het verleden herhaaldelijk is beweerd. Opheltes wordt ook genoemd door Callimachus, aan het begin van diens beroemde Victoria Berenices in Aetia boek 3, waarin het verhaal van Herakles en de Nemeïsche leeuw en vooral het verblijf van de held in de door muizen geplagde hut van Molorchus centraal staat. Volgens sommige geleerden schrijft Callimachus de stichting van de Nemeïsche Spelen in dit gedicht toe aan Herakles, maar naar alle waarschijnlijkheid biedt de Victoria Berenices enkel een aition voor de apiacia corona (‘krans van selderij’), waarmee overwinnaars in de Nemeïsche spelen werden geëerd (vgl. hoofdstuk 4).

In de volgende paragraaf (§1.4) wordt aandacht besteed aan drie opmerkelijke elementen in de synopsis van de mythe door de mythograaf Hyginus, wiens Fabulae helaas niet goed gedateerd kunnen worden. Ten eerste spreekt Hyginus over ‘Ophites’ en ‘Lycus’ in plaats van Opheltes en Lycurgus. Ik betoog dat hier geen sprake is van een alternatieve traditie, maar van tekstuele corrupties: Ophites is corrupt onder invloed van Ophites in de voorafgaande fabula en een mogelijke associatie met het Griekse woord ὄφις (‘slang’), terwijl Lyci regis vermoedelijk is neergeschreven door een kopiist die de laatste drie letters van Lycurgi abusievelijk opvatte als een abbreviatura van regis (‘koning’). Ten tweede geeft Hyginus een andere verklaring voor de apiacia corona: Opheltes zou in altissimum apium gestorven zijn. In de Thebaïs speelt selderij geen rol, maar het feit dat Statius in de Silvae zowel de Nemeïsche zegekrans als Opheltes’ locus mortis aanduidt met gramine Lernae (2.1.181 en 5.3.142), doet vermoeden dat onze poetæ doctus wel bekend was met deze versie van de mythe. Ten derde maakt Hyginus ook melding van een orakel: Opheltes mocht de grond niet raken voordat hij kon lopen. Statius maakt van dit orakel geen gewag, maar hij lijkt op Hyginus’ versie te zinspelen, wanneer Hypsipyle haar voedsterkind uicino caespite plaatst (4.786).

De laatste paragraaf (§1.5) is gewijd aan de Cyclische Thebaïs. Hoewel hiervan slechts een twintigtal verzen bewaard is gebleven, kan aannemelijk worden gemaakt dat het verhaal van Opheltes ook in deze versie was inbegrepen. In elk geval blijkt uit Pausanias en uit archeologisch materiaal dat er, vóór de Hypsipyle van Euripides, een versie bestond waarin Lycurgus en de Zeven met elkaar slaagden. Het ligt voor de hand dat dit conflict, evenals in Statius’ Thebaïs, samenhangt met de dood van Opheltes. Deze oude traditie ligt ten grondslag aan het conflict tussen de Argivers en de Nemeërs in de Thebaïs van Statius – een passage die tot op heden altijd is beschouwd als een epische variatie op de agōn in Euripides’ Hypsipyle. Ook de droogte in Nemea, die in Statius een belangrijke rol speelt, is geworteld in de pre-Euripideïsche traditie.

Het tweede hoofdstuk bespreekt de intertekstuele relatie tussen Statius’ Nemeïsche episode en Euripides’ Hypsipyle (vgl. Soerink 2014). Het opent met een inleiding over deze onvolledig bewaard gebleven tragedie en een status quaeestionis wat betreft de relatie tussen Statius en Euripides (§2.1 en 2.). Vervolgens betoog ik, voortbordurend op een gedachte van Joanne Brown, dat Statius de Hypsipyle niet alleen in zijn epos heeft geïncorporeerd, maar dat ook metapoeïticaal heeft gemaakte: de intocht van Bacchus in boek 4 markeert de tragische wending van het epische gedicht, terwijl de hemeltekens waarmee Bacchus de hereniging van Hypsipyle en haar zoons bekrachtigt, corresponderen met Dionysus’ verschijning ex machina aan het eind van Euripides’ drama (§2.3). Hypsipyle’s epyllion over de Lemnische mannenmoord, dat het leeuwendeel van Thebaïs boek 5 in beslag neemt, is ook geïnspireerd door
Euripides, wiens Hypsipyle een groot episch potentieel aan de dag legt (§2.5). Statius heeft de Attische tragedie echter niet simpelweg gekopieerd. Dat blijkt het duidelijkst uit de manier waarop in de Thebaïs de hereniging van Hypsipyle en haar zoons tot stand wordt gebracht: door Euneüs en Thoas tot volgelingen van Lycurgus te maken, combineert Statius op kunstige wijze de Euripideïsche hereniging van Hypsipyle en haar zoons met het pre-Euripideïsche conflict tussen Lycurgus en de Zeven. Ook op andere punten verschilt Statius’ versie van Euripides. Ik beargumenteer dat niet Statius, maar Euripides de vreemde eend is: Euripides’ versie wijkt, dikwijls om pragmatische dramaturgische redenen, af van de traditionele epische versie (vgl. §1.5), die Statius als epicus juist navolgt.

Het derde hoofdstuk belicht de intratekstuele connecties tussen het verhaal van Opheltes en het complexe verhaal van Linus en Coroebus in het eerste boek van de Thebaïs. Deze verbanden worden duidelijk onder de aandacht gebracht in boek 6, waar het lot van Linus staat afgebeeld op de lijkwade van Opheltes (Theb. 6.64-6); de verwantschap tussen de Nemeïsche slang en de Python van Delphi wordt bovendien expliciet gemaakt in een vergelijking (Theb. 5.531-3).

In het verleden is terecht opgemerkt dat zowel de dood van Linus als de dood van Opheltes het begin markeert van een reeks noodlottige gebeurtenissen. Zelf besteed ik aandacht aan de manier waarop in beide verhalen de relatie tussen mensen en goden, tussen hemel en hel wordt geproblematiseerd. In het verhaal van Linus en Coroebus worden twee monsters gedood, Python en Poine. Apollo’s overwinning is een paradigmatische overwinning van kosmos over chaos, maar Coroebus’ overwinning is minder eenduidig: enerzijds is het een heroïsche daad, anderzijds een heiligschennis waarmee hij zijn stad Argos alleen maar verder in het verderf stort. Ik betoog dat deze dubbelzinnigheid ook geldt voor Capaneus’ monsterzege in boek 5: de strijd tussen superum contemptor Capaneus en de Nemeïsche slang wordt gepresenteerd in Gigantomachische termen, maar het is allerminst duidelijk wie de rol van Jupiter (of Hercules) speelt en wie de rol van Gigant.

De laatste paragraaf (§3.4) besteedt aandacht aan het feit dat zowel Linus als Opheltes gekoppeld kunnen worden aan Callimachus’ Aetia, waar zij vergelijkbare structurele posities innemen (begin en midden). Is het denkbaar dat Statius deze structuur aan Callimachus heeft ontleend? En was er ook in de Aetia een gemaakte intratekstuele connectie tussen beide passages?

De relatie tussen Statius en Callimachus wordt verder onderzocht in hoofdstuk 4. Recentelijk heeft Charles McNelis, voortbordurend op een idee van François Delarue, betoogd dat in Statius’ Thebaïs een poëtische spanning wordt geconstrueerd tussen enerzijds het epische verhaal over de broederstrijd tussen Eteocles en Polynices, dat gericht is op de wederzijdse broedermoord waarin hun conflict culmineert, en anderzijds de elementen in het epos die zowel de expeditie van de Zeven tegen Thebe als de vertelling hiervan frustreren. Uiteraard is mora een aloude epische techniek, zonder welke de Odysseia of de Aeneïs beduidend minder boeken zou tellen. Het opmerkelijke van McNelis’ interpretatie is de gedachte dat mora in de Thebaïs gekoppeld is aan Callimachus en diens poëtische principes. Hij betoogt dan ook dat de Nemeïsche episode in zijn geheel – Hypsipyle’s verhaal over de Lemnische mannenmoord, de dood van Opheltes, de speLEN – geïnspireerd is door Callimachus, in het bijzonder diens Victoria Berenices. McNelis’ interpretatie is door sommigen met veel enthousiasme ontvangen; Peter Heslin heeft zelfs betoogd dat Thebaïs boek 5 in zijn geheel beschouwd moet worden als een epyllion in de trant van Callimachus’ Hecale. Mijns inziens zijn deze claims echter onhoudbaar. Callimachus’ aition draait om Herakles en de apiacia corona, maar hierover wordt door Statius met geen woord gerept. Statius’ episode is niet zozeer geïnspireerd door Callimachus als wel door Euripides, zoals bijvoorbeeld ook blijkt uit Statius’ keuze voor de naam Lycurgus, niet Euphetes.
In de volgende paragraaf (§4.2) wordt nader ingegaan op de Callimacheïsche elementen in Statius’ epos. Want hoewel McNelis’ claim onhoudbaar is, speelt Callimachus beslist een belangrijke rol. In enkele passages voorafgaand aan de Nemeïsche episode wordt Nemea namelijk nadrukkelijk geassocieerd met Herakles en diens worsteling met de Nemeïsche leeuw, waarbij in de catalogus in boek 4 zelfs tamelijk expliciet wordt verwezen naar Molorchus en Callimachus’ *Victoria Berenices*. Zodoende creëert Statius de verwachting dat de Zeven tegen Thebe in Nemea in aanraking zullen komen met Hercules of Molorchus en, op poëticaal niveau, met Callimachus. In de laatste paragraaf (§4.4) betoog ik dat Statius ons hiermee zand in de ogen strooit: wij verwachten een literaire ontmoeting met Hercules of zelfs met Molorchus, maar deze verwachting wordt gefrustreerd. Want in plaats van een Callimacheïsche wending, neemt Statius’ epos in Nemea juist een epische wending: een monsterlijke slang, een *Drachenkampf* en een opvlaming van burgeroorlog tussen de Nemeërs en de Argivers. Deze wending wordt duidelijk gamarkeerd aan het slot van boek 4, wanneer de Argivers zich *en masse* in de heldere stroom van Langia storten en daarmee het heldere Callimacheïsche water in een epische modderige rivier veranderen; ook *armorum ... uirorum* aan het begin van de *Drachenkampf* (Theb. 5.557), een onmiskenbare echo van Vergilius’ *arma uirumque* (Aen. 1.1), signaleert het epische karakter van de passage.

In het volgende hoofdstuk wordt betoogd dat Statius’ Nemea beschouwd kan worden als een ‘paradise lost’. Nemea wordt nadrukkelijk geïntroduceerd als een vredige pastorale wereld, maar met de komst van de Zeven tegen Thebe wordt Nemea meegesleurd in de maalstroom van de broederstrijd tussen Eteocles en Polynices. De koning en koningin van Nemea verliezen hun kind en Nemea wordt bijna het toneel van burgeroorlog, die slechts met moeite kan worden beteugeld. De teloorgang van Nemea wordt krachtig gesymboliseerd door de verwoesting van het heilige woud in boek 6: de bomen worden gekapt om te dienen als brandhout of wapentuig; de vogels, de nimfen en de faunen vluchten angstig weg uit Nemea. De Nemeïsche *locus amoenus* verandert in een *locus horridus*. Deze verstoring heeft duidelijk raakvlakken met het zevende en achtste boek van de *Aeneïs*, waar het vredige Pallanteüm betrokken raakt bij de strijd tussen de Trojanen en de Latijnen. Niet toevallig is Opheltes’ vader duidelijk gemodelleerd naar Vergilius’ Evander, die eveneens zijn zoon verliest aan de oorlog. De dood van Opheltes roept ook duidelijk Vergilius’ vierde *Ecloga* in herinnering, waarin de geboorte van een *Wunderkind* en de komst van een Gouden Tijdperk wordt voorspeld. In het verhaal van Opheltes wordt dit scenario als het ware omgekeerd. Ook de vergelijking, waarin Hypsipyle en Opheltes worden vergeleken met een moedervogel en haar korst, wijst in de richting van het discours over de Gouden Tijd. Deze toespelingen lijken ook een politieke dimensie te hebben: in tegenstelling tot de *Aeneis* gloort aan de horizon van de *Thebaïs* geen Augusteïsche Gouden Tijd, maar een uiterst ongewis toekomstperspectief dat mogelijk gekoppeld kan worden aan de stemming na de bloedige burgeroorlog in 68-69 n.Chr. De laatste paragraaf van hoofdstuk 5 laat zien dat de Nemeïsche episode een scenario realiseert dat wordt gesuggereerd in het derde boek van Vergilius *Georgica*, waar Vergilius’ didactische persona komt te spreken over de dreiging van de Calabrische waterslang. Deze passage ligt ook ten grondslag aan het pseudo-Vergiliaanse gedicht *Culex*, waaraan ook enkele elementen van de ecphrasis van de slang aan zijn ontleend.

In hoofdstuk 6 betoog ik dat het verhaal van Opheltes gelezen kan worden als *mise en abyme*: de episoede spiegelt een aantal centrale themata van het epos als geheel. De noodlottige dood van Opheltes staat niet alleen symbool voor het lot van de Zeven tegen Thebe, zijn dood is ook intratekstuig verbonden met een aantal andere *mortes immaturae* in het epos, bijvoorbeeld Crenaeus en Parthenopaeus in boek 9; talrijke woordelijke echo’s en motieven onderstrepen deze connecties. Dat geldt *mutatis mutandis* ook voor Hypsipyle en Eurydice, die hun (voedster)kind Opheltes verliezen. Hun reacties op zijn dood spiegelen een aantal andere vrouwelijke personages in de *Thebaïs*. De verschillende rouwklachten van oorlogs-
moeders en –weduwen lopen als een rode draad door het epos. Ook hierbij geldt dat de intratekstuele verbanden worden onderstreept door woordelijke en motivische overeenkomsten. De Nemeïsche slang, die de kleine Opheltes met een noodlottige beweging van zijn staart doodt, staat symbool voor de oncontroleerbare furor die de wereld in het verderf stort. De monsterlijke slang is verbonden met zowel hemel als hel, wat overeenstemt met het feit dat de broederstrijd in de Thebaïs door zowel Jupiter als Tisiphone en Dis wordt gedreven. Deze symbolische betekenis van de slang kan ook in andere passages worden aangewezen. In de laatste regels van de Thebaïs wordt het onzegbare leed van de Thebaanse Oorlog nogmaals beklemttoond: in tegenstelling tot de Aeneïs biedt de Thebaïs ons geen troost.

Het korte zevende hoofdstuk is gewijd aan de topografie van Statius’ Nemea. In reactie op eerdere uitspraken over Statius’ vermeende onbekendheid met Griekenland, betoog ik dat Statius de mythische gebeurtenissen in de Nemeïsche episode heeft geprojecteerd op een bestaand landschap. Evenals de Aeneïs dient men de Thebaïs soms te lezen met het contemporaine landschap en zijn monumenten in het achterhoofd.

3.2. Tekst

3.3. Commentaar
Met circa 150 pagina’s bestaat het leeuwendeel van dit proefschrift uit een lemmatisch commentaar op Thebaïs 5.499-753, de passage die hierboven tamelijk uitvoerig is samengetrokken. De afgelopen decennia zijn de meeste boeken van Statius’ epos wetenschappelijk becommentarieerd (zie bibliografie), maar een commentaar op de tweede helft van boek 5 was nog altijd een desideratum; mijn proefschrift hoopt deze lacune op te vullen. Het betreft een tamelijk traditioneel Gesamtkommentar waarin allerlei aspecten van de tekst aan bod komen. Aangezien het onmogelijk en onzinnig is de inhoud van een dergelijk commentaar samen te vatten, beperk ik mij hier tot de doelen die ik mij heb gesteld.

Mijn commentaar is in de eerste plaats bedoeld om de dikwijls complexe poëzie van Statius toegankelijk en begrijpelijk te maken. Men denke daarbij aan noten over tekstuele problemen, obscure mythologische verwijzingen of ongebruikelijke syntactische constructies. Daarbij heb ik echter wel gevorderde studenten en onderzoekers in gedachten gehad; opmerkingen in de trant van ‘sc. esse’ of ‘potential subjunctive’ zijn schaars. Daarnaast heb ik getracht om intratekstuele verbanden met andere passages binnen het epos zichtbaar te maken. Hopelijk wordt hiermee op micro-niveau duidelijk wat ook in de inleiding werd betoogd, namelijk dat de passage op allerlei manieren verweven is met de centrale themata van het epos als geheel. Niet alleen intratekstuele verbanden, ook intertekstuele verbanden met Vergilius, Lucanus, Euripides en vele andere literaire voorgangers komen aan bod. Waar mogelijk heb ik getracht allusies en woordelijke echo’s niet alleen te benoemen, maar ook te interpreteren. Echo’s van Lucanus, bijvoorbeeld, onderstrepen dat de gewelddadigheden in Nemea beschouwd moeten worden als opvolging van bellum plus quam ciuile, terwijl toespelingen op Ovidius’ Martius anguis in Metamorphoses boek 3 duidelijk maken dat de Nemeïsche slang verbonden is met Thebe. Verder bevat de commentaar talrijke observaties wat betreft Statius’ poëtische stijl en techniek: stijlfiguren, neologismen, ringcompositions, etc. Observaties en suggesties van andere Statiani zijn dankbaar in mijn commentaar verwerkt,
ook wanneer ik deze niet volledig onderschrijf. Het is immers aan de lezer, niet aan mij, om zich een oordeel te vormen over Statius’ poëzie. Uiteindelijk zijn alle observaties en comparanda in de commentaar bedoeld om de lezer daartoe in staat te stellen.
Curriculum vitae

