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STATIUS

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# STATIUS

THEBAID, BOOKS 8–12  
ACHILLEID

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY  
D. R. SHACKLETON BAILEY



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# THEBAID

## LIBER VIII

Ut subitus vates pallentibus incidit umbris  
letiferasque domos regisque arcana sepulti  
rupit et armato turbavit funere manes,  
horror habet cunctos, Stygiis mirantur in oris  
5 tela et equos corpusque novum; nec enim ignibus artus  
conditus aut maesta niger adventabat ab urna,  
sed belli sudore calcens, clipeumque cruentis  
roribus et scissi respersus pulvere campi.  
necdum illum aut trunca lustraverat obvia taxo  
10 Eumenis, aut furvo Proserpina poste notarat  
coetibus assumptum functis; quin comminus ipsa  
Fatorum deprensa colus, visoque paventes  
augure tunc demum rumpebant stamina Parcae.  
illum et securi circumspexere fragorem  
15 Elysii, et si quos procul ulteriore barathro  
altera nox aliisque gravat plaga caeca tenebris.  
tunc regemunt pigrique lacus ustaeque paludes,  
umbriferaeque fremit sulcator pallidus undae  
dissiluisse novo penitus telluris hiatu

2 regis P: orbis  $\omega$

5 artus (*acc. pl.*) P $\omega$ : atris  $\psi$

10 furvo  $\omega$ : fulvo P

15 ulteriore P: infer-  $\omega$

17 ustae P $\Sigma$ : vas-  $\omega$

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When suddenly the prophet fell into the pallid shades, shattering the homes of death and the secrets of the buried king<sup>1</sup> and throwing the ghosts into confusion with his armed corpse, all were seized with horror; they marvelled in the Stygian regions at the weapons, the horses, and the strange body; for his limbs were not absorbed by fire nor did he come blackened from the sad urn, but warm with the sweat of war, his shield bespattered with bloody drops and the dust of the torn plain. The Fury had not yet met and purified him with branch of yew nor had Proserpina marked him on the dark doorpost as recruited to the company of the dead.<sup>2</sup> Nay, his advent surprised the very distaff of the Fates and only when they saw the augur did the frightened Parcae break the thread. Secure, the Elysian folk looked about them at the noise, as did they whom afar in the ulterior pit the other night oppresses and a tract blind with other darkness. Then the stagnant meres and burnt swamps groan loud and the pale cleaver<sup>3</sup> of the ghost-bearing stream cries out that Tartarus has sprung asunder to its depths at a strange yawning of the earth and

<sup>1</sup> Pluto. But *orbis* ('world') may be right.

<sup>2</sup> Initiatory procedures not mentioned elsewhere.

<sup>3</sup> Charon.

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- 20 Tartara et admissos non per sua flumina manes.  
 Forte sedens media regni infelicis in arce  
 dux Erebi populos poscebat crimina vitae,  
 nil hominum miserans iratusque omnibus umbris.  
 stant Furiae circum variaequae ex ordine Mortes,  
 25 saevaque multisonas exsertat Poena catenas;  
 Fata ferunt animas et eodem pollice damnant:  
 vincit opus. iuxta Minos cum fratre verendo  
 iura bonus meliora monet regemque cruentum  
 temperat; assistunt lacrimis atque igne tumentes  
 30 Cocytos Phlegethonque, et Styx periuria divum  
 arguit. ille autem supera compage soluta  
 nec solitus sentire metus expavit oborta  
 sidera, iucundaque offensus luce profatur:  
 ‘quae superum labes inimicum impedit Averno  
 35 aethera? quis rupit tenebras vitaeque silentes  
 admonet? unde minas? uter haec mihi proelia fratrum?  
 congregior, pereant agedum discrimina rerum.  
 nam cui dulce magis? magno me tertia victum  
 deiecit fortuna polo, mundumque nocentem  
 40 servo; nec iste meus: diris quin pervius astris  
 inspicitur. tumidusne meas regnator Olympi  
 explorat vires? habeo iam quassa Gigantum  
 vincula et aetherium cupidos exire sub axem

26 ferunt  $\omega$ : ser- P

36 minae  $\omega$ : mina P (*Gronovius, hiatus tamen non improbens*)

40 dirisque in P: -que en  $\omega$ : en  $\psi$  (*Garrod*)

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<sup>4</sup> With *ferunt* one may understand that the Fates by their spinning bring souls to Pluto (cutting the threads) and also cause them to commit deeds for which they will be punished. But other

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that shades have been admitted some other way than by his river.

By chance the lord of Erebus was seated in the middle of the citadel of his unhappy realm demanding of the people their lives' misdeeds. No pity had he for aught human, angered against all the shades. The Furies stand around him and various Deaths in their orders, and cruel Punishment thrusts out her many-jangling chains. The Fates bring the souls and condemn them with the same thumb.<sup>4</sup> The work gets to be too much. Near at hand good Minos and his reverend brother<sup>5</sup> give milder counsels, moderating the bloody monarch. Cocytus and Phlegethon<sup>6</sup> stand by, swollen with tears and fire, while Styx<sup>7</sup> convicts the perjuries of the gods. He, when the upper structure gave way, though unaccustomed to feeling fear, dreaded the confronting stars, and spoke in displeasure at the jocund light: 'What disaster of the High Ones has thrust a hostile heaven upon Avernus? Who broke the darkness and tells the silent folk of life? Whence the threats? Which of my brothers thus wars against me? I join combat. Come, let all boundaries perish! For who is better pleased? The third lot cast me down defeated from great heaven and I keep the guilty world. Even that is not mine. Nay, it is entered by the fell stars and inspected! Is the haughty ruler of Olympus spying out my strength? Already I have the chains of the Giants shaken and the Titans eager to leave for the ethe-

interpretations are possible, and *serunt* ('string in a series') may be right.

<sup>5</sup> Rhadamanthus.

<sup>6</sup> Rivers of tears and fire respectively.

<sup>7</sup> By whom the gods swore their oaths.

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45 Titanas miserumque patrem: quid me otia maesta  
 sacvus et implacidam prohibet perferre quietem  
 amissumque odisse diem? pandam omnia regna,  
 si placet, et Stygio praetexam Hyperiona caelo.  
 Arcada nec superis (quid enim mihi nuntius ambas  
 itque reditque domos?) emittam et utrumque tenebo  
 50 Tyndariden. cur autem avidis Ixiona frango  
 verticibus? cur non exspectant Tantalon undae?  
 anne profanatum totiens Chaos hospite vivo  
 perpetiar? me Pirithoi temerarius ardor  
 temptat et audaci Theseus iuratus amico,  
 55 me ferus Alcides tum cum custode remoto  
 ferrea Cerbereae tacuerunt limina portae;  
 Odrysiis etiam pudet (heu!) patuisse querelis  
 Tartara: vidi egomet blanda inter carmina turpes  
 Eumenidum lacrimas iterataque pensa Sororum;  
 60 me quoque—sed durae melior violentia legis.  
 ast ego vix unum, nec celsa ad sidera, furto  
 ausus iter Siculo rapui conubia campo:  
 nec licuisse ferunt; iniustaeque a Iove leges  
 protinus, et sectum genetrix mihi computat annum.  
 65 sed quid ego haec? i, Tartareas ulciscere sedes,  
 Tisiphone; si quando, novis asperrima monstros  
 triste, insuetum, ingens, quod nondum viderit aether,

56 tacuerunt P: patue- ω

<sup>8</sup> I.e. 'I have enough trouble on my hands.' Saturn, also a Titan, had been put in Tartarus by his son Jupiter.

<sup>9</sup> Mercury.

<sup>10</sup> Castor and Pollux, who took it in turns to be in heaven and the underworld.



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real sky, and our unhappy father.<sup>8</sup> Why in his cruelty does he not let me enjoy my gloomy leisure and restless quiet and hate the daylight I have lost? If I please, I shall lay open all my realm and veil Hyperion with a Stygian sky. I shall not let the Arcadian<sup>9</sup> go to the upper world (what care I for his errands to and fro between both houses?) and I shall keep both sons of Tyndareus.<sup>10</sup> And why do I break Ixion with insatiate whirling? Why do the waters not wait for Tantalus? Shall Chaos so often be profaned by living arrivals and I endure it? Pirithous' reckless passion tries my patience and Theseus sworn to his audacious friend, wild Alcides too, when the iron threshold of Cerberus' gate fell silent with its guardian removed. Even to Odrysian complaints<sup>11</sup> (with shame I say it) was Tartarus opened up. I saw the Eumenides weeping disgraceful tears at the cozening song and the Sisters' threads respun. Me too—but the harsh law's violence took a better way. But as for me, I hardly dared a single stealthy trip, and that not to the high stars, to carry off my bride from a Sicilian field. And they say I had no right, and straightway came unjust conditions from Jove, and her mother cut the year up for me in her reckoning.<sup>12</sup> But why do I talk? Go, Tisiphone, avenge Tartarus' abode. Now if ever be at your worst with new-found monsters, and show us an abomination, grim, unwonted, enormous, something the sky has never seen

<sup>11</sup> Of Orpheus, who went down to the underworld to plead for his wife's return and almost prevailed; but on his way home he disobeyed the injunction not to look back and lost her again.

<sup>12</sup> Ceres' daughter Proserpina was carried off to the underworld by Pluto. By agreement with Ceres she stayed there for part of each year.

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ede nefas, quod mirer ego inuideantque Sorores.  
 atque adeo fratres (nostrique haec omina sunt  
 70 prima odii), fratres alterna in vulnera laeto  
 Marte ruant; sit qui rabidarum more ferarum  
 mandat atrox hostile caput, quique igne supremo  
 arceat exanimes et manibus aethera nudis  
 commaculet: iuuet ista ferum spectare Tonantem.  
 75 praeterea ne sola furor mea regna lacesat,  
 quaere deis qui bella ferat, qui fulminis ignes  
 infestumque Iovem clipco fumante repellat.  
 faxo haud sit cunctis levior metus atra movere  
 Tartara frondenti quam iungere Pelion Ossae.’  
 80 dixerat: atque illi iamdudum regia tristis  
 attremitt oranti, suaque et quae desuper urguet  
 nutabat tellus: non fortius aethera vultu  
 torquet et astriferos inclinat Iuppiter axes.

‘At tibi quos,’ inquit, ‘manes, qui limite praeceptus  
 85 non licito per inane ruis?’ subit ille minantem  
 iam tenuis visu, iam vanescentibus armis,  
 iam pedes: extincto tamen indecerptus in ore  
 augurii perdurat honos, obscuraque fronti  
 vitta manet, ramumque tenet morientis olivae:  
 90 ‘si licet et sanctis hic ora resolvere fas est  
 manibus, o cunctis finitor maxime rerum  
 (at mihi, qui quondam causas elementaque noram,  
 et sator), oro, minas stimulatque corda remulce,  
 neve ira dignare hominem et tua iura timentem;

<sup>87</sup> interceptus P $\omega$  (*Barth*)

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<sup>13</sup> I.e. ‘let the duel between Eteocles and Polynices foreshadow future strife between me and Jupiter.’

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before, to make me marvel and your sisters envy. Or rather let brothers (and let this be the first omen of our hate),<sup>13</sup> ay brothers, rush to kill one another in joyous strife. Let there be a savage who like a rabid wild beast gnaws his enemy's head and another who bans the lifeless from final fire and pollutes the air with naked dead.<sup>14</sup> Let the brutal Thunderer enjoy the sights. Furthermore let the madness not challenge my kingdom only. Seek one to make war upon the gods and repel the fires of the thunderbolt and angry Jove with his smoking shield.<sup>15</sup> I shall see to it that all the world is no less afraid to meddle with black Tartarus than to join Pelion to leafy Ossa.<sup>16</sup> He spoke, and the gloomy palace had long been trembling at his words; his own land and that which presses from above was tottering. Not more powerfully does Jupiter twist heaven with his frown and bend the starry poles.

'But for you,' he cries, 'what doom in death, who rush through the void headlong on your unlawful track?' The other approaches the threatening god, faint now to see, his arms already fading, already on foot; yet on his perished head still stays the symbol of prophecy that none has plucked away, the fillet remains on his brow, albeit dim, and he holds the branch of dying olive: 'If it be allowed and lawful for righteous spirits to open their mouths here, O greatest terminator for all that is (but for me, who once knew causes and elements, also creator), relax, I pray, your threats and nettled heart nor deem worthy of your wrath a man and one that fears your laws. For I enter Lethe daring

<sup>14</sup> Meaning Tydeus and Creon.

<sup>15</sup> Capaneus.

<sup>16</sup> As Giants did, assaulting Olympus.

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- 95 nam nec ad Herculeos (unde haec mihi pectora?) raptus,  
 nec venerem illicitam (crede his insignibus) ausi  
 intramus Lethen: fugiat ne tristis in antrum  
 Cerberus, aut nostros timeat Proserpina currus.  
 augur Apollineis modo dilectissimus aris,  
 100 testor inane Chaos (quid enim hic iurandus Apollo?),  
 crimine non ullo subeo nova fata, nec alma  
 sic merui de luce rapi; scit iudicis urna  
 Dictaei verumque potest deprendere Minos.  
 coniugis insidiis et iniquo venditus auro  
 105 Argolicas acies (unde haec tibi turba recentum  
 umbrarum, et nostrae veniunt quoque funcra dextrae)  
 non ignarus ini: subito me turbine mundi  
 (horret adhuc animus) mediis e milibus hausit  
 nox tua. quae mihi mens, dum per cava viscera terrae  
 110 vado diu pendens et in aëre volvor operto?  
 ei mihi! nil ex me sociis patriaeque relictum,  
 vel captum Thebis; iam non Lernaeva videbo  
 tecta, nec attonito saltem cinis ibo parenti.  
 non tumulo, non igne miser lacrimisque meorum  
 115 productus, toto pariter tibi funere veni,  
 nil istis ausurus equis; nec deprecor undam  
 accipere et tripodum iam non meminisse meorum.  
 nam tibi praesagi quis iam super auguris usus,  
 cum Parcae tua iussa trahant? sed pectora flectas  
 120 et melior sis, quaeso, deis. si quando nefanda  
 huc aderit coniunx, illi funesta reserva  
 supplicia: illa tua, rector bone, dignior ira.’

<sup>95</sup> pectora ω: proelia P

<sup>116</sup> umbram PωΣ (*Alton*)

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no Herculean ravage (how could I think of such?) nor unlawful passion (believe these emblems);<sup>17</sup> no need for Cerberus to flee into his cavern or for Proserpina to fear my chariot. An augur lately most favoured at Apollo's altars, I call Chaos' void to witness (for how should Apollo be invoked here?): 'tis not for any crime that I suffer this strange fate nor have I deserved so to be snatched from fostering daylight. The urn of the Dictaeon judge knows it and Minos can discover the truth. Through my spouse's treachery, sold for unrighteous gold, I joined the Argive ranks not unwitting; hence you have this multitude of recent shades, some dead by my hand. In a sudden convulsion of the world (I feel the horror still) your night swallowed me from the midst of thousands. What were my thoughts as I passed through the hollow entrails of the earth long suspended, rolling in the shrouded air? Woe is me! Nothing of me is left to my comrades and country or captured by Thebes. No more shall I see the dwellings of Lerna nor even in ashes return to my stricken father. I have no tomb, no fire or tears of my dear ones sent me forth, alas. I have come to you with everything there was to bury, nor shall I attempt anything with those<sup>18</sup> horses. I make no demur to drink the water and remember no more my tripods. For what use have you left for a prescient augur when the Parcae spin your biddings? But turn your heart, I beg, and be kinder than the gods. If one day my wicked wife shall come hither, keep your grim punishments for her. She, kind ruler, is more deserving of your anger.'

<sup>17</sup> I.e. 'I am no Hercules to abduct Cerberus (I do not have the strength) nor a Pirithous come to carry off Proserpina (my priestly insignia show it).'

<sup>18</sup> He was now on foot (87).

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Accipit ille preces indignaturque moveri.  
 ut leo, Massyli cum lux stetit obvia ferri,  
 125 tunc iras, tunc arma eitat; si decedit hostis,  
 ire supra satis est vitamque relinquere victo.  
 Interea vittis lauruque insignis opima  
 currus et egregiis modo formidatus in armis  
 ipse palam, fusus nulli nullique fugatus,  
 130 quaeritur: absistunt turmae, suspectaque tellus  
 omnibus, infidi miles vestigia campi  
 circumit, atque avidae tristis locus ille ruinae  
 cessat et inferni vitatur honore sepulcri.  
 nuntius hortanti diversa in parte maniplos  
 135 Adrasto, vix ipse ratus vidisse, Palaemon  
 advolat et trepidans (steterat nam forte cadenti  
 proximus inspectoque miser pallebat hiatu),  
 'verte gradum, fuge rector,' ait, 'si Dorica saltem  
 terra loco patriaeque manent, ubi liquimus, arees.  
 140 non armis, non sanguine opus: quid inutile ferrum  
 stringimus in Thebas? currus humus impia sorbet  
 armaque bellantesque viros; fugere ecce videtur  
 hic etiam, quo stamus, ager. vidi ipse profundae  
 noctis iter raptaeque soli compage ruentem  
 145 illum heu, praesagis quo nullus amiciostris,  
 Oecliden, frustra que manus cum voce tetendi.  
 mira loquor? sulcos etiamnum, rector, equorum  
 fumantemque locum et spumis madida arva reliqui.

129 luce palam P $\omega$  (SB<sup>2</sup>)      nulli  $\omega$ : media P  
 135 Philaemon *coni.* Klotz      138 gradum  $\omega$ : fugam P  
 146 tetendi  $\psi$ : -it P $\omega$   
 147 *interrog. fecit* SB<sup>2</sup>  
 148 reliqui  $\omega$ : -it P $\psi$

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The god accepts the prayer and is indignant at his own emotion. So a lion summons his anger and his weapons when the flash of Massylian steel stands before him, but if his enemy falls, he is content to pass over him and leave life to the vanquished.

Meanwhile search is made for the chariot conspicuous with fillets and triumphal laurel, and for himself, lately feared in the open in his glorious arms, not routed, not put to flight by any.<sup>19</sup> The squadrons fall back, all suspecting the ground, and the soldiers move around the traces of the treacherous field, while the melancholy site of the greedy slide is left alone, still avoided in honour of the infernal sepulchre. Palaemon, scarce believing his eyes, hastens with the news to Adrastus, who was urging on his troops in another quarter. Trembling (for it had been his fortune to stand next to the falling seer and the wretch was pale from the sight of the chasm), he spoke: 'Turn back, fly, lord, if the Dorian land at least remains in place and our native towers where we left them. No need for arms and bloodshed. Why do we draw ineffectual steel against Thebes? The accursed soil sucks in chariots and arms and fighting men. Even this field on which we stand seems, see, to be in flight. I myself saw the way to night's depths and the ground's frame broken and him, alas, than whom none dearer to the prescient stars, Oecles' son, plunging. In vain I stretched my hands and voice. Do I speak marvels?<sup>20</sup> I left the horses' tracks still there, lord, and the spot smoking

<sup>19</sup> SB<sup>1</sup>. *Egregiis in armis*, echoing *Aeneid* 9.581, must apply to the warrior, not the chariot.

<sup>20</sup> I.e. 'don't you believe me?' as shown by what follows. Not a statement.

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nec commune malum est: tellus agnoscit alumnos,  
stat Thebana acies.'

150   Stupet haec et credere Adrastus  
cunctatur; sed Mopsus idem trepidusque ferebat  
Actor idem. iam Fama novis terroribus audax  
non unum cecidisse refert. sponte agmina retro  
non expectato revocantum more tubarum  
155 praecipitant: sed torpet iter, falluntque ruentes  
genva viros; ipsique (putes sensisse) repugnant  
cornipedes nulloque truces hortamine parent  
nec celerare gradum nec tollere lumina terra.  
fortius incursant Tyrii, sed Vesper opacus  
160 lunares iam ducit equos; data foedere parvo  
maesta viris requies et nox auctura timores.

Quae tibi nunc facies postquam permissa gemendi  
copia! qui fletus galeis cecidere solutis!  
nil solitum fessos iuvat; abiecere madentes,  
165 sicut erant, clipeos, nec quisquam spicula tersit,  
nec laudavit equum, nitidae nec cassidis altam  
compsit adornavitque iubam; vix magna lavare  
vulnra et efflantes libet internectere plagas:  
tantus ubique dolor. mensas alimenta<sup>21</sup>que bello  
170 debita nec pugnae suasit labor: omnia laudes,  
Amphiaraë, tuas fecundaque pectora veri  
commemorant lacrimis, et per tentoria sermo

<sup>152</sup> nam P $\omega$  (*Sandstroem*)

<sup>170</sup> timor P $\omega$  (*SB*)

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<sup>21</sup> Addressing the reader. *Tibi* ('admirative' says the scholiast) is extraordinary, but *tunc ibi quae* (Barth, from 'liber optimus') does not commend itself to me.



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and the ground foam-wet. Nor is the calamity general. The earth knows its nurslings. The Theban army stands.'

Adrastus is amazed thereat and slow to believe. But Mopsus was telling the same tale and affrighted Actor the same. Now Rumour, bold with new alarms, reports that more than one has fallen in. The troops rush back of their own will, not waiting for the wonted trumpet call. But their course is sluggish, their knees fail them as they hurry. The very horses resist (you would think they realized) and stubbornly disobey every command, whether to quicken pace or to lift their eyes from the ground. The Tyrians strengthen their attack, but shadowy Vesper is already leading forth the lunar steeds. With a brief truce the warriors are given a sad breathing space and a night to magnify their fears.

Imagine the scene,<sup>21</sup> now that licence is granted to lament. Helmets loosened, how the tears poured down! In their weariness they have no heart for any of the usual concerns. They throw aside their wet shields, just as they were, none wiped his spear or praised his horse or combed and beautified the lofty crest of a shining helm. They hardly care to wash large wounds and bind up exhaling<sup>22</sup> blows; so great everywhere the sorrow. Not even did toil<sup>23</sup> of battle persuade them to take meals and due nourishment for war. As they weep,<sup>24</sup> all things remind them of your glories, Amphiaras, and your heart fertile in truth; and in the tents there is no talk save that the gods have gone, their

<sup>22</sup> I.e. *expirantes animam* (scholiast).

<sup>23</sup> *Timor* is nonsense. *Labor* (cf. TLL VII.2.790.69) is sense—fighting makes men hungry.

<sup>24</sup> *Lacrimis* (dative) = *lacrimantibus*.

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unus: abisse deos dilapsaque numina castris:  
 heu ubi laurigeri currus sollempniaque arma  
 175 et galeae vittatus apex? hoc antra lacusque  
 Castalii tripodumque fides? sic gratus Apollo?  
 quis mihi sidereos lapsus mentemque sinistri  
 fulguris, aut caesis saliat quod numen in extis,  
 quando iter, unde morae, quae saevis utilis armis,  
 180 quae pacem magis hora velit? quis iam omne futurum  
 proferet, aut cum quo volucres mea fata loquentur?  
 hos quoque bellorum casus nobisque tibi que  
 praescieras et (quanta sacro sub pectore virtus!)  
 venisti tamen et miseris comes additus armis.  
 185 et cum te tellus fatalisque hora vocaret,  
 tu Tyrias acies adversaque signa vacasti  
 sternere; tunc etiam media de morte timendum  
 hostibus infestaque abeuntem vidimus hasta.  
 et nunc te quis casus habet? poterisne reverti  
 190 sedibus a Stygiis altaque erumpere terra?  
 ane sedes hilaris iuxta, tua numina, Parcas  
 et vice concordi discis ventura docesque?  
 an tibi felices lucos miseratus Averno  
 rector et Elysias dedit inservare volucres?  
 195 quidquid es, aeternus Phoebos dolor et nova clades  
 semper eris mutisque diu plorabere Delphis.  
 hic Tenedon Chrysenque dies partuque ligatum  
 Delon et intonsi claudet penetralia Branchi,  
 nec Clarias hac luce fores Didymacaque quisquam  
 200 limina nec Lyciam supplex consultor adibit.  
 quin et cornigeri vatis nemus atque Molosso

BOOK 8

deity vanished from the camp: 'Alas, where is the laurelled chariot, the accustomed arms, the fillet-circled helmet top? Is this what comes of cavern and Castalian pool, this the faith of tripods? Such Apollo's gratitude? Who shall tell me of the fallings of the stars, what means lightning on the left or what divinity leaps in slaughtered entrails, when to go, wherefore delays, which hour is good for cruel war, which rather favours peace? Who now shall unveil all futurity or with whom shall birds speak of my destiny? The fortunes of this war also you knew, for us and for yourself, and yet (what courage in your holy heart!) you came and joined us, comrade in luckless arms. And when earth and the fated hour called you, you still had time to lay low the Tyrian ranks and the hostile standards. Then even from the midst of death we saw you terrible to the enemy as you departed, spear at the ready. And now what fate possesses you? Shall you be able to return from the Stygian abodes and break out from earth's depth? Or sit you happily beside the Parcae, your deities, and in harmonious exchange learn things to come and teach them? Or has Avernus' ruler taken pity and given you blessed groves and observation of Elysian birds? Whatever you are, you shall be an eternal grief to Phoebus and a calamity ever new; long shall you be mourned in a silent Delphi. This day shall close Tenedos and Chryse and Delos, anchored by a birth, and the sanctuary of unshorn Branchus; and on this morn no suppliant enquirer shall approach Claros' doors or the threshold of Didyma or Lycia. Nay, the wood of the horned prophet<sup>25</sup> also shall be mute and the oak<sup>26</sup> that breathes out for

<sup>25</sup> Jupiter Hammon.

<sup>26</sup> Dodona.

THEBAID

quercus anhela Iovi Troianaque Thymbra tacebit.  
 ipsi amnes ipsaeque volent arescere laurus,  
 ipse nihil certum sagis clangoribus aether  
 205 praecinet, et nulla ferientur ab alite nubes.  
 iamque erit ille dies quo te quoque conscia Fatis  
 templa colant reddatque tuus responsa sacerdos.'

Talia fatidico peragunt sollemnia regi,  
 ceu flammis ac dona rogo tristesque rependant  
 210 exsequias mollique animam tellure reponant.  
 fracta dehinc cunctis aversaque pectora bello.  
 sic fortes Minyas subito cum funere Tiphys  
 destituit, non arma sequi, non ferre videtur  
 remus aquas, ipsique minus iam ducere venti.  
 215 iam fessis gemitu paulatim corda levabat  
 exhaustus sermone dolor; nox addita curas  
 obruit et facilis lacrimis irrepere somnus.

At non Sidoniam diversa in parte per urbem  
 nox eadem: vario producunt sidera ludo  
 220 ante domos intraque, ipsaeque ad moenia marcent  
 excubiae; gemina aera sonant Idaeaeque terga  
 et moderata sonum vario spiramiuc buxus.  
 tunc dulces superos atque omne ex ordine alumnium  
 numen ubique sacri resonant paeanes, ubique  
 225 sarta coronatumque merum. nunc funera rident  
 auguris ignari, contraque in tempore certant  
 Tiresian laudare suum; nunc facta revolvunt  
 maiorum veteresque canunt ab origine Thebas:  
 hi mare Sidonium manibusque attrita Tonantis

204 sagis ωΣ: sacris P

206 fatis P: -i ω

226 tempore Pω: pectore ψ

## BOOK 8

Molossian Jove and Trojan Thymbra.<sup>27</sup> The very rivers, the very laurels shall wish to dry up, the very heaven shall sound no certain presage in prophetic screams and no bird shall beat the clouds. And soon the day shall come when you too shall be worshipped by temples privy to the Fates and your own priest shall give responses.'

Such was the solemn tribute they paid to the propheting, as though they were giving fire and gifts and sad obsequies to his pyre and consigning his soul to soft earth. From then on the spirits of all were broken and averse from war; so when Tiphys forsook the brave Minyae by his sudden death, the tackle seemed no longer to obey nor the oar to endure the water, the very winds seemed to draw with less force. Now they are weary with lamentation and grief exhausted by speech gradually lightens their hearts. Night came on to swamp their cares and sleep that gently creeps up on tears.

But yonder in the Sidonian city it was a different night. They lengthen the stars with various play before their houses and indoors and the very sentries on the walls are unsteady. Twin cymbals resound and Idaean hides and boxwood that modulates by various breathing.<sup>28</sup> Then everywhere holy paeans hymn the loved High Ones, every native deity in order; everywhere are garlands and wreathed wine. Now they mock the ignorant augur's death, and in timely contrast vie in praises of their own Tiresias; now rehearse their forbears' deeds and sing of ancient Thebes from her beginnings. Some tell of the Sidonian sea and the Thunderer's horns rubbed by hands and Nereus

<sup>27</sup> Another Apolline item coming after the two non-Apolline ones introduced by *quin et*.

<sup>28</sup> Flutes.

THEBAID

- 230 cornua et ingenti sulcatum Nerea tauro,  
 hi Cadmum lassamque bovem fetosque cruenti  
 Martis agros, alii Tyriam reptantia saxa  
 ad chelyn et duras animantem Amphiona cautes,  
 hi gravidam Semelen, illi Cythereia laudant  
 235 conubia et multa deductam lampade fratrum  
 Harmoniam: nullis deest sua fabula mensis.  
 ceu modo gemmiferum thyrso populatus Hydaspen  
 Eoasque domos nigri vexilla triumphi  
 Liber et ignotos populis ostenderet Indos.
- 240 Tunc primum ad coetus sociaeque ad foedera mensae  
 semper inaspectum diraque in sede latentem  
 Oedipoden exisse ferunt vultuque sereno  
 canitiem nigram squalore et sordida fuis  
 ora comis laxasse manu sociumque benignos  
 245 affatus et abacta prius solacia passum;  
 quin hausisse dapes insiccatumque cruorem  
 deiecisse genis. cunctos auditque refertque,  
 qui Ditem et Furias tantum et si quando regentem  
 Antigonem maestis solitus pulsare querelis.
- 250 causa latet. non hunc Tyrii fors prospera belli,  
 tantum bella iuvant; natum hortaturque probatque  
 nec vicisse velit; sed primos comminus cuses  
 et sceleris tacito rimatur semina voto.  
 inde epulae dulces ignotaque gaudia vultu.
- 255 qualis post longae Phineus iciunia poenae,  
 nil stridere domi volucresque ut sensit abactas  
 (necdum tota fides), hilaris mensasque torosque  
 nec turbata feris tractavit pocula pennis.

<sup>256</sup> que  $\psi$ : om. P $\omega$

## BOOK 8

furrowed by the huge bull; others of Cadmus and the weary heifer and the fields pregnant with bloody war; others of stones that crept to the sound of a Tyrian lyre and Amphion animating hard rocks. Some praise gravid Semele, others Cytherean nuptials and Harmonia escorted to her home by many a brother's torch.<sup>29</sup> No table lacks its tale. As though Liber, after ravaging jewel-bearing Hydaspes and the dwellings of the East with his wand, were displaying to the peoples the banners of a dusky triumph and the Indians they had never known.<sup>30</sup>

They say that Oedipus, who always hid out of sight in his sinister abode, then for the first time came out to join a gathering in the bond of a social banquet; that with face serene he cleared the dark filth from his white hair and the unkempt straying locks from his countenance and suffered his fellows' kindly greetings and comfortings hitherto rebuffed; nay, even that he swallowed the fare and wiped the dried blood from his eyes. He hears and answers every man, wont only to assail Dis and the Furies and it might be his guide Antigone with his doleful grumbling. The reason is hidden. 'Tis not the prosperous fortune of the Tyrian war that pleases him, only war. He encourages his son and approves him, but would not wish him victory; but he probes the first clash of swords and the seeds of crime with silent prayer. Hence his enjoyment of the feast and novel happiness on his face. So Phineus after the fasting of his long punishment, perceiving that the screaming in the house had stopped and the birds been driven away (but not yet quite believing), cheerfully handled tables and couches and wine cups undisturbed by savage wings.

<sup>29</sup> By Cupids.

<sup>30</sup> A notably divagatory comparison.

THEBAID

Cetera Graiorum curis armisque iacebat  
 260 fessa cohors; alto castrorum ex aggere Adrastus  
 laetificos tenui captabat corde tumultus,  
 quamquam aeger senio, sed agit miseranda potestas  
 invigilare malis. illum aereus undique clamor  
 Thebanique urunt sonitus, et amara lacessit  
 265 tibia, tum nimio voces marcere superbae  
 incertaeque faces et iam male pervigil ignis.  
 sic ubi per fluctus uno ratis obruta somno  
 conticuit, tantique maris segura iuventus  
 mandavere animas: solus stat puppe magister  
 270 pervigil inscriptaque deus qui navigat alno.

Tempus erat iunctos cum iam soror ignea Phoebi  
 sentit equos penitusque cavam sub luce parata  
 Oceani mugire domum, seseque vagantem  
 colligit et leviter moto fugat astra flagello:  
 275 concilium rex triste vocat, quaeruntque gementes  
 quis tripodas successor agat, quo prodita laurus  
 transeat atque orbum vittae decus. haud mora, cuncti  
 insignem fama sanctoque Melampode cretum  
 Thiodamanta volunt, quicum ipse arcana deorum  
 280 partiri et visas uni sociare solebat  
 Amphiaraus aves, tantaeque haud invidus artis  
 gaudebat dici similem iuxtaque secundum.  
 illum ingens confundit honos inopinaque turbat  
 gloria et oblatas frondes summissus adorat  
 285 seque oneri negat esse parem, cogique meretur.  
 sicut Achaemenius solium gentesque paternas

272 sentit ωΣ: sensit P

276 prodita ωΣ: -digia P: provida *Peyrared*



## BOOK 8

The rest of the Grecian army lay wearied with care and combat. From the camp's high rampart Adrastus listened with faint heart to the joyous uproar, sick though he was with the sickness of old age; but pitiable power drives him to vigilance in misfortune. Brazen clamour from all sides chafes him, sounds of Thebes, and the bitter pipe provokes, along with insolent cries of drunkenness and wavering torches and fires scarce lasting out the night. So when at sea a ship has fallen silent sunk in a single sleep and the trusting crew have handed over their lives careless of the great sea, the helmsman stands wakeful in the poop alone, he and the god<sup>31</sup> who sails on the vessel inscribed with his name.

It was the hour before ready dawn, when Phoebus' fiery sister knows his horses are yoked and hears the roaring of Ocean's hollow house deep down heralding daybreak and collects her wandering self and with a flick of her whip puts the stars to flight. The king summons his gloomy council. With groaning they ask who is to succeed, who will manage the tripods, to whom will pass the forsaken laurel and the orphaned glory of the fillet. No delay, all want Thiodamas, holy Melampus' son, eminent in fame. Amphiaraus himself used to make him partaker in the secrets of the gods and share with him alone the birds he had seen. Far from jealousy of so much skill, he rejoiced that Thiodamas should be called his like and close second. The greatness of the honour confounds him, the unexpected glory makes him reel. Humbly he reverences the proffered leaves, protesting that he is unequal to the burden and thus deserving to be constrained. So if a boy of Achaemenes' line, for

<sup>31</sup> The tutelary deity whose image stood in the stern.

THEBAID

exceptit si forte puer, cui vivere patrem  
 tutius, incerta formidine gaudia librat,  
 an fidi proceres, ne pugnet vulgus habenis,  
 290 cui latus Euphratae, cui Caspia limina mandet;  
 sumere tunc arcus ipsumque onerare veretur  
 patris equum visusque sibi nec sceptrā capaci  
 sustentare manu nec adhuc implere tīaran.

Atque is ubi intorto signatus vellere crinem  
 295 convenitque deis, hilari per castra tumultu  
 vadit ovans ac, prima sui documenta, sacerdos  
 Tellurem placare parat: nec futile maestis  
 id visum Danais. geminas ergo ilicet aras  
 arboribus vivis et adulto caespite texi  
 300 imperat, innumerosque deae, sua munera, flores  
 et cumulos frugum et quidquid novat impiger annus  
 addit et intacto spargens altaria lacte  
 incipit:

‘O hominum divumque aeterna creatrix,  
 quae fluvios silvasque animarum et semina mundo  
 305 cuncta Prometheasque manus Pyrrhaeaeque saxa  
 gignis, et impastis quae prima alimenta dedisti  
 mutastique viris, quae pontum ambisque vehisque:  
 te penes et pecudum gens mitis et ira ferarum  
 et volucrum requies; firmum atque immobile mundi  
 310 robur inoccidui, te velox machina caeli  
 aëre pendentem vacuo, te currus uterque  
 circumit, o rerum media indivisaque magnis  
 fratribus! ergo simul tot gentibus alma, tot altis

<sup>294</sup> signatus ψ: -atur P: -avit ω

## BOOK 8

whom it were safer that his father lived, chance to take over the paternal throne and peoples, he balances joy with doubtful fear: are his nobles loyal, will the people not fight the reins, to whom shall he entrust Euphrates' bank or the Caspian threshold? Then he scruples to take the bow and mount his father's very horse, thinks his hand still too small to wield the sceptre and his head to fill the diadem.

When his hair was marked with twisted wool and he and the gods were agreed, Thiodamas passed in triumph through the camp amid merry tumult and, first proof of his priestly office, prepares to appease Earth; nor did the mourning Danaï think it profitless. So he gives order that straightway two altars be woven from living trees and ripe turf and adds countless flowers for the goddess, her own gifts, and piles of fruit and the busy year's every novelty. Sprinkling the altar-hearths with untouched milk, he begins:

'O eternal creatress of gods and men, you who give birth to rivers and forests and all seeds of lives in the world, and Prometheus' handiwork and Pyrrha's stones, who gave first aliments to hungry men and changed them, who surround and carry the sea: to you belongs the gentle race of cattle and the anger of wild beasts and the repose of birds: firm and stable strength of a world that has no setting, the swift fabric of the sky and both its chariots<sup>32</sup> encompass you as you hang in the empty air, O centre of all things, undivided among the great brethren!<sup>33</sup> Therefore you alone suffice in your bounty for so many nations, so many lofty

<sup>32</sup> Sun and moon.

<sup>33</sup> Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto, who divided the universe, leaving earth out of the split.

THEBAID

- urbibus ac populis, subterque ac desuper una  
 315 sufficis, astriferumque domos Atlanta supernas  
 ferre laborantem nullo vehis ipsa labore:  
 nos tantum portare negas? nos, diva, gravaris?  
 quod, precor, ignari luimus scelus? an quia plebes  
 externa Inachiis huc adventamus ab oris?  
 320 omne homini natale solun, nec te, optima, saevo  
 tamque humili populos deceat distinguere fine  
 undique ubique tuos; maneas communis et arma  
 hinc atque inde feras; liceat, precor, ordine belli  
 pugnaces efflare animas et reddere caelo.  
 325 ne rape tam subitis spirantia corpora bustis,  
 ne propera: veniemus enim, quo limite cuncti,  
 qua licet ire via; tantum exorata Pelasgis  
 siste levem campum, celeres neu praecipe Parcas.  
 at tu, care deis, quem non manus ulla nec enses  
 330 Sidonii, sed magna sinu Natura soluto,  
 ceu te Cirrhaeo meritum tumularet hiatu,  
 sic amplexa coit, hilaris des, oro, precatus  
 nosse tuos, caeloque et vera monentibus aris  
 concilies, et quae populis proferre parabas,  
 335 me doceas: tibi sacra feram praesaga, tuique  
 numinis interpretes te Phoebos absente vocabo.  
 ille mihi Delo Cirrhaque potentior omni,  
 quo ruis, ille adytis melior locus.' haec ubi dicta,  
 nigrantes terra pecudes obscuraque mergit  
 340 armenta, ac vivis cumulos undantis harenae

321 tamque humili P: tamquam humiles (-lis) ω

## BOOK 8

cities and peoples, from below and from above,<sup>34</sup> carrying star-bearing Atlas as he labours to support the dwellings on high with no labour of your own: us alone, goddess, do you refuse to bear, us do you find too heavy? What crime, I pray, do we expiate unawares? Is it that we come here from Inachus' land, a foreign folk? Every soil is natal to man and it would ill become you, noble one, to distinguish by so cruel and so base<sup>35</sup> a line between peoples who, no matter whence and where, are yours. Stay common to all and bear the arms of either side. Let it be granted to us, I pray, to gasp out our fighting lives in the order of war and return them to the sky. Snatch not breathing bodies to sepulchres so sudden, be not in haste. We shall come by the path all take, the permitted road. Only hear our prayer and stabilize the fickle plain for the Pelasgi; do not forestall the swift Parcae. But you, dear to the gods, whom no hand nor Sidonian swords but great Nature embraced in her opened bosom and came together, as though she were burying you in Cirrha's cavern as you deserved, in gladness grant, I beg, to know your forms of prayer and commend me to heaven and the truth-telling altars; and teach me what you were about to reveal to the peoples. I shall bring you prophetic rites and as your deity's ambassador invoke you in Phoebus' absence. The place where you plunge shall be more potent for me than any Delos or Cirrha, better than shrines. That spoken, he buries in the earth black sheep and dusky cattle, heaping piles of undulating sand on their

<sup>34</sup> Earth is conceived by Stoics as the centre of a sphere on which the peoples dwell, above and below, itself surrounded by the cosmos, and the cosmos by outer space.

<sup>35</sup> If there is to be any discrimination, it should be by merit, not mere locality.

THEBAID

aggerat et vati mortis simulacra rependit.

- Talia apud Graios, cum iam Mavortia contra  
cornua, iam saevos fragor aereus excitat enses.  
addit acerba sonum Teumesi e vertice crinem  
345 incutiens acuitque tubas et sibila miscet  
Tisiphone: stupet insolito clangore Cithaeron  
marcidus et turres carmen non tale secutae.  
iam trepidas Bellona fores armataque pulsat  
linina, iam multo laxantur cardine Thebae.  
350 turbat eques pedites, currus properantibus obstant,  
ceu Danaï post terga premant: sic omnibus alae  
artantur portis septemque excursibus haerent.  
Ogygiis it sorte Creon, Eteoclea mittunt  
Neistae, celsas Homoloidas occupat Haemon,  
355 Hypsea Proetiae, celsum fudere Dryanta  
Electrae, quatit Hypsistas manus Eurymedontis,  
culmina magnanimus stipat Dircaea Menoeceus.  
qualis ubi aversi secretus pabula caeli  
Nilus et Eoas magno bibit ore pruinas,  
360 scindit fontis opes septemque patentibus arvis  
in mare fert hiemes; penitus cessere fugatae  
Nereides dulcique timent occurrere ponto.  
Tristis at inde gradum tarde movet Inacha pubes,  
praecipue Eleae Lacedaemoniaeque cohortes  
365 et Pylīi; subitum nam Thiodamanta sequuntur  
augure fraudati, necdum accessere regenti.  
nec tua te, princeps tripodum, sola agmina quaerunt:

360 alveis ζ, *Gronovius*

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<sup>36</sup> 'He imitates Amphiaras' own death, when he was buried alive' Håkanson.

living bodies and pays the seer his meed of simulated death.<sup>36</sup>

So it went among the Greeks, when already the horns of Mars are sounding opposite and with brazen blare fetch out fierce swords. From Teumesos' top bitter Tisiphone adds her din, shaking her hair, and sharpens the trumpets and mingles her hisses. Cithaeron droops, stunned by the unwonted clangour, so do the towers that had followed a different music.<sup>37</sup> Now Bellona beats upon the trembling doors and armed thresholds, now through many a portal Thebes becomes more spacious. Horse disorders foot, chariots block men hastening as though the Danai were pressing at their backs. Thus squadrons crowd at all the gates, stuck fast in the seven issues. By lot Creon goes from the Ogygian, the Neistan send forth Eteocles, Haemon takes the lofty Homoloian, the Proetian and the Electran discharge Hypseus and tall Dryas, Eurymedon's band shakes the Hypsistan, while great-hearted Menoeceus throngs the Dircaean ramparts. Even as when the secret Nile drinks with his great mouth the sustenance of a distant sky and eastern frosts,<sup>38</sup> he splits his water's wealth and carries the winters to the sea over seven open plains; the Nereids retire routed to the depth, fearing to encounter a saltless main.

But sad and slow from over yonder advances the Inachian army, especially the troops of Elis and Lacedaemon and the men of Pylos. For bereft of their augur they follow Thiodamas' sudden leadership nor yet have they rallied to him as their commander. And not your own ranks

<sup>37</sup> Amphion's.

<sup>38</sup> Ethiopian snows.

THEBAID

cuncta phalanx sibi deesse putat; minor ille per alas  
 septimus exstat apex. liquido velut aethere nubes  
 370 invida Parrhasiis unum si detrahat astris,  
 truncus honor Plaustris, nec idem riget igne reciso  
 axis, et incerti numerant sua sidera nautae.

Sed iam bella vocant: alias nova suggere vires,  
 Calliope, maiorque chelyn mihi tendat Apollo.  
 375 fatalem populis ultro poscentibus horam  
 admovet atra dies, Stygiisque emissa tenebris  
 Mors fruitur caelo bellatoremque volando  
 campum operit nigroque viros invitat hiatu,  
 nil vulgare legens, sed quae dignissima vita  
 380 funera, praecipuos annis animisque, cruento  
 ungue notat: iamque in miseros pensum omne Sororum  
 scinditur, et Furiae rapuerunt licia Parcis.  
 stat medius campis etiamnum cuspide sicca  
 Bellipotens, iamque hos clipeum, iam vertit ad illos  
 385 arma ciens aboletque domos, conubia, natos.  
 pellitur et patriae et, qui mente novissimus exit,  
 lucis amor; tenet in capulis hastisque paratas  
 ira manus, animusque ultra thoracas anhelus  
 conatur, galcaeque tremunt horrore comarum.  
 390 quid mirum caluisse viros? flammantur in hostem  
 cornipedes niveoque rigant sola putria nimbo,  
 corpora ceu mixti dominis irasque sedentum  
 induerint: sic frena terunt, sic proelia poscunt  
 hinnitu tolluntque armos equitesque supinant.  
 395 Iamque ruunt, primusque virum concurrere pulvis  
 incipit, et spatiis utrimque aequalibus acti

<sup>371</sup> riget P: nitet  $\omega$

<sup>381</sup> angue P $\omega$  $\Sigma$  (*Barth*)



## BOOK 8

only miss you, lord of tripods; the whole phalanx feels your loss. Less lofty stands out that seventh crest among the squadrons. So in the liquid ether, if an envious cloud were to withdraw one of the Parrhasian stars, the glory of the Wain is marred, the frozen pole is not the same with one fire cut away, the uncertain sailors count their stars.

But now battle calls me. Let a new Calliope lend fresh strength, let a greater Apollo string my lyre. Doomsday brings to the peoples the fatal hour that they themselves demand. Issuing from Stygian shades, Death enjoys the sky. Flying he covers the battlefield, inviting the warriors with his black gape; nothing ordinary does he choose but victims most worthy of life, marking with bloody claw those preeminent in years<sup>39</sup> and valour. And now against the wretches all the Sisters' wool is torn and the Furies have snatched the threads from the Parcae. The Lord of War stands in the middle of the plain, his spearhead still dry, and turns his shield now on these, now on those, arousing arms, effacing homes, wives, children. Out goes love of country, and, last to leave man's heart, love of the light. Anger keeps their hands ready on hilt and spear, and the breath pants in effort beyond the corselet, helmets tremble with the rising of the hair. What wonder that men are hot? The horses are aflame against the enemy and bathe the crumbling ground in a white shower, as though their bodies had mingled with their masters and they had put on their riders' rage; so do they champ the bit, so neigh for battle, and rear up and throw the horsemen backwards.

And now they charge and their first dust begins to meet. They dash upon one another over equal space from

<sup>39</sup> In their prime.

THEBAID

adventant mediumque vident decrescere campum.  
 iam clipeus clipeis, umbone repellitur umbo,  
 ense minax ensis, pede pes et cuspide cuspis:  
 400 sic obnixa acies. pariter suspiria fumant  
 admotaeque nitent aliena in casside cristae.  
 pulcher adhuc belli vultus: stant vertice coni,  
 plena armenta viris, nulli sine praeside currus,  
 arma loco, splendent clipei pharetraeque decorae  
 405 cingulaque et nondum deforme cruoribus aurum.  
 at postquam rabies et vitae prodiga virtus  
 emiscre animos, non tanta cadentibus Haedis  
 aëriam Rhodopen solida nive verberat Arctos,  
 nec fragor Ausoniae tantus cum Iuppiter omni  
 410 arce tonat, tanta quatitur nec grandine Syrtis  
 cum Libyae Boreas Italos niger attulit imbres.  
 excludere diem telis, stant ferrea caelo  
 nubila, nec iaculis artatus sufficit aër.  
 hi pereunt missis, illi redeuntibus hastis,  
 415 concurrunt per inane sudas et mutua perdunt  
 vulnera, concurrunt hastae, stridentia funda  
 saxa pluunt, volucres imitantur fulgura glandes  
 et formidandae non una morte sagittae.  
 nec locus ad terram telis: in corpora ferrum  
 420 omne cadit; saepe ignari perimuntque caduntque.  
 casus agit virtutis opus: nunc turba recedit,  
 nunc premit, ac vicibus tellurem amittit et aufert.  
 ut ventis nimisque minax cum solvit habenas  
 Iuppiter alternoque affligit turbine mundum:  
 425 stat caeli diversa acies, nunc fortior Austri,  
 nunc Aquilonis hiems, donec pugnante procella  
 aut nimiis hic vicit aquis, aut ille sereno.

Principium pugnae turmas Asopius Hypseus

## BOOK 8

either side and see the flat between diminish. Now shield buffets shield, boss boss, sword threatening sword, foot foot, spear spear; so the armies strain against each other. Gasps smoke together, plumes approach shining on alien helmets. The face of war is still fair; helmet crests stand atop, horses have their complement of riders, no chariot lacks its driver, arms are in place, shields shine, quivers and belts are handsome, gold not yet marred with blood. But after fury and prowess prodigal of life lets valour loose, not so does the Bear lash airy Rhodope with solid snow when the Kids are setting, nor does Ausonia so resound when Jupiter thunders from all heaven, nor is Syrtis shaken by hail so heavy when black Boreas has brought Italian rains to Libya. They shut out the day with missiles, iron clouds stand in the sky, the crowded air does not suffice for the darts. Some die by spears discharged, others by spears returning, stakes clash in the void, losing the wounds each carries, spears too, slings rain whistling stones, swift bullets and arrows threatening double death<sup>40</sup> imitate the lightning. The earth has no room for the weapons, each one falls on a body. Often they slay and fall unawares, chance does valour's work. The throng now retreats, now presses forward, losing and gaining ground by turns. So when threatening Jupiter gives rein to winds and squalls, plaguing the world with alternate tempests, heaven's armies stand opposed; now Auster's storm is stronger, now Aquilo's, till in the battle of the gales either the one wins with overplus of water or the other with clear sky.

Asopian Hypseus begins the fray, driving back the

<sup>40</sup> By steel and poison.

THEBAID

Oebalias (namque hae magnum et gentile tumentes  
 430 Euboicum duris rumpunt umbonibus agmen)  
 reppulit erepto cunei ductore Menalca.  
 hic et mente Lacon, crudi torrentis alumnus,  
 nec turpavit avos; hastam ultra pectus euntem,  
 ne pudor in tergo, per et ossa et viscera retro  
 435 extrahit atque hosti dextra labente remittit  
 sanguineam: dilecta genis morientis oberrant  
 Taygeta et pugnae laudataque verbera matri.  
 Phaedimon Iasiden arcu Dircaeus Amyntas  
 destinat: heu celeres Parcae! iam palpitat arvis  
 440 Phaedimus, et certi nondum tacet arcus Amyntae.  
 abstulit ex umero dextram Calydonius Agreus  
 Phegeos: illa suum terra tenet improba ferrum  
 et movet; extimuit sparsa inter tela iacentem  
 praegrediens truncamque tamen percussit Acoetes.  
 445 Iphin atrox Acamas, Argum ferus impulit Hypseus,  
 stravit Abanta Pheres, diversaque vulnera flentes  
 Iphis eques, pedes Argus, Abas auriga iacebant.  
 Inachidae gemini geminos e sanguine Cadmi  
 occultos galeis (saeva ignorantia belli)  
 450 perculerant ferro; sed dum spolia omnia caesis  
 eripiunt, videre nefas, et maestus uterque  
 respicit ad fratrem pariterque errasse queruntur.  
 cultor Ion Pisae cultorem Daphnea Cirrhae  
 turbatis prostravit equis: hunc laudat ab alto  
 455 Iuppiter, hunc tardus frustra miseratur Apollo.  
 Ingentes Fortuna viros illustrat utrimque

<sup>437</sup> verbera ωΣ: pectora P

## BOOK 8

Oebalian squadrons (for in mighty pride of race they were breaking the Euboean line with their hard bosses) and snatching away Menalcas, the leader of the wedge. A Laconian he in mind as well as race, nursling of the rough torrent; nor did he disgrace his forbears. Through bones and flesh he draws back the spear as it travels beyond his breast lest shame be in his back and with failing hand returns it all bloody to the foe. As he dies, beloved Taygetus flits before his eyes and the fights and the stripes his mother praised.<sup>41</sup> Dircaean Amyntas aims his bow at Phaedimus, Iasus' son. Ah swift Parcae! Already Phaedimus palpitates on the ground and sure Amyntas' bow is not yet silent. Calydonian Agreus severed Phegeus' right arm from his shoulder. On the ground it held its sword relentlessly and moved it. Acoetes, passing in front of it as it lay, feared and struck, amputated though it was. Savage Acamas overthrew Iphis, fierce Hypseus Argus, Pheres laid Abas low. Weeping different wounds they lay—Iphis the horseman, Argus the footsoldier, Abas the charioteer. Inachian twins had struck down twins of Cadmus' blood hidden by their helmets (cruel ignorance of war!); but as they strip the slain of all their spoils, they see the horror; each looks at his brother in dismay and together they lament their error. Ion, worshipper at Pisa, brings down Daphneus, worshipper at Cirrha, and throws his horses into confusion. Jupiter from on high praises the one, Apollo, slow to aid, vainly pities the other.

Fortune gives glory to great warriors on either side in

<sup>41</sup> Received in the *diamastigosis*, the ritual flogging of Spartan boys.

THEBAID

- sanguine in adverso: Danaos Cadmeius Haemon  
 sternit agitque, furens sequitur Tyria agmina Tydeus;  
 Pallas huic praesens, illum Tiryntius implet.  
 460 qualiter hiberni summis duo montibus amnes  
 franguntur geminaque cadunt in plana ruina:  
 contendisse putes uter arva arbustaque tollat  
 altius aut superet pontes; et cum una receptas  
 confundit iam vallis aquas, sibi quisque superbus  
 465 ire cupit, pontoque negant descendere mixti.  
 Ibat fumiferam quatiens Onchestius Idas  
 lampada per medios turbabatque agmina Graium,  
 igne viam rumpens; magno quem comminus ictu  
 Tydeos hasta feri dispulsa casside fixit.  
 470 ille ingens in terga iacet, stat fronte superstes  
 lancea, collapsae veniunt in tempora flammae.  
 prosequitur Tydeus: 'saevos ne dixeris Argos,  
 igne tuo, Thebane, (rogum concedimus) arde!'  
 inde, velut primo tigris gavisu cruore  
 475 per totum cupit ire pecus, sic Aona saxo,  
 ense Pholum, Chromin ense, duos Helicaonas hasta  
 transigit, Aegaeae Veneris quos Maera sacerdos  
 ediderat prohibente dea; vos praeda cruenti  
 Tydeos, it saevas etiamnum mater ad aras.  
 480 Nec minus Herculeum contra vagus Haemona ducit  
 sanguis: inexpleto rapitur per milia ferro,

459 pallas huic P: hunc p- ω

463 ecce una Pω (*Garrod*)

469 dispulsa P: discussa ω

42 Lumps of earth, apparently.

43 Not that the twins had the same name, but the name of one does duty for both, as Castor and Pollux can be called Castors.

## BOOK 8

enemy blood. Cadmean Haemon fells and harries Danaï, Tydeus in fury pursues the Tyrian forces. Pallas is there for the one, the Tirynthian fills the other. As when two winter rivers break from mountaintops and fall with double ruin into the plains, you might think they were in competition which should lift land<sup>42</sup> and trees or overrun bridges in higher spate; and when one valley now receives both waters and is like to confound them, each proudly chooses to go his own way and they refuse to descend into the sea commingled.

Onchestian Idas was passing through the midst as he shook a smoky brand and disrupted the Grecian ranks, forcing a path with fire. With a mighty blow at close quarters fierce Tydeus' spear divided his helmet and stabbed him. The huge warrior lies on his back and in his forehead the lance stands upright. The flames collapse and go to his temples. Tydeus follows: 'Call not Argos cruel. We allow you your pyre. Burn, Theban, with your own fire.' Then, as a tigress rejoicing in her first kill is fain to go through the whole flock, he slays Aon with a stone, Pholus with sword and Chromis with sword, and runs the two Helicaons<sup>43</sup> through with a spear. Macra, priestess of Aegean Venus, had given them birth though the goddess forbade. Now you are the prey of bloody Tydeus, your mother still goes to the cruel altars.<sup>44</sup>

No less on the other side docs errant slaughter lead Herculean<sup>45</sup> Haemon. His insatiate steel carries him

<sup>44</sup> To pray for them.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. 499 and 506. Haemon's sister Megara had been Hercules' wife.

THEBAID

nunc tumidae Calydonis opes, nunc torva Pylenes  
 agmina, nunc maestae fundens Pleuronis alumnos,  
 donec in Olenium fessa iam cuspidē Buten  
 485 incidit. hunc turmis obversum et abire vetantem  
 aggreditur; puer ille, puer malasque comamque  
 integer, ignaro cui tunc Thebana bipennis  
 in galeam librata venit: finduntur utroque  
 tempora dividuique cadunt in bracchia crines,  
 490 et non hoc metuens inopino limite vita  
 exsiluit. tunc flavum Hypanin flavumque Politen  
 (ille genas Phoebō, crinem hic pascebat Iaccho:  
 saevus uterque deus); victis Hyperenora iungit  
 conversumque fuga Damasum; sed lapsa per armos  
 495 hasta viri trans pectus abit parmamque tenenti  
 excutit et summa fugiens in cuspidē portat.

Sterneret adversos etiamnum Ismenius Hacinon  
 Inaehidas (nam tela regit viresque ministrat  
 Amphitryoniades), saevum sed Tydea contra  
 500 Pallas agit. iamque adverso venere favore  
 comminus, et placido prior haec Tiryntius ore:  
 'fida soror, quaenam hunc belli caligine nobis  
 congressum fortuna tulit? num regia Iuno  
 hoc molita nefas? citius me fulmina contra  
 505 (infandum!) ruere et magno bellare parenti  
 aspiciat. genus huic—sed mitto agnoscere, quando  
 tu diversa foves, nec si ipsum comminus Hyllum  
 Tydeos hasta tui Stygioque ex orbe remissum  
 Amphitryona petat; teneo aeternumque tenebo  
 510 quantum haec, diva, manus, quotiens sudaverit aegis

<sup>490</sup> limite ω (cf. Σ): limine P      num vitae?



through the thousands, destroying now proud Calydon's power, now Pylene's grim ranks, now the nurslings of sad Pleuron,<sup>46</sup> until with point already weary he comes on Olenian Butes. Him he assails as he turns to his men and forbids them to leave. He is a boy, a boy with cheeks and hair untouched. Before he knows it the poised Theban axe swings down upon his helmet. His temples are split asunder, his locks fall divided onto his arms, and fearing no such fate he bounds out from life by a path unlooked-for (?). Then for blond Hypanis and blond Polites—the one keeping his beard for Phoebus, the other his hair for Bacchus, but both gods were unkind. To the vanquished he joins Hyperenor and Damasus, who had turned to flee; but the spear, slipping through his shoulders, runs out through his chest and shakes the shield from his grasp, carrying it on the point in flight.

Ismenian Haemon would still be laying low his Inachian foes (for Amphitryon's son guides his weapons and gives him strength), but Pallas drives cruel Tydeus against him. And now they come face to face, each favouring adversaries, and first the Tirynthian thus gently speaks: 'My loyal sister, what fortune has brought us this meeting in the murk of war? Has queen Juno contrived this evil? Sooner would she see me rush against the thunderbolts (unspeakable!) and make war upon our great parent. His race—but I will not recognize it, since you favour the other side, nor would I if your Tydens' spear sought Hyllus hand to hand or Amphitryon sent back from the world of Styx. I remember and ever shall how much your hand, goddess, how often this aegis of yours laboured for me when I

<sup>46</sup> Where Melæager was mourned by his sisters.

THEBAID

ista mihi, duris famulus dum easibus omnes  
 lustru vagus terras; ipsa (heu!) comes invia mecum  
 Tartara, ni superos Aeheron excluderet, isses.  
 tu patrem caelumque mihi—quis tanta relatu  
 515 aequet? habe totas, si mens excindere, Thebas.  
 cedo equidem veniamque precor.' sic orsus abibat.  
 Pallada mulcet honos: rediit ardore remisso  
 vultus et erecti sederunt pectoris angues.

Sentit abisse deum, levius Cadmeius Haemon  
 520 tela rotat nulloque manum cognoscit in ictu.  
 tunc magis atque magis vires animusque recedunt,  
 nee pudor ire retro; cedentem Aeheloius heros  
 impetit, et librans uni sibi missile telum  
 derexit iactus summae qua margine parnac  
 525 ima sedet galea et iuguli vitalia lucent.  
 nee frustrata manus, mortemque invenerat hasta;  
 sed prohibet paulumque umeri libare sinistri  
 praebuit et merito parcit Tritonia fratri.  
 ille tamen nec stare loco nec cominus ire  
 530 amplius aut vultus audet perferre cruenti  
 Tydeos; aegro animo vis ac fiducia cessit.  
 qualis saetigeram Lucana cuspide frontem  
 strictus aper, penitus cui non infossa cerebro  
 vulnera, nec felix dextrae tenor, in latus iras  
 535 frangit et expertae iam non venit obvius hastae.

Ecce ducem turmae certa indignatus in hostem  
 spicula feliei Prothoum torquere lacerto,  
 turbidus Oenides una duo corpora pinu,

514 patrem ωΣ (cf. Verg. Aen. 1.78): patriam P

515 ex(s)cindere ω: excēd- P

519 sentit abisse ω: sensit abesse Pψ     anne deum <et>?

524 direxit Pω (Baehrens)     531 aegro ψ, Baehrens: -ra Pω

## BOOK 8

wandered the earth over, a slave in harsh ill chances. Ay, you would yourself have borne me company to trackless Tartarus, did not Acheron exclude the High Ones. You gave me father and heaven. Who could match such favours with the telling? Take all Thebes if you have a mind to raze her. I yield and ask your pardon.' With the words, he drew away. Pallas is mollified by his respect. Her countenance is again as it was, the heat remitted, and the snakes erect on her bosom subside.

Cadmean Haemon senses the god's departure. He hurls his darts more faintly nor recognizes his hand in any blow. Then more and more his strength and spirit wane and he is not ashamed to retreat. The Acheloian hero assails him as he retires and, poising a javelin that none but he could throw, sets aim at the point where the lowest part of the helmet rests on the edge of the shield and the vital places of the throat show white. Nor did his hand fail him. The spear had found death, but Tritonia forbade and let it taste a little of the left shoulder, sparing her deserving brother.<sup>47</sup> Haemon, however, dares neither stay where he is nor any more engage hand to hand nor bear the countenance of bloody Tydeus. His mind is sick, force and confidence forsake it. So a wild boar whose bristling brow has been grazed by a Lucanian point (the wound has not dug deep into his brain and the hand's aim failed to follow through) swerves his rage to one side nor comes to face the sampled spear.

See, indignant that Prothous, leader of a troop, should hurl sure darts against the enemy with prosperous arm, Oeneus' son in his fury strikes two bodies with one pine-

<sup>47</sup> Hercules.

THEBAID

cornipedemque equitemque, ferit: ruit ille ruentem  
 540 in Prothoum lapsasque manu quaerentis habenas  
 in vultus galeam clipeumque in pectora calcat,  
 saucius extremo donec cum sanguine frenos  
 respuit et iuncta domino cervice recumbit.  
 sic ulmus vitisque, duplex iactura colenti,  
 545 Gaurano de monte cadunt, sed maestior ulmus  
 quaerit utrique nemus, nec tam sua bracchia labens  
 quam gemit assuetas invitaque proterit uvas.

Sumpserat in Danaos Heliconius arma Corymbus,  
 ante comes Musis, Stygii cui conscia pensi  
 550 ipsa diu positis letum praedixerat astris  
 Uranie. cupit ille tamen pugnasque virosque,  
 forsitan ut caneret; longa iacet ipse canendus  
 laude, sed amissum mutae flere Sorores.

Pactus Agenoream primis Aty's ibat ab annis  
 555 Ismenen, Tyrii iuvenis non advena belli,  
 quamvis Cirrha domus, soceros nec tristibus actis  
 aversatus erat; sponsam quin castus amanti  
 squalor et indigni commendat gratia luctus.  
 ipse quoque egregius, nec pectora virginis illi  
 560 diversa, inque vicem, sineret Fortuna, placebant.  
 bella vetant taedas, inveni que hinc maior in hostes  
 ira; ruit primis immixtus et agmina Lerna  
 nunc pedes ense vago, prenis nunc celsus habenis,  
 ceu spectetur, agit. triplici velaverat ostro

544 colenti P: coloni ω

wood shaft, horse and rider. Prothous plunges and upon him plunges the horse and, as the rider seeks the reins that slipped from his hand, tramples helmet into face and shield into chest, until the wounded creature casts off the bridle along with his last drop of blood and lies with his neck on his master. So an elm and a vine, double loss to the husbandman, fall from Mount Gaurus, but the elm is the sadder of the two and craves the lost forest for both,<sup>48</sup> lamenting not its own boughs in its slide so much as the familiar grapes and loath to crush them.

Heliconian Corymbus had taken arms against the Danaï, formerly the Muses' companion. Aware of his Stygian thread,<sup>49</sup> Uranie herself had long foretold his death by the placing of the stars. Yet he craves fights and fighting men, perhaps to sing of them. He himself lies long to be sung in praise, but the Sisters mutely wept his loss.

Young Atys was betrothed from earliest years to Agenorian Ismene, no stranger in the Tyrian army though Cirrha was his home. He had not turned away from his bride's parents because of the sad history. Nay, her chaste desolation and the favour due to unmerited affliction commended the betrothed to her lover. He too was of no ordinary stamp. Nor was the girl's heart estranged from his; each pleased the other did Fortune allow. The war forbids the wedding, adding to the young man's anger against the enemy. He rushes among the first and harries the hosts of Lerna now on foot with roaming sword and now aloft with reins in hand, as though spectators'<sup>50</sup> eyes were on him. His mother had clothed his still rising shoulders and

<sup>48</sup> See SB<sup>2</sup>.      <sup>49</sup> 'The doom spun for him by the Fates in the underworld' (Mozley).      <sup>50</sup> Especially Ismene's.

THEBAID

- 565 surgentes etiamnum umeros et levia mater  
pectora; tunc auro phaleras auroque sagittas  
cingulaque et manicas, ne coniuge vilior iret,  
presserat et mixtum cono crispaverat aurum.  
talibus (heu!) fidens vocat ultro in proelia Graios.
- 570 ac prima in faciles grassatus cuspage turmas  
arma refert sociis et in agmina fida peracta  
caede redit. sic Hyrcana leo Caspius umbra  
nudus adhuc nulloque iubae flaventis honore  
terribilis magnique etiamnum sanguinis insons,
- 575 haud procul a stabulis captat custode remoto  
segne pecus teneraque famem consumit in agna.  
mox ignotum armis ac solo corpore mensus  
Tydea non timuit, fragilique lacescere telo  
saepius infrendentem aliis aliosque sequentem
- 580 ausus erat. tandem invalidos Aetolus ad ictus  
forte refert oculos et formidabile ridens,  
'iamdudum video, magnum cupis, improbe, leti  
nomen,' ait; simul audacem non ense nec hasta  
dignatus leviter digitis imbelle solutis
- 585 abiecit iaculum: latebras tamen inguinis alte  
missile, ceu totis intortum viribus, hausit.  
praeterit haud dubium fati et spoliare superbit  
Oenides. 'neque enim has Marti aut tibi, bellica Pallas,  
exuvias figemus,' ait. 'procul arceat ipsum
- 590 ferre pudor; vix, si bellum comitata relictis  
Deipyle thalamis, illi illudenda tulissem.'  
sic ait, et belli maiora ad praemia mente

<sup>566</sup> pharetras *Schrader*

<sup>570</sup> primam P ante corr.: -mum ω (*Housman*)

<sup>589</sup> arceat ωΣ: habeat P

## BOOK 8

smooth chest with threefold purple. Then, lest he go in meaner guise than his spouse, she had overlaid his harness with gold and with gold his arrows, belt, and sleeves, and eurred mingling gold upon his helmet. Trusting, alas, to such show, he challenged the Greeks to battle. At first he attacks weak squadrons with his spear, bringing back arms to his comrades, returning to trusted lines when he had killed his man. So a Caspian lion in Hyreanian shade, still bare, not terrible in pride of yellow mane, innocent yet of mighty bloodshed, makes to raid an idle flock not far from the fold when their shepherd is away and consumes his hunger on a tender lamb. Presently he had no fear of Tydeus, not knowing him in arms<sup>51</sup> and taking only his body's measure, and dared to provoke him again and again with his frail darts as he gnashed his teeth at other foes and pursued them. At last the Aetolian chanced to turn his eyes to the feeble blows and with a terrible laugh: 'This while,' says he, 'I see it, overbold; you crave great fame of death.' With the words he launched an unwarlike shaft lightly with relaxed fingers, not deeming the audacious adversary worthy of sword or spear. None the less the missile drained deep the hidden places of the groin as though hurled with all his might. The son of Oeneus passes him by, his death assured, disdaining to take spoils. 'For indeed these trophies,' he said, 'we shall not hang up to Mars or to you, warlike Pallas. Let shame keep it far from me to bear them myself. Hardly if Deipyle had left her bower and come with me to the war would I have given them to her to play with.' So he speaks and his mind draws him to war's greater

<sup>51</sup> Or 'by his arms' (shield and helmet).

THEBAID

dueitur: innumeris veluti leo forte potitus  
 caedibus imbelles vitulos mollesque iuencas  
 595 transmittit: magno furor est in sanguine mergi  
 nee nisi regnantis cervice reeumbere tauri.  
 at non semianimi elamore Menoeceea lapsus  
 fallit Atys: praevertit equos curruque eitato  
 desilit: instabat pubes Tegeaea iacenti,  
 600 nec prohibent Tyrii. 'pudeat, Cadmea iuventus,  
 terrigenas mentita patres! quo tenditis,' inquit,  
 'degeneres? meliusne iacet pro sanguine nostro  
 hospes Atys? tantum hospes adhuc et coniugis ultor  
 infelix nondum iste suae; nos pignora tanta  
 605 prodimus?' insurgunt iusto firmata pudore  
 agmina, cuique suae rediere in pectora curae.

Interea thalami seereta in parte sorores,  
 par aliud morum miserique innoxia proles  
 Oedipodae, varias miscent sermone querelas.  
 610 nec mala quae iuxta, sed longa ab origine fati,  
 hae matris taedas, oculos ast illa paternos,  
 altera regnantem, profugum gemit altera fratrem,  
 bella ambac. gravis hinc miseri eunctatio voti:  
 nutat utroque timor. quemnam hoc certamine vietum,  
 615 quem visse velint? tacite praeponderat exsul.  
 sic Pandioniae repetunt ubi fida volucres  
 hospitia atque larem bruma pulsante relietum,  
 stantque super nidos ueterisque exordia fati  
 annarrant teetis: it truneum ac flebile murmur;  
 620 verba putant, voxque illa tamen non dissona verbis.

Atque ibi post lacrimas et longa silentia rursus

619 et truncum P $\omega$  (*Markland*): fit tr- *Housman*



prizes. So a lion who has made countless killings passes by unwarlike calves and soft heifers; his madness is to sink in mighty blood and lie only on the neck of a reigning bull. But Menoeceus fails not to hear Atys' fall and dying cry. He turns his horses and leaps from his speedy chariot. The men of Tegea were advancing on him as he lay and the Tyrians not stopping them. 'For shame,' he says, 'youth of Cadmus, belying your earthborn fathers! Where are you making for, degenerates? Should Atys, a stranger, rather lie dead defending our blood, still but a stranger, poor youth, avenging a wife not yet his? Do we betray such pledges?' The troops rise up, stiffened by proper shame, and to each heart returns its loved one. †'

Meanwhile in a secret inner chamber, the sisters, a pair of another character,<sup>52</sup> innocent offspring of unhappy Oedipus, mingle various complaint in their talk—not of present ills but from Fate's origin far back. One laments their mother's wedding torches, the other their father's eyes; one the reigning brother, the other the exiled, both the war. Hence grievous delay of unhappy prayer. Fear nods both ways. Whom should they wish vanquished in this struggle, whom victorious? Silently the exile tips the scale. So when Pandion's birds<sup>53</sup> return to their trusted quarters and the home they left when winter drove them forth, they stand over the nest and tell the dwelling their tale of ancient woe; they take their broken, tearful murmur for words, and indeed that utterance sounds not unlike words.

Then after tears and long silence Ismene begins afresh:

<sup>52</sup> Different from their brothers.

<sup>53</sup> Nightingales. See Tereus in Index.

THEBAID

incohat Ismene: 'quisnam hic mortalibus error?  
 quae decepta fides? curam invigilare quieti  
 claraque per somnos animi simulacra reverti?  
 625 ecce ego, quae thalamos, nec si pax alta maneret,  
 tractarem sensu, (pudet heu!) conubia vidi  
 nocte, soror; sponsum unde mihi sopor attulit amens  
 vix notum visu? semel his in sedibus illum,  
 dum mea nescio quo spondentur foedera pacto,  
 630 respexi non sponte, soror. turbata repente  
 omnia cernebam, subitusque intercidit ignis,  
 meque sequebatur rabido clamore reposita  
 mater Atyn. quatenus haec dubiae praesagia cladis?  
 nec timeo, dum tuta domus milesque superstes  
 635 Doricus et tumidos liceat componere fratres.'  
 talia nectebant, subito cum pigra tumultu  
 expavit domus, et multo sudore receptus  
 fertur Atys, servans animam iam sanguine nullo,  
 cui manus in plaga, dependet languida cervix  
 640 exterior clipeo, crinesque a fronte supini.  
 prima videt caramque tremens Iocasta vocabat  
 Ismenen: namque hoc solum moribunda precatur  
 vox generi, solum hoc gelidis iam nomen inerrat  
 faucibus. exclamant famulae, tollebat in ora  
 645 virgo manus, tenuit saevus pudor; attamen ire  
 cogitur, indulget summum hoc Iocasta iacenti  
 ostenditque offertque. quater iam morte sub ipsa  
 ad nomen visus defectaque fortiter ora

634 superstes P: recedat ω

645 deiecta Pψ: delec- vel dilec- ψ (Heinsius)

BOOK 8

‘What delusion is this for mortals? What trust deceived? Can it be that care keeps vigil over repose and clear images of our minds return in sleep?’<sup>54</sup> See, I, who would have naught to do with wedding chambers knowingly even if peace were still profound, for shame alas, I saw nuptials, sister, in the night. Whence did demented slumber bring me my betrothed, scarce known to me by sight? Once I looked at him in this dwelling, not of my will, sister, while in some fashion my pledges were contracted. Suddenly I saw<sup>55</sup> everything in turmoil, a sudden fire came between us, his mother was following me with frantic cries, demanding Atys back. What presage this of doubtful calamity? Not that I am afraid, so our house be safe and the Dorian army stay here and we can make peace between our angry brothers.’<sup>56</sup> Such converse they exchanged, when suddenly confused alarm struck the idle house and Atys, retrieved with mighty effort, was borne in, still keeping his life though no blood was left in him. His hand was on the wound, his drooping neck hung over the back of the shield, his hair streamed back from his forehead. Jocasta saw him first and trembling calls his beloved Ismene; for this only her son-in-law’s dying voice entreats, this name only strays in his cold throat. The women cry out, the maiden lifts hands to face, cruel shame holds her back; but she must go, Jocasta grants this final indulgence to the prostrate youth, showing and offering the girl. Four times at the very point of death he bravely raises his eyes and failing head at her name. Only at her he gazes, neglecting the

<sup>54</sup> Our waking thoughts take visual form.

<sup>55</sup> In the dream. <sup>56</sup> On the reading *superstes* and the interpretation of this episode see SB<sup>2</sup>.

THEBAID

- sustulit; illam unam neglecto lumine caeli  
 650 aspicit et vultu non exsatiatur amato.  
 tunc quia nec genetrix iuxta positusque beata  
 morte pater, sponsae munus miserabile tradunt  
 declinare genas; ibi demum teste remoto  
 fassa pius gemitus lacrimasque in vulnera fudit.  
 655 Dumque ea per Thebas, aliis serpentibus horrens  
 et face mutata bellum integrabat Enyo.  
 arma volunt, primos veluti modo comminus ictus  
 sustulerint omnisque etiamnum luceat ensis.  
 eminent Oenides: quamvis et harundine certa  
 660 Parthenopaeus agat, morientumque ora furenti  
 Hippomedon proculcet equo, Capaneaue pinus  
 iam procul Aoniis volet agnoscenda catervis,  
 Tydcos illa dies, illum fugiuntque tremuntque  
 clamantem: 'quo terga datis? licet ecce peremptos  
 665 ulcisci socios maestamque rependere noctem.  
 ille ego inexpletis solus qui caedibus hausi  
 quinquaginta animas: totidem, totidem heia gregatim  
 ferte manus! nulline patres, nulline iacentum  
 unanimi fratres? quae tanta oblivio luctus?  
 670 quam pudet Inachias contentum abiisse Mycenae!  
 hinc super Thebis? haec robor regis? ubi autem  
 egregius dux ille mihi?' simul ordine laevo  
 ipsum exhortantem cuneos capitisque superbi  
 insignem fulgore videt; nec segnius ardens  
 675 occurrit, niveo quam flammiger ales olo  
 imminet et magna trepidum circumligat umbra.  
 tunc prior: 'Aoniae rex o iustissime gentis,

654 lumina P $\omega$  ( $\zeta$ )

655 ardens P $\omega$ , *nempe propter face* (Schrader)

## BOOK 8

light of heaven, and cannot be satisfied with the beloved face. Then, since his mother is not at his side and his father is laid away in happy death, they give his betrothed the pitiful office of closing his eyes. Finally with none to witness she confesses her wifely sorrow and upon his wounds pours her tears.

As this was toward in Thebes, Enyo<sup>57</sup> was reviving the fight, bristling with other snakes and a fresh torch. They crave arms as though they had only lately raised hand against hand in combat and every sword still shone. Oeneus' son stands out. Though Parthenopaeus ply a sure bow and Hippomedon trample the faces of the dying with his furious horse, and Capaneus' pine fly for Aonian squadrons to recognize from afar, that day was Tydeus', him they flee and fear as he shouts: 'Whither are you running? See, now you can avenge your slain comrades and pay back that sad night. I am he that single-handed took fifty lives, insatiate in slaughter. Bring as many and as many hands in batches, huzza! Are there no fathers, no loving brothers of the fallen? How so forgetful of loss? How it shames me that I left content for Inachian Mycenae! Are these what Thebes has left? These the king's stalwarts? And where, I wonder, is that noble leader?' As he spoke, he saw the man himself encouraging troops on the left, conspicuous by the flash of his proud helm. Ardently he accosts him, as eager as a flame-bearing bird that hovers over a snowy swan, enveloping the frightened creature with his mighty shadow. Then speaking first: 'Ruler most

<sup>57</sup> Enyo = Bellona. She is equipped with snakes and torch like a Fury.

THEBAID

imus in arma palam tandemque ostendimus enses,  
 an noctem et solitas placet expectare tenebras?<sup>57</sup>  
 680 ille nihil contra, sed stridula cornus in hostem  
 it referens mandata ducis, quam providus heros  
 iam iam in fine viae percussam obliquat, et ipse  
 telum ingens avide et quanto non ante lacerto  
 impulit. ibat atrox finem positura duello  
 685 lancea (convertere oculos utrimque faventes  
 Sidonii Graique dei), crudelis Erinys  
 obstat et infando differt Eteoclea fratri,  
 cuspis in armigerum Phlegyan peccavit.

Ibi ingens

pugna virum, stricto nam saevior irruit ense  
 690 Aetolus, retroque datum Thebana tegebant  
 arma ducem. sic densa lupum iam nocte sub atra  
 arcet ab appresso pastorum turba iuvenco;  
 improbus erigitur contra, nec cura vetantes  
 impetere: illum, illum, semel in quem venerat, arguet.  
 695 non secus obiectas acies turbamque minorem  
 dissimulat transitque manu; tamen ora Thoantis,  
 pectora Deilochi, Clonii latus, ilia torvi  
 perforat Hippotadac; truncis sua membra remittit  
 interdum galeasque rotat per nubila plenas.  
 700 et iam corporibus sese spoliisque cadentum  
 clauserat; unum acies circum consumitur, unum  
 omnia tela vovent: summis haec ossibus haerent,  
 pars frustrata cadunt, partem Tritonia vellit,

<sup>697</sup> c(h)lonii ω: ctho- P

<sup>58</sup> Even the pro-Theban deities had no love for Eteocles. Taken with *faventes* as 'favouring either side' *utrimque* is super-

## BOOK 8

just of Aonia's people, do we go openly to arms and show our swords at last or would you rather wait for night and your customary darkness?' The other made no answer but a spear goes whizzing against his enemy bearing the leader's message. The provident hero strikes it aside almost at the end of its journey, and himself eagerly hurls a weapon with a force he had never used before. The angry lance went on its way to put an end to the war. Sidonian and Grecian gods on both sides turned favouring eyes.<sup>58</sup> The cruel Erinys blocks, and defers Eteocles for his unnatural brother. The spear went awry, hitting Phlegyas the armour-bearer.

Followed a great melee, for the Aetolian rushed in with drawn sword fiercer than ever while the Theban arms defended their retreating leader. So in the dark of night a dense crowd of shepherds wards off a wolf from the steer he has caught; he rears against them obstinately, but cares not to go for those who bar his way and presses on him, only him whom he had once attacked. Not otherwise does Tydeus ignore the forces arrayed against him, the lesser crowd, and pass them by. Even so, he pierces the face of Thoas, the chest of Deilochus, the flank of Clonius, the groin of grim Hippotades. Sometimes he throws limbs back to their trunks and whirls charged helmets through the clouds. And now he had blocked himself with corpses and the spoils of the falling. Around him alone the army expends itself, for him alone all missiles long. Some lodge in the surface of his bones, others fall frustrate, some Tritonia

fluus after *Sidonii Craique*. *Crudelis Erinys obstet* suggests that the Fury's action was unwelcome to both.

THEBAID

multa rigent clipeo. densis iam consitus hastis  
 705 ferratum quatit umbo nemus, tergoque fatiscit  
 atque umeris gentilis aper; nusquam ardua coni  
 gloria, quique apicem torvae Gradivus habebat  
 cassidis, haud lactum domino ruit omen: inusta  
 temporibus nuda aera sedent, circumque sonori  
 710 vertice percusso volvuntur in arma molares.  
 iam cruor in galea, iam saucia proluit ater  
 pectora permixtus sudore et sanguine torrens.  
 respicit hortantes socios et Pallada fidam  
 longius opposita celantem lumina parma:  
 715 ibat enim magnum lacrimis inflectere patrem.  
 Ecce secat Zephyros ingentem fraxinus iram  
 fortunamque ferens; teli non eminent auctor:  
 Astacides Melanippus erat, nec prodidit ipse  
 et vellet latuisse manum, sed gaudia turmae  
 720 monstrabant trepidum; nam flexus in ilia Tydeus  
 summissum latus et clipei laxaverat orbem.  
 clamorem Aonii miscent gemitumque Pelasgi,  
 obiectantque manus indignantemque tuentur.  
 ille per oppositos longe rimatus amarum  
 725 Astaciden, totis animae se cogit in ictum  
 reliquiis telumque iacit quod proximus Hopleus  
 praebucrat: perit expressus conamine sanguis.  
 tunc tristes socii cupidum bellare (quis ardor!)  
 et poscentem hastas mediaque in morte negantem  
 730 expirare trahunt, summique in margine campi  
 effultum gemina latera inclinantia parma  
 ponunt, ac saevi rediturum ad proelia Martis  
 promittunt flentes. sed et ipse recedere caelum



plucks out, many stand stiff on his buckler. His shield boss, planted dense with spears, shakes an iron forest, the native boar on his back and shoulders has rents. The lofty glory of his helm is departed and Gradivus surmounting its grim top plunges down, no happy omen for the owner. The bare bronze<sup>59</sup> sits welded on his temples and all around boulders noisily strike his head and fall upon his shield. Now there is blood in the helm, a black torrent of mingled gore and sweat deluges his wounded chest. He looks back upon the comrades who urge him on and faithful Pallas, who afar hides her eyes behind her shield; for she was on her way to sway her great father with her tears.

See, an ashen spear cleaves the Zephyrs bearing mighty wrath and mighty fortune, but the weapon's sender is not apparent. It was Melanippus, son of Astacus. He himself did not give away his handiwork and would fain that it stay hidden, but the joy of his troop revealed him as he trembled. For Tydeus had bent his sunken side over his groin and let his round shield slip. The Aonii mingle shouts, the Pelasgi groans, thrusting their hands to guard him, protecting him in his despitc. He spied the hated son of Astacus afar through those between and with all that remained of his spirit makes himself strike, throwing a dart that Hoplaus close by had handed him. His blood is forced out by the effort, it is gone. Then his sad comrades drag him away, longing to fight (what passion!), demanding spears, and in the throcs of death refusing to expire. They set him down at the plain's edge, propped up on either side as he leans upon two shields, and tearfully promise that he will return to the battles of cruel Mars. But he himself per-

<sup>59</sup> Shorn of its plume.

THEBAID

- ingentesque animos extremo frigore labi  
 735 sensit, et innixus terrae, 'miserescite,' clamat,  
 'Inachidae: non ossa precor referantur ut Argos  
 Aetolumue larem; nec enim mihi cura supremi  
 funeris: odi artus fragilemque hunc corporis usum,  
 740 desertorem animi. caput, o caput, o mihi si quis  
 apportet, Melanippe, tuum! nam voveris arvis,  
 fido equidem, nec me virtus suprema fecellit.  
 i, precor, Atrei si quid tibi sanguinis unquam,  
 Hippomedon, vade, o primis puer inclute bellis  
 Arcas, et Argolicae Capaneu iam maxime turmae.'  
 745 Moti omnes, sed primus abijt primusque repertum  
 Astaciden medio Capaneus e pulvere tollit  
 spirantem laevaue super cervicc reportat,  
 terga cruentantem concussi vulneris unda:  
 qualis ab Arcadio redijt Tirynthius antro  
 750 captivumque suem clamantibus intulit Argis.  
 Erigitur Tydeus vultuque occurrit et amens  
 laetitiaque iraque, ut singultantia vidit  
 ora trucesque oculos seseque agnovit in illo,  
 imperat abscisum porgi, laevaue receptum  
 755 spectat atrox hostile caput, gliscitque tepentis  
 lumina torva videns et adhuc dubitantia figi.  
 infelix contentus erat: plus exigit ultrix  
 Tisiphone; iamque inflexo Tritonia patre  
 venerat et misero decus immortale ferebat,  
 760 atque illum effracti perfusum tabe cerebri

753 tra(h)i ω: -it P (*H&kanson*)

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<sup>60</sup> Hippomedon's relationship with Atreus is not stated, but his family origin was in Mycenae (9.514). In 4.305–08 Atreus is rep-

BOOK 8

ceived that the sky was receding and his mighty heart failing in final chill. Leaning on the ground, he cries: 'Have pity, sons of Inachus. I ask not that my bones be taken back to Argos or my Aetolian home. I care not for funeral rites. I hate my limbs and the frail use of this body, deserter of my soul. The head, oh could someone bring me your head, Melanippus! For you are rolling on the ground, I doubt it not, and my valour did not fail me at the last. Go, I beg, Hippomedon, if ever you had aught of Atreus' blood!<sup>60</sup> On your way, boy of Arcady, famous in your first war, and Capaneus, now greatest of the Argive host!'

All were moved, but Capaneus is first to go and first to find Astacus' son and raise him from the dust and return with him on his left shoulder still breathing and staining his captor's back with blood from the shaken wound. So returned the Tiryinthian from the Arcadian cavern and brought the captive boar to applauding Argos.

Tydeus raises himself and turns his face to meet him. He is wild with joy and anger as he sees the gasping visage, the fierce eyes, and recognizes himself in the other. He orders that his enemy's head be cut off and brought to him. Holding it in his left hand, he glares at it savagely and swells as he sees it still warm and the eyes, grim and still uncertain, grow fixed. The wretch was content, but avenging Tisiphone exacts more. And now Tritonia had come; she had swayed her father<sup>61</sup> and was bearing immortal glory to the unhappy warrior. She looks at him, sees him

resented as contemporary. Some accounts make Hippomedon Adrastus' nephew, but Statius shows no knowledge of this.

<sup>61</sup> The echo of 715 *inflectere patrem* is probably inadvertent.

THEBAID

aspicit et vivo scelerantem sanguine fauces  
(nec comites auferre valent): stetit aspera Gorgon  
crinibus emissis rectique ante ora cerastae  
velavere deam; fugit aversata iacentem,  
765 nec prius astra subit quam mystica lampas et insons  
Elisos multa purgavit lumina lympha.

<sup>766</sup> elisos P $\omega$  $\Sigma$ : Ilissos *Gronovius*

## BOOK 8

wet with the issue of the broken brain and polluting his jaws with living blood—nor can his comrades wrest it away. The Gorgon stood rough with hair<sup>62</sup> outflung and the asps upreared before her face concealed the goddess. Turning from the prostrate man, she flees, nor ascends to the stars until the mystic torch and guiltless Elisos<sup>63</sup> had purged her eyes with plenteous water.

<sup>62</sup> Snakes.

<sup>63</sup> Probably a variant spelling, as in 12.631, rather than a corruption. In Greek sources too Ilissos sometimes has one medial s.

## LIBER IX

Asperat Aonios rabies audita cruenti  
Tydeos; ipsi etiam minus ingemuere iacentem  
Inachidae, culpantque virum et rupisse queruntur  
fas odii; quin te, divum implacidissime, quamquam  
5 praecipuum tunc caedis opus, Gradive, furebas,  
offensum virtute ferunt, nec comminus ipsum  
ora sed et trepidos alio torsisse iugales.  
ergo profanatum Melanippi funus acerbo  
vulnere non aliis ultum Cadmeia pubes  
10 insurgunt stimulis quam si turbata sepulcris  
ossa patrum monstrisque datae crudelibus urnae.  
accendit rex ipse super: 'quisquamne Pelagis  
mitis adhuc hominemque gerit? iam morsibus uncis  
(pro furor! usque adeo tela exsatiavimus?) artus  
15 dilacerant. nonne Hyrcanis bellare putatis  
tigribus, aut saevos Libyae contra ire leones?  
et nunc ille iacet (pulchra o solacia leti!)  
ore tenens hostile caput, dulcique nefandus  
immoritur tabo; nos ferrum immite facesque:  
20 illis nuda odia, et feritas iam non eget armis.  
sic pergant rabidi claraque hac laude fruantur,  
dum videas haec, summe pater. sed enim hiscere campos

<sup>9</sup> pubes ω: proles P

## BOOK 9

Report of bloody Tydeus' frenzy exasperates the Aonians. Even the children of Inachus bemoaned the fallen hero but little; they blame him, complaining that he broke the law of hate. Nay, 'tis said that even Gradivus, most turbulent of gods, though then of all times plying the mad work of carnage, was offended by the prowess<sup>1</sup> and looked not directly himself, turning his frightened horses too another way. So the Cadmean warriors rise to avenge Melanippus' corpse outraged by so cruel a wound, spurred as though their fathers' bones had been disturbed in their tombs and their urns given to cruel monsters. The king himself inflames them still further: 'Does any man still have mercy or humanity for the Pelasgi? Now they are tearing limbs apart with their hooked teeth—the madness! Have we so glutted their weapons? Think you not that we war with Hyrcanian tigers, fight fierce lions of Libya? And now he lies (fine comfort in death!) gripping his enemy's head with his mouth, expiring in unholy relish of the gore. We use pitiless steel and firebrands; for them there is bare hate, and their savagery no longer needs weapons. So let them continue in their madness and enjoy this glorious renown, provided you see it, Father supreme. Well, but they com-

<sup>1</sup> Ironical. In 11.1 *virtutis iniquae* the adjective makes a vital difference.

## THEBAID

conquesti terraeque fugam mirantur; an istos  
 vel sua portet humus? magno sic fatus agebat  
 25 procursu fremituque viros, furor omnibus idem  
 Tydeos invisi spoliis raptoque potiri  
 corpore. non aliter subtexunt astra catervae  
 incestarum avium, longe quibus aura nocentem  
 aëra desertasque tulit sine funere mortes;  
 30 illo avidae cum voce ruunt, sonat arduus aether  
 plausibus, et caelo volucres cessere minores.

Fama per Aonium rapido vaga murinure campum  
 spargitur in turmas (solito perniciosior index  
 cum lugenda refert), donec, cui maxima fando  
 35 damna vehit, trepidas lapsa est Polynicis ad aures.  
 deriguit iuvenis lacrimaeque haesere paratae  
 et cunctata fides: nimium nam cognita virtus  
 Oenidae credi letum suadetque vetatque.  
 sed postquam haud dubio clades auctore reperta est,  
 40 nox oculos mentemque rapit; tum sanguine fixo  
 membra simul, simul arma ruunt: madet ardua fletu  
 iam galea atque ocreae clipeum excepere cadentem.  
 it maestus genua aegra trahens hastamque sequentem,  
 vulneribus ceu mille gravis totosque per artus  
 45 saucius: absistunt socii monstrantque gementes.  
 tandem ille abiectis, vix quae portaverat, armis  
 nudus in egregii vacuum iam corpus amici  
 procidit et tali lacrimas cum voce profudit:  
 'hasne tibi, armorum spes o suprema meorum,  
 50 Oenide, grates, haec praemia digna rependi,  
 funus ut invisâ Cadmi tellure iaceres

51 nudus ut  $\text{P}\omega$  (*Håkanson*)



## BOOK 9

plain of gaping fields and wonder that earth flees. Would their own ground support such as they?' Thus speaking, he led his men shouting in a great onset. All are mad to gain possession of the spoils of hated Tydeus and his abducted corpse. Not otherwise do swarms of foul birds veil the stars when a breeze from afar has brought noxious air and deaths forsaken without burial; thither they rush in noisy greed, the lofty air is loud with flapping wings, and lesser birds retire from the sky.

Rumour with fleet murmur spreads at large through the Aonian plain into the squadrons, a nimbler messenger than usual when she brings dolorous news, until she glides into Polynices' affrighted ears, to whom her tale brings sorest loss. The young man froze, his tears halted ready to flow, he was slow to believe; the valour of Oeneus' son that he knew too well bids him and forbids him to credit his death. But when the disaster was attested on sure authority, night takes his eyes and mind. His blood is stopped, his limbs and arms fall together to earth. His tall helmet is wet with weeping and his greaves catch his shield as it drops. Sadly he walks, dragging feeble knees and trailing spear as though heavy with a thousand hurts and wounded in every limb; his comrades stand aloof and point at him with groans. At last he throws aside the arms he had been hard put to it to carry and falls naked<sup>2</sup> on the now vacant body of his peerless friend, shedding tears with such words as these: 'Is this the thanks, last hope of my arms, son of Oeneus, this the worthy reward I have rendered you, that you lie a corpse<sup>3</sup> on the hated earth of Cadmus while I

<sup>2</sup> *Nudus* often has the sense of unarmed or almost naked.

<sup>3</sup> As Hill says, *nudus* here probably arose from 47.

THEBAID

- sospite me? nunc exsul ego aeternumque fugatus,  
 quando alius misero ac melior mihi frater adeptus.  
 nec iam sortitus veteres regnique nocentis  
 55 periurum diadema peto: quo gaudia tanti  
 empta mihi aut sceptrum quod non tua dextera tradet?  
 ite, viri, solumque fero me linquite fratri:  
 nil opus arma ultra temptare et perdere mortes;  
 ite, precor; quid iam dabitis mihi denique mains?  
 60 Tydea consumpsi! quanam hoc ego morte piabo?  
 o socer, o Argi et primae bona iurgia noctis  
 alternaeque manus et, longi pignus amoris,  
 ira brevis! non me ense tuo tunc, maxime Tyden,  
 (et poteris) nostri mactatum in limine Adrasti!  
 65 quin etiam Thebas me propter et impia fratris  
 tecta libens, unde haud alius remeasset, adisti,  
 ceu tibimet scepra et proprios latus honores.  
 iam Telamona pium, iam Thesea Fama tacebat.  
 qualis et ecce iaces! quae primum vulnera rimer?  
 70 quis tuus hic, quis ab hoste cruor? quae te agniva quive  
 innumeri stravere globi? num fallor? et ipse  
 invidit pater et tota Mars impulit hasta?

- Sic ait, et maerens etiamnum lubrica tabo  
 ora viri terget lacrimis dextramque reponit.  
 75 'tunc meos hostes hucusque exosus, et ultra  
 sospes ego?' exuerat vagina turbidus ensem  
 aptabatque neci: comites tenere, socerque  
 castigat bellique vices ac fata revolvens

<sup>69</sup> mirer P $\omega$  (*Schrader*)

<sup>74</sup> dextram  $\omega$ : -a P

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<sup>4</sup> Editors who prefer the superfluous *dextra* to *dextram* have

## BOOK 9

survive? Now indeed I am an exile, banished forever, since my other and better brother has been taken from me. Alas! I no longer seek the old lottery and the perjured crown of a guilty royalty. What care I for joys so dearly bought or a sceptre that your hand shall not deliver? Go, warriors, and leave me alone to my savage brother. No need to try arms further and waste deaths. Go, I pray. What greater thing are you now to give me? I have expended Tydeus. With what death shall I atone for this? O father-in-law, O Argos, and the healthy brawl of that first night, the blows we traded and the brief anger, pledge of long affection! Why was I not slain then by your sword, great Tydeus, on our father Adrastus' threshold—you could have done it. Nay, on my account you went willingly to Thebes and my brother's impious dwelling, whence no other would have returned, as though to win the sceptre for yourself and honours of your own. Already Fame had nothing to say of faithful Telamon and Theseus. And how nobly you lie! What wounds should I probe first? Which of this blood is yours, which from an enemy? What hosts, what countless packs laid you low? Am I wrong? Was Father Mars himself jealous and smote you with all his spear?

So he speaks and grieving cleanses with his tears the warrior's face still slippery with gore and replaces his right hand.<sup>4</sup> 'Did you hate my enemies thus far, and do I live on?' Wildly he drew his sword from its scabbard and made it ready for killing. His companions hold him back and his father-in-law rebukes him, comforting his bursting breast with recital of war's chances and of Fate. Gradually he

not considered that Tydeus' hand (originally his left hand: 8.754) would be at his mouth holding the skull.

THEBAID

solatur tumidum, longeque a corpore caro  
 80 paulatim, unde dolor letique animosa voluntas,  
 amovet ac tacite ferrum inter verba reponit.  
 ducitur amisso qualis consorte laborum  
 deserit inceptum media inter iugera sulcum  
 taurus iners colloque iugum deforme remisso  
 85 parte trahit, partem lacrimans sustentat arator.

Ecce autem hortatus Eteoclis et arma secuti,  
 lecta manus, iuvenes, quos nec Tritonia bello,  
 nec prope collata sprevisset cuspide Mavors,  
 adventant; contra, collecta ut pectora parnae  
 90 fixerat atque hastam longe protenderat, haeret  
 arduus Hippomedon: ceu fluctibus obvia rupes,  
 cui neque de caelo metus et fracta aequora cedunt,  
 stat cunctis immota minis; fugit ipse rigentem  
 pontus et ex alto miserae novere carinae.

95 Tunc prior Aonides (validam simul eligit hastam):  
 'non pudet hos manes, haec infamantia bellum  
 funera dis coram et caelo inspectante tueri?  
 scilicet egregius sudor memorandaque virtus  
 hanc tumulare feram, ne non maerentibus Argos  
 100 exsequiis lacrimandus eat mollique feretro  
 infandam eiectans saniem! dimittite curam.  
 nullae illum volucres, nulla impia monstra nec ipse,  
 si demus, pius ignis edat.' nec plura, sed ingens  
 intorquet iaculum, duro quod in aere moratum  
 105 transmissumque tamen clipei stetit orbe secundo.  
 inde Pheres accerque Lycus; sed cassa Pheretis  
 hasta redit, Lycus excelso terrore comantem  
 perstringit galeam: convulsae cuspide longe

<sup>95</sup> elicit P $\omega$  $\Sigma$  (*Heinsius*)

## BOOK 9

removes him far from the beloved corpse, whence comes his grief and high-hearted will to die, and silently as he talks puts the weapon back in place. He is led like a bull who has lost the partner of his toils; listlessly in mid acre he deserts the furrow he has begun and with slackened neck drags one part of the unhandsome yoke while the weeping ploughman bears the other. ✓

But see! Following Eteocles' urgings and arms, a chosen band of warriors advances, whom Tritonia would not have scorned in war nor Mars in close combat. Against them with breast gathered tight to his shield and spear thrust far out before him tall Hippomedon stands fast—like a rock fronting the waves: no fear has it from the sky, and the waters retire broken; it stands unmoved by any threat, the sea itself flees its hard face and from the deep hapless ships know it well.

Then the Aonian speaks first and at the same time chooses a stout spear: 'Are you not ashamed to protect this dead, this corpse that dishonours our warfare, before the gods and the watching sky? A fine effort, memorable valour—to bury this wild beast, lest he not go to Argos to be wept in mourning obsequies, vomiting accursed gore on his soft bier! Dismiss your care. No birds would consume him, no impious monsters, not pious fire itself were we to grant it.' No more said, but he hurls the huge javelin. It tarried in the hard bronze, yet passed through and stuck in the second layer of the shield. Pheres and fierce Lycus followed; but Pheres' spear returns to earth frustrate, while Lycus' grazes the helmet with its lofty, terrible crest. The plumes torn by the spear-point scattered far and the

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diffugere iubae patuitque ingloria cassis.  
 110 ipse nec ire retro, nec in obvia concitus arma  
 exsilit, inque eadem sese vestigia semper  
 obversus cunctis profert recipitque, nec umquam  
 longius indulget dextrae motusque per omnes  
 115 corpus amat, corpus servans circumque supraque  
 vertitur. imbellem non sic amplexa iuvenum  
 infestante lupo tunc primum feta tuetur  
 mater et ancipiti circumfert cornua gyro;  
 ipsa nihil metuens sexusque oblita minoris  
 spernat et ingentes imitatur femina tauros.  
 120 tandem intermissa iaculorum nube potestas  
 reddere tela fuit; iamque et Sicyonius Alcon  
 venerat auxilio, Pisaeaque praepetis Idae  
 turba subit cuneumque replent. his laetus in hostes  
 Lernacam iacit ipse trabem; volat illa sagittis  
 125 aequa fuga mediumque nihil cunctata Politen  
 transabit et iuncti clipeum cavat improba Mopsi.  
 Phocea tum Cydona Tanagraeumque Phalantum  
 atque Erycem, hunc retro conversum et tela petentem,  
 dum spes nulla necis, erinito a vertice figit:  
 130 faucibus ille cavis hastam non ore receptam  
 miratur moriens, pariterque et murmure plenus  
 sanguis et expulsi salierunt cuspide dentes.  
 ausus erat furto dextram eiectare Leonteus,  
 pone viros atque arma latens, positumque trahebat  
 135 presso crine caput: vidit, quamquam undique crebrac,

<sup>120</sup> iaculorum *cod. quidam*: iaculantum P $\omega$ , nimirum ex -atur  
*supra*                   <sup>123</sup> letus P; fre-  $\omega$                    <sup>133</sup> eiectare P; iniec-  $\omega$

<sup>5</sup> So far as I have looked, nobody seems to have found anything

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metal lay bare without its glory. Hippomedon does not retreat, nor yet is he provoked to leap out against the opposing arms, but ever turning upon the same tracks he thrusts forward in all directions and draws back, never letting his hand stretch too far. In all his movements he cherishes the body, turning around it and over it. Not so does his dam enfold a defenceless calf, her firstborn, protecting him from a prowling wolf, and carries her horns in a circle, wheeling doubtfully; for herself she has no fear and foams unmindful of her lesser sex, a female imitating mighty bulls. At length the cloud of darts<sup>5</sup> made a pause and there was opportunity to return fire. Now Alcon of Sicyon had come to aid and fleet Idas' Pisaeon squadron arrives filling up the wedge. Rejoiced by these, he himself launches a big Lernaean shaft against the foe. It flies with the speed of an arrow and unchecked runs Polites through and hollows remorseless the shield of adjoining Mopsus. Then he transfixes Cydon of Phocis and Phalantus of Tanagra and Eryx, the last as he turned round looking for weapons with no thought of death, down from his bushy head. He marvels as he dies at a spear in his hollow throat that had not come by his mouth;<sup>6</sup> blood full of his cry and teeth expelled by the point leapt forth together. Leonteus, hiding behind men and arms, dared to put forth his hand stealthily, and was drawing the prostrate head by the hair; Hippomedon saw, though many a threat faced him on every side, and with cruel sword took off the presump-

odd in *iaculantum*, translated 'darts' or equivalent. It could come from *imitatur* in the previous line, if it was not a slip of the poet's pen.

<sup>6</sup> The spear struck his throat as he stooped and ran into his mouth. The reverse route would be normal.

THEBAID

Hippomedon, ante ora minae, saevoque protervam  
 abstulit ense manum; simul increpat: 'hanc tibi Tydeus,  
 Tydeus ipse rapit; post et confecta virorum  
 fata time magnosque miser fuge tangere manes!'

140 ter Cadmea phalanx torvum abduxere cadaver,  
 ter retrahunt Danaï: Siculi velut anxia puppis  
 seditione maris nequiquam obstante magistro  
 errat et averso redit in vestigia velo.

Non ibi Sidoniae valuissent pellere coepto  
 145 Hippomedonta manus, non illum impacta moverent  
 tormenta oppositum, formidatique superbis  
 turribus impulsus temptato umbone redissent.

sed memor Elysii regis noxasque recensens  
 Tydeos in medios astu subit impia campos

150 Tisiphone: sensere acies subitusque cucurrit  
 sudor equis sudorque viris, quamquam ore remisso  
 Inachium fingebat Halyn; nusquam impius ignis  
 verberaque, et iussi tenere silentia crines.

arma gerit iuxtaque feri latus Hippomedontis  
 155 blanda genas vocemque venit; tamen ille loquentis  
 extimuit vultus admiraturque timorem.

illa autem lacrimans, 'tu nunc,' ait, 'inclute, frustra  
 exanimes socios inhumataque corpora Graium  
 (scilicet is nobis metus, aut iam cura sepulcri?)

160 protegis; ipse manu Tyria tibi captus Adrastus  
 raptatur, teque ante alios, te voce manuque  
 invocat; heu qualem lapsare in sanguine vidi,  
 exutum canos lacero diademate crines!  
 nec procul hinc, advertite oculos ubi plurimus ille

<sup>7</sup> The Strait of Messina.

<sup>8</sup> Pluto; cf. 8.65ff.

<sup>9</sup> It was her function to harry criminals.



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tuous hand, upbraiding him withal: 'Of this hand Tydeus robs you, Tydeus himself. In future fear even the lifeless corpses of warriors and beware, wretch, of touching the mighty dead.' Thrice the Cadmean phalanx pulled the grim carcass away, thrice the Danaei retrieve it. So when the Sicilian sea<sup>7</sup> fights itself, an anxious ship strays despite the helmsman's efforts and returns upon her tracks with averted sail. ✓

Sidonian hands would not there have had strength to drive Hippomedon from his commitment, catapults with their missiles would not have moved him from his stance, shocks dreadful to proud towers would have tested his shield boss and rebounded. But impious Tisiphone remembers the Elysian king<sup>8</sup> and reviews the guilt of Tydeus.<sup>9</sup> Craftily she enters the midst of the field. The armies felt it and a sudden sweat ran down the horses and down the men, though with countenance relaxed she simulated Inachian Halys. Gone were the unholy torch and the scourge, and the hair at her command kept silence.<sup>10</sup> She bears arms, and comes close to fierce Hippomedon; bland her eyes and voice, and yet he feared her face as she spoke and wondered at his fear. Weeping she says: 'In vain, famous warrior, you now protect dead comrades, unburied bodies of Greeks, as though our fear is for them or our present care for a sepulchre. Adrastus himself has been captured, look you, by a Tyrian band and is being dragged off, calling on you above all others, on you with voice and hand. Ah, how I saw him slipping in blood, his white hair stripped of its torn diadem! 'Tis not far from here; look where all that dust is yonder, that knot of men.'

<sup>10</sup> Her snakes did not hiss.

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- 165 pulvis, ubi ille globus.' paulum stetit anxius heros  
 librabatque metus; premit aspera virgo: 'quid haeres?  
 imus? an hi retinent manes, et vilior ille  
 qui superest?' miserum sociis opus et sua mandat  
 proelia et unanimi vadit desertor amici,  
 170 respiciens tamen et revocent si forte paratus.  
 inde legens turbata trucis vestigia divae  
 huc illuc frustra ruit avius, impia donec  
 Eumenis ex oculis reiecta caerula parna  
 fugit et innumeri galeam rupere cerastae.  
 175 aspicit infelix discussa nube quietos  
 Inachidas currumque nihil metuentis Adrasti.  
 Et Tyrii iam corpus habent, iam gaudia magnae  
 testantur voces, victorque ululatus aderrat  
 auribus occultoque ferit praecordia luctu.  
 180 ducitur hostili (pro dura potentia fati!)  
 Tydeus ille solo, modo cui Thebana sequenti  
 agmina, sive gradus seu frena effunderet, ingens  
 limes utrimque datus; nusquam arma, manusque quiescunt;  
 nulla viri feritas: iuvat ora rigentia leto  
 185 et formidatos impune lacessere vultus.  
 hic amor, hoc una timidi fortesque sequuntur,  
 nobilitare manus, infectaque sanguine tela  
 coniugibus servant parvisque ostendere natis.  
 sic ubi Maura diu populatum rura leonem,  
 190 quem propter clausique greges vigilantque magistri,  
 pastorum lassae debellavere cohortes:  
 gaudet ager, magno subeunt clamore coloni,  
 praecerpuntque iubas immaniaque ora recludunt  
 damnaque commemorant, seu iam sub culmine fixus  
 195 excubat, antiquo seu pendet gloria luco.

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A little while the hero stood, anxiously balancing his fears. The harsh maiden urges: 'Why do you hesitate? Do we go? Or does this corpse detain you and is he that still lives of less account?' He hands over his sad work and his own battles to his comrades and leaves, deserting his bosom friend, yet looking back and ready if haply they should recall him. Thence following in the tangled footsteps of the ferocious goddess, he rushes this way and that without a path, until the impious Eumenis casting away her shield disappears darkling from his sight and countless asps burst her helmet. The cloud is dispersed and the unlucky hero sees the sons of Inachus at rest and the chariot of Adrastus, who is in no danger.

And now the Tyrians have the body. Loud cries attest their joy and yells of victory stray to his ears and strike his heart with secret grief. Ah, harsh power of Fate! Tydeus is dragged over hostile soil, Tydeus, for whom lately a great space was left on either side as he pursued the ranks of Thebes, whether with feet unchecked or with reins. His arms are gone, his hands are quiet, his savagery is no more. They were glad to vex the features rigid in death, the dreaded countenance, with impunity. This is their craving, this cowards and brave alike pursue, to ennoble their hands, and they keep the bloodstained weapons to show their wives and little children. So when a lion that has long ravaged the Moorish countryside, on whose account flocks are shut in and their masters keep vigil, has been warred down by weary troops of shepherds, the land is glad, the husbandmen come with loud clamour, plucking at his mane, opening his monstrous jaws, telling of their losses, whether he now keeps watch impaled under a roof or hangs the glory of an ancient grove.

THEBAID

At ferus Hippomedon quamquam iam sentit inane  
 auxilium et seram raptō pro corpore pugnam,  
 it tamen et caecum rotat irrevocabilis ensem,  
 vix socios hostesque, nihil dum tardet euntem,  
 200 secernens; sed caede nova iam lubrica tellus  
 armaque seminecesque viri currusque soluti  
 impediunt laevumque femur, quod cuspide fixum  
 regis Echionii seu dissimulaverat ardens  
 sive ibi nescierat. maestum videt Hoplea tandem;  
 205 Tydeos hic magni fidus comes et modo frustra  
 armiger alipedem prona cervice tenebat  
 fatorum ignarum domini solumque frementem  
 quod vacet inque acies audentior ille pedestres.  
 hunc aspernantem tumido nova pondera tergo  
 210 (unam quippe manum domitis expertus ab annis)  
 corripit affaturque: 'quid o nova fata recusas,  
 infelix sonipes? nusquam tibi dulce superbi  
 regis onus; non iam Aetolo spatiabere campo  
 gaudentemque iubam per stagna Achcloia solves.  
 215 quod superest, caros, i, saltem ulciscere manes  
 aut sequere; extorrem neu tu quoque laeseris umbram  
 captivus tumidumque equitem post Tydea portes.'  
 audisse accensumque putes: hoc fulmine raptum  
 abstulit et similes minus indignatur habenas.  
 220 semifer aëria talis Centaurus ab Ossa  
 desilit in valles: ipsum nemora alta tremescunt,  
 campus equum. trepidi cursu glomerantur anhelo  
 Labdacidae, premit ille super, necopināque ferro

203 seu  $\omega$ : sed P

211 fata P: iussa  $\omega$

212 nusquam  $\omega$ : numq- P

213 satiabere P $\omega\Sigma$  (Bentley)

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But fierce Hippomedon, though he sees that his aid is idle now and battle for the taken corpse too late, goes all the same and beyond recall whirls his blind sword, scarce distinguishing friend from foe so long as nothing slows his course. But the ground now slippery with recent carnage and arms and half-dead men and shattered chariots hold him up, likewise his left thigh that had been pierced by the Echionian monarch's spear; but in his passion he had either dissembled the hurt or not known it was there. At last he sees sorrowing Hopleus; he was the faithful companion of great Tydeus, and lately, but in vain, his armour-bearer. Now he held his charger that with bowed neck, ignorant of his master's fate, chafed only at his idleness for that Tydeus was more venturesome for battles on foot. As he rejects a new weight on his proud back (for since the years of his taming he had known one hand only), the hero<sup>11</sup> seizes him and speaks to him: 'Unhappy steed, why do you refuse new destiny? Never more for you the sweet burden of your proud king. No more will you pace the Aetolian plain or loose your rejoicing mane in the pools of Achelous. For the rest, come, at least avenge the beloved dead; or follow, and do not you also as a captive harm his banished shade and after Tydeus carry some haughty rider.' He seemed to hear and take fire; so tempestuously he swept the hero away, less resenting the similar reins. So a half-brute Centaur leaps from airy Ossa down to the valley; the lofty forests tremble at himself, the plain at the horse. Alarmed, the sons of Labdacus flock together in a panting run, he presses upon them from above, shearing their unsuspect-

<sup>11</sup> In the Latin the change of subject is tacit, as not seldom in Statius.

THEBAID

colla metens linquit truncos post terga cadentes.

- 225 Ventum erat ad fluvium; solito tunc plenior alveo  
 (signa mali) magna se mole Ismenos agebat.  
 illa brevis requies, illo timida agmina lassam  
 de campis egere fugam; stupet hospita belli  
 unda viros claraque armorum incenditur umbra.
- 230 insiluere vadis, magnoque fragore solutus  
 agger et adversae latuerunt pulvere ripae.  
 ille quoque hostiles saltu maiore per undas  
 irruit attonitis (longum dimittere habenas)  
 sicut erat; tantum viridi defixa parumper
- 235 caespite populeo commendat spicula trunco.  
 tunc vero exanimes tradunt rapientibus ultro  
 arma vadis: alii dimissa casside, quantum  
 tendere conatus animae valuere sub undis,  
 turpe latent; multi fluvium transmitters nando
- 240 aggressi, sed vincla tenent laterique repugnat  
 balteus et madidus deducit pectora thorax.  
 qualis caeruleis tumido sub gurgite terror  
 piscibus, arcani quotiens devexa profundi  
 scrutantem delphina vident; fugit omnis in imos
- 245 turba lacus viridesque metu stipantur in algas;  
 nec prius emersi quam summa per aequora flexus  
 cmicet et visis malit certare carinis:  
 talis agit sparsos, mediisque in fluctibus heros  
 frena manu pariter, pariter regit arma, pedumque
- 250 remigio sustentat equum; consuetaque campo  
 fluctuat et mersas levis ungula quaerit harenas.  
 Sternit Iona Chromis, Chromin Antiphos, Antiphon  
 Hypseus,

<sup>237</sup> *dismissa* ω: dem- P

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ing necks with his steel and leaving their falling trunks in his wake.

They reached the river. His channel fuller than of wont (a bad sign), Ismenos moved in a mighty mass. There was a brief respite, thither the affrighted ranks took their weary flight from the plain. The water, host to war, is amazed at the warriors and takes fire at the clear reflection of their arms. Into the stream they leapt. The bank collapsed with a mighty crash, shrouding the opposite shore in dust. Hippomedon too with a mightier bound rushed through the hostile waters upon his panicked foes (no time to slip the reins)<sup>12</sup> just as he was; only his javelins, fixed in the green turf, he entrusts for a while to a poplar trunk. Then terrorstruck they let the sweeping torrent take their arms. Some let go their helmets<sup>13</sup> and basely hide so long as they can stretch their breathing under water. Many try to swim across the river, but ties hold them, the belt resists the side and the soaked corselet draws down the breast. Such panic seizes blue fish beneath a swollen flood when they see a dolphin searching the slopes of the secret depth; the whole shoal flees into the lowest pools and crowds in terror into the green seaweed, nor do they come out before he darts in curves upon the surface and chooses rather to race the ships he has espied. So the hero drives them scattered; in mid water he guides the reins and his arms together, holding up the horse<sup>14</sup> with feet like oars; the light hoof accustomed to the plain floats, seeking the sunken sands.

Chronis fells Ion, Antiphos Chronis, Hypseus Anti-

<sup>12</sup> And dismount.      <sup>13</sup> So that they will not show above the surface. Not 'sponte mergunt' as Hill, reading *demissa*.

<sup>14</sup> The rider keeps the horse afloat instead of vice versa!

THEBAID

Hypseus Astyagen evasurumque relicto  
 amne Linum, ni Fata vetent et stamine primo  
 255 ablatum tellure mori. premit agmina Thebes  
 Hippomedon, turbat Danaos Asopius Hypseus:  
 amnis utrumque timet. crasso vada mutat uterque  
 sanguine, et e fluvio neutri fatale reverti.  
 iam laceri pronis volvuntur cursibus artus  
 260 oraque et abscisae redeunt in pectora dextrae,  
 spicula iam clipeosque leves arcusque remissos  
 unda vehit, galeasque vetant descendere cristae:  
 summa vagis late sternuntur flumina telis,  
 ima viris; illic luctantur corpora leto,  
 265 efflantesque animas retro premit obvius amnis.

Flumineam rapicente vado puer Argipus ulmum  
 prenderat, insignes umeros ferus ense Menoeceus  
 amputat; ille cadens, nondum conamine adempto,  
 truncus in excelsis spectat sua brachia ramis.  
 270 Hypseos hasta Sagcn ingenti vulnere mersit,  
 ille manet fundo, rediit pro corpore sanguis.  
 desiluit ripis fratrem rapturus Agenor,  
 heu miser et tenuit, sed saucius ille levantem  
 degravat amplexu: poterat resolutus Agenor  
 275 emersisse vadis, piguit sine fratre reverti  
 surgentem dextra Capetum vulnusque minantem  
 sorbebat rapidus nodato gurgite vertex;  
 iam vultu, iam crine latet, iam dextera nusquam,  
 ultinus abruptas ensis descendit in undas.  
 280 mille modis leti miseros mors una fatigat.

<sup>275</sup> piguit P: puduit ω



## BOOK 9

phos, Hypseus also Astyages and Linus as he was leaving the river and would have got away, did not the Fates forbid and had not his first thread ordained that he die not on land. Hippomedon presses upon the ranks of Thebes, Asopian Hypseus harries the Danaï. The river fears both. Both thicken the water with gore, and neither is destined to return from the stream. Now mangled limbs and heads roll on the down-flowing current and severed hands rejoin breasts, now the flood carries darts and light bucklers and bows unstrung, and plumes forbid helmets to flow downstream.<sup>15</sup> The surface of the water is widely strewn with stray weapons, its depths with men; there bodies struggle with death and lives breathing forth are met and pushed back by the river.

Young Argipus<sup>16</sup> had caught hold of a riverside elm as the stream swept him away; fierce Menoeceus cuts off the shapely shoulders with his sword. As he falls, effort still continuing, he gazes mutilated at his own arms in the tall branches. Hypseus' spear sank Sages with a great wound; he stays at the bottom, blood returns in lieu of body. Agenor leapt down from the bank to catch his brother and held him, alas poor wight! But the wounded man weighs him down with his embrace as he lifts. Agenor could have broken loose and emerged from the water, but he was loath to return without his brother. Capetus rises with his right hand and threatens to strike, but a swift eddy sucks him in its knotty whirl. His face, his hair is hidden, gone now his right hand, last of all his sword descends into the hurrying waters. One death harasses the wretches in a thousand

<sup>15</sup> Or 'sink' (cf. 279). The plumes became entangled in surrounding flotsam?

<sup>16</sup> See on 3.546.

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induit a tergo Mycalesia cuspis Agyrten;  
 respexit: nusquam auctor erat, sed concita tractu  
 gurgitis effugiens invenerat hasta cruorem.

285     Figitur et validos sonipes Aetolus in armos  
 exsiluitque alte vi mortis et aëra pendens  
 verberat; haud tamen est turbatus fulmine ductor,  
 sed miseratur equum magnoque ex vulnere telum  
 exiit ipse gemens et sponte remisit habenas.  
 inde pedes repetit pugnas gressuque manuque  
 290     certior, et segnem Nomium fortemque Mimanta  
 Thisbaeumque Lichan Anthedoniumque Lycetum  
 continuat ferro geminisque e fratribus unum  
 Thespiaden; eadem poscenti fata Panemo  
 ‘vive superstes,’ ait, ‘diraeque ad moenia Thebes  
 295     solus abi miseros non decepture parentes.  
 di bene quod pugnas rapidum deiecit in amnem  
 sanguinea Bellona manu: trahit unda timentes  
 gurgite gentili, nuda nec flebilis umbra  
 stridebit vestros Tydeus inhumatus ad ignes;  
 300     ibitis aequoreis crudelia pabula monstris,  
 illum terra vehit suaque in primordia solvet.’  
 sic premit adversos et acerbat vulnera dictis;  
 ac nunc ense furit, nunc tela natantia captans  
 ingerit: innuptae comitem Therona Dianae,  
 305     ruricolamque Gyan cum fluctivago Ergino,  
 intonsumque Hersen, contemptoremque profundi  
 Crethea, nimbosam qui saepe Caphereos arcem  
 Euboicasque hiemes parva transfugerat alno—  
 quid non fata queant? traicctus pectora ferro

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guises. A Mycaesian spearhead from behind buries itself in Agyrtes' back. He looked round; no thrower was to be seen. Impelled by the force of the torrent, the spear had escaped and found blood.

The Aetolian steed is stabbed in his strong shoulders. High he rears with the power of death and prancing beats the air. But the leader is not unnerved by the shock. He pities the horse and draws the weapon from the great wound himself groaning and of his own will lets go the reins. Then he rejoins the battle on foot, more sure in tread and hand, and with his sword slays one after another, sluggish Nomius and valiant Mimas and Thisbaean Lichas and Anthedonian Lycetus, and Thespiades, one of twin brothers. To Panemus, who asks for the same fate, 'Live on,' he says. 'Go hence alone to the walls of accursed Thebes, no more to deceive your hapless parents.<sup>17</sup> Heaven be thanked that Bellona with her bloody hand cast the battle down into the rapid stream. The water draws you cowards on your native flood, nor shall Tydeus' naked shade shriek pitiably unburied beside your pyres. You shall go cruel food for sea monsters, him earth bears and shall resolve into his elements.' Thus he presses upon his foes, embittering wounds with words. Now he rages with his sword, now catches floating javelins and hurls them. Theron he slays, companion of virgin Diana, and country-dwelling Gyas and wave-wandering Erginus and unshorn Horses and Cretheus, despiser of the deep, who often in a tiny boat had run the gauntlet of Caphereus' stormy height and Euboean tempests. Ah, power of Fates! His breast trans-

<sup>17</sup> This incident abbreviates one in 2.629-43 with some variations of detail (SB<sup>2</sup>). Doubtless an inadvertence.

THEBAID

- 310 volvitur in fluctus, heu cuius naufragus undae!  
 te quoque sublimi tranantem flumina curru,  
 dum socios, Pharsale, petis, resupinat ademptis  
 Dorica cuspis equis; illos violentia saevi  
 gurgitis infelixque iugi concordia mergit.
- 315 Nunc age, quis tumidis magnum expugnaverit undis  
 Hippomedonta labor, cur ipse excitus in arma  
 Ismenos, doctae nosse indulgete Sorores:  
 vestrum opus ire retro et senium depellere Famae.  
 gaudebat Fauno Nymphaque Ismenide natus
- 320 maternis bellare tener Crenaeus in undis,  
 Crenaeus, cui prima dies in gurgite fido  
 et natale vadum et virides cunabula ripae.  
 ergo ratus nihil Elysias ibi posse Sorores,  
 laetus adulantem nunc hoc, nunc margine ab illo
- 325 transit avum, levat unda gradus, seu defluus ille,  
 sive obliquus eat; nec cum subit obvius ulla  
 stagna dedere moras pariterque revertitur amnis.  
 non Anthedonii tegit hospitis inguina pontus  
 blandior, aestivo nec se magis aequore Triton
- 330 exserit, aut carae festinus ad oscula matris  
 cum remeat tardumque ferit delphina Palaemon.  
 arma decent umcros, clipeusque insignis et auro  
 lucidus Aoniae caelatur origine gentis.  
 Sidonis hic blandi per candida terga iuvenci,
- 335 iam secura maris, teneris iam cornua palmis  
 non tenet, extremis alludunt aequora plantis;  
 ire putes clipeo fluctusque secare iuvenicum.  
 adiuvat unda fidem, pcelago nec discolor amnis.

315 expugnaverit  $\omega$ : inclinavit in P

318 depellere P $\psi$  $\Sigma$ : defendere  $\omega$

## BOOK 9

fixed with steel, he rolls into the waves, shipwrecked, alas, on what waters! You too, Pharsalus, as you cross the river in your lofty chariot to join your fellows, a Dorian spear lays on your back and steals your horses. Then the violence of the cruel flood drowns and the unlucky concord of the yoke.

Come now, poetic Sisters, of your indulgence let me know what labour fought down great Hippomedon in the swollen waters, why Ismenos himself was roused to arms. Your work it is to go backwards and avert Fame's senility. Young Crenaeus, born of Faunus and the Nymph Ismenis, rejoiced to make war in his mother's waters, Crenaeus, whose first light was in the faithful stream, whose cradle was his natal water and its green banks. So thinking that the Elysian Sisters had no power therein, he merrily traverses his egressing grandfather now from this bank, now from that. The wave lifts his steps whether he goes downstream or athwart; and when he meets its path, the river delays him not at all but turns back along with him. No more blandly does the sea eever the groin of the guest from Anthedon<sup>18</sup> nor Triton rise higher from a summer sea, nor Palaemon when he hastens back to his dear mother's kiss and strikes his slow dolphin. His arms besem his shoulders, his handsome shield, shining with gold, is engraved with the origin of the Aonian race. There the girl of Sidon<sup>19</sup> on the white back of the winsome steer, now trustful of the sea, no longer holds the horns in her tender palms, the water plays around her toes; you would think the bull was moving on the shield and eaving the billows. The wave lends eedence, the river is of like colour

<sup>18</sup> Glaucus.

<sup>19</sup> Europa.

THEBAID

tunc audax pariter telis et voce proterva  
 340 Hippomedonta petit: 'non haec fecunda veneno  
 Lerna, nec Herculeis haustae serpentibus undae:  
 sacrum amnem, sacrum (et miser experiere!) deumque  
 altrices irrumpis aquas.' nihil ille, sed ibat  
 345 comminus; opposuit cumulo se densior amnis  
 tardavitque manum; vulnus tamen illa retentum  
 pertulit atque animae tota in penetralia sedit.  
 horruit unda nefas, silvae flevistis utracque,  
 et graviora cavae sonuerunt murmura ripae.  
 350 ultimus ille sonus moribundo emersit ab ore,  
 'mater!', in hanc miseri ceciderunt flumina vocem.

At genetrix coetu glaucarum cincta sororum  
 protinus icta malo vitrea de valle solutis  
 exsiluit furibunda comis, ac verbere crebro  
 oraque pectoraque et viridem scidit horrida vestem.  
 355 utque erupit aquis iterumque iterumque trementi  
 ingeminat 'Crenae' sono: nusquam ille, sed index  
 desuper (a miserae nimium noscenda parenti!)  
 parma natat; iacet ipse procul, qua mixta supremum  
 Ismenon primi mutant confinia ponti.  
 360 fluctivagam sic saepe domum madidosque penates  
 Alcyone deserta gemit, cum pignora sacvus  
 Auster et argentes rapuit Thetis invida nidos.  
 mergitur orba iterum, penitusque occulta sub undis  
 365 limite non uno, liquidum qua subter eunti  
 lucet iter, miseri nequiquam funera nati

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<sup>20</sup> The water of Ismenos is the same colour as the sea on the shield.

<sup>21</sup> In Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 11.741–48, Halcyone and her hus-

## BOOK 9

with the sea.<sup>20</sup> Then he boldly seeks Hippomedon with weapons and saucy speech alike: 'This is not Lerna, mother of poisons, nor do Herculean snakes drink these waters. 'Tis a sacred river you invade, sacred (and so you shall find, wretch!), waters that foster gods.' The other made no answer, but went against him. The river opposed him in denser mass and slowed his hand, that none the less carried through the hindered stroke and settled full into life's inner places. The water shuddered at the outrage, the woods on either side wept, the hollow banks gave a heavier noise. A last sound came from his dying mouth: 'Mother.' On this the poor fellow's word the river descended.

But his mother, surrounded by a bevy of her grey-green sisters, stricken by calamity leapt frenzied straightway from the vitreous valley, hair dishevelled, and with many a blow wildly tore her face and bosom and green raiment. As she burst from the water, she cried again and again with quavering voice 'Crenaeus.' Nowhere was he, but on the surface floats his telltale shield, only too easy for his poor parent to recognize. He himself lies far off, where first the margin of the sea mingles and changes Ismenos' final flow; so often forsaken Halcyone laments her wave-wandering home and sodden house, when cruel Auster and jealous Thetis have stolen her children, her shivering nestlings.<sup>21</sup> Bereaved, she sinks again and hidden deep down under the waves she searches in vain for the body of her poor son by many a path, where the liquid way shines before her as

band Ceyx, changed into sea birds, continue to mate and rear their young. At nesting time her father Aeolus keeps the sea calm to protect his grandchildren. Statius follows or invents a different version.

## THEBAID

vestigat plangitque tamen; saepe horridus amnis  
 obstat, et obducto caligant sanguine visus.  
 illa tamen praeceps in tela offendit et enses  
 scrutaturque manu galeas et prona reclinat  
 370 corpora; nec ponto summota intrabat amaram  
 Dorida, possessum donec iam fluctibus altis  
 Nereidum miserata cohors ad pectora matris  
 impulit. illa manu ceu vivum amplexa reportat  
 insternitque toris riparum atque umida siccatur  
 375 mollibus ora comis, atque haec ululatus addit:  
 ‘hoc tibi semidei munus tribuere parentes  
 nec mortalis avus? sic nostro in gurgite regnas?  
 mitior heu misero discors alienaque tellus,  
 mitior unda maris, quae iuxta flumina corpus  
 380 rettulit et miseram visa exspectasse parentem.  
 hine mei vultus? haec torvi lumina patris?  
 hi crines undantis avi? tu nobile quondam  
 undarum nemorumque decus, quo sospite maior  
 diva et Nympharum longe regina ferebar.  
 385 heu ubinam ille frequens modo circa limina matris  
 ambitus orantesque tibi servire Napaeae?  
 cur nunc te, melius saevo mansura profundo,  
 amplexu misero tumulis, Crenaeae, reporto  
 non mihi? nec tantae pudet heu miseretque ruinae,  
 390 dure parens? quae te alta et ineluctabilis imo  
 condidit amne palus, quo nec tam cruda nepotis  
 funera nec nostri valeant perrumpere planctus?

<sup>387</sup> mansure  $\zeta$ , *Baehrens*

<sup>22</sup> *Tamen* has given pause. I take it as saying that despite her concentration on the search she did not desist from the actions of



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she goes; but still she makes moan.<sup>22</sup> Often the rough river opposes her, and her eyes dim with a film of blood. None the less she hastens, knocking against javelins and swords, searching helmets with her hand, and bending back prone bodies. The deep did not put her off and she was entering salt Doris, until a compassionate band of Nereids pushed him, now possessed by the deep billows, to his mother's breast. Embracing him as though he were alive, she brings him back, lays him on the bank's couch and dries his wet face with her soft hair. And this she adds to her cries of woe: 'Is this the gift your demigod parents<sup>23</sup> bestowed upon you, and your immortal grandsire?<sup>24</sup> Thus do you reign in our flood? Gentler to the unfortunate, alas, this discordant, alien earth, gentler the sea's wave that beside the river brought your body back and seemed to be waiting for your hapless mother. Is this my face? These the eyes of your wild father? These the tresses of your wave-rolling grandsire? You were once the peculiar glory of waters and woods; while you lived I was called a greater goddess, queen beyond compare of Nymphs. Alas where is that courtier throng around your mother's threshold, glen maidens begging to be your slaves? Why do I now bring you back in my sad embrace, Crenaeus, I who had better have stayed in the cruel deep, not for me but for the tomb? Harsh father, have you no shame, no pity for such a downfall? What deep, ineluctable swamp in nethermost stream has hidden you, to which neither your grandson's grievous fate nor my laments can break through? See, Hippomedon

mourning. Håkanson would make her ignorant of her son's death, but she was already bewailing him in 353f. and her fears had been confirmed (358).

<sup>23</sup> Faunus and Ismenis.

<sup>24</sup> River Ismenos.

THEBAID

ecce furit iactatque tuo se in gurgite maior  
 Hippomedon, illum ripaeque undaeque tremescunt,  
 395 illius impulsu nostrum bibit unda cruorem:  
 tu piger et trucibus facilis servire Pelasgis.  
 ad cineres saltem supremaque iusta tuorum,  
 saeve, veni non hic solum accensure nepotem.<sup>25</sup>  
 his miscet planctus multumque indigna cruentat  
 400 pectora, caeruleae referunt lamenta sorores:  
 qualiter Isthmiaco nondum Nereida portu  
 Leucothean planxisse ferunt, dum pectore anhelu  
 frigidus in matrem saevum marc respuit infans.

At pater arcano residens Ismenos in antro,  
 405 unde aurae nubesque bibunt atque imbrifer arcus  
 pascitur et Tyrios melior venit annus in agros,  
 ut lamenta procul, quamquam obstrepit ipse, novosque  
 accepit natae gemitus, levat aspera musco  
 colla gravemque gelu crinem, ceciditque soluta  
 410 pinus adulta manu dimissaque volvitur urna.  
 illum per ripas annoso scrupea limo  
 ora exsertantem silvae fluviique minores  
 mirantur: tantus tumido de gurgite surgit,  
 spumosum attollens apicem lapsuque sonoro  
 415 pectora caeruleae rivis manantia barbae.  
 obvia cognatos gemitus casumque nepotis  
 Nympharum docet una patrem monstratque cruentum  
 auctorem dextramque premit: stetit arduus alto  
 anne, manuque genas et nexa virentibus ulvis  
 420 cornua concutiens sic turbidus ore profundo

<sup>25</sup> She threatens suicide.

<sup>26</sup> See Ino in Index. The myth took various forms and much is

## BOOK 9

rages; greater than before he swaggers in your flood, banks and waves tremble before him, by his thrust the water drinks our blood. But you are sluggish and ready to serve the fierce Pelasgi. At least, cruel one, come to the ashes and last rites of your own. Not a grandson's pyre only shall you kindle here.<sup>25</sup> Herewith she mingles buffets, bloodying much her blameless bosom. Her cerulean sisters echo her wailing. So in Isthmus' haven men say the not yet Nereid Leucothea made lament, as her cold babe with panting breast spewed the cruel sea upon his mother.<sup>26</sup>

Father Ismenos was seated in his privy cavern, from which winds and clouds drink and the rainbow feeds and a better harvest comes to Tyrian fields. When he heard the wailings afar, though the sound of his own waters came between, and his daughter's groans renewed, he raises his moss-encrusted neck and his hair heavy with ice, the grown pine drops from his loosened grasp and his urn is let fall and rolls away. Woods and lesser rivers wonder at him along the banks as he thrusts forth his face, pebbly with ancient mud. So massive does he rise from the swollen flood, lifting his foamy head and his breast down which course in sounding flow the streams of his cerulean beard. One of the Nymphs meets him and tells her father of his family sorrows and his grandson's fate, shows the bloody doer, and presses his right hand. He stands towering in the deep river and smiting his face and shaking his horns entwined with green sedge thus in his distress with deep utterance

obscure. The version here adumbrated makes Melicertes' body wash up on the Corinthian coast and retch seawater onto his mother Ino, who has not yet become Leucothea (nor he Palaemon) and mourns him. Ino then is still alive. Cf. *Silvae* 2.1.179.

## THEBAID

incipit: 'huncne mihi, superum regnator, honorem  
 quod totiens hospesque tuis et conscius actis  
 (nec memorare timor) falsa nunc improba fronte  
 cornua, nunc vetitam currus disiungere Phoeben,  
 425 dotalesque rogos deceptaque fulmina vidi  
 praecipuosque alui natorum? an vilis et illis  
 gratia? ad hunc certe repisit Tiryntius amnem,  
 hac tibi flagrantem Bromium restinximus unda.  
 aspice quas fluvio caedes, quae funera portem  
 430 continuus telis alioque adopertus acervo.  
 omne vadum belli series tenet, omnis anhelat  
 unda nefas, subterque animae supraque recentes  
 errant et geminas iungunt caligine ripas.  
 ille ego clamatus sacris ululatibus amnis,  
 435 qui molles thyrsos Baccheaque cornua puro  
 fonte lavare feror, stipatus caedibus artas  
 in freta quaero vias; non Strymonos impia tanto  
 stagna cruore natant, non spumifer altius Hebrus  
 Gradivo bellante rubet. nec te admonet altrix  
 440 unda tuasque manus, iam pridem oblite parentum  
 Liber? an Eous melius pacatur Hydaspes?  
 at tu, qui tumidus spoliis et sanguine gaudes  
 insontis pueri, non hoc ex anne potentem  
 Inachon aut saevas victor revelere Mycenae,  
 445 ni mortalis ego et tibi ductus ab aethere sanguis.'

Sic ait infrendens et sponte furentibus undis  
 signa dedit: mittit gelidus montana Cithacron  
 auxilia antiquasque nives et pabula brumae

424 *disiungere* ωΣ: *deiu-* P

430 *alio* P: *alto* ω

<sup>27</sup> Alluding to Jupiter's affairs with Antiope (in the form of

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begins: 'Ruler of the High Ones, is this my reward? So often I have been host and confidant to your doings, nor am I afraid to recount them. I saw your shameless horns on a false brow, and Phoebe forbidden to unyoke her chariot, and pyres for marriage gifts and lightnings deceived;<sup>27</sup> and I nurtured the foremost of your sons. Or do they too hold my service so cheap? Sure it is that the Tirynthian crawled to this river and that with this water we extinguished Bromius' flames for you. Look what carnage, what corpses I carry in my stream, continuous as I am with weapons and covered all over with a second tier.<sup>28</sup> War's series holds my whole channel, all my water breathes out horror, new ghosts wander above and below, joining my two banks with darkness. I, river resounding with holy howls, I who am said to wash soft wands and Bacchus' horns with my pure fount, am choked with carcasses and seek a narrow passage to the sea. The impious pools of Strymon swim not with such gore, foaming Hebrus reddens no higher when Gradivus wars. And does not my nurturing water remind you, Liber, you and your arms, long forgetful of your parents? Or are you better employed subduing eastern Hydaspes? As for you that proudly exult in the spoils and blood of an innocent lad, you shall not return victorious to mighty Inachus or cruel Mycenae from this river, unless I am mortal and your blood comes from heaven.'

So he spoke, gnashing his teeth, and gave a sign to the already raging waters. Chill Cithaeron sends help from his mountain, ordering snows of long ago and winter's

a Satyr), Alcmena, and Semele (the lightnings were elicited by Juno's trick).

<sup>28</sup> Of corpses (SB<sup>2</sup>).

THEBAID

- ire iubet; frater tacitas Asopos eunti  
 450 conciliat vires et hiulcis flumina venis  
 suggerit. ipse cavae scrutatur viscera terrae  
 stagnaque torpentesque laeus pigrasque paludes  
 excutit, atque avidos tollens ad sidera vultus  
 umentes nebulas exhaurit et aëra siecat.  
 455 iamque super ripas utroque exstantior ibat  
 aggere, iam medium modo qui superaverat annem  
 Hippomedon, intactus aquis umerosque manusque,  
 miratur erevisse vadum seseque minorem.  
 hinc atque hinc tumidi fluetus animosaque surgit  
 460 tempestas instar pelagi, cum Pliadas haurit  
 aut nigrum trepidis impingit Oriona nautis.  
 non secus aequoreo iaetat Teumesius annis  
 Hippomedonta salo, semperque umbone sinistro  
 tollitur et clipeum nigrante supervenit aestu  
 465 spuineus assultans fraetaque refunditur unda  
 et eunulo maiore reedit; nec mole liquenti  
 contentus carpit putres servantia ripas  
 arbusta annosasque trabes eiectaue fundo  
 saxa rotat. stat pugna impar annisque virique,  
 470 indignante deo; nec enim dat terga nec ullis  
 frangitur ille minis, venientesque obvius undas  
 intrat et obieeta dispellit flumina parma.  
 stat terra fugiente gradus, et poplite tenso  
 lubrica saxa tenet, genibusque obnixus et haerens  
 475 subruta fallaei servat vestigia limo,  
 sic etiam increpitans: 'unde haec, Ismene, repente  
 ira tibi? quove has traxisti gurgite vires,

462 annis  $\omega$ : ignis P

473 stat P: stant  $\omega$

BOOK 9

fodder<sup>29</sup> to leave. Brother Asopos adds silent strength to him as he flows, contributing his stream with open veins.<sup>30</sup> He himself explores the bowels of the hollow earth, shaking out pools and sluggish lakes and lazy swamps, and lifting his greedy face to the stars drains moist mists and dries the air. And now he ran above his banks, taller than either mound; and Hippomedon, whose shoulders and hands had lately been above mid river untouched by the waters, wonders at their increase and himself diminished. From this side and from that the swollen waves and the bold tempest rise like the main when it drains the Pleiads or thrusts black Orion upon affrighted sailors; not otherwise does the Teumesian river<sup>31</sup> toss Hippomedon in his sealike flood and is ever lifted by the boss on his left arm, topping the shield with dark tide as he leaps foaming thereat, then falling back with broken wave to return in greater mass. Not content with his liquid volume, he plucks at the trees that keep the crumbling banks, and whirls aged boughs and rocks ejected from his bed. The unequal fight of river and man stands still, and the god waxes indignant. For the hero does not turn tail, is undaunted by any threats. He meets the oncoming waters and enters them, dividing the stream with outstretched shield. He stands firm as the ground flees his steps, his tense legs hold to the slippery rocks, he strains with his knees and clings, keeping the foothold that the treacherous mud undermines. So too he makes reproach: 'Whence, Ismenos, this sudden wrath of yours? From what flood have you drawn such strength, slave of an

<sup>29</sup> Cf. 11.115, where the North Wind is said to feed on snow.

<sup>30</sup> Subterranean ducts.

<sup>31</sup> Housman's note duly ridicules P's *ignis*.

THEBAID

imbelli famulate deo solumque cruorem  
 femineis experte choris, cum Bacchica mugit  
 480 buxus et insanæ maculant trieterida matres?  
 dixerat; atque illi sese deus obtulit ultro  
 turbidus imbre genas et nube natantis harenae,  
 nec saevit dictis, trunca sed pectora quercu  
 ter quater oppositi, quantum ira deusque valebat,  
 485 impulit assurgens: tandem vestigia flexit  
 excussumque manu tegimen, conversaque lente  
 terga refert. instant undæ sequiturque labantem  
 annis ovans; nec non saxis et grandine ferri  
 desuper infestant Tyrii geminoque repellunt  
 490 aggere. quid faciat bellis obsessus et undis?  
 nec fuga iam misero, nec magnæ copia mortis.

Stabat gramineac producta crepidine ripae  
 undarum ac terræ dubio, sed amicior undis,  
 fraxinus ingentique vadum possederat umbra.  
 495 huius opem (nam qua terras invaderet?) unca  
 arripuit dextra: nec pertulit illa trahentem,  
 sed maiore super, quam stabat, pondere victa  
 solvitur et, qua stagna subit radice quibusque  
 arentem mordebat humum dimissa, superne  
 500 iniecit sese trepido ripamque, nec ultra  
 passurum subitæ vallavit ponte ruinae.  
 huc undæ coeunt, et ineluctabile caeno  
 verticibusque cavis sedit crescitque barathrum.  
 iamque uneros, iam colla ducis sinuosa vorago  
 505 circumit: hic demum victus suprema fateri



## BOOK 9

unwarlike god? The only blood you have seen is in women's dances, when Bacchus' pipe is lowing and mad mothers foully hold triennial festival.' He spoke, and the god came face to face, his visage all awash with rain and a cloud of floating sand. He rages not with words, but rising with an oaken trunk thrice and four times smites his adversary's chest with all the force of anger and deity. At last Hippomedon<sup>32</sup> reversed his steps, the shield shaken from his hand, and slowly turning his back retreated. The waters press upon him, the river follows in triumph as he totters. The Tyrians too with stones and hail of steel assail him from above and drive him back from either bank. What is he to do, beset by battle and by water? Neither is there flight for the unfortunate now nor opportunity for glorious death.

An ash tree stood jutting from the verge of the grassy bank, whether in water or on land is in doubt, but more friendly to the water, possessing the stream with its mighty shade. He clutched its aid (for whereby could he get to land?) with hooked clasp. But it bore not his dragging. Overcome by weight above<sup>33</sup> greater than its own, it breaks loose. Detached from the root by which it entered the water and those with which it bit the dry soil, it cast itself and the bank down upon the tremulous hero, now at the end of his endurance, and surrounded him with the bridge of its sudden collapse. Hither the waters combine; an inescapable chasm with mud and hollow eddies sinks and rises. And now the winding whirlpool encircles the chieftain's shoulders, now his neck. Defeated at last he confesses the

<sup>32</sup> Tacit change of subject again.

<sup>33</sup> Hippomedon from below presses the tree down with his hands.

THEBAID

exclamat: 'fluvione (pudet!), Mars inclute, merges  
 hanc animam, segnesque lacus et stagna subibo  
 ceu pecoris custos, subiti torrentis iniquis  
 interceptus aquis? adeone occumbere ferro  
 510 non merui?' tandem precibus commota Tonantem  
 Iuno subit: 'quonam miseros, sator inclute divum,  
 Inachidas, quonam usque premes? iam Pallas et odit  
 Tydea, iam raptio tacuerunt augure Delphi:  
 en meus Hippomedon, cui gentis origo Mycenae  
 515 Argolicique lares numenque ante omnia Iuno  
 (sic ego fida meis?), pelagi crudelibus ibit  
 praeda feris? certe tumulos supremaque victis  
 busta dabas: ubi Cecropiae post proelia flammae,  
 Theseos ignis ubi est?' non spernit coniugis aequas  
 520 ille preces, leviterque oculos ad moenia Cadmi  
 rettulit, et viso sederunt flumina nutu.  
 illius exsanguis umeri et perfossa patescunt  
 pectora: ceu ventis alte cum elata resedit  
 tempestas, surgunt scopuli quaesitaque nautis  
 525 terra, et ab infestis descendunt aequora saxis.  
 quid ripas tenuisse iuvat? premit undique nimbo  
 telorum Phoenissa cohors, nec tegmina membris  
 ulla, omnisque patet leto; tunc vulnera manant,  
 quique sub amne diu stupuit cruor, aëre nudo  
 530 solvitur et tenues venarum laxat hiatus,  
 incertique labant undarum frigore gressus.  
 procumbit, Getico qualis procumbit in Haemo  
 seu Boreae furiis putri seu robore quercus

506 merges ω: -gis P

531 frigore ω: et f- P: e f- *Postgate*

end, exclaiming: 'For shame, renowned Mars, will you sink this my spirit in a river? Shall I go down beneath sluggish meres and pools like a shepherd caught in the hostile waters of a sudden torrent? Was I so unworthy to die by steel?' Moved at last by his prayers, Juno accosts the Thunderer: 'How far, famed begetter of the gods, will you bear down upon the sons of Inachus, how far? Already Pallas has come to hate Tydeus,<sup>34</sup> already Delphi has fallen silent, her prophet reft. And now shall my Hippomedon, whose race stems from Mycenae,<sup>35</sup> whose home is in Argos, whose deity is Juno above all (is this my loyalty to my own?), shall he go a prey to the cruel beasts of the sea? Surely you used to grant tombs and final pyres to the vanquished. Where are Cecropian flames after battles, where Theseus' fire?'<sup>36</sup> He spurns not his consort's fair plea and lightly casts his eyes back to Cadmus' walls; seeing his nod, the river subsided. The hero's bloodless shoulders and pierced breast come into view, even as, when a storm raised high by winds has abated, rocks arise and the land the sailors sought, the waters descend from the beetling cliffs. What use to gain the bank? The Phoenician host presses him from all sides with a shower of weapons. Nothing protects his limbs, he is all open to death. Then his wounds flow. The blood, long stanch'd beneath the river, is released in the naked air and loosens the openings of the veins. His steps totter, uncertain from the chill of the water. He falls forward, as an oak falls on Getic Haemus by the fury of Boreas or its own rotting wood, an oak

<sup>34</sup> Actually (*et*) hates, not merely abandons.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. 8.742.

<sup>36</sup> Juno too becomes prophetic—probably just a slip.

THEBAID

- caelo mixta comas, ingentemque aëra laxat:  
 535 illam nutantem nemus et mons ipse tremescit  
 qua tellure cadat, quas obruat ordine silvas.  
 non tamen aut ense galeamve audacia cuiquam  
 tangere; vix credunt oculis ingentiaque horrent  
 funera et astrictis accedunt comminus armis.
- 540 Tandem adiit Hypseus capulumque in morte tenenti  
 extrahit et torvos laxavit casside vultus;  
 itque per Aonios alte mucrone corusco  
 suspensam ostentans galeam et clamore superbit:  
 'hic ferns Hippomedon, hic formidabilis ultor  
 545 Tydeos infandi debellatorque cruenti  
 gurgitis!' agnovit longe pressitque dolorem  
 magnanimus Capaneus, telumque inmane lacerto  
 hortatur librans: 'ades o mihi, dextera, tantum  
 tu praesens bellis et inevitabile numen,  
 550 te voco, te solam superum contemptor adoro.'  
 sic ait, et voti sese facit ipse potentem.  
 it tremibunda abies clipeum per et aerea texta  
 loricae tandemque animam sub pectore magno  
 depreudit: ruit hand alio quam celsa fragore  
 555 turris, ubi innumeros penitus quassata per ictus  
 labitur effractaque aperit victoribus urbem.  
 cui super assistens, 'non infitiamur honorem  
 mortis,' ait. 'refer huc oculos, ego vulneris auctor;  
 lactus abi multumque aliis iactantior umbris!  
 560 tunc ense galeamque rapit clipeumque revellit

540 capulum  $\omega$ : caelum P: telum *coni.* Garrod

547 lacerto  $\omega$ : receptum *ex -to* P

552 terga P $\omega$  (*Gronovius*)

## BOOK 9

that mingled its foliage with the sky, and leaves a vast void of air; the forest and the mountain itself tremble as it nods—on what earth will it fall, what woods will it overwhelm in sequence? But none so bold as to touch his sword or helm. They scarce believe their eyes and shudder at the vast corpse, approaching close with shields tight pressed. ↓

At last Hypseus came near and drew the swordhilt out of his dead grasp and loosened the grim features from the headpiece. He goes through the Aonii displaying the helmet suspended aloft on a flashing blade, and loudly vaunts: 'Here is fierce Hippomedon, here the formidable avenger of abominable Tydeus and the vanquisher of the blood-stained river.' Great-hearted Capaneus knew him from afar and repressed his grief. Poising a huge weapon with his arm, he thus exhorts: 'Help me, right hand, my only present and inevitable deity in battle, I call upon you; you only I, contemner of the High Ones, adore.' So says he and himself fulfils his prayer. The pinewood shaft passes quivering through shield and bronze mail of the corselet and at length finds the life deep in the great breast. He falls with a crash like a lofty tower, when 'profoundly shaken by countless blows it collapses, opening a breached city to the victors. Standing over him, Capaneus speaks: 'I deny you not the glory of your death. Cast your eyes this way: I gave the wound. Go happy, and make more boast by far than other shades.' Then he seizes sword and helmet and tears away the warrior's<sup>37</sup> own shield and holding them over lifeless

<sup>37</sup> *Hypseos* (Markland) is generally read for *ipsius*, which is perfectly satisfactory if not actually more elegant, as Håkanson saw.

THEBAID

ipsius; exanimumque tenens super Hippomedonta,  
 'accipe' ait 'simul hostiles, dux magne, tuasque  
 exuvias, veniet cineri decus et suus ordo  
 manibus; interea iustos dum reddimus ignes,  
 565 hoc ultor Capaneus operit tua membra sepulcro.'  
 sic anceps dura belli vice mutua Grais  
 Sidoniisque simul nectebat vulnera Mavors:  
 hic ferus Hippomedon, illic non segnior Hypseus  
 fletur, et alterni praebent solacia luctus.  
 570 Tristibus interea somnum turbata figuris  
 torva sagittiferi mater Tegeatis ephebi,  
 crine dato passim plantisque ex more solutis,  
 ante diem gelidas ibat Ladonis ad undas  
 purgatura malum fluvio vivente soporem.  
 575 namque per attonitas curarum pondere noctes  
 saepe et delapsas adytis, quas ipsa dicarat,  
 exuvias, seque ignotis errare sepulcris  
 extorrem nemorum Dryadumque a plebe fugatam,  
 saepe novos nati bello rediisse triumphos,  
 580 armaque et alipedem notum comitesque videbat,  
 nunquam ipsum, nunc ex umeris fluxisse pharetras,  
 effigiesque suas simulacraque nota cremari.  
 praeicipuos sed enim illa metus portendere visa est  
 nox miserae totoque erexit pectore matrem:  
 585 nota per Arcadias felici robore silvas  
 querens erat, Triviae quam desacraverat ipsa  
 electam turba nemorum numenque colendo  
 fecerat: hic arcus et fessa reponere tela,  
 armaque curva sinum et vacuorum terga leonum

561 ipsius P $\omega$ : Hypseos *Markland, male*

581 nunquam P: nusq-  $\omega$

## BOOK 9

Hippomedon 'Great leader,' he says, 'receive your enemy's spoils and your own together. Honour will come to your ashes and proper proecess to your shade. Meantime, until we render you your due of flames, with this sepulchre Capaneus your avenger o'erlays your limbs.' So Mavors impartially devised mutual wounds for Greeks and Sidonians alike in the harsh interehange of battle. Here fierce Hippomedon, there Hypseus, no idler than he, is bewailed and alternate grief gives solace.

Meantime the stern Tegean mother of the archer youth, troubled in her sleep by gloomy visions, was on her way before dawn with hair flying in the wind and feet bare as of wont to the chill waters of Ladon to purge her sinister slumber in the living stream. For in nights dismayed by weight of cares she often saw spoils she had dedicated herself fallen from their shrines and herself wandering among unknown tombs exiled from the forest and banished from the Dryad folk; and often triumphs of her son new brought from the war, his arms and familiar horse and companions, but never himself; or again she would see the quiver slip from her shoulders and her own images and familiar likenesses burnt up. But that night above all seemed to the poor woman to portend danger and roused the mother in all her breast. There was an oak of abundant timber known throughout Arcadia's forests, which she herself had chosen from a multitude of groves and consecrated to Trivia, making it numinous by her worship. Here she would lay by her bows and wearied arrows and fix the curving weapons of

THEBAID

590 figere et ingentes aequantia cornua silvas.  
 vix ramis locus, agrestes adeo omnia cingunt  
 exuviae, et viridem ferri nitor impedit umbram.  
 hanc, ut forte iugis longo defessa redibat  
 venatu, modo rapta ferox Erymanthidos ursae  
 595 ora ferens, multo proscissam vulnere cernit  
 deposuisse comam et rorantes sanguine ramos  
 exspirare solo; quaerenti Nympha cruentas  
 Maenadas atque hostem dixit saevisse Lyaeum.  
 dum gemit et planctu circumdat pectus inani,  
 600 abruptere oculi noctem maestoque cubili  
 exsilit et falsos quaerit per lumina fletus.

Ergo ut in amne nefas merso ter crine piavit  
 verbaque sollicitas matrum solantia curas  
 addidit, armatae ruit ad delubra Dianae  
 605 rore sub Eoo, notasque ex ordine silvas  
 et quercum gavisam videt. tunc limine divae  
 astitit et tali nequiquam voce precatur:  
 'virgo potens nemorum, cuius non mollia signa  
 militiamque trucem sexum indignata frequento  
 610 more nihil Graio (nec te gens aspera ritu  
 Colchis Amazoniaeve magis coluere catervae):  
 si mihi non umquam thiasi ludusve protervae  
 noctis et, invisum quamvis temerata cubili,  
 non tamen aut teretes thyrsos aut mollia gessi  
 615 pensa, sed in tetricis et post conubia lustris,  
 sic quoque venatrix animumque innupta remansi,  
 nec mihi secretis culpam occultare sub antris  
 cura, sed ostendi prolem posuique trementem  
 ante tuos confessa pedes, nec degener ille

<sup>604</sup> *sex litterae eras. in P: armatae ω*



## BOOK 9

boars and hides of empty<sup>38</sup> lions and antlers large as great woods. Scarcely is there room for the branches, so do rustic trophies cover all around and the glint of steel blocks the green shade. As she was returning from the mountains weary from long hunting and proudly bearing the fresh-taken head of an Erymanthian boar, she sees the tree dying on the ground, torn with many a wound, its leaves fallen and its branches dripping blood. To her question the Nymph tells of bloody Maenads and the cruelty of hostile Lyæus. As she groans and surrounds her breast with phantom blows, her eyes break off the night; she leaps from her sad couch and searches her orbs for imaginary tears.

So when she had dipped her hair thrice in the river to expiate the abomination and added words to comfort a mother's anxious cares, she hastens in the dew of dawn to armed Diana's shrine and rejoices to see the trees in their familiar row and the oak. Then standing at the goddess' threshold, she prays in vain as thus: 'Virgin lady of the forests, whose ungentle standards and fierce campaigning I attend in no Grecian fashion, indignant at my sex (nor have the rough breed of Colchis or the troops of the Amazons given you more worship), if dances and the sport of a wanton night have never been for me and though violated by a hated bed I never bore smooth wands or soft wool but even after marriage, even so, remained a huntress in the stern wild and at heart a virgin; nor was it my care to hide my fault in some secret grot, but I showed my child and placed him trembling at your feet, confessing; nor was he

<sup>38</sup> Epithet transferred.

## THEBAID

- 620 sanguinis inque meos reptavit protinus arcus,  
 tela puer lacrimis et prima voce poposeit:  
 hunc mihi (quid trepidae noctes somnisque minantur?),  
 hunc, precor, audaci qui nunc ad proelia voto  
 hen nimium tibi fisis abit, da visere belli  
 625 victorem, vel, si ampla peto, da visere tantum!  
 hic sudet tuaque arma ferat. preme dira malorum  
 signa; quid in nostris, nemoralis Delia, silvis  
 Maenades hostiles Thebanaeque numina regnant?  
 ei mihi! cur penitus (simque augur cassa futuri!),  
 630 cur penitus magnoque interpretor omine queream?  
 quod si vera sopor miserae praesagia mittit,  
 per te maternos, mitis Dietynta, labores  
 fraternumque decus, emectis hunc fige sagittis  
 infelicem uterum; miserae siue funera matris  
 635 audiat ille prior! dixit, fletuque soluto  
 aspicit et niveae saxum maduisse Dianae.  
 Illam diva ferox etiamnum in limine sacro  
 expositam et gelidas verrentem criminibus aras  
 linquit, et in mediis frondentem Maenalon astris  
 640 exsuperat gressu saltumque ad moenia Cadmi  
 destinat, interior caeli qua semita licet  
 dis tantum, et emetas iuxta videt ardua terras.  
 iamque fere medium Parnasi frondea praeter  
 colla tenebat iter, cum fratrem in umbe cornesca  
 645 aspicit laud solito visi: renecebat ab armis  
 maestus Echionis, demersi funera ligens  
 auguris, irruvit caeli plaga sidere mixto,  
 occursuque sacro pariter inbar arsit utrinque,  
 et coiere arcus et respondere pharetrae.  
 650 ille prior: 'scio, Labdacias, germana, cohortes

## BOOK 9

unworthy of my blood, but straightway the boy crept onto my bow and with tears and first speech asked for weapons: him, I pray (what do my nights of fear, my slumbers, threaten?), him who now goes to war in daring hope, trusting (too much, alas!) to you, grant that I see him victorious in battle or, if I ask much, grant only that I see him. Here let him sweat and bear your arms. Suppress dire signs of evil. Why in our woods, Delia of the groves, do hostile Maenads and Theban deities reign? Woe is me! Why deep, deep down (may I prove a prophet ignorant of things to come!) do I make out a great omen in the oak? But if sleep sends me, alas, true presages, by your mother's labour, gentle Dictynna, and your brother's glory, with all your arrows pierce this luckless womb. Let him hear first of the death of his unhappy mother.' She spoke and sees that even snowy Diana's stone is wet with flow of tears.

The fierce goddess leaves her still prostrate on the sacred threshold, sweeping the chill altar with her hair. Stepping out, she clears leafy Maenalos in mid heaven and points her leap to Cadmus' walls, where the sky's inner path shines for gods only, and sees all lands together from the height. And now halfway on her journey she was passing by the leafy ridges of Parnassus when in a gleaming cloud she sees her brother, not looking as he was wont. He was returning in sadness from the Echionian fray, mourning the death of the sunken augur. The tract of sky reddened as the two stars mingled. At their sacred meeting a ray burned on either side, their bows came together and their quivers answered. He first: 'I know it, sister. You are seeking the troops of Labdacus and the Arcadian who

633 *cunctis P: instis ω*648-49 *om. P*

THEBAID

et nimium fortes ausum petis Arcada pugnās.  
 fida rogat genetrix: utinam indulgere precanti  
 Fata darent! en ipse mei (pudet!) irritus arma  
 cultoris frondesque sacras ad inania vidi  
 655 Tartara et in memet versos descendere vultus;  
 nec tenui currus terraeque abrupta coegi,  
 saevus ego immeritusque coli. lugentia cernis  
 antra, soror, mutasque domos: haec sola rependo  
 dona pio comiti; nec tu peritura movere  
 660 auxilia et maestos in vanum perge labores.  
 finis adest iuveni, non hoc mutabile fatum,  
 nec te de dubiis fraterna oracula fallunt.’  
 ‘sed decus extremum misero,’ confusa vicissim  
 virgo refert, ‘nostraeque licet solacia morti  
 665 quaerere, nec fugiet poenas quicumque nefandam  
 insontis pueri scelerarit sanguine dextram  
 impius; et nostris fas sit saevire sagittis.’  
 sic effata movet gressus libandaque fratri  
 parcius ora tulit, Thebasque infesta petivit.  
 670 At pugna ereptis maior crudescit utrimque  
 regibus, alternosque ciet vindicta furores.  
 Hypseos hinc turmae desolatamque magistro  
 agmen, at hinc gravius fremit Hippomedontis adempti  
 orba cohors; praebent obnixi corpora ferro,  
 675 idem ardor rabidis externum haurire cruorem  
 ac fudisse suum, nec se vestigia mutant:  
 stat cuneo defixa acies, hostique cruento  
 dant animas et terga negant: cum lapsa per auras  
 vertice Dircaeī velox Latonia montis

664 vere P: durae ω (SB<sup>1</sup>)

674 corpora P: pectora ω

## BOOK 9

dares combats beyond his strength. His loyal mother asks you. Would that the Fates were letting you grant her prayer! Look at me! Myself helpless I saw my votary's arms (for shame!) and sacred fronds and the face he turned to me go down to Tartarus' void. Nor did I check his chariot and close death's chasm, cruel that I am and undeserving of worship. You see my cavern in mourning, sister, my house mute.<sup>39</sup> With these gifts only I make return to my faithful companion. Do you also forbear to bring succour unavailing and sad labour in vain. The youth's end is near, this fate not to be changed; the matter is not doubtful and your brother's oracle does not deceive you.' 'But at least,' in consternation the virgin answers, 'it is permitted to seek honour for him at the last and solace for death that is mine;<sup>40</sup> nor shall he escape punishment whoever impiously stains his wicked hand with the innocent boy's blood. Let my arrows too have the right to rage.' So she speaks and moves on, allowing her brother a grudging kiss, and in anger seeks Thebes.

But the fight grows fiercer now that the chieftains on both sides have been taken and vengeance rouses mutual ire. Here roar the squadrons of Hypseus and the troop bereft of its master, there more deeply the orphaned cohort of lost Hippomedon. They offer their straining bodies to the steel with the same mad ardour to drain alien blood and to pour out their own. Not a step do they stir, but the ranks stand in a wedge, giving their lives to the bloody foe and refusing their backs—when the swift daughter of Latona glided through the air and stood upon the top of

<sup>39</sup> Cf. 8.196.

<sup>40</sup> See SB1.

THEBAID

- 680 astitit; agnoscunt colles notamque tremescit  
 silva deam, saevis ubi quondam exserta sagittis  
 fecundam lasso Nioben consumpserat arcu.  
 Illum acies inter coepta iam caede superbum  
 nescius armorum et primas tunc passus habenas  
 685 venator raptabat equus, quem discolor ambit  
 tigris et auratis adverberat unguibus armos.  
 colla sedent nodis, et castigata iubarum  
 libertas, nemorisque notae sub pectore primo  
 iactantur niveo lunata monilia dente.  
 690 ipse bis Oebalio saturatam murice pallam  
 lucentesque auro tunicas (hoc neverat unum  
 mater opus) tenui collectus in ilia vinclo,  
 cornipedis laevo clipeum demiserat armo  
 ense gravis nimio: tereti iuvat aurea morsu  
 695 fibula pendentis circum latera aspera cinctus,  
 vaginaeque sonum tremulumque audire pharetrae  
 murmur et a cono missas in terga catenas;  
 interdum cristas hilaris iactare comantes  
 et pictum gemmis galeae iubar. ast ubi pugna  
 700 cassis anhela calet, resoluta vertice nudus  
 exoritur: tunc dulce comae radiisque trementes  
 dulce nitent visus et, quas dolet ipse morari,  
 nondum mutatae rosea lanugine malae.  
 nec formae sibi laude placet multumque severis  
 705 asperat ora minis, sed frontis servat honorem  
 ira decens. dat sponte locum Thebana iuventus,  
 natorum memores, intentaque tela retorquent;  
 sed premit et saevas miserantibus ingerit hastas.

<sup>694</sup> iuvat  $\omega$ : iubet P; ligat *Gronovius*

<sup>695</sup> pendentis P $\omega$  (*Carrod*)

## BOOK 9

Dirce's mountain. The hills recognize her and the woods tremble at the goddess they know, where once bare-breasted she had consumed fecund Niobe<sup>41</sup> with cruel arrows and a weary bow.

Him in his pride among the ranks now that the slaughter has begun sweeps a hunter ignorant of arms and suffering then his first bridle, circled by a striped tigerskin whose gilded claws lash his shoulders. His neck is flat with knots curtailing the freedom of the mane, and on his upper chest bounces a crescent necklace of snowy ivory,<sup>42</sup> sign of the forest. He himself wore a cloak twice steeped in Oebalian dye and a tunic lucent with gold (the only garment his mother had woven), gathered to his loins with a slender band. He had let drop his shield on the horse's left shoulder, but his sword, too large, weighed heavy. A golden brooch with polished clasp rejoices him, for the belt that hangs about his rugged flanks. He likes to hear the sound of the scabbard and the rattle of the quiver and the chains that fall from his crest onto his back, and sometimes give a merry toss of his hairy plume, and the flash of coloured gems upon his helmet. But when his panting casque grows hot with battle, he frees his head and rises bare. Then his locks shine sweetly and sweetly his eyes in their tremulous radiance and his cheeks whose tardiness vexes himself, not yet changed by rosy down. Nor does praise of his beauty make him vain; much he roughens his face with frowning threats, but seemly anger preserves his brow's comeliness. The Theban warriors give way of their own will, mindful of their sons, and pull back their levelled bolts, but he presses upon them and flings cruel spears on

<sup>41</sup> I.e. Niobe's offspring.

<sup>42</sup> From the tusks of a boar.

illum et Sidoniae iuga per Teumesia Nymphae  
 710 bellantem atque ipso sudore et pulvere gratum  
 laudant, et tacito ducunt suspiria voto.

Talia cernenti mitis subit alta Dianae  
 corda dolor, fletuque genas violata, 'quod,' inquit,  
 'nunc tibi, quod leti quaeram dea fida propinqui  
 715 effugium? haecne ultro procrasti in proelia, saeve  
 ac miserande puer? cruda heu festinaque virtus  
 suasit et hortatrix animosi gloria leti!  
 scilicet angustum iamdudum urgumentibus annis  
 Macnialium tibi, parve, nemus, perque antra ferarum  
 720 vix tutae sine matre viac, silvestria cuius  
 nondum tela procax arcumque implere valebas.  
 et nunc illa meas ingentem plangit ad aras  
 invidiam surdasque fores et limina lassat:  
 tu dulces lituos ululataque proelia gaudes  
 725 felix et miserae tantum moriture parenti.'  
 ne tamen extremo frustra morientis honori  
 affuerit, venit in medios caligine furva  
 saepta globos, primumque leves furata sagittas  
 audacis tergo pueri caelestibus implet  
 730 goryton telis, quorum sine sanguine nullum  
 decedit; ambrosio tunc spargit membra liquore,  
 spargit equum, ne quo violetur vulnere corpus  
 ante necem, cantusque sacros et conscia miscet  
 murmura, secretis quae Colchidas ipsa sub antris  
 735 nocte docet monstratque feras quaerentibus herbas.

725 moriture Pψ: peri- ω

727 fulva Pω (Ϛ, Grotius)

731 decedit Pψ: effugit ω

<sup>43</sup> Lit. 'about to die only to (i.e. in the eyes of) your unhappy



BOOK 9

those who pity him. Even the Sidonian Nymphs on Teumesian ridges praise him as he fights, he wins favour by the very sweat and dust; and they fetch sighs in silent longing.

As Diana sees the spectacle, tender grief goes to the depth of her heart and she violates her cheeks with tears: 'What refuge, ah what' she says 'from approaching death can your faithful goddess find you now? Did you of your own will hurry into this battle, cruel and pitiable boy? Alas, valour raw and impatient persuaded you, and the urging glory of a courageous death. This long while past, it seems, Maenalus' forest has been too small for you, little lad, as the years pressed you on, and those paths through wild beasts' dens scarce safe without your mother, whose woodland weapons and bow your impudence had not yet strength to handle. And now at my altars she makes lament and mighty reproach, wearying the deaf doors and thresholds. You, happy you, rejoice in delightful trumpets and the shouts of battle, only your hapless parent foresees your death.'<sup>43</sup> But lest she attend in vain the final honour of the dying youth, she goes into the midst of the fighting men guarded by a dark mist. First she steals the light arrows from the bold lad's back and fills his quiver with celestial shafts, none of which falls bloodless. Then she sprinkles his limbs with ambrosial liquor, his horse too, so that his body be not harmed by any wound before his death, mingling sacred chants and privy murmurings, which she herself teaches Colchian women by night in secret caverns and shows baneful herbs to their searching.

mother.' Parthenopaeus makes a fine show and only Atalanta realizes that he is doomed. For the dative cf. 12.332 *mihi nempe iaces, mihi victus es uni*. Others otherwise, to no purpose.

THEBAID

Tunc vero exserto circumvolat igneus arcu  
 nec se mente regit, patriae matrisque suique  
 immemor, et nimium caelestibus utitur armis:  
 ut leo, cui parvo mater Gaetula cruentos  
 740 suggerit ipsa cibos, cum primum crescere sensit  
 colla iubis torvusque novos respexit ad unguis,  
 indignatur ali, tandemque effusus apertos  
 liber amat campos et nescit in antra reverti.

Quos, age, Parrhasio sternis, puer improbe, cornu?  
 745 prima Tanagraeum turbavit harundo Coroebum  
 extremo galeae primoque in margine parmae  
 angusta transmissa via: stat faucibus unda  
 sanguinis, et sacri facies rubet igne veneni.  
 saevius Eurytion, cui luminis orbe sinistro  
 750 callida tergeminis acies se condidit uncis.  
 ille trahens oculo plenam labente sagittam  
 ibat in auctorem: sed divum fortia quid non  
 tela queant? alio geminatum lumine vulnus  
 explevit tenebras; sequitur tamen improbus hostem,  
 755 qua meminit, fusum donec prolapsus in Idan  
 decidit: hic saevi miser inter funera belli  
 palpitat et mortem sociosque hostesque precatur.  
 addit Abantiadas, insignem crinibus Argum  
 et male dilectum miserae Cydona sorori.  
 760 [illi perfossum telo patefecerat inguen]

\* \* \* \* \*

huic geminum obliqua traiecit harundine tempus;  
 exsilit hac ferrum, velox hac penna remansit,  
 fluxit utrimque cruor. nulli tela aspera mortis

<sup>750</sup> callida PΣ: aspera ω

<sup>760</sup> om. Pω; lac. statuit Kohlmann

## BOOK 9

Then with bow out-thrust he dashes here and there like fire, out of his mind's control, forgetful of country, mother, self, using the celestial weapons overmuch. So a lion, to whom when small his Gaetolian dam herself brings bloody food, when first he has felt his neck increase with a mane and looked grimly at his new claws, scorns to be fed and dashing out at last to freedom loves the open plains nor thinks of returning to the den. ♣

Boy overbold, whom, pray, do you lay low with your Parrhasian bow? The first arrow confounded Corocbus of Tanagra, despatched through the narrow opening between the lowest edge of the helmet and the uppermost of the shield; in his throat stands a wave of blood and his face flushes with the fire of sacred poison.<sup>44</sup> More cruelly dies Eurytion; the cunning point with triple barb buried itself in the orb of his left eye. Pulling out the arrow replete with the collapsing organ, he ran at the archer. But what cannot the strong shafts of the gods accomplish? The wound was doubled in the other eye, completing darkness. Unconscionable he still pursues his enemy by memory, until he falls tripping over prostrate Idas. Here, poor wight, he gasps among the cruel war's corpses, praying foes and comrades for death. He adds the sons of Abas, Argus, remarkable for his hair, and Cydon, loved amiss by his unhappy sister. The one \* \* \*; the other he pierced through his temples with transverse shaft; the steel sprang out on one side, on the other the swift feather remained, blood flowed on

<sup>44</sup> From Diana's arrow (729f.).

## THEBAID

765 dant veniam, non forua Lamum, non infula Lygdum,  
 non pubescentes texerunt Aeolon anni:  
 figitur ora Lamus, flet saucius inguina Lygdus,  
 perfossus telo niveam gemis, Aeole, frontem.  
 te praeceps Eurboea tulit, te candida Thisbe  
 miserat, hunc virides non excipietis Erythrae.  
 770 nunquam cassa manus, nullum sine numine fugit  
 missile, nec requies dextrae, sonitumque priori  
 iungit harundo sequens. num quis crederet arcum  
 aut unam saevire manum? modo derigit ictus,  
 nunc latere alterno dubius conamina mutat,  
 775 nunc fugit instantes et solo respicit arcu.

Et iam mirantes indignantesque coibant  
 Labdacidae, primusque Iovis de sanguine claro  
 Amphion ignarus adhuc quae funera campis  
 ille daret: 'quoniam usque moram lucrabere fati,  
 780 o nullum meritos puer orbatum parentes?  
 quin etiam menti tumor atque audacia gliscit,  
 congressus dum nemo tuos pugnamque minorem  
 dignatur bellis, iramque relinqueris infra.  
 i, repete Arcadium mixtusque aequalibus illic,  
 785 dum ferus hic vero desaevit pulvere Mavors,  
 proelia huc domi: quod si te maesta sepulcri  
 fauna movet, dabimus leto moriari virorum!  
 iam dudum hunc contra stimulis gravioribus ardet  
 trux Atalantiades; necdum ille quierat, et inquit:  
 790 'sera etiam in Thebas, quarum hic exercitus, arma  
 profero; quisnam adeo puer, ut bellare recuset  
 talibus? Arcadiae stirpem et fera semina gentis,

<sup>767</sup> perfossam P $\omega$  (*Bentley*)

<sup>770</sup> numine P; vulnere  $\omega$

<sup>769</sup> amyclae P $\omega$  $\Sigma$  (*Koestlin*)

<sup>787</sup> moriere P $\omega$  (*Housman*)

BOOK 9

both. To none do the sharp arrows show merey. His beauty did not proteet Lamus, nor his fillet Lygdus, nor Aeolos his youthful years. Lamus is pierced in the face, Lygdus bewails a wound in the groin, Aeolos groans with his white forehead gashed deep by a dart. You steep Euboea bore, you white Thisbe had sent, him green Erythrae (?)<sup>45</sup> shall not reeover. Never does his arm miss, no weapon flies without deity, his right hand has no rest, each arrow joins sound with its precursor. Who would believe that one bow rages, or one hand? Now he aims ahead, now in doubt he echanges his attack to one side or another, now he flees his assailants, looking back only with his bow.

And now the sons of Labdaeus were coming together, wondering and indignant. First Amphion, of Jove's illustrious race, unaware as yet what death the other was dealing in the field: 'How long will you borrow time by Fate's delaying, O boy that will bereave your parents as they richly deserve? Why, your pride and audacity swell high as none deigns to meet you or thinks so small a fight worth waging, and you are left beneath anger. Begone, go back to Areadia and play at battles there at home with your fellows while here fierce Mavors works off his rage in veritable dust. But if the sad fame of burial move you, we will let you die a man's death.' Against him Atalanta's fierce son long burns, heavily stung. The other had not yet finished when he begins: 'Even too late I bring my weapons against Thebes if this is her army. Who is so much a boy that he would refuse

<sup>45</sup> If *Amyclae* is the poet's careless error, it is a very strange one. *Erythra* is recommended by *Thisbe* . . . *Erythrae* in 7.261–65.

non Thebana vides: non me sub nocte silenti  
 Thyias Echionio genetrix famulata Lyaeo  
 795 edidit, haud unquam deformes vertice mitras  
 induimus turpemque manu iactavimus hastam.  
 protinus astrietos didici reptare per amnes  
 horrendasque domos magnarum intrare ferarum  
 et—quid plura loquar? ferrum mea semper et arcus  
 800 mater habet, vestri feriunt eava tympana patres.’  
 non tulit Amphion vultumque et in ora loquentis  
 telum immane rotat; sed ferri lumine diro  
 turbatus sonipes sese dominumque retorsit  
 in latus atque avidam transmisit devius hastam.  
 805 acrior hoc iuvenem strieto muerone petebat  
 Amphion, cum se medio Latonia campo  
 iecit et ante oculos omni stetit obvia vultu.

Haerebat iuveni devinctus amore pudico  
 Maenalius Doreeus, cui bella suumque timorem  
 810 mater et audaces pueri mandaverat annos.  
 huius tum vultu dea dissimulata profatur:  
 ‘haetenus Ogygias satis infestasse catervas,  
 Parthenopaeae, satis; miserae iam parcae parenti,  
 parce deis, quicumque favent.’ nec territus ille:  
 815 ‘hunc sine me (non plura petam), fidissime Doreeu,  
 sternere humi, qui tela meis gerit aemula telis  
 et similes cultus et frena sonantia iacetat.  
 frena regam, cultus Triviae pendebitis alto  
 limine, captivis matrem donabo pharetris.’  
 820 audiit et mixto risit Latonia fletu.

Viderat hanc caeli iamdudum in parte remota

<sup>807</sup> omni (*etiam* Σ; *cf.* SB<sup>1</sup>) . . . obvia ω: omnes (*ex omnis*) . . .  
 omnia P                   <sup>819</sup> culmine *Markland*

## BOOK 9

to fight the likes of these? You see before you Areadia's stoek, seed of warlike raece, not Theban. Me did no Thyiad mother, servant to Eehionian Lyaeus, bring forth in the silent night, I never put unsightly turbans on my head or brandished a shameful spear. Straightway I learned to crawl over frozen rivers and enter the dread homes of great beasts; and (why say more?) my mother ever has steel and bow about her, your fathers strike hollow drums.' That was too much for Amphion, and he whirls a mighty javelin against the speaker's face and mouth. But the horse, seared by the dire brilliance of the steel, twisted himself and his master sideways and turning away let the greedy spear pass by. All the more fiereely for this did Amphion seek the young man with drawn blade, when Latona's daughter cast herself into the middle of the field and stood full-face before his eyes, in his path.

Maenalian Doreeus, bound to the youth by ehaste affection, used to keep by his side; to him the mother had entrusted the warfare and her fear and the boy's venture-some years. By his countenance then disguised, the goddess speaks: 'Enough thus far to have harried the Ogygian troops, Parthenopaeus, enough! Now spare your unhappy mother, spare the gods, whosoever of them wish you well.' Unafraid he answers: 'Most trusty Doreeus, allow me (it is all I shall ask) to stretch upon the ground this man, who bears weapons to rival my weapons and flaunts like raiment and sounding reins. I shall guide his reins, his raiment shall hang on Trivia's lofty lintel, the eaptive quiver shall be my gift to my mother.' Latona's child heard and smiled amid her tears.

For a long while Venus had seen all this in a remote part

THEBAID

Gradivum complexa Venus, dumque anxia Thebas  
 commemorat Cadmumque viro caraeque nepotes  
 Harmoniae, pressum tacito sub corde dolorem  
 825 tempestiva movet: 'nonne hanc, Gradive, protervam  
 virginitate vides mediam se ferre virorum  
 coetibus, utque acies audax et Martia signa  
 temperet? en etiam donat praebetque necandos  
 830 tot nostra de gente viros. huic tradita virtus,  
 huic furor? agrestes superest tibi figere dammas.'  
 desiluit iustis commotus in arma querelis  
 Bellipotens, cui sola vagum per inane ruenti  
 Ira comes, reliqui sudant ad bella Furores.  
 835 nec mora, cum maestam monitu Letoida duro  
 increpat assistens: 'non haec tibi proelia divini  
 dat pater; armiferum ni protinus improba campum  
 deseris, huic aequam nosces nec Pallada dextrae.'  
 quid faciat contra? premit hinc Mavortia cuspis,  
 hinc plenae tibi, parve, colus, Iovis inde severi  
 840 vultus: abit solo post haec evicta pudore.

At pater Ogygias Mavors circumspicit alas  
 horrendumque Dryanta movet, cui sanguinis auctor  
 turbidus Orion, comitesque odisse Dianae  
 (inde furit) patrium. hic turbatos arripit ense  
 845 Arcadas exarmatque ducem; cadit agmine longo  
 Cyllenes populus Tegeesque habitator opacae  
 Aepytiique duces Telphusiacaecaeque phalanges.  
 ipsum autem et lassa fidit prosternere dextra,

<sup>46</sup> I.e. diffuse.      <sup>47</sup> The pressures aforementioned were hard to resist but in the last analysis Diana's modesty was the deciding factor. Translators are apt to ignore *post haec*.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. 7.256-58.



## BOOK 9

of the sky as she embraced Gradivus. Speaking to her lord of Thebes and Cadmus and the descendants of their dear Harmonia, she opportunely stirs the resentment hidden in his silent heart: 'Do you not see her, Gradivus, how impudent in her virginity she carries herself in the midst of warriors' gatherings? And how boldly she governs armies and Martian standards? See, she even makes a present of so many men of our race, supplies them for slaughter. Has valour and rage been made over to her? For you it remains to shoot wild deer.' The Lord of War leapt down into the fray, moved to arms by her just complaints. Anger was his only companion as he plunges through the wandering<sup>16</sup> void, the other Madnesses are sweating in the battle. No delay, he stands by Leto's sad daughter and upbraids her with a harsh warning: 'Not these are the battles that the Father of the gods gives you. Unless you leave the field of arms at once, shameless jade, you shall know that Pallas herself is no match for this right hand.' How could she resist? Mavors' spear threatens on the one hand, the boy's full distaff on the other, from yonder Jove's frowning countenance. She departs, vanquished after all this by sheer modesty.<sup>17</sup>

But Father Mavors surveys the Ogygian ranks and stirs up dread Dryas, whose blood came from turbulent Orion and whose hatred of Diana's companions was hereditary—hence his rage.<sup>18</sup> He seizes on the routed Arcadians with his sword and leaves their leader defenceless. In a long train fall the people of Cyllene and the dweller in shady Tegea and the Aegyptian chiefs and the Telphusian ranks. Their captain himself he trusts to lay low, even though his

- nec servat vires: etenim huc iam fessus et illuc  
 850 mutabat turmas; urgent praesagia mille  
 funeris, et nigrae praecedunt nubila mortis.  
 iamque miser raros comites verumque videbat  
 Dorcea, iam vires paulatim abscedere sensit,  
 sentit et exhaustas umero levioire pharetras;  
 855 iam minus atque minus fert arma, puerque videtur  
 et sibi, cum torva clipei metuendus obarsit  
 luce Dryas: tremor ora repens ac viscera torsit  
 Arcados; utque feri vectorem fulminis albus  
 cum supra respexit olor, cupit hiscere ripam  
 860 Strymonos et trepidas in pectora contrahit alas:  
 sic iuvenem saevi conspecta mole Dryantis  
 iam non ira subit, sed leti nuntius horror.  
 arma tamen, frustra superos Triviamque precatus,  
 molitur pallens et surdos expedit arcus.  
 865 iamque instat telis et utramque obnixus in ulnam  
 cornua contingit mucrone et pectora nervo,  
 cum ducis Aonii magno cita turbine cuspis  
 fertur in adversum nervique obliqua sonori  
 vincla secat: pereunt ictus, manibusque remissis  
 870 vana supinato ceciderunt spicula cornu.  
 tunc miser et frenos turbatus et arma remisit,  
 vulneris impatiens umeri quod tegmina dextri  
 intrarat facilemque cutem; subit altera cuspis  
 cornipedisque fugam succiso poplite sistit.  
 875 tum cadit ipse Dryas (mirum!) nec vulneris unquam

855 fert ira *Alton* (cf. 46)

865 obliquus P (oblitus),  $\omega$  (*Phillimore*)

872 tegmina  $\omega$ : -ne P

## BOOK 9

hand be weary, nor does he husband his strength. For tired now he<sup>49</sup> goes from squadron to squadron this way and that. A thousand presages of doom pursue him, mists of black death go before him. And now, alas, he saw that few were with him, saw the real Doreeus, felt his strength leave him little by little, felt his shoulder lighter, his quiver exhausted. Now less and less easily he bears his arms and seems even to himself a boy—when with fierce gleam of shield terrible Dryas flamed before him. A sudden tremor twisted the Arcadian's face and vitals. As a white swan, seeing above him the bearer of the fierce thunderbolt, wishes that Strymon's bank would open up and folds his trembling wings to his breast; so when the youth beheld the bulk of savage Dryas, no anger seized him now, but a shuddering, harbinger of death. Yet paling he handles his shield and makes ready his unresponsive bow, vainly praying to the High Ones and Trivia. And now he is about to shoot and straining into either elbow he touches the horns with the arrow's head and his breast with the string, when the spear of the Aonian leader hurled with a mighty whirl comes at him, severing obliquely the bond of sounding string,<sup>50</sup> the shot goes for nothing and from his loose hands the idle arrow falls and the bow springs backwards. Then in consternation the hapless lad drops reins and shield, impatient of the wound that had entered the coverings of his right shoulder and the yielding skin. Another spear follows and hamstringing his horse, halting his flight. Then Dryas himself falls (strange!) nor ever knows of the wound. The

<sup>49</sup> Another tacit change of subject.

<sup>50</sup> Not attachments, but the string itself, linking the two horns.

THEBAID

consciis: olim auctor teli causaeque patebunt.

At puer infusus sociis in devia campi  
 tollitur (heu simplex aetas!) moriensque iacentem  
 flebat equum; cecidit laxata casside vultus,  
 880 aegraque per trepidos expirat gratia visus,  
 et prenis concussa comis ter colla quaterque  
 stare negant, ipsisque nefas lacrimabile Thebis,  
 ibat purpureus niveo de pectore sanguis.  
 tandem haec singultu verba incidente profatur:  
 885 'labimur; i, miseram, Dorceu, solare parentem.  
 illa quidem, si vera ferunt praesagia curae,  
 aut somno iam triste nefas aut omine vidit.  
 tu tamen arte pia trepidam suspende diuque  
 decipito; neu tu subitus neve arma tenenti  
 890 veneris, et tandem, cum iam cogere fateri,  
 dic: "merui, genetrix: poenas invita capesse:  
 arma puer rapui, nec te retinente quievi,  
 nec tibi sollicitac saltem inter bella peperci.  
 vive igitur potiusque animis irascere nostris  
 895 et iam pone metus. frustra de colle Lycaei  
 anxia prospectas, si quis per nubila longe  
 aut sonus aut nostro sublatus ab agmine pulvis:  
 frigidus et nuda iaceo tellure, nec usquam  
 tu prope, quae vultus efflantiaque ora teneres.  
 900 hunc tamen, orba parens, crinem," dextraque secundum  
 praebuit, "hunc toto capies pro corpore crinem,  
 comere quem frustra me dedignante solebas.  
 huic dabis exsequias, atque inter iusta memento

<sup>876</sup> patebunt P: -bant  $\omega$

<sup>879</sup> laxata casside  $\omega$ : lassata cuspidē P

<sup>893</sup> saltem  $\omega$ : tandem P

## BOOK 9

weapon's sender and the reason will one day be revealed.<sup>51</sup>

But the boy collapsed upon his comrades is borne to a sequestered part of the field. Alas for the simplicity of youth! Dying, he wept for his prostrate horse! Unloosed his helmet, his face sank and in his flickering eyes sick beauty fails. Three times and four they seize his hair and shake his neck that will not stay upright; and (a sacrilege to draw tears from Thebes herself) blood coursed purple from his snowy breast. At length he speaks, sobs interrupting the words: 'I am dying. Go Dorceus, comfort my poor mother. To be sure, if cares bring true presages, she has already seen the sad evil in sleep or omen. But do you with pious craft keep her fears in suspense and long deceive her. Go not to her suddenly or when she has arms in her hand. And finally, when you are forced to confess, say this: "I have deserved it, mother; punish me, though it be against your will. A boy, I snatched up arms and when you held me back I would not be still, nor even in the wars did I spare your fear. Live then, and rather be angry with my haughty spirit. And now put fears aside. In vain do you gaze anxiously from Lycaeus' hill, hoping for a distant sound through the clouds or for dust raised by my troop. Cold I lie on the bare earth, nor anywhere are you near to hold my face and parting breath. But this lock, mother bereaved" (and with his hand he offered it to be cut) "this lock, you will take in lieu of my whole body, that you used in vain to comb, though I thought scorn. To this you will give burial and as

<sup>51</sup> By one Papinius Statius in his *Thebaid*. The death of Camilla's slayer in *Aeneid* 11.864 is in mind.

THEBAID

905 ne quis inexpertis hebetet mea tela lacertis  
dilectosque canes ullis agat amplius antris.  
haec autem primis arma infelicia castris  
ure, vel ingratae crimen suspende Dianae.”

## BOOK 9

part of what is due<sup>52</sup> remember to see that none blunt my arrows with novice arm or any more lead my beloved hounds in any glade. As for this shield, unhappy in its first campaign, burn it, or hang it up as a reproach to thankless Diana.”

<sup>52</sup> The two following injunctions are to be included among the observances due to the dead (*iusta*).

## LIBER X

- Obruit Hesperia Phoebum nox unida porta,  
imperiiis properata Iovis, nec castra Pelasgum  
aut Tyrias miseratus opes, sed triste tot extra  
agmina et immeritas ferro decreescere gentes.  
5 panditur immenso deformis sanguine campus:  
illie arma et equos, ibant quibus ante superbi,  
funeraque orba rogis neglectaque membra relinquunt.  
tunc inhonora cohors laceris insignibus aegras  
secernunt acies, portaeque, inemtibus arma  
10 angustae populis, latae cepere reversos.  
par utrimque dolor; sed dant solacia Thebis  
quattuor errantes Danann sine praeside turmae:  
cen mare per timidum viduae moderantibus alui,  
quas deus et casus tempestatesque gubernant.  
15 inde animis Tyriis non iam sua castra, sed ultro  
hostilem servare fugam, ne forte Mycenae,  
contenti rediisse, petant: dat tessera signum  
exenbiis, positaeque vices; dux Martis operti  
sorte Meges ultroque Lycus, iauque ordine iusso

<sup>3</sup> miserantis *Carrod*

<sup>18</sup> noctis opertae *P $\omega$  (SB<sup>2</sup>) cf. 463*



## BOOK 10

Dewy Night buried Phoebus at the western gate, hastened by Jove's commands. Nor did he pity the Pelasgian camp or the Tyrian forces, but it saddened him that so many warriors from outside<sup>1</sup> should perish and innocent peoples be diminished by the sword. The plain stretches insightfully with a vast quantity of blood. There they leave the arms and the horses on which they had ridden so proudly and corpses destitute of pyres and neglected limbs. Then, an inglorious troop with battered standards, they separate their failing lines, and the gates that were too narrow for the peoples when they went to battle were broad to receive them returning. Grief was equal on both sides, but the four Danaan squadrons wandering with none to command them give consolation to Thebes; like vessels on a swelling sea widowed of their steersmen, which god and chance and tempest guide. Hence the Tyrians are emboldened no more to keep watch for their own camp but rather for their enemy's flight, should they perhaps seek Mycenae, content to return. The watchword gives sentries their sign and turns of duty are settled. The leaders of the covert<sup>2</sup> warfare are Meges, chosen by lot, and Lycus by his request. And

<sup>1</sup> *Extra = externa.*

<sup>2</sup> Because nocturnal; see SB<sup>2</sup>, adding 463.

- 20 arma, dapes ignemque ferunt; rex firmat euntes:  
 'victores Danaum (neque enim lux crastina longe,  
 nec quac pro timidis intercessere tenebrae  
 semper erunt), augete animos et digna secundis  
 25 praecipuaeque manus: subiit ultricia Tydeus  
 Tartara, Mors subitam vivi stupet auguris umbram,  
 Ismenos raptis tumet Hippomedontis opimis,  
 Arcada belligeris pndet annumerare tropaeis.  
 in manibus merces; nusquam capita ardua belli  
 30 monstrataeque ducum septena per agmina cristae.  
 scilicet Adrasti senium fraterque iuventa  
 peior et insanis Capaneus metuendus in armis.  
 ite age et obsessis vigilem circumdate flammam!  
 nulli ex hoste metus: praedam asservatis opesque  
 35 iam vestras.' sic ille truces hortatibus implet  
 Labdacidas, iuvat exhaustos iterare labores:  
 sicut erant (pulvis sudorque cruorque per artus  
 mixtus adhuc) vertere gradum; vix obvia passi  
 colloquia, amplexus etiam dextrasque suorum  
 40 excussere umeris. tunc frontem aversaque terga  
 partiti laterumque sinus, vallum undique cingunt  
 ignibus infestis. rabidi sic agmine multo  
 sub noctem coiere lupi, quos omnibus agris  
 nil non ausa fames longo tenuavit hiatu:  
 45 iam stabula ipsa premunt, torquet spes irrita fauces  
 balatusque tremens pinguesque ab ovilibus aerae;

<sup>26</sup> nigri P $\omega$  (*Jortin*: integri *Garrod*: alii alia)

<sup>37</sup> erat P $\omega$  (*Markland*)

now in order prescribed they bear arms, food, and fire. The king heartens them as they go: 'Conquerors of the Danaï (for tomorrow's dawn is not far away and the darkness that interposed to save the cowards will not last forever), be of good cheer and bear hearts worthy of heaven's favour. All Lerna's glory and her foremost warriors lie low. Tydeus has gone to avenging Tartarus, Death stands amazed at the living<sup>3</sup> augur's unlooked-for shade, Ismenos is puffed up with Hippomedon's victory spoils, we are ashamed to count the Arcadian among the trophies of war. Our reward is in our hands; the lofty heads of the war, the captains' crests displayed in their seven hosts are gone. Are we to fear Adrastus' old age and my brother, the worse for his youth, and Capaneus' crazy arms? Go now and set wakeful flames around the besieged. Nothing is to fear from the enemy. You watch over booty, wealth already yours.' So he fills the fierce sons of Labdacus with encouragement. They are fain to repeat the toils exhausted. Just as they were, dust, sweat, and blood still mingled on their bodies, they turned around. Scarce did they suffer those who would meet and talk with them, even shaking off from their shoulders their loved ones' embracing hands. Then they divide between them front and rear and curving flanks and surround the rampart with hostile fires. So a great pack of ravening wolves meet at nightfall, whose gaping jaws throughout the countryside all-venturing hunger has long starved; now they press on the very sheepfolds, hope denied tortures their gullets, and the quavering bleat and odours of fatness from the pens; nothing is left but to break

<sup>3</sup> *Vivi*, the best correction of *nigri*; Amphiaras had not been cremated (8.6). So Håkanson, citing 8.52 *hospite vivo*.

## THEBAID

quod superest, duris affrangunt postibus ungues  
pectoraque, et siccos minuunt in limine dentes.

- At procul Argolici supplex in margine templi  
50 coetus et ad patrias fusae Pelopeides aras  
sceptraferae lunonis opem reditumque suorum  
exposcunt, pictasque fores et frigida vultu  
saxa terunt parvosque docent procumbere natos.  
condiderant iam vota diem; nox addita curas  
55 iungit, et ingestis vigilant altaria flammis.  
peplum etiam dono, cuius mirabile textum  
nulla manu sterilis nec dissociata marito  
versarat, calathis castae velamina divae  
haud spernenda ferunt, variis ubi plurima floret  
60 purpura picta modis mixtoque incenditur auro.  
ipsa illic magni thalamo desponsa Tonantis,  
expers conubii et timide positura sororem,  
lumine demisso pueri Iovis oscula libat  
simplex et nondum furtis offensa mariti.  
65 hoc tunc Argolicae sanctum velamine matres  
induerant ebur, et lacrimis questuque rogabant:  
'aspice sacrilegas Cadmeae paelicis arces,  
siderei regina poli, tumulumque rebellem  
disice et in Thebas aliud (potes) excute fulmen.'  
70 quid faciat? scit Fata suis contraria Crais  
aversumque Iovem, sed nec periisse precatus  
tantaque dona velit; tempus tamen obvia magni  
Fors dedit auxilii. videt alto ex aethere clausa  
moenia et insomni vallum statione teneri:  
75 horruit irarum stimulis motaque verendum

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<sup>4</sup> Semele.      <sup>5</sup> Semele's tomb and precinct (see Dodds on Euripides, *Bacchae* 6-12).

their claws and chests against the hard posts and grind dry fangs upon the threshold.

But far away, prostrate on the rim of the Argive temple before their native altars, a suppliant concourse of Pelopæan women implore sceptred Juno's aid and their loved ones' return, pressing their faces against the painted doors and cold stones and teaching their little children to fall prone. Their prayers had already laid the day to rest; night follows, continuing cares, and the altars keep vigil with heaped fires. They also bear a gift in a basket, a robe whose marvellous fabric none barren or separated from her husband had handled, raiment for the chaste goddess not to be scorned; on it flowers much purple variously embroidered and blazing with commingled gold. There was herself, betrothed to the chamber of the great Thunderer, knowing nothing of wedlock, timorously about to put off the sister; with eyes downcast she tastes the kisses of boy Jupiter, innocent, not yet wounded by her husband's cheats. With this garment the Argive matrons then veiled the holy ivory and made their plea with tears and complaining: 'Look upon the sacrilegious towers of the Cadmean paramour,<sup>4</sup> Queen of starry heaven, and break up the rebel mound,<sup>5</sup> and shake out against Thebes (you can!) another thunderbolt.' What is she to do? She knows that the Fates are against her Greeks and Jove averse, but neither would she have the prayers and so great a gift go for nothing. But Fortune came her way and gave opportunity for effectual aid. From high heaven she sees the walls shut in and the ramparts held by a sleepless guard. She shivered with the stings of anger and shook the sacred diadem with

THEBAID

turbavit diadema coma: non saevius arsit  
 Herculeae cum matris onus geminosque Tonantis  
 secubitus vacuis indignaretur in astris.  
 ergo intempesta somni dulcedine captos  
 80 destinat Aonios Leto praebere, suamque  
 orbibus accingi solitis iubet Irin et omne  
 mandat opus. paret iussis dea clara polumque  
 linquit et in terras longo suspenditur arcu.  
 Stat super occiduae nebulosa cubilia Noctis  
 85 Aethiopasque alios, nulli penetrabilis astro,  
 lucus iners, subterque cavis grave rupibus antrum  
 it vacuum in montem, qua desidis atria Somni  
 securumque larem segnis Natura locavit.  
 limen opaca Quies et pigra Oblivio servant  
 90 et nunquam vigili torpens Ignavia vultu.  
 Otia vestibulo pressisque Silentia pennis  
 muta sedent abiguntque truces a culmine ventos  
 et ramos errare vetant et murmura demunt  
 alitibus. non hic pelagi, licet omnia clament  
 95 litora, non ullus caeli fragor; ipse profundis  
 vallibus effugiens speluncae proximus amnis  
 saxa inter scopulosque tacet: nigrantia circum  
 armenta, omne solo recubat pccus, et nova marcent  
 germina, terrarumque inclinat spiritus herbas.  
 100 mille intus simulacra dei caelaverat ardens  
 Mulciber: hic haeret lateri redimita Voluptas,  
 hic comes in requiem vergens Labor, est ubi Baccho,

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<sup>6</sup> Jupiter's night with Alcmena is tripled in 6.289 and 12.301, which is the standard figure, though some go higher. Some see a

the stirring of her hair. No more fiercely did she burn when in the empty stars she waxed indignant against the burden of Hercules' mother and the twofold infidelities of the Thunderer.<sup>6</sup> Therefore she resolves to catch the Aonii in the bliss of an untimely sleep and offer them to Death. She commands her servant Iris to gird herself with her accustomed circles<sup>7</sup> and assigns her all the work. The bright goddess obeys orders, leaves the sky, and is suspended onto earth by her long bow.

Beyond the misty bowers of western Night and the other Ethiopians<sup>8</sup> stands a still grove that no star can penetrate; below, a cave heavy with porous rocks runs into a hollow mountain, where sluggish Nature set the halls of lazy Sleep, his carefree dwelling. Sheltered Rest and lazy Oblivion and Sloth, torpid with never-waking countenance, keep the threshold. In the forecourt Eases and Silences sit mute with folded wings, driving blustering winds from the rooftop, forbidding branches to stray, and depriving birds of their song. Here is no roar of sea though all shores resound, none of sky. The very river that runs away close to the cavern among rocks and boulders in the deep valley is silent. Around are black herds; every sheep lies on the ground, the new buds flag, a breath from the earth makes the grasses droop. Inside fiery Mulciber had carved a thousand images of the god. Here wreathed Pleasure elings to his side, here his companion Labour sinking to repose, elsewhere he shares a couch with Bacchus or

reference to Jupiter's affairs with Alcmena and Semele; but what of Antiope?

<sup>7</sup> The rings of the rainbow.

<sup>8</sup> Ethiopians in the far west (cf. *Aeneid* 4.480–82).

THEBAID

est ubi Martigenae socium pulvinar Amori  
 obtinet. interius tecti in penetralibus altis  
 105 et cum Morte iacet, nullique ea tristis imago  
 cernitur. hae species. ipse autem umentia subter  
 antra soporifero stipatos flore tapetas  
 incubat; exhalant vestes et corpore pigro  
 strata calent, supraque torum niger efflat anhelō  
 110 ore vapor; manus haec fusos a tempore laevo  
 sustentat crines, haec cornu oblita remisit.  
 adsunt innumero circum vaga Somnia vultu,  
 vera simul falsis permixtaque †flumina flammis†  
 Noctis opaca cohors, trabibusque ac postibus haerent,  
 115 aut tellure iacent. tenuis, qui circuit aulam,  
 invalidusque nitor, primosque hortantia somnos  
 languida succiduis expirant lumina flammis.

Huc se caeruleo libravit ab aethere virgo  
 discolor: effulgent silvae, tenebrosaque tempe  
 120 arrisere deae, et zonis lucentibus icta  
 evigilat domus; ipse autem nec lampade clara  
 nec sonitu nec voce deae percussus eodem  
 more iacet, donec radios Thaumantias omnes  
 impulit inque oculos penitus descendit inertes.  
 125 tunc sic orsa loqui nimborum fulva creatrix:  
 ‘Sidonios te Iuno duces, mitissime divum  
 Somne, iubet populumque trucis defigere Cadmi,  
 qui nunc eventu belli timefactus Achaeum  
 pervigil asservat vallum et tua iura recusat.  
 130 da precibus tantis; rara est hoc posse facultas  
 placatumque Iovem dextra Iunone mereri.’

<sup>113</sup> tristia blandis *edd. plerique, alii alia conii.*: flumina flammis  
 Pψ (112–17 *om.* ω)



with Love, Mars' child. Further inside in the deep recesses of the dwelling he lies with Death also and by none is that picture seen as sad.<sup>9</sup> These are semblances. Himself beneath the dank cave lies on draperies packed with soporific flowers. His garments exhale, the coverlets are warm with his sluggish body and above the couch a dark vapour breathes out from his panting mouth. One hand holds up the hair falling from his left temple, the other has let go his forgotten horn. Around him are wandering dreams of countless aspect, true mingled with false, sad with comforting (?), the dim troop of Night; they cling to the rafters and doorposts or lie on the ground. Slight and faint is the gleam that circles the dwelling and languid lights inviting first slumbers expire in flickering flames.

Hither the many-hued maiden poised herself from the dark-blue sky. The woods are bright, the gloomy valleys smile upon the goddess, struck by her shining zones the house awakens. But Sleep is not smitten by the goddess' bright torch nor her sound or voice; he lies as before, until Thaumás' daughter drove all her rays upon him, sinking deep into his unmoving eyes. Then the golden creator of showers thus began to speak: 'Sleep, most gentle of the gods, Juno commands you bind the Sidonian captains and the people of fierce Cadmus, who now, puffed up by the issue of the battle, vigilantly watch the Achaean rampart and refuse your power. Grant so potent a prayer. Rarely comes such opportunity to earn Jove's good will with Juno's bless-

<sup>9</sup> Usually understood 'but that sad image is seen of none'; but see SB<sup>2</sup>.

THEBAID

dixit, et increpitans languentia pectora dextra,  
 ne pereant voces, iterumque iterumque monebat.

135    ille deae iussis vultu, quo nutat, eodem  
 annuit; excedit gravior nigrantibus antris  
 Iris et obtusum multo iubar excitat imbri.

    Ipse quoque et volucrum gressum et ventosa citavit  
 tempora, et obscuri sinuatam frigore caeli  
 implevit chlamydem, tacitoque per aethera cursu  
 140    fertur et Aoniis longe gravis imminet arvis.  
 illius aura solo volucres pecudesque ferasque  
 explicat, et penitus, quemcumque supervolat orbem,  
 languida de scopulis sidunt freta, pigrius haerent  
 nubila, demittunt extrema cacumina silvae,  
 145    pluraque laxato ceciderunt sidera caelo.  
 primus adesse deum subita caligine sensit  
 campus, et innumerae voces fremitusque virorum  
 summisere sonum; cum vero umentibus alis  
 incubuit piceaque haud umquam densior umbra  
 150    castra subit, errare oculi resolutaque colla,  
 et medio affatu verba imperfecta relinqui.  
 mox et fulgentes clipeos et saeva remittunt  
 pila manu, lassique cadunt in pectora vultus.  
 et iam cuncta silent: ipsi iam stare recusant  
 155    cornipedes, ipsos subitus cinis abstulit ignes.

    At non et trepidis eadem Sopor otia Grais  
 suadet, et adiunctis arcet sua nubila castris  
 noctivagi vis blanda dei: stant undique in armis

---

<sup>10</sup> But how was Jupiter involved? This was Juno's plan. I take this for another licentious inversion: *placatum Iovem dextra Iunone* for *placato Iove dextram Iunonem* (to gain Juno's favour without offending Jupiter). *Pacatumque* would perhaps help.

## BOOK 10

ing (?).<sup>10</sup> She spoke, and pounding his languid breast with her hand charged him again and again, lest her words be wasted. He assented to the goddess' command with the same nodding face. Iris left the dusky cavern heavier than she had entered it<sup>11</sup> and burnishes her dulled beams with plenteous rain.

Sleep too roused his steps to speed and his windy temples,<sup>12</sup> and filled out his billowing cloak with the chill of the sombre sky. In silent course he is borne through the upper air and from afar looms heavily over the Aonian fields. His atmosphere strews birds and cattle and wild beasts upon the ground; whatever part of the world he flies over, the waters subside in deepest languor from the rocks, the mists cling more lazily, the woods droop their treetops, and more stars fall from the loosened sky. First a sudden darkening made the plain feel the god's presence, and the countless voices and cries of the warriors were hushed. But when he brooded with humid wings and entered the camp with pitchy shadow (never more dense), their eyes wandered, their necks relaxed, words were left unfinished in mid utterance. Presently they let go their shining shields and cruel javelins, their faces fell wearily upon their chests. Now all is silent. The very horses refuse to stand, sudden ash extinguishes the very fires.

But Slumber does not lull the anxious Greeks to the same inaction, and the coaxing power of the night-wandering god keeps his mists from their neighbouring camp.

11 †

12 Wings.

foedam indignantes noctem vigilesque superbos.  
 160 ecce repens superis animum lymphantibus horror  
 Thiodamanta subit formidandoque tumultu  
 pandere fata iubet, sive hanc Saturnia mentem,  
 sive novum comitem bonus instigabat Apollo.  
 prosilit in medios, visu audituque tremendus  
 165 impatiensque dei, fragili quem mente receptum  
 non capit: exundant stimuli, nudusque per ora  
 stat furor et trepidas incerto sanguine tendit  
 exhaustique genas; acies huc errat et illuc,  
 sartaque mixta comis sparsa cervice flagellat.  
 170 sic Phryga terrificis genetrix Idaea cruentum  
 elicit ex adytis consumptaque bracchia ferro  
 scire vetat; quatit ille sacras in pectora pinus  
 sanguineosque rotat crines et vulnera cursu  
 exanimat: pavet omnis ager, respersaque cultrix  
 175 arbor, et attoniti currum erexere leones.

Ventum ad consilii penetrale domunque verendam  
 signorum, magnis ubi dudum cladibus aeger,  
 rerum extrema movens, frustra consultat Adrastus.  
 stant circum subiti proceres, ut quisque perempto  
 180 proximus, et magnis loca desolata tuentur  
 regibus, haud lacti seque huc crevisse dolentes.  
 non secus amisso medium cum praeside puppis  
 fregit iter, subit ad vidui moderamina clavi  
 aut laterum custos aut quem penes obvia ponto  
 185 prora fuit: stupet ipsa ratis tardeque sequuntur

<sup>13</sup> He feels no pain.

<sup>14</sup> Torches.

<sup>15</sup> Hardly in tandem with *scire vetat* in 172.

## BOOK 10

They stand everywhere in arms, indignant at the night's shame and the haughty watchmen. Lo, a sudden thrill comes upon Thiodanas as the High Ones drive his mind to madness and command him in terrifying tumult to reveal the fates—whether Saturnia so inspired him or kindly Apollo was inciting his new attendant. He leaps into the midst, terrible to see and to hear, unable to bear the deity—too much for the frail receiving mind to contain. His pangs flow over and naked frenzy stands in his face, swelling and draining his quivering cheeks with uncertain blood. His eyes wander hither and thither, and tossing his neck he flails the garland entwined with his hair. So the Mother of Ida draws forth the bleeding Phrygian from her dread shrine nor lets him know that steel has devoured his arms;<sup>13</sup> he brandishes the sacred pines<sup>14</sup> against his breast, whirling his bloodstained locks, and deadens his wounds<sup>15</sup> by running; all the land is terror-struck, the tree of worship<sup>16</sup> is bespattered, the astonished lions raise up the chariot.

He came to the inner council chamber, the venerated home of the standards, where Adrastus, long sickened by great disasters, vainly deliberates on their desperate plight. About him are grouped the new leaders, as each stood next to the slain, protecting the places left empty by the great kings, not joyfully but grieving to have risen so high. Even as when a ship has lost her skipper and stopped in mid voyage, there comes to guide the doubtful helm either the guardian of the sides or he whose care was the prow that fronts the main; the vessel herself is stumped.

<sup>16</sup> The pine, sacred to Cybele.

THEBAID

arma, nec accedit domino tutela minori.

- Ergo alacer trepidos sic erigit augur Achivos:  
 'magna deum mandata, duces, monitusque verendos  
 advehimus: non hae nostro de pectore voces:  
 190 ille canit, cui me famulari et sumere vittas  
 vestra fides, ipso non discordante, subegit.  
 nox fecunda operum pulchraeque accommoda fraudi  
 panditur augurio divum; vocat obvia Virtus,  
 et poscit Fortuna manus. stupet obruta somno  
 195 Aonidum legio: tempus nunc funera regum  
 ulcisci miserumque diem; rapite arma morasque  
 frangite portarum: sociis hoc subdere flammam,  
 hoc tumulare suos. equidem haec et Marte diurno,  
 200 dum res infractae pulsique in terga redimus,  
 (per tripodas iuro et rapti nova fata magistri)  
 vidi, et me volucres circum plausere secundae.  
 sed nunc certa fides. modo me sub nocte silenti  
 ipse, ipse assurgens iterum tellure soluta,  
 qualis erat (solos infecerat umbra iugales),  
 205 Amphiarus adit: non vanae monstra quietis,  
 nec somno comperta loquor. "tune," inquit, "inertes  
 Inachidas (redde haec Parnasia sarta meosque  
 redde deos) tantam patiere amittere noctem,  
 degener<sup>?</sup> haec egomet caeli secreta vagoque  
 210 edocui lapsus<sup>?</sup> vade heia, ulciscere ferro  
 nos saltem!" dixit, meque haec ad linina visus  
 cuspide sublata totoque impellere curru.

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<sup>17</sup> The tutelary deity whose image stood in the poop.

<sup>18</sup> Amphiarus.

Her tackle is slow to respond, the figurehead<sup>17</sup> does not join a lesser master.

So thus does the eager augur hearten the Achaeans: ‘Captains, great charges of the gods and awful admonitions do I bring. Not from my breast are these words: *he*<sup>18</sup> prophesies whom your trust has called me to serve and assume his fillets, himself not dissenting. A night fertile in action and fitted for a noble ruse is revealed by divine augury. Valour meets and calls us and Fortune demands our hands. The Aonian legion is sunk in slumbrous stupor. Now is the time to avenge the deaths of our kings and the unhappy day. Snatch up your arms and break the gates’ delays; this is to light pyres for our comrades, this to entomb our own.<sup>19</sup> For my part I saw this in the day’s affray as our arms were humbled and we fled back worsted (I swear it by the tripods and the strange fate of my reft master), I saw it and around me auspicious birds flapped their wings. But now I have sure proof. Just now in the silence of the night he, he in person, rising through the earth that parted once again, even as he was (the shade had touched only his team), Amphiaraus came to me. I speak not of phantoms of vain repose or things perceived in sleep. “Will you,” he said, “allow the sons of Inachus to lose such a night (restore these Parnassian wreaths, restore my gods) in idleness, degenerate? Were these the secrets of the heavens I taught you and the wandering flights? Go, off with you! For me at least take vengeance with the sword.” He spoke and seemed to drive me to this door with raised spear and all his chariot.

<sup>19</sup> A victory now will let us bury our dead and ensure burial for ourselves. *Suos* (‘one’s own’) rather than *se*, in balance with *sociis*.

## THEBAID

quare agite, utendum superis; non cominus hostes  
sternendi: bellum iacet, et saevire potestas.

215 eequi aderunt, quos ingenti se attollere fama  
non pigeat, dum Fata sinunt? iterum eeee benignae  
noctis aves; sequor, et eomitum licet agmina cessent,  
solus eo. atque adeo venit ille et quassat habenas.'

Talia voeiferans noctem exturbabat, euntque  
220 non secus accensi proceres quam si omnibus idem  
eorde deus: flagrant eomitari et iungere casus.  
ter denos numero, turmarum robora, inssus  
ipse legit; circa fremit indignata iuventus  
eetera, eur maneant castris ignavaque servent  
225 otia: pars sublime genus, pars facta suorum,  
pars sua, sortem alii clamant, sortem undique poscunt.  
gaudet in adversis animoque assurgit Adrastus.  
vertice sic Pholoës volucrum nutritor equorum,  
cum fetura gregem pecoroso vere novavit,  
230 laetatur cernens hos montis in ardua niti,  
hos innare vadis, certare parentibus illos;  
tunc vacuo sub corde movet, qui molle domandi  
ferre iugum, qui terga boni, quis in arma tubasque  
natus, ad Eleas melior quis surgere palmas:  
235 talis erat turmae ductor longaevis Achivae.  
nee deest coeptis: 'unde haec tam sera repente  
numina? qui fractos superi rediistis ad Argos?  
estne hic infelix virtus, gentique superstes  
sanguis, et in miseris animorum semina durant?  
240 laudo equidem, egregii iuvenes, pulchraque meorum  
seditione fruor; sed fraudem et operta paramus  
proelia, eelandi motus: numquam apta latenti



BOOK 10

Therefore to work; we must use the High Ones. The enemy are not to be slain hand to hand. The war lies on the ground and we have power to be cruel. Will any join me, not loath to raise themselves to height of fame while the Fates allow? See, again the birds of night are kind. I follow, and though my comrade troops hang back, I go alone. Nay more, *he* comes, shaking his reins.'

So he cries, disrupting the night, and the chiefs go; enkindled as though the same god were in all their hearts, they burn to bear him company and join fortunes. He himself, as ordered, chooses thirty men, the pick of the squadrons. Around him the rest of the warriors loudly protest: why should they remain in the camp keeping sluggish idleness? Some cry their high birth, some the deeds of their forbears, some their own, others the lot, on all sides they demand the lot. Adrastus in adversity rejoices, his spirits rise. So on Pholoë's top the rearer of fleet horses, when birth has renewed his stud in the cattle-teeming spring-time, is happy to see some struggling up the mountain heights, some swimming in the waters, others vying with their parents; then his free mind asks which should be broken in to a gentle yoke, which will make good riding, which is born for arms and trumpets, which better fitted to attain Elean palms. Such was the aged leader of the Achaean host. Nor is he wanting to their enterprise. 'Whence comes so late this sudden inspiration? Which of you High Ones have returned to broken Argos? Is valour in misfortune here? Does the fibre of our race survive and do seeds of courage endure in time of woe? For my part I commend you, noble warriors, and delight in my followers' glorious mutiny. But we are devising guile and secret battles, our movements must be concealed. A crowd is never apt for

THEBAID

- turba dolo. servate animos, venit ultor in hostes  
 ecce dies; tunc arma palam, tunc ibimus omnes.<sup>7</sup>  
 245 his tandem virtus iuvenum frenata quievit:  
 non aliter moto quam si pater Aeolus antro  
 portam iterum saxo premat imperiosus et omne  
 claudat iter, iam iam sperantibus aequora ventis.  
 Insuper Herculeum sibi iungit Agyllea vates  
 250 Actoraque: hic aptus suadere, hic robore iactat  
 non cessisse patri; comites tribus ordine deni,  
 horrendum Aoniis et contra stantibus agmen.  
 ipse novi gradiens furta ad Mavortia belli  
 ponit adoratas, Phoebea insignia, frondes,  
 255 longaevique ducis gremio commendat honorem  
 frontis, et oblatam Polynicis munere grato  
 lorica galeamque subit. ferus Actora magno  
 ense gravat Capaneus, ipse haud dignatus in hostem  
 ire dolo superosque sequi. permutat Agylleus  
 260 arma trucidis Nomii: quid enim fallentibus umbris  
 arcus et Herculeae iuissent bella sagittae?  
 Inde per abruptas castrorum ex aggere pinnas,  
 ne gravis exclamet portae mugitus aënae,  
 praecipitant saltu; nec longum, et protinus ingens  
 265 praeda solo ccu iam exanimes multoque peracti  
 ense iacent. 'ite, o socii, quacumque voluptas  
 cecidis inexhaustae, superisque faventibus, oro,  
 sufficite!' hortatur clara iam voce sacerdos.  
 'cernitis expositas turpi marcere cohortes.  
 270 pro pudor! Argolicas hinc ausi obsidere portas,

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<sup>20</sup> Forgetting 222f.

stealthy rise. Keep your courage ready; see, dawn comes to avenge us on our foes. Then the fight shall be in the open, then all of us shall go.' With these words at length the warriors' valour was bridled and composed. It was as though father Aeolus with his cavern in uproar were imperiously to place another rock against the door and close all passage, just when the winds are already expecting the sea.

In addition the prophet joins Agylleus, son of Hercules, and Actor with himself. The one is skilled in persuasion, the other boasts strength equal to his father's. With each of the three go ten companions,<sup>20</sup> a force formidable to the Aonii even face to face. He himself, as new to war he marches to a martial rise, lays aside the sacred branches, Phoebus' emblems, and commits to the aged leader's bosom his brow's adornment, donning corselet and helm, the thankful<sup>21</sup> gift of Polynices. Fierce Capaneus loads Actor with a great sword; himself disdains to attack an enemy with guile and to follow the High Ones. Agylleus changes arms with fierce Nomius. For what use the bow and arrows of Hercules' warfare in deceiving darkness?

Then they jump down the camp's rampart by way of the sheer battlements lest the heavy creaking of the brazen gate make too much noise. Nor was it long before an enormous prey lies on the ground, as though already lifeless, slain by many swords: 'Forward, comrades, wherever lust of limitless slaughter takes you; the High Ones favour, do not fail them, I pray.' So now with loud voice the priest exhorts them. 'You see the cohorts exposed in base languor. For shame! Did these dare to besiege the Argive gates,

<sup>21</sup> Not 'welcome'; it was for Polynices to be grateful (cf. Ovid, *Heroides* 1.27 *grata dona*).

## THEBAID

hi servare viros? sic fatus, et exiit eusem  
 fulmineum rapidaque manu morientia transit  
 agmina. quis numeret caedes, aut nomine turbam  
 exanimem signare queat? subit ordine nullo  
 275 tergaque pectoraque et galeis inclusa relinquit  
 murmura permiscetque vagos in sanguine manes:  
 hunc temere explicitum stratis, hunc sero remissis  
 gressibus illapsum clipeo et male tela tenentem,  
 coetibus hos mediis vina inter et arma iacentes,  
 280 acclines clipeis alios, ut quemque ligatum  
 infelix tellure sopor supremaque nubes  
 obruerat. nec numen abest, armataque Imo  
 lunarem quatiens exserta lampada dextra  
 pandit iter firmatque animos et corpora monstrat.  
 285 sentit adesse deam, tacitus sed gaudia celat  
 Thiodamas; iam tarda manus, iam debile ferrum  
 et caligantes nimis successibus irac.  
 Caspia non aliter magnorum in strage iuvenum  
 tigris, ubi immenso rabies placata cruore  
 290 lassavitque genas et crasso sordida tabo  
 confudit maculas, spectat sua facta doletque  
 defecisse famem: victus sic augur inerrat  
 caedibus Aoniis; optet nunc brachia centum  
 centenasque in bella manus; iam taedet inertes  
 295 exhaurire animas, hostemque assurgere mallet.  
 Parte alia segnes magno satius Hercule vastat  
 Sidonios Actorque alia, sua quemque cruento  
 limite turba subit: stagnant nigrantia tabo

<sup>294</sup> inanes *Po* (*Watt*)

<sup>295</sup> minas *Po* (*Dansté*)

these to keep ward on warriors?' So he spoke and drew his lightning sword and with rapid hand passes athwart the dying host. Who could number the carnage or put names to the lifeless throng? In no order he comes at backs and breasts, leaving murmurs stifled in the helmets and mingling wandering ghosts in blood. One was stretched carelessly on a couch, one with sagging steps had sunk at last upon his shield barely keeping hold of his weapons, others lay in groups amid wine and arms, others leaned on their shields, as unlucky sleep and the final cloud had bound each man and overwhelmed him on the ground. Deity is not absent, for armed Juno brandishing a lunar<sup>22</sup> torch with her bared right arm makes plain the path, strengthening their courage and pointing out bodies. Thiodamas feels the goddess' presence but hides his joy in silence. Now his hand is slow, his sword weak, his anger dims with overmuch success. Not otherwise does a Caspian tigress in the slaughter of great steers, when her rage has been appeased by measureless bloodshed and she has wearied her jaws and blurred her stripes with foul, thick gore, survey her deeds and grieve that her hunger fails. So the exhausted augur wanders among Aonian carnage. Now would he pray for a hundred arms and a hundred hands for warfare. Now he is weary of draining away torpid lives<sup>23</sup> and would rather wish the enemy to rise against him.

In another quarter great Hercules' sced devastates the sluggish Sidonians, in another Actor, each succeeded by his following in bloody swath. The grasses soak black with

<sup>22</sup> Bright as the moon.                      <sup>23</sup> *Animas* replaces *minas*, no threats, empty or otherwise, being involved. *Inertes* for *inanes* follows, going well with *hostemque assurgere mallet*.

300 gramina, sanguineis nudant tentoria rivis;  
 fumat humus, somnique et mortis anhelitus una  
 volvitur; hand quisquam visus aut ora iacentum  
 erexit: tali miseris deus aliger umbra  
 incubat et tantum morientia lumina solvit.  
 traxerat insomnis cithara hidoque suprema  
 305 sidera iam nullos visurus Ialmenus ortus,  
 Sidonim paeana canens; huic languida cervix  
 in laevum cogente deo, mediaque iacebant  
 colla relicta lyra: ferrum per pectus Agyllens  
 exigit aptatamque cava testudine dextram  
 310 percutit et digitos inter sua fila trementes.  
 proturbat mensas dirus liquor: undique manant  
 sanguine permixti latices, et Bacchus in altos  
 crateras paterasque redit. ferus occupat Aetor  
 implicitum fratri Thanyrin, Tagns haurit Echecli  
 315 terga coronati, Danaus caput amputat Hebri:  
 nescius heu rapitur Fatis, hilarisque sub umbras  
 vita fugit mortisque ferae hierata dolores.  
 stratus limbo gelida subter iuga fida rotasque  
 Calpetus Aonios granen gentile metentes  
 320 proflatu terrebat equos: madida ora redundant  
 accensusque mero sopor aestuat; ecce iacentis  
 Inachius vates iugulum fodit, expulit ingens  
 vina error fractumque perit in sanguine murmur.  
 fors illi praesaga quies, nigrasque gravatus  
 325 per somnum Thebas et Thiodamanta videbat.

<sup>299</sup> nudant *Po* (*Clausen*)

<sup>24</sup> I.e. the vessels etc. standing on them.

<sup>25</sup> As the scholiast explains, the spilt wine was forced back into

## BOOK 10

gore, the tents are awash with sanguinary streams. The ground smokes and the laboured breath of sleep and death rolls forth together. None of the prostrate men lifted eyes or head; so dense the shadow wherewith the winged god broods over the unfortunates, opening their eyes only as they die. Ialmenus had spent his last stars sleepless in music and sport, never to see another sunrise, singing a Sidonian song of victory. At the god's compulsion his head drooped leftward and his neck lay in abandon over the lyre. Agyllens drives his steel through the breast and strikes the right hand attached to the hollow tortoiseshell and the fingers trembling among their strings. A dire flow upsets the tables.<sup>24</sup> From all sides streams water mixed with blood and Bacchus returns to the deep mixing bowls and dishes.<sup>25</sup> Fierce Actor takes off Thamyris in his brother's embrace, Tagns stabs wreathed Echechus in the back, Danaus severs Hebrus' head; unwitting, alas, he is snatched by the Fates, his life flees merrily to the shades, escaping the pains of a cruel death. Stretched on the chilly ground beneath his trusty team and wheels, Calpetus was alarming his Aonian horses by his heavy breathing as they cropped their native turf. His madid mouth overflows and sleep inflamed with wine tosses and turns. See, the Inachian seer slits his throat as he lies. A great gush of blood expels the wine and a broken cry is lost in the gore. Perhaps his rest was prophetic and in his heavy sleep he saw a blackened<sup>26</sup> Thebes and Thiodamas.

the overturned bowls by the blood. Or perhaps mingled blood and wine are imagined as gushing up from the wounds into the vessels; cf. 322f. <sup>26</sup> Thebes was not about to be burned, so *nigras* = 'dressed in mourning.'

Quarta soporiferae superabant tempora noeti,  
 cum vaeuae nubes et honor non omnibus astris,  
 afflatusque fugit curru maiore Bootes.  
 ianque ipsum defecit opus, cum providus Actor  
 330 Thiodamanta voeat: 'satis haec inopina Pelasgis  
 gaudia: vix ullos tanto reor agmine saevam  
 effugisse neem, ni quos deformis in alto  
 sanguine degeneres oeeultat vita; seeundis  
 pone modum; sunt et diris sua numina Thebis.  
 335 forsitan et nobis modo quae favere recedunt.'  
 paruit, et madidas tollens ad sidera palmas:  
 'Phoebe, tibi exuvias monstratae praemia noctis  
 nondum ablutus aquis (tibi enim haec ego sacra litavi)  
 340 trado ferus miles tripodum fidusque sacerdos,  
 si non dedeeui tua iussa tulique prementem,  
 saepe veni, saepe hanc dignare irrumpere mentem.  
 nunc tibi crudus honos, trunca arma eruorque virorum:  
 at patrias si quando domos optataque, Paeon,  
 345 templa, Lyeie, dabis, tot ditia dona sacratis  
 postibus et totidem voti memor exige tauros.'  
 dixerat, et laetis soeios revocabat ab armis.  
 Venerat hos inter fato Calydonius Hopleus  
 Maenaliusque Dymas, dilecti regibus ambo,  
 regum ambo comites, quorum post funera maesti  
 350 vitam indignantur. prior Arcada eoncitat Hopleus:  
 'nullane post manes regis tibi cura perempti,  
 clare Dyma, teneant quem iam fortasse volucres

352 clare P (cf. SB<sup>2</sup>): care ω

27 The Sun's.                      28 Had the slaughter not been in the nature of a ritual sacrifice, he would have washed his hands before addressing the god.                      29 *Lycius* (Λύκειος), a cult title of



BOOK 10

A fourth watch remained to slumbrous night, when the clouds are empty and not all the stars are shining and Boötes flees at the breath of a greater chariot.<sup>27</sup> Now the work itself is exhausted, when prudent Actor calls to Thiodamas: 'Enough for the Pelasgi are these unlooked-for joys. Scarce any, I think, of so great a host has escaped cruel death, save cowards whom a shameful life may hide in the depth of the blood. Set term to good fortune. Fell Thebes too has her deities. It may be that those who lately favoured us are departing.' He obeyed, and lifting his dripping hands to the stars: 'Phoebus, I consign to you the spoils, prizes of the night you showed me, not yet cleansed with water (for to you I made this welcome sacrifice),<sup>28</sup> I, fierce soldier of the tripods, faithful priest. If I have not disgraced your commands and have borne your pressing, come often, deign often to invade this mind of mine. Now 'tis a rude offering I bring you, maimed weapons and warriors' blood. But if ever you grant our native homes, Paean, and the temples we long for, Lycius,<sup>29</sup> remember my vow and claim as many rich gifts for your sacred portals and as many bulls.'<sup>30</sup> He spoke and recalled his comrades from their happy warfare.

Among them, as Fate willed, had come Calydonian Hopless and Maenalian Dymas, both dear to their kings, both companions of their kings, grieving and indignant to live after their deaths. First Hopless challenges him of Arcady: 'Have you no care for your slain king now that he is gone, famed<sup>31</sup> Dymas? Already perhaps birds and Theban

Apollo, still sometime mistaken for *Lycius* = Lycian.

<sup>30</sup> As many gifts as there are trophies and as many bulls as there are slain Thebans.

<sup>31</sup> *Care* is often read, but see SB<sup>2</sup>.

## THEBAID

- Thebanique canes? patriae quid deinde feretis,  
 Arcades? en reduces contra venit aspera mater:  
 355 funus ubi? at nostro semper sub pectore Tydeus  
 saevit inops tumuli, quamvis patientior artus  
 ille nec abruptis adeo lacrimabilis annis.  
 ire tamen saevumque libet nullo ordine passim  
 scrutari campum, mediasve irrupere Thebas.'
- 360       Excipit orsa Dymas: 'per ego haec vaga sidera iuro,  
 per ducis errantes instar mihi numinis umbras,  
 idem animus misero; comitem circumspicit olim  
 mens humilis luctu, sed nunc prior ibo'—viamque  
 incohat et maesto conversus ad aethera vultu
- 365 sic ait: 'arcanac moderatrix Cynthia noctis,  
 si te tergemini perhibent variare figuris  
 numen et in silvas alio descendere vultu,  
 ille comes nuper nemorumque insignis alumnus,  
 ille tuus, Diana, puer (nunc respice saltem)
- 370 quaeritur.' intendit pronis dea curribus alnum  
 sidus et admoto monstravit funera cornu.  
 apparent campi Thebaeque altusque Cithaeron:  
 sic, ubi nocturnum tonitru malus aethera frangit  
 Iuppiter, absiliunt nubes et fulgure claro
- 375 astra patent, subitusque oculis ostenditur orbis.  
 accepit radios et cadem percitus Hopleus  
 Tydea luce videt; longe dant signa per umbras  
 mutua laetantes, et amicum pondus uterque,  
 ceu reduces vitae saevaue a morte remissos,
- 380 subiecta cervice levant; nec verba, nec ausi  
 flere diu: prope saeva dies indexque minatur  
 ortus. eunt taciti per maesta silentia magnis

370 incendit P $\omega$  (*Barth*)

dogs have him. What will you bring back to your country then, men of Arcady? See, an angry mother comes before you as you return: where is his body? But in my heart Tydeus ever rages, lacking a grave, even though his limbs are tougher and his broken years less lamentable. Yet would I go and search the cruel field at random all over, or break into the midst of Thebes.'

Dymas takes him up: 'I swear by these wandering stars, by the shade of my leader, godlike to me, my mind, alas, is as yours. In the dejection of my grief I have long sought a companion; but now I shall go first,' and he leads the way. His sad face turned to heaven, he speaks: 'Cynthia, arbiter of secret night, if they say you vary your godhead in triple form<sup>32</sup> and come down to the woods with a different countenance, it is your late companion that we seek, the peerless nursling of the forests, your own boy, Diana; at least look upon us now.' The goddess inclined her chariot and pointed her fostering star and brought her horns near and showed the bodies. The plain comes to view and Thebes and lofty Cithaeron. So when Jupiter in evil mood bursts the nightly heaven with his thunder, the clouds leap aside and the stars appear in the lightning flash and the world is suddenly displayed to our eyes. He received the rays and Hopleus, struck by the same light, sees Tydeus. Distant, they signal one another through the darkness rejoicing, and each carries on his shoulders the loved burden as though returned to life and sent back from cruel death. No words, nor dared they weep for long. Cruel day is close and the informer sunrise threatens. They walk mute through

<sup>32</sup> As Diana, Moon (Cynthia), and Hecate.

## THEBAID

passibus exhaustasque dolent pallere tenebras.

- 385 Invida Fata piis et Fors ingentibus ausis  
 rara comes. iam castra vident animisque propinquant,  
 et decrescit onus, subiti cum pulveris umbra  
 et sonus a tergo. monitu ducis acer agebat  
 Amphion equites, noctem vigilataque castra  
 390 explorare datus, primusque per avia campi  
 usque procul (necdum totas lux solverat umbras)  
 nescio quid visu dubium incertumque moveri  
 corporaque ire videt; subitus mox fraude reperta  
 exclamat, 'cohibete gradum quicumque!' sed hostes  
 esse patet: miseri pergunt anteire timentque  
 395 non sibi; tunc mortem trepidis minitatur et hastam  
 expulit, at vanos alte levat eminus ictus,  
 affectans errare manum. stetit illa Dymantis  
 ante oculos, qui forte prior, gressumque repressit.  
 at non magnanimus curavit perdere iactus  
 400 Aepytus, et fixo transverberat Hoplea tergo  
 pendentisque etiam perstrinxit Tydeos armos.  
 labitur egregii nondum ducis immemor Hopleus,  
 expiratque tenens, felix si corpus ademptum  
 nesciit et saevas talis descendit ad umbras.  
 405 Viderat hoc retro conversus et agmina sentit  
 iuncta Dymas, dubius precibusne subiret an armis  
 instantes: arma ira dabat, Fortuna precari,  
 non audere, iubet; neutri fiducia coepto:  
 distulit ira preces; ponit miserabile corpus

396 ac P $\omega$  (*Damsté*)

404 nesciat P $\omega$  (*SB*)      descendit P $\psi$ : -dat  $\omega$

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the gloomy silence, taking great strides, and hate to see the exhausted darkness grow pale. ✓

The Fates love not the pious and Fortune rarely goes hand in hand with great attempts. Already they see the camp and in their minds are drawing close and the load grows lighter, when at their back is a cloud of sudden dust and a noise. It was brave Amphion leading his horsemen at his chief's behest, assigned to try out the night and the guarded camp. He first perceives far off in the pathless stretches of the plain (light had not yet dispelled all the dark) something stirring, doubtful to the sight and uncertain, bodies in motion. Of a sudden, discerning mischief he cries: 'Halt, whoever you are!' But plainly they are enemies. The unfortunates go on ahead and are afraid, not for themselves. Then he threatens the tremblers with death and hurls a spear, but from a distance sends his blow high and to no effect, feigning an erring hand. The weapon stood before Dymas' eyes, who by chance was in front, and checked his step. But great-hearted Aepytyus had no thought to lose his cast and transfixes Hoppleus from behind, even grazing Tydeus' shoulders as he hung. Hoppleus falls, not yet unmindful of his great leader, and dies holding him, fortunate in that he knew not of the body's removal<sup>33</sup> and descended thus to the cruel shades.

Dymas had turned round and seen. He perceived that the troop was close upon him and doubted whether to meet their onset with prayer or with arms. Anger gave arms, Fortune tells him to pray, not dare. He trusts in neither course. Anger put off entreaty. He places the pitious

<sup>33</sup> The body is taken away, but once dead he did not know that. *Si = si quidem* (causal).

THEBAID

- 410 ante pedes, tergoque graves quas forte gerebat  
 tigridis exuvias in laevam torquet et obstat  
 exsertum obiectans mucronem, inque omnia tela  
 versus et ad caedem iuxta mortemque paratus:  
 ut lea, quam saevo fetam pressere cubili  
 415 venantes Numidae, natos erecta superstat,  
 mente sub incerta torvum ac miserabile frendens;  
 illa quidem turbare globos et frangere morsu  
 tela queat, sed prolis amor crudelia vincit  
 pectora, et a media catulos circumspicit ira.  
 420 et iam laeva viro, quamvis saevire vetaret  
 Amphion, erepta manus, puerique trahuntur  
 ora supina comis. serus tunc denique supplex  
 demisso mucrone rogat: 'moderatus, oro,  
 ducite, fulminei per vos cunabula Bacchi  
 425 Inoamque fugam vestrique Palaemonis annos!  
 si cui forte domi natorum gaudia, si quis  
 hic pater, angusti puero date pulveris haustus  
 exiguanque facem! rogat, en rogat ipse tacentis  
 vultus: ego infandas potior satiare volucres,  
 430 me praebete feris, ego bella audere coegi.'  
 'immo,' ait Amphion, 'regem si tanta cupido  
 condere, quae timidis belli mens, ede, Pelasgis,  
 quid fracti exsanguisque parent; cuncta ocium effer,  
 et vita tumuloque ducis donatus abito.'  
 435 horruit et toto praecordia protinus Arcas  
 implevit capulo. 'summumne hoc cladibus,' inquit,  
 'deerat ut affictos turparem ego proditor Argos?  
 nil enimus tanti, nec sic velit ipse cremari.'  
 sic ait, et magno proscissum vulnere pectus

<sup>428</sup> iacentis P (-tes), ωΣ (*Markland*)

body before his feet and twists to the left a huge tigerskin<sup>34</sup> that he chanced to be wearing on his back, standing square and presenting his drawn sword, facing all weapons and ready alike to die and to kill. So a lioness that has newly whelped, beset by Numidian hunters in her cruel den, stands upright over her young, gnashing her teeth in grim and piteous wise, her mind in doubt; she could disrupt the groups and break their weapons with her bite, but love for her offspring binds her cruel heart and from the midst of her fury she looks round at her cubs. And now the hero's left hand had been shorn away, though Amphion forbade cruelty, and the boy<sup>35</sup> is dragged face upward by the hair. Only then too late he asks quarter and pleads with lowered blade: 'Draw him more gently, I pray you by the cradle of Bacchus born of lightning and Ino's flight and the youth of your Palaemon! If any of you have joy of sons at home, if any here is a father, give the boy some handfuls of meagre dust and scanty fire. He asks, see; though he be silent, his face itself asks. I am more fit to feed the abominable birds, give me to the wild beasts. I made him dare the wars.' 'Nay,' says Amphion, 'if you are so eager to bury your king, tell me what war plan have the cowardly Pelasgi; broken and exhausted, what do they intend? Out with it all, and quickly. Then take your life and your leader's burial and go free.' The Arcadian shuddered and straightway filled his breast, hilt and all: 'Was this wanting to crown my calamities, that I should turn traitor and dishonour Argos in her trouble? Nothing is worth that price, nor would he himself wish to be buried thus.' So he speaks and throws his breast,

<sup>34</sup> In lieu of a shield.

<sup>35</sup> Parthenopaeus' body.

THEBAID

- 440 iniecit puero, supremaque murmura volvens:  
 'hoc tamen interea certe potiare sepulcro.'  
 tales optatis regum in complexibus ambo,  
 par insigne animis, Aetolus et inclutus Arcas,  
 egregias efflant animas letoque fruuntur.
- 445 vos quoque sacrati, quamvis mea carmina surgant  
 inferiore lyra, memores superabitis annos.  
 forsitan et comites non aspernabitur umbras  
 Euryalus Phrygiique admittet gloria Nisi.
- At ferus Amphion, regi qui facta reportent  
 450 edoceantque dolum captivaque corpora reddant,  
 mittit ovans; clausis ipse insultare Pelasgis  
 tendit et abscisos sociorum ostendere vultus.  
 interea reducem murorum e culmine Grai  
 Thiodamanta vident nec iam erumpentia celant  
 455 gaudia. ut exsertos enses et caede recenti  
 arma rubere notant, novus assilit aethera magnum  
 clamor, et e summo pendent cupida agmina vallo  
 noscere quisque suos. volucrum sic turba recentum,  
 cum reducem longo prospexit in aëre matrem,
- 460 ire cupit contra summique e margine nidi  
 exstat hians, iam iamque cadat, ni pectore toto  
 obstet aperta parens et amantibus increpet alis.  
 dumque opus arcanum et taciti compendia Martis  
 enumerant laetisque suos complexibus implent
- 465 Hopleaque exquirunt tardumque Dymanta queruntur:  
 ecce et Dircaeae iuxta dux concitus alae  
 venerat Amphion; non longum cacde recenti  
 laetatus videt innumeris fervere catervis

441 et tu P: claro  $\omega$  (*Brakman: alii alia*)

456 novus  $\omega$ : tunc P



## BOOK 10

carved with a great wound, on the boy, with a final utterance: 'Yet gain meanwhile *this* burial at least.'<sup>36</sup> So a pair of noble courage, the Aetolian and the famed Arcadian, both in the longed-for embraces of their kings, breathe out their great souls and enjoy their death. You too will outlive the mindful years, consecrate, though my songs rise from a lesser lyre, and perhaps Euryalus shall not scorn your attendant shades and Phrygian Nisus' glory shall grant you entry.<sup>37</sup>

But fierce Amphion in triumph sends messengers to the king to report the action and inform him of the stealth and return the captive bodies. He himself goes to taunt the besieged Pelasgi and show the severed faces of their comrades. Meanwhile from the top of the walls the Greeks see Thiodamas returning and no more conceal their bursting joy. When they see the drawn swords and shields red with recent gore, a shout of shouts leaps to the great heavens and the host hangs from the topmost rampart, each man eager to recognize his friends. So when a throng of fledglings see the mother bird returning far away in the air, they would fain go to meet her and hang out from the top edge of the nest, gaping; they are just about to fall, did not the parent spread all her bosom to block them and rebuke them with loving wings. While they tell the tale of their secret work and make brief sum of silent warfare, satisfying their friends with joyous embraces, while they look for Hopleus and complain that Dymas tarries, see, the captain of the Dircaean squadron, Amphion, had come in swift ca-

<sup>36</sup> He covers ('buries') the corpse with his own body.

<sup>37</sup> The episode is of course modelled on *Aeneid* 9.

## THEBAID

- tellurem atque una gentem exspirare ruina.  
 470 qui tremor incitur caeli de lampade tactis,  
 hic fixit iuvenem, pariterque horrore sub uno  
 vox, acies sanguisque perit, gemitusque parantem  
 ipse ultro convertit equus; fugit ala retorto  
 pulvere. nondum illi Thebarum claustra subibant,  
 475 et iam Argiva cohors nocturno freta triumpho  
 prosilit in campos; per et arma et membra iacentum  
 taetraque congerie sola semianimumque cruorem  
 cornipedes ipsique ruunt: gravis exterit artus  
 ungula, sanguineus lavat imber et impedit axes.  
 480 dulce viris hac ire via, ceu tecta superbi  
 Sidonia atque ipsas calcent in sanguine Thebas.  
 hortatur Capaneus: 'satis occultata, Pelasgi,  
 delituit virtus: nunc, nunc mihi vincere pulchrum  
 teste die; mecum clamore et pulvere aperto  
 485 ite palam, iuvenes: sunt et mihi provida dextrae  
 omina et horrendi stricto mucrone furores.'  
 sic ait; ardentis alacer succendit Adrastus  
 Argolicusque gener, sequitur iam tristior augur.  
 iamque premunt muros (et adhuc nova funera narrat  
 490 Amphion) miseramque intrarant protinus urbein,  
 ni Megareus specula citus exclamasset ab alta:  
 'claude, vigil, subeunt hostes, claude undique portas!'  
 Est ubi dat vires nimius timor: ocius omnis  
 porta coit; solas dum tardius artat Echion  
 495 Ogygias, audax animis Spartana iuventus

470 *inlicita P $\omega$  (Carrod)*

reer. Not for long was he happy in his recent slaughter; he sees the ground warm with a countless host and a nation expiring in one ruin. A trembling such as befalls those touched by fire from heaven seized the warrior and in one shudder he lost voice, sight, and strength. As he would groan, his horse unbidden turns him round; the squadron flees, kicking back the dust. They were not yet at the barriers of Thebes when the Argive cohort, confident in the night's triumph, bounds into the field. Through the arms and members of the fallen and ground foul with heaps and blood of the half-alive the chargers and riders rush. The heavy hoof crushes limbs, a sanguinary rain washes and elogs the chariot wheels. It pleases the warriors to take this path, as though they were proudly trampling Sidonian dwellings and Thebes herself in blood. Capaneus urges them on: 'Long enough, Pelasgians, has your valour hidden under cover. Now, now is victory glorious to me, with the day to witness. Come with me, men, for all to see, with shouts and dust in the open. I too have prescient omens in my right hand, my drawn sword makes my frenzies terrible.' So he speaks. Adrastus and his Argive son-in-law cagerly kindle their ardour, the augur follows, now in sadder vein.<sup>38</sup> And now they are at the walls (and still Amphion is relating the new reverse) and would have entered the unhappy city there and then but that Megareus called in haste from a high watchtower: 'Close up, sentry, enemy coming, close gates all round.'

Sometimes excess of fear lends strength. Swiftly every gate shuts to. Only through the Ogygian, as Eehion is slow to close it, do Sparta's bold warriors break in and fall slain

<sup>38</sup> Foreseeing the coming defeat.

THEBAID

- irrupit, caesique ruunt in limine primo  
 ineola Taygeti Panopeus rigidique natator  
 Oebalus Eurotae; tuque, o spectate palaestris  
 omnibus et nuper Nemeaeo in pulvere felix,  
 500 Alcidama, primis quem caestibus ipse ligarat  
 Tyndarides, nitidi moriens econvexa magistri  
 respicis: averso pariter deus oecidit astro.  
 te nemus Oebalium, te lubrica ripa Laeaeenae  
 virginis et falso gurges cantatus olori  
 505 flebit, Amyclaeis Triviae lugebere Nymphis,  
 et quae te leges praeceptaque fortia belli  
 erudiit genetrix, nimium didicisse queretur.  
 talis Echionio Mavors in limine saevit.
- Tandem umeris obnixus Aeron et pectore toto  
 510 pronus Ialmenides aeratae robora portae  
 torserunt: quanta pariter cervicis gementes  
 profringunt inarata diu Pangaea iuveneii.  
 par operis iactura lucro; quippe hoste retento  
 exelusere suos. eadit intra moenia Graius  
 515 Ormenus, et pronas tendentis Amyntoris ulnas  
 fundentisque preces penitus cervicis recisa  
 verba solo vultusque eadunt, colloque decorus  
 torquis in hostiles cecidit per vulnus harenas.  
 solvitur interea vallum, primaeque recusant  
 520 stare morae; iam se peditum iunxere catervae  
 moenibus: at patulas saltu transmittersse fossas  
 horror equis: haerent trepidi atque immane paventes

516 recisa ω: remissa P

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<sup>39</sup> Jupiter wooing Leda on the bank ('slippery' because deceptive) of Eurotas.      <sup>40</sup> Theban, as often, whereas Echion in 494 is an otherwise unknown warder of the Ogygian gate.

upon the threshold: Panopeus, who dwelt in Taygetus, and Oebalus, swimmer of chill Eurotas; and you, Alcidamas, cynosure of every wrestling ground and lately fortunate in Nemean dust, whose first gloves were tied by Tyndareus' son himself, look upon the vault of your shining teacher as you die; but the god set, his star averse from them all. You the Oebalian forest shall weep, you the slippery bank of the Laconian maiden, the river where a false swan<sup>39</sup> sung, you shall be mourned by Trivia's Amyclaeon Nymphs, and your mother, who taught you laws and brave precepts of warfare, shall complain that you learned your lesson too well. Thus does Mavors rage on the Echionian<sup>40</sup> threshold.

At length Acron thrusting with his shoulders and Ialmenus' son leaning with all his breast turned the timber of the bronze-clad gate with the strength of groaning bullocks that together break Pangaea's long unploughed soil. The labour balanced gain and loss, for keeping the enemy within they shut their comrades out. Grecian Ormenus falls inside the walls. As Amyntor<sup>41</sup> stretched forth his upturned arms and poured out entreaties, his neck is cut right off, words and countenance fall to the ground, his handsome necklace dropped from his throat through the wound onto the hostile sands. Meanwhile the rampart is breached and the first defenders lack the will to stand. Troops of foot are at the walls, but the horses shrink from leaping the broad ditches; they halt trembling and fearing the vast

<sup>41</sup> Theban or 'Greek'? Certainly the former, to balance Ormenus (and a Spartan would not beg for his life). 'Enemy sands' in 518, like *hostiliaque arva* in 11.16f., is the ground outside the walls; there *hostilia* relates to the 'Greek' Capaneus, here the ground is hostile because it is for the time being enemy-occupied. The poet is to blame for the incongruity, unless this is to be regarded as a trope.

THEBAID

abruptum mirantur agi; nunc impetus ire  
 margine ab extremo, nunc sponte in frena recedunt.  
 525 hi praefixa solo vellunt munimina, at illi  
 portarum obiectus minuunt et ferrea sudant  
 claustra remoliri, trabibusque atque aere sonoro  
 pellunt saxa loco; pars ad fastigia missas  
 exsultant haesisse faces, pars ima lacessunt  
 530 scrutanturque cavas caeca testudine turre.

At Tyrii, quae sola salus, caput omne coronant  
 murorum, nigrasque sudas et lucida ferro  
 spicula et arsuras caeli per inania glandes  
 saxaque in adversos ipsis avulsa rotabant  
 535 moenibus: exundant saevo fastigia nimbo,  
 armataeque vomunt stridentia tela fenestras.  
 qualiter aut Malean aut alta Ceraunia supra  
 cessantes in nube sedent nigrisque leguntur  
 collibus et subitae saliunt in vela procellae:  
 540 talis Agenoreis Argivum exercitus armis  
 obruitur; non ora virum, non pectora flectit  
 imber atrox, rectosque tenent in moenia vultus  
 immemores leti et tantum sua tela videntes.  
 Anthea falcato lustrantem moenia curru  
 545 desuper Ogygiae pepulit gravis impetus hastae;  
 lora excussa manu, retroque in terga volutus  
 semianimos artus ocreis retinentibus haeret;  
 mirandum visu belli scelus: arma trahuntur,

523 agi ω Σ: iter P  
 artata ω (*Postgate*)

527 -busque et ariete P: -busque  
 538 leguntur ω: locun- P

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<sup>42</sup> P's reading *iter* is preferred by Håkanson, taking *immane* with *pavescentes*. The adverbial use is common.

chasm they wonder that they are driven forward.<sup>42</sup> Now they make to plunge from the edge, now of their own accord they recoil upon the reins. Some tear up defences planted in the ground, others dismantle blocks before the gates and sweat to remove iron barriers and drive stones from their place with beams and sounding bronze. Part hurl torches at the rooftops and exult when they stick, part challenge the foundations and search the hollow turrets with their blind tortoise.<sup>43</sup>

But the Tyrians crown every high point on the walls (it is their only recourse) and whirl black<sup>44</sup> stakes against the foe and javelins flashing with steel and balls that catch fire as they travel through the empty air and stones from the very walls. The summits overflow with a fierce downpour and armed windows vomit whistling darts. As tempests sit idly in cloud above Malea or lofty Ceraunia, gather on the darkling hills, and suddenly leap against the sails, so is the Argive army overwhelmed by Agenorean arms. But the frightful shower does not turn the warriors' faces aside, nor their breasts; they hold their eyes straight to the walls, oblivious of death, seeing no weapons but their own. Antheus was circling the walls with his scythed chariot when the heavy plunge of an Ogygian spear struck him from above. The reins were shaken from his hand and as he is hurled backwards he is held by the greaves retaining his half-lifeless limbs. A crime of war wonderful to behold: his

<sup>43</sup> The *testudo* (tortoiseshell), formed by soldiers joining shields over their heads.

<sup>44</sup> I.e. 'burnt' (*ustae*; cf. 5.386).

THEBAID

550 fumantesque rotae tellurem et tertius hastae  
sulcus arat; longo sequitur vaga pulvere cervix,  
et resupinarum patet orbita lata comarum.

At tuba luctificis pulsat clangoribus urbem  
obsaeptasque fores sonitu perfringit amaro.  
divisere aditus, omnique in limine saevus  
555 signifer ante omnes sua damna et gaudia portans.  
dira intus facies, vix Mavors ipse videndo  
gaudeat; insanis lymphatam horroribus urbem  
scindunt dissensu vario Luctusque Furorque  
et Pavor et caecis Fuga circumfusa tenebris.  
560 Bellum intrasse putes: fervent discursibus arces,  
miscentur clamore viae, ferrum undique et ignes  
mente vident, saevas mente acceperere catenas.  
consumpsit ventura timor: iam tecta replerant  
templaque, et ingratae vallantur planctibus arae.  
565 una omnes eademque subit formido per annos:  
poscunt fata senes, ardet palletque iuventus,  
atria femineis trepidant ululata querelis.  
flent pueri et flendi nequeunt cognoscere causas  
attoniti et tantum matrum lamenta trementes.  
570 illas cogit amor, nec habent extrema pudorem:

555 portans P: -tat ω: -tas Zander

557 insanis P: incertis ω

569 trementes P: timen- ω: tuen- Bentley

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<sup>45</sup> Reading and meaning are in dispute. With *portas* and colon after *signifer* Håkanson (followed by Hill) renders 'fights, now successful, now adverse, were fought outside every gate' (*sua* presumably referred to *portas*—each gate has its losses or its joy). I



shield is dragged and the earth ploughed by the smoking wheels, and, a third furrow, the spear. The lolling head follows in a long trail of dust and the broad track of his back-streaming hair shows plain.

But the trumpet's mournful clangour smites the city, breaking through blocked doors with bitter bray. They divide the approaches and at each threshold stands a fierce ensign-bearer, leading in front of all their losses and their joys.<sup>45</sup> Dire is the spectacle within. Mavors himself would scarce take pleasure in the sight. The city is in frenzy, horrorstruck; Mourning, Madness, Panic, and Flight encompassed by blind darkness rend it in various discord. You might think War had come inside. The high places are astir with runnings to and fro, the streets a medley of shouts, from all directions in their minds they see sword and fire and are loaded with cruel chains. Fear has devoured the future.<sup>46</sup> Now they had thronged houses and temples, thankless altars are palisaded with lamentations. One and the same terror invades all ages. Old men ask for death, young men turn fiery and turn pale, halls shiver with the scream of women's wail. Children weep and know not why they weep, dismayed and fearing only their mothers' sobbing. Them love compels, their despair has no shame.

think, however, that the rest of 555 should relate to *signifer* and tentatively interpret: an Argive standard-bearer will go into combat first, bringing loss or joy (to the men behind him, *sua* relating to *omnes*) according to the result. Statius will have been familiar with Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, in which each gate has its defender and its assailant. In 8.353–57 each gate has its defender.

<sup>46</sup> In their imaginations the future holds only the evils they fear.

THEBAID

ipsae tela viris, ipsae iram animosque ministrant,  
hortanturque unaque ruunt, nec avita gementes  
limina nec parvos cessant ostendere natos.

575 sic ubi puniceo pastor rapturus ab antro  
armatas erexit apes, fremit aspera nubes,  
inque vicem sese stridore hortantur et omnes  
hostis in ora volant, mox deficientibus alis  
amplexae flavamque domum captivaque plangunt  
mella laboratasque premunt ad pectora ceras.

580 Nec non ancipitis pugnat sententia vulgi  
discordesque serit motus: hi reddere fratrem  
(nec mussant, sed voce palam claroque tumultu),  
reddere regna iubent; periit reverentia regis  
sollicitis: 'veniat pactumque hic computet annum,

585 Cadmeosque lares exsul patriasque salutet  
infelix tenebras; cur autem ego sanguine fraudes  
et periura luam regalis crimina noxae?

inde alii: 'sera ista fides, iam vincere mavult.'  
Tiresian alii lacrimis et supplice coetu

590 orant, quodque unum rebus solamen in artis,  
nosse futura rogant. tenet ille inclusa premitque  
fata deum: 'quiane ante duci bene credita nostro  
consilia et monitus, cum perfida bella vetarem?  
te tamen, infelix,' inquit, 'perituraque Thebe,

595 si taceam, nequeo miser exaudire cadentem  
Argolicumque oculis haurire vacantibus ignem.

vincamur, Pietas; pone heia altaria, virgo,  
quacramus superos.' facit illa, acieque sagaci

600 sanguineos flammarum apices geminumque per aras  
ignem et clara tamen mediae fastigia lucis

## BOOK 10

They themselves give their husbands weapons, give them anger and courage, exhort them, rush along with them, cease not to point with groans to ancestral homes and little children. So when a shepherd has roused armed bees meaning to take plunder from their pumice cavern, the fierce cloud hums noisily, exhorting each other with their buzzing, and all fly at the enemy's face; then with failing wings they embrace lamenting their yellow home and captive honey, pressing to their bosom the laboured combs.

The crowd is divided in a strife of sentiment, sowing motions of discord. Some call for restoring the brother (nor mutter, but in open utterance and loud tumult), restoring the kingship. In their fear they have lost all reverence for the monarch: 'Let him come back, let him calculate here the year agreed. Let the unhappy exile salute his Cadmean home and his father's darkness. Why should I atone with my blood for fraud and perjurious crime of royal guilt?' Then others: 'Tis too late for such good faith; he<sup>47</sup> now prefers victory.' Others beg Tiresias with tears and suppliant throng, asking to know the future, sole consolation in time of trouble. He holds the decrees of the gods hidden in his heart and presses them down: 'Say you so because in time past my counsels and warnings were wisely entrusted to our leader when I forbade perfidious warfare? And yet, unhappy Thebes, doomed if I am silent, I cannot bear to hear you falling and drink Argive flames with these vacant eyes. Piety, let me own defeat. Up, girl, set the altars, let us enquire of the High Ones.' She does it, and with keen vision tells him of bloodred tips of flame and a twofold fire on the altar and the top of a medial bright-

<sup>47</sup> Polynices.

THEBAID

orta docet; tunc in speciem serpentis inanem  
 ancipiti gyro volvi frangique rubore  
 demonstrat dubio, patriasque illuminat umbras.  
 ille coronatos iamdudum amplectitur ignes,  
 605 fatidicum sorbens vultu flagrante vaporem.  
 stant tristes horrore comae, vittasque trementes  
 caesaries insana levat: diducta putares  
 lumina consumptumque genis rediisse nitorem.  
 tandem exundanti permisit verba furori:  
 610 'audite, o sontes, extrema litamina divum,  
 Labdacidae: venit alma salus, sed limite duro.  
 Martius inferias et saeva efflagitat anguis  
 sacra: cadat generis quicumque novissimus exstat  
 viperei, datur hoc tantum victoria pacto.  
 615 felix qui tanta lucem mercede relinquet.'  
 Stabat fatidici prope saeva altaria vatis  
 maestus, adhuc patriae tantum communia lugens  
 fata, Creon: grandem subiti cum fulminis ictum,  
 non secus ac torta traiectus cuspide pectus,  
 620 accipit exanimis sentitque Menoecea posci.  
 monstrat enim suadetque timor; stupet anxius alto  
 corda metu glaciante pater: Trinacria qualis  
 ora repercussum Libyco mare sumit ab aestu.  
 mox plenum Phoebos vatem et celcrare iubentem,  
 625 nunc humilis genua amplectens, nunc ora canentis,

602 ruborem P $\omega$  (*Barth*)

606 trementes  $\omega$ : pr- P

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<sup>48</sup> The twofold fire represents the two warring sides. They coalesce into one ('medial brightness'), then turn into the form of a snake, symbolic of Thebes (the serpent race), but of Creon/

ness risen clear nevertheless. Then she shows him that it rolls with two-way ring into the phantom likeness of a snake and breaks in dubious red.<sup>48</sup> So she enlightens her father's darkness. He for a while embraces the garlanded fires, absorbing the prophetic vapour with flagrant countenance. His hair stands in horror and dismay, the mad locks raise the quivering fillets. You might think that his eyes had opened and exhausted colour returned to his cheeks. At length he allowed words to his flooding frenzy: 'Hear, guilty sons of Labdacus, the gods' final sacrifice. Kind salvation comes, but by a hard road. Mars' snake demands death offerings and a cruel rite. Whoever is youngest of the serpent race, let him fall. Thus only is victory vouchsafed. Happy he who shall quit the light for so great a guerdon!'

Near the prophetic seer's cruel altar stood Creon. Sad he was, but so far mourning only his country's and the common fate; but then he feels the mighty impact of a sudden thunderbolt, barely living, as though a flying javelin had transfixed his breast, and he knows that Menoeceus is demanded, for fear shows and persuades. Deep dread turns the paternal heart to ice. He stands shocked and anguished, like as the Trinacrian shore receives the sea thrown back from Libyan surge.<sup>49</sup> Then he vainly begs the prophet, full of Phoebus as he is and ordering haste, to be silent, now grovelling at his knees, now clasping his mouth

Menoceus in particular (cf. 668). Thus two prophecies: victory for Thebes and, cryptically, Menoeceus' blood sacrifice (*dubio rubore*) in reverse time sequence: Thebes wins, but at the cost of Menoeceus' life. Of course, the presentation is meant to be mysterious.

<sup>49</sup> Not the most luminous of comparisons.

THEBAID

nequiquam reticere rogat; iam Fama sacratam  
vocem amplexa volat, clamantque oracula Thebae.

630 Nunc age, quis stimulos et pulchrae gaudia mortis  
addiderit iuveni (neque enim haec absentibus umquam  
mens homini transmissa deis), memor incipe Clio,  
saecula te quoniam penes et digesta vetustas.

635 Diva Iovis solio iuxta comes, unde per orbem  
rara dari terrisque solet contingere, Virtus,  
seu pater omnipotens tribuit, sive ipsa capaces  
elegit penetrare viros, caelestibus ut tunc  
desiluit gavisā plagis—dant clara mcanti  
astra locum quosque ipsa polis affixerat ignes;  
iamque premit terras, nec vultus ab aethere longe.  
640 sed placuit mutare genas, fit provida Manto,  
responsis ut plena fides, et fraude priorcs  
exuitur vultus. abiit horrorque vigorque  
ex oculis, paulum decoris permansit honosque  
mollior, et posito vatū gestamina ferro  
645 subdita; descendunt vestes, torvisque ligatur  
vitta comis (nam laurus erat); tamen aspera produunt  
ora deam nimique gradus. sic Lydia coniunx  
Amphitryoniaden exutum horrentia terga  
perdere Sidonios umeris ridebat amictus  
et turbare colus et tympana rumpere dextra.

650 Sed neque te indecorem sacris dignumque iuberi

640 plena P: plana ω

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<sup>50</sup> That *ut* is exclamatory I cannot believe. It has been observed that aposiopesis in Statius is elsewhere found only in speeches, but the length of this sentence may perhaps excuse an exception. *Et* (= *quoque*) would restore syntax.

as he chants. Already Rumour flies with the sacred utterance in her arms and Thebes cries aloud the oracle.

Come now, Clio, remember and begin the tale, since the ages lie in your keeping, the annals of antiquity: who spurred the young man to joy in a glorious death? For such impulse is never given to mortal without the presence of the gods.

Divine Valour, seated beside Jupiter on his throne, whence she is wont but rarely to be granted to the world for earth to enjoy, whether the almighty Father bestows her or she herself chooses to enter men able to receive her, even as<sup>50</sup> then she leapt down in gladness from the celestial regions—the bright stars give place to her as she goes and those fires that she herself had fixed in the heavens;<sup>51</sup> and now she treads earth, yet her countenance is not far from the ether. But she thought it well to change her face and becomes prophetic Manto, that the response may fully be believed, and by guile she sheds her former aspect. The grimness and force left her eyes, something of the beauty remained, a softer comeliness. Her sword was laid aside, replaced by prophet's trappings. Her raiment descends, a fillet is bound on her stern locks (replacing laurel<sup>52</sup>); yet her austere look and long strides betray the goddess. So his Lydian wife<sup>53</sup> smiled to see Amphytrion's son stripped of the bristly hide, spoiling Sidonian garments with his shoulders and upsetting the distaffs and breaking the drums with his right hand.

She finds you, Menoeceus, not unfitting to the sacrifice

<sup>51</sup> Heroes translated to the stars.

<sup>52</sup> Symbolic of victory.

<sup>53</sup> Omphale.

## THEBAID

talia Dircaea stantem pro turre, Menoeceu,  
 invenit; immensae reserato limine portae  
 sternebas Danaos, pariter Mavortius Haemon.  
 sed consanguinei quamvis atque omnia fratres,  
 655 tu prior: exanimis circum cumulantur acervi;  
 omne sedet telum, nulli sine caedibus ictus  
 (necdum aderat Virtus); non mens, non dextra quiescit,  
 non avida arma vacant, ipsa insanire videtur  
 Sphinx galeae custos, visoque animata cruore  
 660 emicat effigies et sparsa orichalca renident:  
 cum dea pugnantis capulum dextraque repressit:  
 'magnanime o juvenis, quo non agnoverit ullum  
 certius armifero Cadmi de semine Mavors,  
 linque humiles pugnas, non haec tibi debita virtus:  
 665 astra vocant, caeloque animam, plus concipe, mittes.  
 iamdudum hoc hilares genitor bacchatur ad aras,  
 hoc ignes fibraeque volunt, hoc urguet Apollo:  
 terrigenam cuncto patriae pro sanguine poscunt.  
 Fama canit monitus, gaudet Cadmeia plebes  
 670 certa tui; rape mente deos, rape nobile fatum.  
 i, precor, accelera, ne proximus occupet Haemon.'  
 sic ait, et magna cunctantis pectora dextra  
 permulsit tacite seseque in corde reliquit.  
 fulminis haud citius radiis afflata cupressus  
 675 combibit infestas et stirpe et vertice flammam  
 quam iuvenis multo possessus numine pectus  
 erexit sensus letique invasit amorem.  
 ut vero aversae gressumque habitumque notavit  
 et subitam a terris in nubila crescere Manto,  
 680 obstipuit. 'sequimur, divum quaecumque vocasti,

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<sup>54</sup> Tiresias.



and worthy to be thus commanded, as you stand before the Dircaean tower. With the entrance of the huge gate unbarred, you were laying the Danai low, and Mavortian Haemon likewise. But though you two are of one blood and brothers in all things, you are in the lead. Heaps of dead are piled around. Every dart settles, no blows fall without slaughter (and Valour has not yet come), neither mind nor hand rests. His greedy arms have no respite, the very Sphinx, the guardian of the helmet, seems maddened; her image, animated by the sight of blood, flashes out and the spattered brass gleams. But the goddess put back his hand and his swordhilt as he fought: 'Great-hearted youth, than whom Mavors would acknowledge none more surely as of Cadmus' weapon-bearing seed, leave these mean combats; not such is your due of valour. The stars call you, you shall send your soul to heaven—think larger! For this my father<sup>54</sup> has been dancing at the merry altars, fires and entrails so will, Apollo so urges. They call for an earthborn to ransom all our country's blood. Rumour voices the counsels, the folk of Cadmus rejoice, certain of you. Quickly seize the gods in thought, seize a noble destiny. Go on, I pray you, hurry, lest Haemon behind you forestall.' So she speaks, and as he hesitates, silently strokes his breast with her great hand and leaves herself in his heart. Not more speedily does the cypress tree blasted by lightning rays drink the angry fires with stem and crest than the youth, overwhelmed by supernatural power, exalted his spirit and rushed on love of death. But when he marked her gait and bearing as she turned away and how of a sudden Manto grew from earth into the clouds, he fell amazed. 'I follow,' he cried, 'whoever of the gods you are

THEBAID

nec tarde paremus, ait; iam iamque recedens  
 instantem vallo Pylium tamen Agrea fixit.  
 armigeri fessum excipiunt; tum vulgus euntem  
 auctorem pacis servatoremque deumque  
 685 conclamat gaudens atque ignibus implet honestis.

Iamque iter ad muros cursu festinus anhelò  
 obtinet et miseros gaudet vitasse parentes,  
 cum genitor \* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* steteruntque ambo et vox haesit utrique,  
 deiectaeque genae. tandem pater ante profatus:

690 'quis novus inceptis rapuit te casus ab armis?  
 quae bello graviora paras? dic, nate, precanti,  
 cur tibi torva acies? cur hic truculentus in ore  
 pallor, et ad patrios non stant tua lumina vultus?  
 audisti responsa, palam est. per ego oro tuosque,  
 695 nate, meosque annos miseraeque per ubera matris,  
 ne vati, ne crede, puer! superinc profanum  
 dignantur stimulare senem, cui vultus inanis  
 extinctique orbis et poena simillima diro  
 Oedipodae? quid si insidiis et fraude dolosa  
 700 rex agit, extrema est cui nostra in sorte timori  
 nobilitas tuaque ante duces notissima virtus?  
 illius haec forsàn, remur quae verba deorum;  
 ille monet! ne frena animo permitte calenti,  
 da spatium tenuemque moram, male cuncta ministrat

683 *vide annotationem meam*

688 *lac. proposuit Ker steterunt (del. que) Menke*

700 *extrema est cui nostra ω: cui n- ex- P: ex- cui n- Williams*

55 But in the context he is all alacrity. *Fossum* ('stabbed,' sc. *Agrea*) might be considered. The plural *armigeri* is odd though.

that have summoned me, nor slowly do I obey,' and even as he withdraws he yet stabs Agreus of Pylos as he threatens the rampart. His squires receive him weary.<sup>55</sup> Then the rejoicing people hail him on his way as peacebringer, saviour, and god, filling him with noble fire.

And now in breathless haste he makes his way to the walls and is glad to have avoided his unhappy parents, when his sire \* \* \*<sup>56</sup> and both stood still, neither finding utterance, with eyes downcast. At length the father spoke first: 'What new chance has snatched you from battle begun? What weightier than war do you purpose? I pray you, son, tell me. Why look you so grim? Why this angry pallor in your face, why do your eyes not meet your father's gaze? You have heard the oracle, 'tis plain. Son, I beg you by your years and mine, by your unhappy mother's breasts, do not, my boy, do not believe the prophet. Do the High Ones deign to urge an unclean<sup>57</sup> ancient, with empty face and orbs extinct, bearing a punishment most like to fell Oedipus? What if it be treachery, a crafty trick of the king's, who in his desperate plight fears our nobility and your valour renowned above our chieftains? *His* mayhap are the words we think are the gods', *he* gives the command. Give not rein to your hot mood, give time, a little

<sup>56</sup> Aposiopesis after *genitor* is gratuitous and contrary to Statius' custom (see on 635). What should the reader supply? It also makes *que* in 688 otiose.

<sup>57</sup> Tiresias (so too in 11.288) is called unclean because of his changes of sex: according to one tradition he was turned into a woman after wounding copulating snakes on Mt Cylene in Arcadia; later he was turned back into a man.

THEBAID

- 705 impetus; hoc, oro, munus concede parenti.  
 sic tua maturis signentur tempora canis,  
 et sis ipse parens et ad hunc, animose, timorem  
 pervenias: ne perge meos orbare penates.  
 externi te nempe patres alienaque tangunt
- 710 pignora? si pudor est, primum miserere tuorum.  
 haec pietas, hic verus honos; ibi gloria tantum  
 ventosumque decus titulique in morte latentes.  
 nec timidus te flecto parens: i, proelia misce,  
 i Danaas acies mediosque per obviis enses:
- 715 non teneo; liceat misero tremibunda lavare  
 vulnera et undantem lacrimis siccare cruorem,  
 teque iterum saevis iterumque remittere bellis.  
 hoc malunt Thebae.' sic colla manusque tenebat  
 implicitus; sed nec lacrimae nec verba movebant
- 720 dis votum iuvenem; quin et monstrantibus illis  
 fraude patrem tacita subit avertitque timorem:  
 'falleris heu verosque metus, pater optime, nescis.  
 non me ulli monitus, nec vatum exorsa furentum  
 sollicitant vanisque movent (sibi callidus ista
- 725 Tiresias nataeque canat), non si ipse reclusis  
 comminus ex adytis in me insaniret Apollo.  
 sed gravis unanimi casus me fratris ad urbem  
 sponte refert: gemit Inachia mihi saucius Haemon  
 cuspide; vix illum medio de pulvere belli
- 730 inter utrasque acies, iam iamque tenentibus Argis—  
 sed moror. i, refove dubium turbaeque ferenti  
 dic, parcant leviterque velant; ego vulnera doctum  
 iungere supremique fugam revocare cruoris  
 Aëtiona petam.' sic imperfecta locutus

724 vanis P: manes ω      *parenth. fecit Courtney*

## BOOK 10

delay; impulse is ever a bad servant. This boon, I beg, grant your father. So may your temples be marked by the grey hairs of age, so may you be yourself a parent and live to fear as I do, bold lad. Go not on to bereave my home. Do other fathers and alien children move you? For shame, first have pity on your own. That is piety, that is true honour; yonder is only glory, vain renown, reputation hidden in death. I that dissuade am no timid father. Go, join battle, go through the Danaan ranks, through the midst of swords, be a target; I do not hold you back. But let me alas have leave to wash your quivering wounds and dry your streaming blood with my tears, and send you back to cruel wars again and again. This rather Thebes desires.' So he held neck and hands in his embrace. But neither tears nor words moved the young man, vowed to the gods. Nay, at their prompting he plays a silent trick on his father, turning his fear aside: 'Alas, good father, you are mistaken, you know not what is truly to fear. No commands, no words of frenzied seers trouble me or move me with their vanities (let crafty Tiresias chant such for himself and his daughter), no, not if Apollo himself were to unbar his shrine and rave in my face. But the heavy chance of my dear brother brings me of my own will back to the city. My Haemon is groaning, wounded by an Inachian spear. Scarcely from out of the dust of battle between the two lines—Argos almost held him—but I waste time. Go, comfort his doubtful case and tell his bearers to be careful with him and carry him gently. I shall seek Aëtion with his skill to join wounds and call back ebbing lifeblood.' So cutting short his speech, he

THEBAID

735 effugit; illi atra mersum caligine pectus  
 confudit sensus; pietas incerta vagatur  
 discordantque metus, impellunt credere Parcae.

Turbidus interea ruptis venientia portis  
 agmina belligeri Capaneus agit aequore campi,  
 740 cornua nunc equitum, cuneos nunc ille pedestres,  
 et proculcantes moderantum funera currus;  
 idem altas turres saxi et turbine crebro  
 laxat, agit turmas idem atque in sanguine fumat.  
 nunc spargit torquens volucris nova vulnera plumbo,  
 745 nunc iaculum excusso rotat in sublime lacerto,  
 nullaque tectorum subit ad fastigia quae non  
 deferat hasta virum perfusaque caede recurat.  
 nec iam aut Oeniden aut Hippomedonta preemptos  
 aut vatem Pelopea phalanx aut Arcada credunt;  
 750 quin socium coisse animas et corpore in uno  
 stare omnes, ita cuncta replet. non ullius actas,  
 non cultus, non forma movet; pugnantibus idem  
 supplicibusque furit; non quisquam obsistere contra,  
 non belli temptare vices: procul arma furentis  
 755 terribilesque iubas et frontem cassidis horrent.

At pius electa murorum in parte Menoecens  
 iam sacer aspectu solitoque augustior ore,  
 ceu subito in terras supero demissus ab axe,  
 constitit, exempta manifestus casside nosci,  
 760 despexitque acies hominum et clamore profundo  
 convertit campum iussitque silentia bello.  
 'armorum superi, tuque o qui funere tanto  
 indulges mihi, Phoebe, mori, date gaudia Thebis  
 quae pepigi et toto quae sanguine prodigus emi.

hastens away. The other's heart is drowned in a dark fog, confusing his senses. Love wanders uncertain, fears are at odds with one another; but the Parcae urge him to believe.

Meanwhile stormy Capaneus drives the host emerging from the breached<sup>58</sup> gates over the level battlefield—now squadrons of horse, now bodies of foot, and chariots trampling their drivers' corpses. He also shakes high towers with constant showers of rocks, also routs troops of horse and smokes in gore. Now he scatters sudden wounds with discharge of rapid lead, now whirls a javelin aloft with outshaken arm. No spear reaches the rooftops but brings down its man, returning drenched with slaughter. No longer does the Pelopean phalanx believe Oeneus' son or Hippomedon slain, or the seer or him of Arcady, rather that the souls of all his comrades have come together and stand in one body, so does he fill all lacks. No man's age or attire<sup>59</sup> or beauty moves him. He rages against combatants and suppliants alike. None strives against him or tries the turnabouts of war. Afar they dread the madman's arms and terrible plumes and helmet's front.

But pious Menoeceus took his stand on a chosen part of the walls. Sacred now his aspect, more august than his wonted countenance, as though he had suddenly been sent from heaven down to earth. Doffing his helmet and manifest for all to recognize, he gazed down upon the ranks of men and with a deep cry turned the field upon himself, calling the war to silence: 'High Ones of arms and you, O Phoebus, who grant me to die so great a death, give to Thebes the joy that I have covenanted and bought with the

<sup>58</sup> By the defenders presumably to make a sortie.

<sup>59</sup> Which might indicate rank or priestly office.

THEBAID

- 765 ferte retro bellum captaeque impingite Lernae  
 reliquias turpes, confixaque terga fovescentes  
 Inachus indecores pater aversetur alumnos.  
 at Tyriis templa, arva, domos, conubia, natos  
 reddite morte mea: si vos placita hostia iuvi,  
 770 si non attonitis vatis consulta recepi  
 auribus et Thebis nondum credentibus hausi,  
 haec Amphionis pro me persolvite tectis  
 ac mihi deceptum, precor, exorate parentem.<sup>7</sup>  
 sic ait, insignemque animam mucrone corusco  
 775 dedignantem artus pridem maestamque teneri  
 arripit atque uno quaesitam vulnere rumpit.  
 sanguine tunc spargit tures et moenia lustrat,  
 seque super medias acies, nondum ense remisso,  
 iecit et in saevos cadere est conatus Achivos.  
 780 ast illum amplexae Pietas Virtusque ferebant  
 leniter ad terras corpus; nam spiritus olim  
 ante Iovem et summis apicem sibi poscit in astris.  
 Iamque intra muros nullo sudore receptum  
 gaudentes heroa ferunt: abscesserat ultro  
 785 Tantalidum venerata cohors; subit agmine longo  
 colla inter iuvenum, laetisque favoribus omni  
 concinitur vulgo Cadmum atque Amphiona supra  
 conditor; hi sertis, hi veris honore soluto  
 accumulunt artus patriaque in sede reponunt  
 790 corpus adoratum. repetunt mox bella peractis  
 laudibus; hic victa genitor lacrimabilis ira  
 congemit, et tandem matri data flere potestas:  
 'lustralemne feris ego te, puer inclute, Thebis

<sup>769</sup> placita  $\psi$ , *Gronovius*: -ida  $P\omega$

<sup>772</sup> terris  $P\omega$  (*Schrader*)



## BOOK 10

lavishing of all my blood. Bear back the war and thrust the ignominious remnants upon captive Lerna. Let father Inachus turn away from his inglorious nurslings as they tend their wounded backs. But to the Tyrians restore temples, land, homes, wives and children at the price of my death. If as chosen sacrifice I was to your liking, if my ears received the prophet's response undismayed and drank it in when Thebes still disbelieved, pay this due to Amphion's dwellings in exchange for me, and, I pray, appease the father I deceived.' So he speaks and with flashing blade seizes the noble soul that has long disdained its body and grieved to be in durance, probes with one stroke, and breaks. Then he bespatters the towers with his blood and purifies the walls and throws himself upon the midst of the lines not yet letting go his sword, trying to fall against the fierce Achaeans. But Piety and Valour took him in their arms and bore his body gently to earth. For his spirit is long since before Jupiter, claiming for itself a pinnacle among the highest stars.

And now rejoicing they bear the hero within the walls, recovered with no labour. The Tantalid army had withdrawn of its own accord, in reverence. He comes in a long procession on the necks of warriors, and all the folk with happy favour sing him as their founder above Cadmus and Amphion. Some heap his limbs with garlands, some with loose beauty of spring, and place the venerated body in his ancestral tomb. Presently, their praising done, they go back to battle. Here the father laments with tears, overcoming his anger, and at length his mother is given her chance to weep: 'Was I rearing you, famous boy, as a sacri-

THEBAID

- 795 devotumque caput vilis ceu mater alebam?  
 quod molita nefas? cui tantum invisā deorum?  
 non ego monstri ferro coitu revoluta novavi  
 pignora, nec nato peperī funesta nepotes.  
 quid refert? habet ecce suos Iocasta ducesque  
 regnantesque videt: nos saeva piacula bello  
 800 demus, ut alterni (placet hoc tibi, fulminis auctor?)  
 Oedipodionii mutant diademata fratres?  
 quid superos hominesve queror? tu, saeve Menoeceu,  
 tu miseram ante omnes propecrasti extinguere matrem.  
 unde hic mortis amor? quae sacra insania menti?  
 805 quosve ego conceptus aut quae male pignora fudi  
 tam diversa mihi? nimirum Martius anguis,  
 quaeque novis proavum tellus effloruit armis—  
 hinc animi tristes nimiusque in pectore Mavors,  
 et de matre nihil. sponte en ultroque peremptus  
 810 irrumpis maestas Fatis nolentibus umbras.  
 ast egomet Danaos Capaneaque tela verberar:  
 haec erat, haec metuenda manus ferrumque quod amens  
 ipsa dedi. viden ut iugulo consumpserit ensim?  
 altius haud quisquam Danaum mucrone subisset.  
 815 Dicere infelix etiamnum et cuncta replet  
 questibus: abducunt comites famulaeque perosam  
 solantes thalamoque tenent, sedet eruta multo  
 ungue genas; non illa diem, non verba precantum  
 respicit aut visus flectit tellure relictos,

796 novavi ψ: notavi ω: nat- P

798 habet ecce suos ω: potitur natis P

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<sup>60</sup> *Vilis* is genitive (SB<sup>2</sup>). Scapegoats normally came from the dregs.

BOOK 10

fice for fierce Thebes, a devoted head, as though mother of  
 a worthless wight?<sup>60</sup> What sin did I commit, which of the  
 gods so hates me? No strange children did I make to return  
 to me in monster-bearing intercourse, I bore my son no  
 grandchildren in dire union. What odds? See, Jocasta has  
 her children and beholds them captains and kings. Am I  
 to give cruel offerings to the war, so that the brothers,  
 the sons of Oedipus (is this your pleasure, author of the  
 thunderbolt?), may take turns with diadems? Why do I  
 complain of gods and men? 'Twas you, cruel Menoeceus,  
 you, that hastened before all the rest to kill your unhappy  
 mother. Whence this love of death? What accursed mad-  
 ness entered your mind? What did I conceive, what chil-  
 dren did I put forth to my sorrow, so unlike myself? Surely  
 it was Mars' snake and earth flowering with our forbears'  
 newborn arms—hence that sinister courage, hence all too  
 much of Mavors in your heart and nothing from your  
 mother. Sec, slain by your own unprompted wish you in-  
 vade the sad shades against the will of the Fates. But I was  
 fearing the Danai and the weapons of Capaneus. This hand  
 I should have been afraid of, this, and the weapon I gave  
 you myself in my folly. See you how he devoured the sword  
 with his throat? None of the Danai would have gone down  
 deeper with the blade.'

The unfortunate would still be speaking and filling all  
 things with her complaints, but her companions lead her away  
 and her maids comforting her in her despite keep her in  
 her chamber, where she sits with cheeks torn by many a  
 nail. She pays no heed to the daylight or to words of  
 entreaty nor turns her abandoned gaze from the ground,

820 iam vocis, iam mentis inops. sic aspera tigris  
 fetibus abreptis Scythico deserta sub antro  
 accubat et tepidi lambit vestigia saxi;  
 nusquam irae, sedit rabidi feritasque famesque  
 oris, eunt praeter segura armenta gregesque:  
 825 aspicit illa iacens; ubi enim quibus ubera pascat  
 aut quos ingenti premat expectata rapina?

Hactenus arma, tubae, ferrumque et vulnera: sed nunc  
 comminus astrigeros Capaneus tollendus in axes.  
 non mihi iam solito vatum de more canendum;

830 maior ab Aoniis poscenda amentia lucis:  
 mecum omnes andete deae! sive ille profunda  
 missus nocte furor, Capaneaue signa secutae  
 arma Iovem contra Stygiac rapuere Sorores,  
 scu virtus egressa modum, seu gloria praeceps  
 835 et magnae data fama neci, seu laeta malorum  
 principia et blandae superum mortalibus irac.

Iam sordent terrena viro taedetque profundae  
 caedis, et exhaustis olim Graiumque suisque  
 missilibus lassa respexit in aethera dextra.

840 ardua mox torvo metitur culmina visu,  
 innumerosque gradus gemina latus arbore clausos,  
 aërium sibi portat iter, longeque timendus  
 multifidam quercum flagranti lumine vibrat;  
 arma rubent una clipeoque incenditur ignis.  
 845 'hac,' ait, 'in Thebas, hac me iubet ardua virtus  
 ire, Menoeceo qua lubrica sanguine turris.  
 experiar quid sacra iuvent, an falsus Apollo.'  
 dicit, et alterno captiva in moenia gressu

823 rapidi P; rabies  $\omega$  (Vollmer)

830 amentia P $\psi$  $\Sigma$ : audacia *vel* -atia  $\omega$

bereft of voice and thought. So the fierce tigress whose cubs have been stolen lies forsaken in her Scythian cave and licks the prints on the warm stone; gone is her rage, quiet the wildness and the hunger of her rabid mouth; herds and flocks pass by unafraid; she looks and lies; for where are they for whom she should nourish her dugs, whom, long awaited, she should load with massive prey?

Thus far of arms, trumpets, of steel and wounds. But now Capaneus must be raised aloft to fight the starry vault at close quarters. No longer may I sing in the wonted fashion of poets; I must ask for a higher lunacy from Aonia's groves. Goddesses all, dare with me. Was his frenzy sent from the depth of night, did the Stygian Sisters take arms against Jove following Capaneus' standard? Or was it valour past bounds or reckless thirst for glory and fame granted to a great death or success the harbinger of disaster and the High Ones flattering mortals in their wrath?

Now the warrior despises aught terrestrial and is weary of slaughter down below. The missiles of the Greeks and his own have been used up long since and his hand is tired. He looks up at the sky. Then with grim gaze he measures the lofty summits and carries an airy path for himself, steps beyond count enclosed on both sides by wooden beams. Terrible from afar, he brandishes a flaring torch of oaken faggots. His arms too redden and fire kindles on his shield. 'This way' he cries 'into Thebes, this way my mounting valour bids me go, where the tower is slippery with Menoeceus' blood. I shall try what sacrifice avails, whether Apollo be false.' He speaks and step upon step rises exul-

835 seu magnae P $\omega$  (SB)      fama  $\zeta$ : fata P $\omega$

541 cl(a)usus P $\omega$  (Wernsdorf)

THEBAID

surgit ovans: quales mediis in nubibus aether  
 850 vidit Aloidas, cum cresceret impia tellus  
 despectura deos nec adhuc immane veniret  
 Pelion et trepidum iam tangeret Ossa Tonantem.  
 Tunc vero attoniti fatorum in cardine summo,  
 ceu suprema lues urbi facibusque cruentis  
 855 aequatura solo turres Bellona subiret,  
 omnibus e tectis certatim ingentia saxa  
 roboraque et gravidas fundae Balearis habenas  
 —nam iaculis caeloque vagis spes unde sagittis?—  
 verum avidi et tormenta rotant et molibus urgent.  
 860 ille nec ingestis nec terga sequentibus umquam  
 detrahitur telis, vacuoque sub aëre pendens  
 plana velut terra certus vestigia figat,  
 tendit et ingenti subit occurrente ruina:  
 annis ut incumbens longaevi robora pontis  
 865 assiduis oppugnat aquis; iam saxa fatiscunt  
 emotaeque trabes: tanto violentior ille  
 (sentit enim) maiore salo quassatque trahitque  
 molcm aegram, nexus donec celer alveus omnes  
 abscedit et cursu victor respirat aperto.  
 870 utque petita diu celsus fastigia supra  
 eminuit trepidamque assurgens desuper urbem  
 vidit et ingenti Thebas exterruit umbra,  
 increpat attonitas humilesque Amphionis arces:  
 ‘pro pudor, hi faciles carmenque imbelli secuti,  
 875 hi, mentita diu Thebarum fabula, muri!  
 et quid tam egregium prosternere moenia molli

<sup>857</sup> gravidas ω: vali- P (cf. 6.700)

<sup>867</sup> sentit P: saevit ω

<sup>873</sup> attonitos Pω (SB<sup>1</sup>, qui 873–75 *distinxi*)

humilesque ψ:

-sne Pω

<sup>876</sup> et quidnam Pω (Bentley)

## BOOK 10

tant against the captive walls. So the ether saw the Aloidae amid the clouds when the impious earth was growing as though to look down upon the gods; vast Pelion was not yet come and already Ossa touched the frightened Thunderer.

Then indeed aghast at the supreme crisis of their fate, as though final destruction threatened the city and Bellona were come with bloody brand to level her towers with the soil, from every roof they vie with huge stones and stakes and the gravid thong of the Balearic sling (for what hope in javelins and sky-wandering arrows?)—nay, they eagerly whirl catapults and ply him with masses. No missiles flung upon him from above or following his back bring him down; poised in the empty air, as though he were planting firm and level steps on earth, upwards he goes in the face of a mighty avalanche. So a river pressing upon the timbers of an ancient bridge batters it with ceaseless waters; already stones show gaps and beams are dislodged; all the more violently does the river (for he knows) shake and pull the faltering mass in mightier surge until the swift channel has severed all the joints and victoriously takes breath in open course. Finally he stands out high above the long-sought summit and rising sees the affrighted town below, terrifying Thebes with his huge shadow. Thus he taunts Amphion's towers as they cower dismayed: 'For shame! These are the easy walls that followed Amphion's unwarlike song, the long-told lying legend of Thebes! And what great feat is it to flatten the structures of a soft lyre?'<sup>61</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Punctuated and interpreted in SB<sup>1</sup>.

THEBAID

- structa lyra? simul insultans gressuque manuque  
 molibus obstantes cuneos tabulataque saevus  
 destruit: absiliunt pontes, tectique trementis  
 880 saxea frena labant, dissaepitoque aggere rursus  
 utitur et truncas rupes in templa domosque  
 praecipitat frangitque suis iam moenibus urbem.  
 Iamque Iovem circa studiis diversa fremebant  
 Argolici Tyriique dei; pater, aequus utrisque,  
 885 aspicit ingentes ardentum comminus iras  
 seque obstare videt. gemit inservante noverca  
 Liber et obliquo respectans lumine patrem:  
 'nunc ubi saeva manus, meaque heu cunabula flammae?  
 fulmen, io ubi fulmen?' ait. gemit auctor Apollo  
 890 quas dedit ipse domos; Lernam Thebasque rependit  
 maestus et intento dubitat Tiryntius arcu;  
 maternos plangit volucer Danaëus Argos;  
 flet Venus Harmoniae populos metuensque mariti  
 stat procul et tacita Gradivum respicit ira.  
 895 increpat Aonios audax Tritonia divos,  
 Iunonem tacitam furibunda silentia torquent.  
 non tamen haec turbant pacem Iovis. ecce quierant  
 iurgia, cum mediis Capaneus auditus in astris:  
 'nullane pro trepidis,' clamabat, 'numina Thebis  
 900 statis? ubi infandae segnes telluris alumni,  
 Bacchus et Alcides? piget instigare minores:  
 tu potius venias (quis enim concurrere nobis  
 dignior?); en cineres Semelaeaeque busta tenentur!

<sup>879</sup> destruit  $\psi$ : re- P ante corr.,  $\psi$

<sup>901</sup> piget  $\omega$ : pudet P $\psi$

<sup>62</sup> Apollo's oracle given to Cadmus (7.664) led to the foundation of Thebes.



BOOK 10

Thereupon he falls upon the blocks with foot and hand, fiercely demolishing wedges and planks standing in his path. The bridges fly apart, the stone ties of the covering roof give way, the rampart is dismantled. He uses it again, hurling the mutilated rocks down upon temples and houses, smashing the city with her own walls. ✓

And now around Jupiter the gods of Argos and Tyre were clamouring in diverse partisanship. Fair to both, the Father surveys the mighty wrath blazing before his eyes and sees that only he can keep it in check. Liber groans as his stepmother watches and looking askance at his father: 'Where now,' he cries, 'is your fierce hand and the flames that were, alas, my cradle? The thunderbolt, ho, where is the thunderbolt?' Apollo the founder<sup>62</sup> grieves for the homes he gave. The Tirynthian sadly weighs Lerna<sup>63</sup> against Thebes and with strung bow stands irresolute. The flying son of Danaë<sup>64</sup> laments his mother's Argos. Venus weeps for Harmonia's people and, fearful of her husband, stands apart, looking at Gradivus in silent anger. Bold Tritonia rails at the Aonian gods, furious silence torments mute Juno. Yet all this does not disturb Jove's peace. Behold, the wrangling had subsided, when Capaneus is heard in mid heaven: 'Do none of you deities,' he roars, 'take stand for trembling Thebes? Where are the sluggish nurslings of the accursed land, Bacchus and Alcides? It irks me to urge inferiors; come you rather, for who is worthier to meet me? See, Semele's ashes and tomb are mine. Come

<sup>63</sup> The Tirynthians were in the Argive camp and Hercules was their god (4.146f.; cf. 11.46–48).

<sup>64</sup> Perseus' inclusion among the gods may surprise, but cf. 7.417.

THEBAID

- nunc age, nunc totis in me conitere flammis,  
 905 Iuppiter! an pavidas tonitru turbare puellas  
 fortior et soceri turres excindere Cadmi?  
 Ingemuit dictis superum dolor; ipse furemtem  
 risit et incussa sanctarum mole comarum,  
 'quaenam spes hominum tumidae post proelia Phlegrae?  
 910 tune etiam feriendus?' ait. premit undique lentum  
 turba deum frendens et tela ultricia poscit,  
 nec iam audet Fatis turbata obsistere coniunx.  
 ipsa dato nondum caelestis regia signo  
 915 sponte tonat, coeunt ipsae sine flamine nubes  
 accurruntque imbres: Stygias rupisse catenas  
 Iapetum aut victam supera ad convexa levari  
 Inarimen Aetnamve putes. pudet ista timere  
 caelicolas; sed cum in media vertigine mundi  
 stare virum insanasque vident deposcere pugnas,  
 920 mirantur taciti et dubio pro fulmine pallent.  
 cocperat Ogygiae supra fastigia turris  
 arcanum mugire polus caelumque tenebris  
 auferri: tenet ille tamen, quas non videt, arces,  
 fulguraque attritis quotiens micuere procellis,  
 925 'his,' ait, 'in Thebas, his iam decet ignibus uti,  
 hinc renovare faces lassamque accendere quercum.'  
 talia dicentem toto Iove fulmen adactum  
 corripuit: primae fugere in nubila cristae,  
 et clipei niger umbo cadit, iamque omnia lucent  
 930 membra viri. cedunt acies, et terror utrinque,

906 fortior ω: -ius P

now, strive against me with all your flames, Jupiter! Or are you braver at alarming timid girls with your thunder and razing the towers of your bride's father Cadmus?'

At his words the High Ones grieved and groaned. Himself laughed at the madman, and shaking the mass of his sacred hair 'What hope,' says he, 'do men have after the battles of presumptuous Phlegra? Must I strike you down too?' From all hands the crowd of deities urge their tardy chief, gnashing their teeth and demanding weapons of vengeance, nor does his cowed consort dare longer to obstruct the Fates. The celestial region itself thunders of its own accord, no signal yet given; the clouds gather of themselves without a wind and the rains come running. You might think Iapetus had broken his Stygian chains or vanquished Inarime or Aetna<sup>65</sup> was rising to the vault above. The sky-dwellers are ashamed to fear these things, but when they see the warrior stand in the mid whirl of the world demanding crazy battles, they wonder in silence and turn pale for the dubious thunderbolt. Above the summit of the Ogygian tower the heavens began a secret rumbling and the sky to be withdrawn in darkness. Yet Capaneus still grasps the heights he no longer sees, and whenever lightning flashes from the chafed tempests: 'These flames,' he says, 'ay, these, it now besecms me to use against Thebes, from them to renew my torch and kindle my wearied oak.' As he spoke thus, the thunderbolt seized him, flung with all that was Jupiter. First his plumes fled into the clouds and the blackened boss of his shield falls; now all his limbs are aglow. The lines fall back; on either side is terror, where

<sup>65</sup> Vanquished by the two Giants they held prisoner, Typhoeus and Enceladus respectively.

THEBAID

quo ruat, ardenti feriat quas corpore turmas.  
 intra se stridere facem galeamque comasque  
 sentit, et urentem thoraca repellere dextra  
 conatus ferri cinerem sub pectore tractat.  
 935 stat tamen, extremumque in sidera versus anhelat,  
 pectoraque invisit obicit fumantia muris;  
 nec caderet, sed membra virum terrena relinquunt,  
 exuiturque animus; paulum si tardius artus  
 cessissent, potuit fulmen sperare secundum.

932-34 *non habent P $\omega$*

933 *quaerit  $\psi$  (Imhof; versum post 932 excidisse putat Eden, fort recte)*

939 *sperare P: meruisse  $\omega$*

## BOOK 10

will he plunge, what squadrons strike with his burning body? He feels the fire hiss within him, in helmet and hair, tries to push back the burning corselet with his hand, touches the ashes of the steel at his breast; but still he stands and breathes his last against the stars, leaning his smoking breast against the hated walls. Nor would he have fallen; but his earthly limbs desert him and his spirit is set free. If his body had yielded a little later, he might have hoped for<sup>66</sup> a second bolt.

<sup>66</sup> His spirit was undaunted and he would have welcomed an encore.

## LIBER XI

- Postquam magnanimus furias virtutis iniquae  
consumpsit Capaneus exspiravitque receptum  
fulmen, et ad terras longe comitata cadentem  
signavit muros ultricis semita flammae,  
5 componit dextra victor concussa plagarum  
Iuppiter et vultu caelumque diemque reducit.  
gratantur superi, Phlegrae ceu fessus anhelet  
proclia et Encelado fumanti impresserit Aetnæ.  
ille iacet lacerae complexus fragmina turris,  
10 torvus adhuc visu memorandaque facta relinquens  
gentibus atque ipsi non illaudata Tonanti.  
quantus Apollineae temerator matris Averno  
tenditur; ipsae horrent, si quando pectore ab alto  
emergunt volucres immensaque membra iacentis  
15 spectant, dum miserae crescunt in pabula fibrae:  
sic gravat iniectus terras hostiliaque urit  
arva et anhclantem caelesti sulphure campum.  
respirant Thebac, templisque iacencia surgunt  
agmina; iam finis votis finisque supremis  
20 planctibus, et natos ausae deponere matres.  
At vaga palantes campo fuga volvit Achivos.

<sup>8</sup> fumantem P $\omega$  (*H&kanson*)

<sup>21</sup> palantes  $\omega$ : pallen- P

## BOOK 11

After great-hearted Capaneus exhausted the fury of his excessive valour and breathed forth the lightning within him, and when the path of avenging flame that accompanied his long descent to earth branded the walls, victorious Jupiter with his right hand composes the shaken zones and with his countenance brings back sky and daylight. The High Ones congratulate him as though he were wearily panting the battles of Phlegra and had piled Aetna on smoking Enceladus. Capaneus lies grasping fragments of the broken tower, still grim of visage, leaving to the nations memorable deeds not unpraised of the Thunderer himself. He stretches in bulk as large as the violator of Apollo's mother<sup>1</sup> in Avernus; the very birds shudder when they emerge from the depth of his breast and view the giant's prostrate limbs, as the miserable entrails grow again to feed them. So flung upon the burdened earth he burns the hostile fields and the plain as it pants with heavenly sulphur. Thebes breathes again, the prostrate multitudes in the temples arise. There is an end to prayers, an end to despairing lamentation, mothers dare to put down their babes.

But scattered flight rolls the Achaeans pell-mell over

<sup>1</sup> Tityos.

THEBAID

nec tantum hostiles turmae aut ferrum mortale timetur:  
 omnibus ante oculos irae Iovis, omnibus ardent  
 arma metu galeaeque tonant, visusque paventes  
 25 ipse sequi et profugis opponere Iuppiter ignes.  
 instat Agenoreus miles caelique tumultu  
 utitur: indomitos ut cum Massyla per arva  
 armenti reges magno leo fregit hiatu  
 et contentus abit; rauci tunc comminus ursi,  
 30 tunc avidi venere lupi, rabieque remissa  
 lambunt degeneres alienae vulnera praedae.  
 hinc premit Eurymedon, cui rusticus horror in armis,  
 rustica tela manu, patriumque agitare tumultus  
 (Pan illi genitor); tener hinc conatibus annos  
 35 egreditur iuvenemque patrem puer aequat Alatreus:  
 felices ambo, sed fortunatior ille,  
 quem genuisse iuvat; nec iam dinoscere promptum  
 quac magis arna sonent, quo plus eat hasta lacerto.  
 Artatur denso fugientum examine vallum.  
 40 quas volvis, Gradive, vices! modo moenia Cadmi  
 scandebant, sua nunc defendunt tecta Pelasgi.  
 ceu redeunt nubes, ceu circumflantibus Austris  
 alternus procumbit ager, ccu gurgite cano  
 nunc retegit bibulas, nunc induit aestus harenas.  
 45 expirat late pubes Tirynthia, alumni  
 exuvias imitata dei; trux macret ab astris  
 Amphitryoniades Nemeaea in sanguine terga  
 et similes ramos similesque videre pharctras.  
 stabat in Argolicae ferrato culmine turris

22 nec iam P $\omega$  (SB)      hostiles  $\omega$ : -tes P      44 induit P:  
 obruit  $\omega$       46 astris P; alto  $\omega$       47 nemea P: nem(a)ec  $\omega$   
 (Gronovius)      49 culmine P $\psi$ : margine  $\omega$



the plain, nor do they now fear only enemy squadrons or mortal steel. All have the wrath of Jove before their eyes, for all fear makes their armour burn and their helmets thunder. Jupiter himself seems to pursue them in their terror and block their escape with his fires. Agenor's soldiers press upon them and take advantage of the sky's tumult. So when in Massylian fields a lion has broken the untamed kings of the herd with his mighty jaws and goes away content; then growling bears and greedy wolves come up, low creatures, and with diminished rage lick the wounds of another's prey. On one side urges Eurymedon, rough and rustic in his arms, rustic the weapons in his hand, his heritage to stir up tumult—Pan was his father. On the other, young Alatreus outstrips his years with his enterprise. The boy equals his youthful father; happy both, but more fortunate he whose joy it is to have begot. Nor is it easy to tell whose weapons sound the louder, which arm sends the spear faster.

The rampart is crowded with a dense swarm of fugitives. Gradivus, what changes you roll! But lately the Pelasgi were scaling Cadmus' walls, now they defend their own shelters; so clouds come back, so crops fall flat in turn as the South Winds veer, so with white waters the tide now bares now clothes the thirsty sands. Far and wide Tiryinthian manhood dies, who copy the spoils of their nursing god; the fierce son of Amphytrion grieves to see from the stars Nemean hides in the blood and like boughs<sup>2</sup> and like quivers. In the iron-clad top of an Argive turret

<sup>2</sup> Clubs similar to his own.

THEBAID

50 egregius lituo dextri Mavortis Enyeus  
 hortator; sed tunc miseris dabat utile signum  
 suadebatque fugam et tutos in castra receptus,  
 cum subitum obliquo descendit ab aëre vulnus,  
 urgentisque sonum laeva manus aure retenta est,  
 55 sicut erat; fugit in vacuas iam spiritus auras,  
 iam gelida ora tacent, carmen tuba sola peregit.

Iamque potens scelerum geminaeque exercita gentis  
 sanguine Tisiphone fraterna claudere quaerit  
 bella †tuba†: nec se tanta in certamina fidit  
 60 sufficere, inferna comitem ni sede Megaeram  
 et consanguineos in proelia suscitet angues.  
 ergo procul vacua concedit valle solumque  
 ense fodit Stygio terraeque immurmurat absens  
 nomen et (Elysiis signum indubitabile regnis)  
 65 crinalem attollit longo stridore cerasten:  
 caeruleae dux ille comae, quo protinus omnis  
 horruit audito tellus pontusque polusque,  
 et pater Aetnaeos iterum respexit ad ignes.  
 accipit illa sonum; stabat tunc forte parenti  
 70 proxima, dum coetu Capaneus laudatur ab omni  
 Ditis et insignem Stygiis fovet annibus umbram.  
 protinus abrupta terrarum mole sub astris  
 constitit; exsultant manes, quantumque profundae  
 rarescunt tenebrae, tantum de luce recessit.  
 75 excipit atra soror dextraeque innexa profatur:  
 ‘hac, germana, tenus Stygii metuenda parentis

58-59 fraterno . . . . . bella obitu *Miedel, alii alia (anne fraterna . . . ira?)*

<sup>3</sup> *Tuba* ('trumpet') in this sense seems impossible and doubt-

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stood Enyeus, adept at urging men on with the trumpet to favouring Mavors. But at this time he was giving a signal useful to those in trouble, persuading flight and safe retreat to camp. Suddenly a side-stroke descended from the air and as he urged the sound his hand was nailed to his left ear, just as it was. Now his spirit flies into the empty breeze, now his mouth is cold and silent, the trumpet finished its call alone.

Now Tisiphone is in possession of her crimes. Exercised by the blood of both peoples, she seeks to end the war by brotherly rage (?).<sup>3</sup> But she doubts that she can cope with such a bout unless she rouse Megaera from the infernal abode to be her companion, her and her kindred snakes to battle. So she retires far off in an empty valley and digs the soil with her Stygian sword and murmurs to the earth the absent name; and (sign indubitable to the Elysian realms) she raises a horned serpent in her hair with a long hiss. He was the leader of the cerulean tresses, and when they heard him, straightway all earth and sea and sky shuddered and the Father looked again to his Aetnean fires. Megaera receives the sound; she chanced to be standing next to her parent<sup>4</sup> while Capaneus was lauded by all the assembly of Dis and bathed his noble shade in the Stygian stream. Breaking earth's mass, straightway she stood beneath the stars; the dead rejoice, and as the darkness below grows thinner, so the daylight wanes. Her black sister welcomes her with a handclasp and speaks: 'So far, sister, I have managed to endure our

less derives from 56; among possible alternatives I prefer *ira*.

<sup>4</sup> Pluto. But cf. 136, where Tisiphone is called daughter of Erebus.

THEBAID

- imperia et iussos potui tolerare furores  
 sola super terras hostilique obvia mundo,  
 dum vos Elysium et faciles compscitis umbras.  
 80 nec pretium deforme morae cassique labores:  
 hoc quodcumque madet campi, quod sanguine fumant  
 stagna, quod innumero Lethaea examine gaudet  
 ripa, meae vires, mea laeta insignia. sed quid  
 haec ego? Mars habeat, vulgataque iactet Enyo.  
 85 vidistis (Stygiis certe manifestus in umbris)  
 sanguine foedatum rictus atroque madentem  
 ora ducem tabo: miserum insatiabilis edit  
 me tradente caput. modo nempe horrendus ab astris  
 descendit vos usque fragor: mea sacra premebat  
 90 tempestas, ego mixta viri furialibus armis  
 bella deum et magnas ridebam fulminis iras.  
 sed iam (effabor enim) longo sudore fatiscunt  
 corda, soror, tardaeque manus; hebet infera caelo  
 taxus et insuetos angues nimia astra soporant.  
 95 tu, cui totus adhuc furor exsultantque recentes  
 Cocyti de fonte comae, da iungere vires.  
 non solitas acies nec Martia bella paramus,  
 sed fratrum (licet alma Fides Pietasque repugnent,  
 vincentur), fratrum stringendi comminus enses.  
 100 grande opus! ipsae odiis, ipsae discordibus armis  
 aptemur. quid lenta venis? agedum clige cuius  
 signa feras. ambo faciles nostrique; sed anceps  
 vulgus et affatus matris blandamque precatu  
 Antigonen timeo, paulum ne nostra retardent  
 105 consilia. ipse etiam, qui nos lassare precando  
 suetus et ultrices oculorum exposcere Diras,

81 madet P: -ent ω

87 miserum ω: -ris P: -ri *Vollmer*

89 me P: mea ω

Stygian parent's dread commands and the frenzy imposed on me, alone upon the earth and facing a hostile world, while the rest of you hold down Elysium and the compliant shades. Nor unsightly is my sojourn's reward nor vain my labours. That all this plain is soaked, the pools steam with blood, Lcthe's bank joys in a countless swarm—that is my power, my happy tokens. But why do I speak of such things? Let Mars have them, let Enyo boast and tell the world. You saw (for sure he was manifest in the Stygian shades) a leader's jaws befouled with blood and his face dripping with black gore; insatiable he devours a hapless head that *I* gave him. Just now a dreadful crash descended from the stars to your world, did it not? The sacred storm above you was mine, *I* mingled with the warrior's mad arms and laughed at wars of gods and the mighty wrath of the thunderbolt. But now, for I will confess it, my heart grows weary with length of toil, sister, and my hands are slow. The infernal yew<sup>5</sup> grows dull with sky and too much unwonted starlight makes my snakes drowsy. Do you, whose fury is still intact, whose tresses rejoice fresh from Cocytus' fount, let me join forces. No customary battle, no Martian war do we prepare, but the swords of brothers (though kindly Faith and Piety resist, they will be vanquished), brothers I say, must be drawn in conflict. A mighty work! Let us ourselves fasten onto their hate and quarrelling arms. Why do you dawdle? Come, choose, whose standard will you bear? Both are compliant, both ours. But I fear the doubtful mob and the mother's pleas and Antigone, gentle in entreaty, lest they retard a little our designs. For even he that is wont to weary us with his prayers and demand the Furies as

<sup>5</sup> Her torch.

THEBAID

iam pater est: coetu fertur iam solus ab omni  
 flere sibi. atque adeo moror ipsa irrumperere Thebas  
 assuetumque larem. tibi pareat impius exsul,  
 110 Argolieumque impelle nefas; neu mitis Adrastus  
 praevaleat plebesque, cave, Lernaea moretur.  
 vade, et in alternas inimica revertere pugnas.’

Talia partitae diversum abiere sorores:  
 ut Notus et Boreas gemino de cardine mundi,  
 115 hic nive Rhipaea, Libycis hic pastus harenis,  
 bella cient: clamant annes, freta, nubila, silvae,  
 iamque patent strages; plangunt sua damna coloni  
 et tamen oppressos miserantur in aequore nautas.  
 illas ut summo vidit pater altus Olympo  
 120 incestare diem trepidumque Hyperionis orbem  
 suffundi maculis, torvo sic incohat ore:  
 ‘vidimus armiferos, quo fas erat usque, furores,  
 caelicolae, licitasque acies, etsi impia bella  
 unus init aususque mea procumbere dextra.  
 125 nunc par infandum miserisque incognita terris  
 pugna subest: auferte oculos! absentibus ausint  
 ista deis lateantque Iovem; sat funera mensae  
 Tantaleae et sontes vidisse Lycaonis aras  
 et festina polo ducentes astra Mycenae.  
 130 nunc etiam turbanda dies: mala nubila, tellus,  
 accipe, secedantque poli: stat parcere mundo  
 caelitibusque meis; saltem ne virginis almae  
 sidera, Ledaevi videant neu talia fratres.’  
 sic pater omnipotens, visusque nocentibus arvis  
 135 abstulit, et dulci terrae caruere sereno.

<sup>6</sup> ‘And here I am, tarrying’ might give the force of *atque adeo*; cf. SB<sup>2</sup>.

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avengers of his eyes is now a father; he is said to weep now for himself, alone, apart from all the rest. Ah, but I tarry<sup>6</sup> to break into Thebes myself, my familiar home. Let the impious exile obey you, urge on Argive wickedness; let not mild Adrastus prevail and beware lest the host of Lerna make delay. Go and return for the duel—my enemy!

Such the division the sisters made and went their separate ways. Even so South Wind and North stir up war from the two pivots of the world, the one fed on Rhipaeian snow, the other on Libyan sands; rivers, seas, clouds, and woods clamour and disaster is already plain to see; farmers bewail their losses and yet pity sailors overwhelmed in the deep. When the Father aloft on high Olympus sees them pollute the daylight and Hyperion's trembling orb suffused with spots, thus he launches into stern speech: 'Sky-dwellers, we have seen fury of arms carried to the limits of the lawful, battles permissible, although *one* embarked on impious warfare and dared to fall by my hand. Now an unspeakable duel approaches, a fight unknown to the unhappy earth. Avert your eyes! Let them dare such things in the gods' absence and hide from Jove. Enough to have witnessed the deadly banquet of Tantalus and Lycaon's guilty altars and Mycenae bringing the hastening stars upon the sky. Now too day must be confounded. Earth, take evil clouds and let the heavens withdraw. I am resolved to spare the world and my celestials. At least let not the stars of the kindly Maiden<sup>7</sup> or the Ledaean brethren see such sights.' Thus the almighty Father, and took his eyes from the guilty fields; and the lands lacked the clear sky they love.

<sup>7</sup> Astraea (Justice).

THEBAID

- Iamque per Argolicas Erebo sata virgo cohortes  
 vestigat Polynicis iter portisque sub ipsis  
 invenit, incertum leto tot iniqua fugane  
 exeat, et dubios turbabant omina sensus.
- 140 viderat, obscura vallum dum nocte pererrat  
 aeger consilii curisque novissima volvens,  
 coniugis Argiae laceram cum lampade maesta  
 effigiem (sunt monstra deum: sic ire parabat,  
 has latura viro taedas erat): ergo roganti
- 145 quae via quisve dolor, cur maesta insignia, tantum  
 fleverat atque manu tacitos averterat ignes.  
 scit mentem vidisse nefas; etenim unde Mycenis  
 afforet et vallum coniunx inopina subiret?  
 sed fati monitus vicinaque funera sentit,
- 150 ac sentire timet. cum vero Acherontis aperti  
 Dira ter admoto tetigit thoraca flagello,  
 ardet inops animi, nec tam considerare regno  
 quam scelus et caedem et perfossi in sanguine fratris  
 expirare cupit, subitusque affatur Adrastum:
- 155 'sera quidem, extremus socium gentisque superstes  
 Argolicae, consulta, pater, iam rebus in artis  
 aggredior; tunc tempus erat, cum sanguis Achivum  
 integer, ire ultro propriamque capessere pugnam,  
 non plebis Danaae florem regumque vrendas
- 160 obiectare animas, ut lamentabile tantis  
 urbibus induerem capiti decus. ast ea quando  
 praeteriit virtus, nunc saltem exsolvere fas sit  
 quae merui. scis namque, socer, licet alta recondas

<sup>139</sup> turbabant  $\omega$ : turbarant P $\Sigma$

<sup>161</sup> ast ea  $\psi$ : aspera P $\omega$

<sup>8</sup> Tisiphone (cf. 69).

<sup>9</sup> I.e. of the whole force. He exag-



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And now the virgin daughter of Erebus<sup>8</sup> tracks Poly-nices' path through the Argive cohorts and finds him at the very gate, uncertain whether to escape so many misfortunes by death or by flight. Omens troubled his doubting senses. Wandring along the rampart in the dark of night, unhappy of counsel, anxious, meditating the worst, he had seen the image of his wife Argia, her person torn and carrying a mournful torch (signs there are from the gods; thus she was about to walk, these the torches she would bring her husband). So when he asks where she was going and what her distress, why the woeful emblems, she only wept and silently turned aside the flame. He knew the evil vision was from his mind; for how could his wife have come from Mycenae and suddenly mount the rampart? But he perceives Fate's admonitions and his approaching death, and fears to perceive. But when the Fury of opened Acheron touched his corselet three times with her lash, he burns in helpless passion, cager not so much to settle on the throne as for crime and slaughter and death in the blood of his butchered brother. Of a sudden he addresses Adrastus: 'Last survivor of the allies and the Argive nation,<sup>9</sup> I take belated counsel, father, in our present straits. Then was the time, when Achaean blood had not been broached, to advance of my own accord and fight my own battle; not to thrust forward the flower of the Danaan folk and the sacred lives of kings so that I might place a crown upon my head for so many cities to weep. But since the time for that valour has gone by, now at least let it be lawful for me to pay what I deserve. For you know it, father, though you

gerates, for what was left of the Argive army was still in being. He *was* the last survivor of the Seven except for Adrastus.

## THEBAID

- vulnera et afflictum generi vereare pudorem:  
 165 ille ego sum qui te pacem et pia iura regentem  
 (infelix utinamque aliis datus urbibus hospes!)  
 extorrem patria regnoque—sed exige tandem  
 supplicium: fratrem suprema in bella (quid horres?  
 decretum est fixumque) voco; desiste morari,  
 170 nec poteris. non si atra parens miseraeque sorores  
 in media arma cadant, non si ipse ad bella ruenti  
 obstet et extinctos galeae pater ingerat orbis,  
 deficiam. anne bibam superest quodcumque cruoris  
 Inachii et vestris ctiamnum mortibus utar?  
 175 vidi ego me propter ruptos telluris hiatus,  
 nec subii; vidi exanimum fecique nocentem  
 Tydea; me Tegee regem indefensa reposcit,  
 orbaque Parrhasiis ululat mihi mater in antris.  
 ipse nec Ismeni ripas, dum stagna cruentat  
 180 Hippomedon, Tyrias potui nec scandere turres,  
 dum tonat, et tecum, Capaneu, miscere furores.  
 quis tantus pro luce timor? sed digna rependam.  
 convenient ubi quaeque nurus matresque Pelasgae  
 longaevique patres, quorum tot gaudia carpsi  
 185 orbavique domos: fratri concurreo. quid ultra est?  
 spectent et votis victorem Eteoclea poscant.  
 iamque vale, coniunx, dulcesque valete Mycenae!  
 at tu, care socer, (nec enim omnis culpa malorum  
 me penes; et superi mecum Parcaeque nocentes)  
 190 sis lenis cineri, meque haec post proelia raptum  
 alitibus fratrique tegas urnamque reportes,

<sup>183</sup> ubicumque  $P\omega$  (*Weber*)

<sup>10</sup> He was about to say 'I drove you to war,' but breaks off.

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hide deep the wound and respect your son-in-law's afflicted shame: I am he that, while you ruled in peace and righteousness (an ill-starred guest, would I had been bestowed on other cities!), banished from country and throne<sup>10</sup>—but at long last exact the punishment: my brother to mortal combat (why do you shudder, 'tis decreed and fixed) I challenge. Think not to hold me back, nor will it be in your power. No, if my mother in black and my unhappy sisters were to fall betwixt the arms, if my father himself were to block me as I rush to fight and cast his perished orbs upon my helmet, not so should I fail. Or should I drink what is left of Inachian blood and still use your deaths? I saw the earth gape and yawn on my account and went not in. I saw Tydeus lifeless and made him guilty. Tegea undefended claims back her king from me and his bereaved mother keens at me in Parrhasian glens. Myself I could not climb Ismenos' bank while Hippomedon's blood stained the water nor scale the Tyrian tower amid the thunder and mingle madness, Capaneus, with you. Why so much fear for life? But I shall make due recompense. Let the Pelasgian wives and mothers and aged fathers whom I have robbed of so many joys, whose homes I have made desolate, assemble wherever they be. I fight my brother. What more is there? Let them watch and pray for Eteocles' victory. And now farewell my wife and farewell sweet Mycenae. But you, dear sire (for not all the blame for our calamities is mine, the High Ones too and the Parcae are guilty with me), be kind to my ashes and after this battle seize me and protect me from the birds and my brother

*Extorrem* (of Polynices in 12.262) has to refer to Adrastus here. A reference to his own exile (*extorris* Schrader) would be pointless.

THEBAID

hoc tantum, et natae melius conubia iungas.’

- Ibant in lacrimas, veluti cum vere reverso  
 Bistoniae tepuere nives; summittitur ingens  
 195 Haemus et angustos Rhodope descendit in amnes.  
 coeperat et leni senior mulcere furentem  
 alloquio: scidit orsa novo terrore cruenta  
 Eumenis, alipedemque citum fataliaque arma  
 protinus, Inachii vultus expressa Pherecli,  
 200 obtulit ac fidas exclusit casside voces.  
 ac super haec: ‘abrumpe moras, celeremus! et illum  
 adventare ferunt portis.’ sic omnia vicit,  
 correptumque iniecit equo; volat aequore aperto  
 pallidus instantemque deae circumspicit umbram.  
 205 Sacra Iovi merito Tyrius pro fulmine ductor  
 nequiquam Danaos ratus exarmasse ferebat.  
 nec pater aetherius divumque has ullus ad aras,  
 sed mala Tisiphone trepidis inserta ministris  
 astat et inferno praevertit vota Tonanti.  
 210 ‘summe deum, tibi namque meae primordia Thebae  
 (liveat infandum licet Argos et aspera Inno)  
 debent, Sidonios ex quo per litora raptor  
 turbasti thiasos, dignatus virgine nostra  
 terga premi et placidas falsum mugire per undas,  
 215 nec te vana fides iterum Cadmeia adeptum  
 conubia et Tyrios nimium irrupisse penates:  
 tandem, inquam, soceros dilectaque moenia gratus  
 respicis assertorque tonas; ceu regia caeli  
 attemptata tui, sic te pro turribus altis  
 220 vidimus urgentem nubes, lactique benignum

<sup>11</sup> As Cadmus’ sister Europa is counted as Theban; cf. 7.191.

<sup>12</sup> Semele after Alcmena.

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and bring back my urn—that is all—and make a better marriage for your daughter.’

They fell a-weeping as when with spring’s return Bistonian snows grow warm; mighty Haemus is bowed, and Rhodope descends into the straightened rivers. The old king began to soothe the madman with gentle encouragement, but the bloody Fury cut off the words with fresh terror and in the guise of Inachian Phereclus straightway set before him his swift charger and fateful arms, shutting off well-meant speech with the helmet. Then: ‘No more tarrying, let us make haste,’ she cried. ‘He too, they say, is coming at the gate.’ So all-prevailing, she seized him and threw him on the horse. Pale of countenance he flies over the open flat and looks round to see the goddess’ looming shadow.

The Tyrian leader was vainly offering to Jupiter the sacrifice the thunderbolt had earned, thinking that he had disarmed the Danaï. The heavenly Father was not at the altar nor any of the gods, but evil Tisiphone was there among the trembling acolytes and diverted his prayer to the Thunderer of the underworld: ‘Highest of gods, for to you my Thebes owes her beginning, though accursed Argos and fierce Juno be jealous, from the time when in your ravishing you broke up the Sidonian dances on the shore, deigning to bear on your back a maiden of our race<sup>11</sup> and utter false lowings over the calm water—nor is the story idle that you found Cadmean wedlock a second time and too lustily invaded a Tyrian home:<sup>12</sup> at last, I say, you think in gratitude of your marriage kin and the cherished walls and thunder as their champion. As though your own heavenly palace were attempted, we saw you driving the clouds to defend our lofty towers, we recognized joyfully the

## THEBAID

- fulmen et auditos proavis agnovimus ignes.  
 accipe nunc pecudes et magni turis acervos  
 votivumque marem; dignas sed pendere grates  
 haud mortale opus est. certent tibi reddere Baecelus  
 225 noster et Aleides, illis haec moenia servas.  
 dixerat: ast illi niger ignis in ora genasque  
 prosiluit raptumque comis diadema eremavit.  
 tunc ferus ante ietum spumis delubra cruentat  
 taurus et obstantum mediis e coetibus exit  
 230 turbidus insanoque ferens altaria cornu.  
 diffugiunt famuli, et regem solatur haruspex.  
 ipse instaurari sacrum male fortis agique  
 imperat, et magnos ficto premit ore timores.  
 235 qualis ubi implicuitum Tirynthius ossibus ignem  
 sensit et Oetaeas membris accedere vestes,  
 vota incepta tamen libataque tura ferebat  
 durus adhuc patiensque mali; mox grande coactus  
 ingemuit, victorque furit per viscera Nessus.  
 Nuntius exanimi suspensus pectora eursu  
 240 Aepytus ad regem portae statione relieta  
 tendit et haec trepido vix intellectus anhelat:  
 ' rumpe pios cultus intempestivaque, rector,  
 sacra deum: frater muris circum omnibus instat  
 portarumque moras frenis assultat et hastis,  
 245 nomine te crebro, te solum in proelia poscens.  
 flent maesti retro comites, et uterque loquenti  
 aggemit et pulsus exercitus obstrepit armis.  
 ille vocat. nunc tempus erat, sator optime divum.  
 quid meruit Capaneus?' turbatus inhorruit altis  
 250 rex odiis, mediaque tamen gavisus in ira est.

friendly bolt and the fire our ancestors heard. Now receive our flocks and high-piled incense and a votive male. But to give worthy thanks is no work for mortals. Let our Bacchus and Alcides vie in gratitude to you. For them you preserve these walls.' He spoke; but black fire leapt forth against mouth and eyes, tearing the diadem from his hair and consuming it. Then before the blow the angry bull bloodies the shrine with his foam and breaks out in turmoil from the opposing throng, bearing the altar on his frantic horn. The servants scatter and the soothsayer consoles the king. He himself, too steadfast, orders the rite renewed and carried through, hiding dire misgivings with a feigned countenance. So when the Tirynthian felt the fire deep in his bones and the Oetaean robe clinging to his limbs, he none the less continued to offer prayer begun and incense already poured, still hard and patient of the pain; presently perforce he gave a great groan and Nessus<sup>13</sup> rages victorious through his vitals.

In breathless haste, his mind on tenterhooks, comes a messenger to the king, Aepytus. He has left his post by the gate and scarce understood pants these words to the trembling monarch: 'Ruler, break off your pious worship and these ill-timed rites of religion. Your brother menaces all round the walls, assailing with rein and spear the gates' delays, demanding you by name again and again, you alone, to battle. Behind his sad companions weep and both armies groan at him as he speaks, clashing arms in protest. But he summons! Now was the time, best begetter of the gods. What did Capaneus deserve?' The king shuddered in turmoil with profound hatred, and yet rejoiced in the

<sup>13</sup> His poison (see Nessus in Index).

THEBAID

sic ubi regnator post exsulis otia tauri  
 mugitum hostilem summa tulit aure iuvenus  
 agnovitque minas, magna stat fervidus ira  
 ante gregem spumisque animos ardentibus efflat,  
 255 nunc pede torvus humum, nunc cornibus aëra findens;  
 horret ager, trepidaeque expectant proelia valles.  
 Nec desunt regi comites: 'sine moenia pulset  
 irritus.' 'ille autem fractis huc audeat usque  
 viribus?' 'hic miseris furor est, instare periclo,  
 260 nec librare metus et tuta odisse.' 'resiste  
 hic fretus solio, nos propulsabimus hostem,  
 nos bellare iube.' sic proxima turba, sed ardens  
 ecce aderat luctu dicturusque omnia belli  
 libertate Creon: urit fera corda Menoecus,  
 265 nulla patri requies, illum quaeritque tenetque,  
 illum sanguineos proflantem pectore rivos  
 aspicit et saeva semper de turre cadentem.  
 ut dubium et pugnas cunctantem Eteoclea vidit,  
 'ibis,' ait, 'neque te ulterius, fratrumque ducumque  
 270 pessime, funeribus patriae lacrimisque potentem,  
 Eumenidum bellicae reum, patiemur inulti.  
 sat tua non aequis limum periuria divis.  
 urbem armis opibusque gravem et modo civibus artam,  
 ceu caelo deiecta lues inimicave tellus,  
 275 hausisti, vacuumque tamen sublimis obumbras.  
 dcest servitio plebes: hos ignis egentes  
 fert humus, hos pelago patrius iam detulit amnis;  
 hi quaerunt artus, illi anxia vulnera curant.  
 redde agedum miseris fratres natosque patresque,  
 280 redde arvis domibusque viros! ubi maximus Hypscus

<sup>257</sup> regi ψ: regni Pω

<sup>269</sup> -umque ducumque ω: -emque ducemque P



midst of his ire. So when a ruling bull after the peace of his rival's exile hears with the tip of his ear a hostile lowing and recognizes the threat, he stands before the herd aflame with mighty wrath and exhales his passion in ardent foam, splitting the ground with his hoof and the air with his horns; the land shudders and the quaking valleys await the battle.

The courtiers do not fail the king: 'Let him batter the walls for nothing. Would he dare come thus far with broken power?' 'This is the madness of misery, to press upon peril, not to weigh dangers, and hate safety.' 'Stay here assured upon your throne, we shall repulse the enemy, tell *us* to fight.' Thus the throng closest by; but see, here comes Creon passionate with grief and ready to speak his whole mind in the licence of war. Menoeceus chafes his fierce heart, the father has no peace, him he seeks and holds, him he sees breathing streams of blood out from his breast, ever falling from the cruel tower. When he sees Eteocles in doubt, delaying the combat: 'You shall go,' he says, 'and no longer shall we suffer you unavenged—worst of brothers and of leaders, powerful in your country's deaths and tears, guilty of the Furies and the war. Enough atonement have we made the unfriendly gods for your perjuries. This city, potent in arms and wealth and lately thronged with citizens, you have drained like a plague sent down from the sky or a hostile earth, and yet your shadow towers aloft over its emptiness. You lack folk to be your slaves. These the soil bears, wanting fire, those their native river has already carried to the sea. Some seek their limbs, others tend painful wounds. Come, give back to the unfortunates their brothers, sons, and fathers, give back men to the fields and houses. Where is great Hypseus and Dryas,

finitimusque Dryas<sup>?</sup> ubi Phocidos arma sonorae  
 Euboicique duces<sup>?</sup> illos tamen aequa duelli  
 fors tulit ad manes: at tu (pudet) hostia regni,  
 hostia, nate, iaces, ceu mutus et e grege sanguis  
 285 (ei mihi!) primitiis ararum et rite nefasto  
 libatus iussusque mori: et cunctabitur ultra  
 iste nec, adverso nunc saltem Marte vocatus,  
 stabit<sup>?</sup> an in pugnas alium iubet ire profanus  
 Tiresias iterumque meos oracula nectit  
 290 in gemitus<sup>?</sup> quid enim misero super unicus Haemon<sup>?</sup>  
 ille iube subeat, tuque hinc spectator ab alta  
 turre sede! quid saeva fremis famulamque cohortem  
 respectas<sup>?</sup> hi te ire volunt, hi pendere poenas;  
 ipsa etiam genetrix ipsaeque odere sorores.  
 295 in te ardens frater ferrum mortemque minatur  
 saeptaque portarum convellit claustra, nec audis<sup>?</sup>  
 Sic pater infrendens, miseraque exaestuat ira.  
 ille sub haec 'non fallis,' ait, 'nec te incluta nati  
 fata movent. canere illa patrem et iactare decebat,  
 300 sed spes sub lacrimis, spes atque occulta cupido  
 his latet: insano praetendis funera voto,  
 meque premis frustra vacuae ceu proximus aulae.  
 non ita Sidoniam Fortuna reliquerit urbem,  
 in te ut scepra cadant, tanto indignissime nato.  
 305 nec mihi difficilis praesens vindicta; sed arma,  
 arma prius, famuli! coeant in proelia fratres.  
 vult gemitus lenire Creon. lucrare furorem:  
 victori mihi cuncta lues.' sic iurgia paulum

<sup>296</sup> saevaue P $\omega$  (SB<sup>2</sup>)

<sup>14</sup> Allusion to the Delphic oracle; cf. 1.492 *vocalibus antris*.

closest neighbour, where the arms of sounding<sup>14</sup> Phocis and the captains of Euboea? But these the fair chance of war brought to their death. Whereas (oh shame!) you, my son, lie a royal sacrifice, ay, a sacrifice, like a dumb beast of the flock (woe is me!), sprinkled with the altar's first-fruits in an unholy rite and ordered to die. And shall this man delay longer, shall he not now at least, summoned by opposing Mars, stand fast? Or does unclean<sup>15</sup> Tiresias order another to go to battle and again weave oracles for my groaning? For why, alas, is Haemon left me, he alone? Tell *him* to go, and do you sit and watch from this high tower. Why this fierce rage, why do you look back to your troop of lackeys? They would have you go and pay the penalty, they. Even your mother, even your sisters hate you. Hot against you your brother threatens steel and death and tears down the guarded bars of the gates; and hear you not?

So spoke the father, gnashing his teeth, boiling with rage and misery. To which the king: 'You deceive me not. Your son's glorious death is not what moves you. As a father such canting and ranting became you, but hope lurks under these tears, hope and hidden desire. You make death a pretext for your mad ambition and press me vainly as though next in succession to the vacant throne. Not so utterly shall Fortune have abandoned the Sidonian city that the sceptre should fall to you, most undeserving of so great a son! Nor would present vengeance be hard for me to take. But arms first, arms, my men! Let brothers meet in battle. Creon would fain soothe his sorrow. Let your madness go clear for now. When I am victor you shall pay me for all.' So he deferred their quarrel for a while and re-

<sup>15</sup> Because of his changes of sex; see note on 10.696.

- distulit atque ensem, quem iam dabat ira, repressit.  
 310 ictus ut incerto pastoris vulnere serpens  
 erigitur gyro longumque e corpore toto  
 virus in ora legit; paulum si devius hostis  
 torsit iter, cecidere minae tumefactaque frustra  
 colla sedent, irasque sui bibit ipse venci.
- 315 At genetrix, primam funestae sortis ut amens  
 expavit famam (nec tarde credidit), ibat  
 scissa comam vultusque et pectore nuda cruento,  
 non sexus decorisve memor: Pentheia qualis  
 mater ad insani scandebat culmina montis,  
 320 promissum saevo caput allatura Lyaeo.  
 non comites, non ferre piae vestigia natae  
 aequa valent: tantum miserae dolor ultimus addit  
 robur, et exsanguis crudescunt luctibus anni.  
 iamque decus galeae, iam spicula saeva ligabat  
 325 ductor et ad lituos hilarem intrepidumque tubarum  
 prospiciebat equum, subito cum apparuit ingens  
 mater; et ipse metu famulumque expalluit omnis  
 coetus, et oblatam retro dedit armiger hastam.  
 'quis furor? unde iterum regni integrata resurgit  
 330 Eumenis? ipsi etiam post omnia, cominus ipsi  
 stabitis? usque adeo geminas duxisse cohortes  
 et facinus mandasse parum est? quo deinde redibit  
 victor? in hosne sinus? o diri coniugis olim  
 felices tenebrae! datis, improba lumina, poenas:  
 335 haec spectanda dies. quo, saeve, minantia flectis  
 ora? quid alternus vultus pallorque ruborque  
 mutat, et obnixa frangunt mala murmura dentes?

312 ore P $\omega$  ( $\zeta$ )321 piae P: ipsae  $\omega$

## BOOK 11

pressed the sword that anger was already putting in his hand. As a snake struck at random by a shepherd rises up in a coil and gathers length of poison from his whole body into his mouth, but if his enemy slants his steps away a little, the threats subside, the neck that swelled to no purpose settles down, and he drinks the wrath of his own venom.

But his mother, distraught and terrified by the first rumour of her calamity (nor was she slow to believe it), went with torn hair and face, breasts bare and bleeding, unmindful of sex and seemliness; like the mother of Pentheus climbing to the top of the mad mountain to bring the promised head to cruel Lyaeus. Her companions cannot keep pace with her, nor can her fond daughters. Such strength does ultimate grief give the unhappy woman; her exhausted years grow young with her sorrows. And now the leader was binding on the glory of his helm and his cruel javelins and viewing his horse that rejoiced at the trumpets nor feared the bugles, when of a sudden his mother loomed large before him. He and all his following turned pale with fear and his squire took back the proffered spear. 'What madness is this? Whence once more does the Fury of our kingdom rise again full-blown? Will you yourselves when all is done, you yourselves stand face to face? Is it too little to have led two armies and delegated your crime? To what shall the victor then return? To these arms? Ah, my fell husband's darkness, fortunate that it was! Presumptuous eyes, you are punished! I had to see this day. Whither, cruel man, do you turn your threatening gaze? Why does your face grow pale and red by turns? Why do your clenched teeth check evil mutterings? Woe is me, you

THEBAID

- me miseram! vinctes. prius haec tamen arma necesse est  
 experiare domi: stabo ipso in limine portae  
 340 auspicium infelix scelerumque immanis imago.  
 haec tibi canities, haec sunt calcanda, nefande,  
 ubera, perque uterum sonipes hic matris agendus.  
 parce: quid oppositam capulo parmaque repellis?  
 non ego te contra Stygiis feralia sanxi  
 345 vota deis, caeco nec Erinyas ore rogavi.  
 exaudi miseram: genetrix te, saeve, precatur,  
 non pater; adde moram sceleri et metire quod audes.  
 sed pulsat muros germanus et impia contra  
 bella ciet: non mater enim, non obstat eunti  
 350 ulla soror: te cuncta rogant, hic plangimus omnes;  
 ast ibi vix unus pugnas dissuadet Adrastus,  
 aut fortasse iubet. tu limina avita deosque  
 linquis et a nostris in fratrem amplexibus exis.’  
 At parte ex alia tacitos obstante tumultu  
 355 Antigone furata gradus (nec casta retardat  
 virginitas) volat Ogygii fastigia muri  
 exsuperare furens; senior comes haeret cuncti  
 Actor, et hic summas non duraturus ad arces.  
 utque procul visis paulum dubitavit in armis,  
 360 agnovitque (nefas!) iaculis et voce superba  
 tecta incessentem, magno prius omnia planctu  
 implet et ex muris ceu descensura profatur:  
 ‘comprime tela manu paulumque hanc respice turrem,  
 frater, et horrentes refer in mea lumina cristas!  
 365 agnoscisne hostes? sic annua pacta fidemque  
 poscimus? hi questus, haec est bona causa modesti

<sup>366</sup> poscimus  $\zeta$ , *Schrader*

will be the victor.<sup>16</sup> But first you must try out your arms at home. I shall stand in the very threshold of the gate, an unlucky omen, a frightful image of crimes. These my white hairs, these breasts, wicked man, you must trample, this horse you must drive through your mother's womb. Spare me. Why do you thrust me from your path with swordhilt and shield? I took no funereal vows to Stygian gods against you nor besought the Furies with blind utterance. Hear me, alas! Your mother, cruel man, begs you, not your father. Give pause to your crime and measure what you do. But your brother knocks at the walls and stirs up impious war against you: yes, for no mother or sister stands in his way. You all things entreat, here we all lament; but yonder only Adrastus barely dissuades from the fight—or perhaps he commands it. You leave your ancestral threshold and gods, and go forth against your brother from our embraces.'

From another quarter Antigone steals rapidly her silent steps through the opposing tumult (nor does her chaste virginity retard her), mad to surmount the summit of the Ogygian wall. Old Actor clings to her side as she goes, but he too will not have strength to reach the very top. Awhile she hesitated at sight of the arms afar and recognized (horror!) him as he assaulted the city with javelins and proud voice. First she fills all around with loud lament and speaks as though about to throw herself from the wall: 'Brother, hold your weapons and look for a moment at this tower. Turn your bristling crest to my eyes. Do you see enemies? Is this how we claim yearly pact and good faith? Are these the complaints, this the good cause of a modest exile? I be-

<sup>16</sup> You will fight, you will even win, but . . .

## THEBAID

exsulis? Argolicos per te, germane, penates  
 (nam Tyriis iam nullus honos), per si quid in illa  
 dulce domo, summitte animos: en utraque gentis  
 370 turba rogant ambaeque acies; rogat illa suorum  
 Antigone devota malis suspectaque regi,  
 et tantum tua, dure, soror. saltem ora trucesque  
 solve genas; liceat vultus fortasse supremum  
 noscere dilectos et ad haec lamenta videre  
 375 anne fleas. illum gemitu iam supplice mater  
 frangit et exsertum dimittere dicitur ensem:  
 tu mihi fortis adhuc, mihi, quae tua nocte dieque  
 exsilia erroresque fleo iam iamque tumentem  
 placavi tibi saepe patrem? quid crimine solvis  
 380 germanum? nempe ille fidem et stata foedera rupit,  
 ille nocens saevusque suis; tamen ecce vocatus  
 non venit.' his paulum furor elanguescere dictis  
 coeperat, obstreperet quamquam atque obstaret Erinys;  
 iam summissa manus, lente iam flectit habenas,  
 385 iam tacet; erumpunt gemitus, lacrimasque fatetur  
 cassis; habent irae, pariterque et abire nocentem  
 et venisse pudet: subito cum matre repulsa  
 Eumenis eiecit fractis Eteoclea portis  
 clamantem: 'venio, solumque quod ante vocasti  
 390 invideo; ne incesse moras, gravis arma tenebat  
 mater; io patria, o regum incertissima tellus,  
 nunc certe victoris eris!' nec mitior ille,  
 'tandem,' inquit, 'scis, saeve, fidem et descendis in aequum?  
 o mihi nunc primum longo post tempore frater,  
 395 congregere: hae leges, haec foedera sola supersunt.'  
 sic hostile tuens fratrem; namque uritur alto



seech you by your Argive home, my brother (for you care naught for the Tyrians any more), if in that dwelling anything is dear to you, abate your pride. See, a throng of either people and both armies beg you. Your Antigone begs, faithful to the ills of her loved ones and suspect to the king, sister only to you, O hard of heart! At least relax your frowning look. Let me recognize, it may be for the last time, the face I love and see whether you weep at my lament. Him our mother already softens with her suppliant tears and he is said to be letting go his drawn sword. Are you still strong of purpose to me? To me, who bewail your exile and wanderings night and day, who have often calmed our father's wrath against you as it swelled? Why do you free your brother of blame? It was he, was it not, who broke faith and covenant agreed, he is guilty and cruel to his kin; yet see, he is challenged and does not come.' At these words his rage began to weaken a little, though the Fury loudly resists. Already his hand is falling, already he wheels his mount less rapidly, already he keeps silent. His groans break through, his helmet confesses his tears. Anger abates and he is ashamed both to depart and to have come in guilt; when suddenly the Fury repulses the mother and hurls forth Eteocles from the broken gates shouting: 'Here I come and envy you one thing only, that you challenged first. Chide not the delay, my mother's weight was holding my arms. My country, land most doubtful of your kings, now surely you will belong to the victor.' No gentler is the other: 'At length, bully,' he says, 'do you know the meaning of good faith and come down onto the level? Now for the first time in so long you are my brother: fight me. These are the only terms, the only covenants that remain.' Thus he speaks, eying his brother in en-

THEBAID

corde quod innumeri comites, quod regia cassis  
 instratusque ostro sonipes, quod fulva metallo  
 parma micet, quamquam haud armis inhonorus et ipse  
 400 nec palla vulgare nitens: opus ipsa novarat  
 Maeoniis Argia modis ac pollice docto  
 stamina purpureae sociaverat aurea telae.

Iamque in puluereum Furiis hortantibus aequor  
 prosiliunt, sua quemque comes stimulatque monetque.  
 405 frena tenent ipsae phalerasque et lucida comunt  
 arma manni mixtisque iubas serpentibus augment.  
 stat consanguineum campo scelus, unius ingens  
 bellum uteri, coeuntque pares sub casside vultus.  
 signa pavent, siluere tubae, stupefactaque Martis  
 410 cornua; ter nigris avidus regnator ab oris  
 intonuit terque ima soli concussit, et ipsi  
 armorum fugere dei: nusquam incluta Virtus,  
 restinxit Bellona faces, longeque paventes  
 Mars rapuit currus, et Gorgone cruda virago  
 415 abstittit, inque vicem Stygiae subiere sorores.  
 prominet excelsis vulgus miserabile tectis,  
 cuncta madent lacrimis et ab omni plangitur arce.  
 hinc questi vixisse senes, hinc pectore nudo  
 stant matres parvosque vetant attendere natos.  
 420 ipse quoque Ogygios monstra ad gentilia manes  
 Tartareus rector porta iubet ire reclusa.  
 montibus insidunt patriis tristisque corona  
 infecere diem et vinci sua crimina gaudent.

415 rubuere P $\omega$  (*Bentley*)

17 The robe Argia made was for Polynices; cf. 12.313.

mity. For in the depth of his heart he chafes at the other's countless retinue, his regal helmet and purple-covered horse, his shield flashing with gold, even though himself well-accoutred, shining in no common cloak; Argia herself had fashioned it Maeonian fashion, wedding golden thread to purple cloth with skilful thumb.<sup>17</sup> ✓

And now at the Furies' prompting they bound forth into the dusty plain, each with his companion to goad and guide. These themselves hold the reins and order the trappings and shining arms, mingling snakes to enlarge the crests. Kindred crime stands in the field, the mighty battle of a single womb; beneath their helmets twin faces meet. The standards are afraid, the trumpets silent, the horns of Mars dumbfounded. Thrice from the realms of darkness thundered their greedy ruler, thrice he shocked earth's foundations, the very gods of battle fled. Valour renowned vanished, Bellona put her torches out, Mars drove his frightened chariot far away, the Maiden<sup>18</sup> rough with her Gorgon stood aside, and in their place came<sup>19</sup> the Stygian Sisters. The common folk stand forth on the rooftops, a pitious sight, floods of tears are everywhere and from every height comes wailing. Here old men complain that they have lived too long, their mothers stand bare-breasted and tell their little sons not to look. The ruler of Tartarus himself orders the gate set open and the Ogygian ghosts to go and view the monstrous doings of their countrymen. They sit on their native hills and in sad circle pollute the day, rejoicing that their sins are surpassed.

<sup>18</sup> Minerva.

<sup>19</sup> Or, with *rubuere*, 'flushed red,' defensible as an imaginative touch (association with blood). Typically Furies are black.

Illos ut stimulis ire in discrimen apertis  
 425 audiit et sceleri nullum iam obstare pudorem,  
 advolat et medias immittit Adrastus habenas,  
 ipse quidem et regnis multum et venerabilis aevo,  
 sed quid apud tales, quis nec sua pignora curae,  
 ex ter honoros? tamen ille rogat: 'spectabimus ergo hoc,  
 430 Inachidae Tyriique, nefas? ubi iura dei que?  
 bella ubi? ne perstate animis. te deprecor, hostis  
 (quamquam, haec ira sinat, nec tu mihi sanguine longe),  
 te, gener, et iubeo. sceptri si tanta cupido est,  
 435 exuo regales habitus, i, Lerman et Argos  
 solus habe.' non verba magis suadentia frangunt  
 accensos sumptisque semel conatibus obstant,  
 quam Scytha curvatis erectus fluctibus umquam  
 Pontus Cyaneos vetuit concurrere montes.  
 ut periisse preces geminoque ad proelia fusos  
 440 pulvere cornipedes explorari que furentum  
 in digitis ammentata videt, fugit omnia linquens,  
 castra, viros, generum, Thebas, ac Fata monentem  
 conversum que iugo propellit Ariona: qualis  
 demissus curru laevae post praemia sortis  
 445 umbrarum custos mundique novissimus heres  
 palluit, amisso veniens in Tartara caelo.

Non tamen indulgit pugnae cunctata que primo  
 substitit in scelere et paulum Fortuna morata est.  
 bis cassae periire viae, bis comminus actos  
 450 avertit bonus error equos, purae que nefandi  
 sanguinis obliquis ceciderunt ictibus hastae.  
 tendunt frena manu, saevis calcaribus urgent

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<sup>20</sup> A complicated matter; see on l.224–26.

When Adrastus hears that the pair are going to battle with open taunts and that no shame any longer hinders the crime, he hastens to the spot and drives his chariot between them. He himself is right venerable in royalty and years, but what is alien dignity to such as these, who care not for their own kith and kin? Yet he beseeches: 'Sons of Inachus and Tyrians, shall we then watch this wickedness? Where is right and the gods, where war? Persist not in your passion. I pray you desist, my enemy—though did this anger permit, you too are not far from me in blood;<sup>20</sup> you, my son-in-law, I also command. If you so much desire a sceptre, I put off my royal raiment, go, have Lerna and Argos to yourself.' His words of persuasion no more change their fiery mood or check their enterprise once resolved than Scythian Pontus raised up in arching waves ever forbade the Cyanean Rocks to clash. When he sees his prayers are wasted and the horses galloping to battle in double dust and the madmen fingering their javelin straps, he flees leaving it all behind—camp, men, son-in-law, Thebes—and drives Arion on as he turns in the yoke and warns of Fate; even as the warden of the shades and last heir of the world<sup>21</sup> descending from his chariot after the adverse lot's assignment grew pale on entering Tartarus with heaven lost.

Yet Fortune gave not indulgence to the fight, but at the outset of the crime she paused and halted, delaying a little while. Twice they rode in vain, twice a kindly error made the horses swerve in collision course and the spears struck aside and fell clean of impious blood. They strain at the reins and urge the innocent creatures with cruel goads.

<sup>21</sup> He came out last in the lottery.

immeritos. movet et geminas venerabile divum  
 prodigium turmas, alternaque murmura volvunt  
 455 mussantes: iterare acies, procurrere saepe  
 impetus et totum miseris opponere bellum.

Iamdudum terris coetuque offensa dcorum  
 aversa caeli Pietas in parte sedebat,  
 non habitu quo nota prius, non ore sereno,  
 460 sed vittis exuta comam, fraternaue bella,  
 ceu soror infelix pignantum aut anxia mater,  
 deflebat, saevimque Iovem Parcasque nocentes  
 vociferans, seseque polis et luce relicta  
 descensuram Erebo et Stygios iam malle penates.  
 465 'quid me,' ait, 'ut saevis animantum ac saepe deorum  
 obstaturam animis, princeps Natura, creabas?  
 nil iam ego per populos, nusquam reverentia nostri.  
 o furor, o homines diracque Prometheos artes!  
 quam bene post Pyrrham tellus pontusque vacarent!  
 470 en mortale genus!' dixit, speculataque tempus  
 auxilio, 'temptemus,' ait, 'licet irrita coner,'  
 desiluitque polo; niveus sub nubibus atris  
 quamquam maesta deae sequitur vestigia limes.  
 vix steterat campo, subita mansuescere pace  
 475 agmina sentirique nefas; tunc ora madescent  
 pectoraque, et tacitus subrepsit fratribus horror.  
 arma etiam simulata gerens cultusque viriles,  
 nunc his, nunc illis, 'agite, ite, obsistite,' clamat,  
 'quis nati fratresque domi, quis pignora tanta

<sup>454</sup> alterna  $\omega$ : aliena P  
 vocabat P

<sup>469</sup> vacarent  $\psi$ : vacabant  $\omega$ :  
<sup>472</sup> altis P $\omega$  (*Schrader*)

<sup>22</sup> Just described; cf. 480f. The phrasing seems excessive.

The two armies too are stirred by the awful prodigy of the gods.<sup>22</sup> They mutter and roll alternate murmurings. Often they would lief renew the battle and run forward, setting the whole war in the wretches' way.

Long time had Piety been sitting in a secluded part of heaven, offended by earth and the company of the gods, not in her old familiar guise nor with face serene; but with the fillets stripped from her hair, she wept the fraternal strife, like a hapless sister or anguished mother of the combatants, railing at cruel Jove and the guilty Parcae, threatening to leave sky and light and go down to Erebus, for she now preferred a Stygian home: 'Why did you create me, primal Nature,' she says, 'to oppose the fierce passions of living beings and often of gods? I am nothing now among the nations, nowhere is any reverence for me. Ah, madness! Ah, mankind, fell arts of Prometheus! How good it had been if earth and sea had stayed empty after Pyrrha!<sup>23</sup> Behold the race of mortals!' She spoke, and spying out a time to aid, 'Let me try,' she said, 'though the attempt be in vain.' And she leapt down from heaven. Beneath the dark clouds a snow-white trail follows the goddess' footsteps, sad though they were. Scarce had she set foot on the plain when the armies turned gentle in a sudden peace and the wickedness was perceived. Then faces and breasts are moistened and silent horror steals upon the brothers. Bearing feigned arms and manly dress she cries now to these, now to those: 'Go, go, stand in their way, you who have sons and brothers at home and here too pledges so

<sup>23</sup> I.e. if Pyrrha had not repopulated them after the great flood. The indicative *vacabant* makes a stolid falsehood for which one hopes Statius is not to blame.

THEBAID

480 hic quoque! nonne palam est ultro miserescere divos?  
tela cadunt, cunctantur equi, Fors ipsa repugnat.'

Nonnihil impulerat dubios, ni torva notasset  
Tisiphone fraudes caelestique ocior igne  
afforet increpitans: 'quid belli obverteris ausis,  
485 numen iners pacique datum? cede, improba: noster  
hic campus nosterque dies; nunc sera nocentes  
defendis Thebas. ubi tunc, cum bella cieret  
Bacchus et armatas furiarent orgia matres?  
aut ubi segnis eras, dum Martius impia serpens  
490 stagna bibit, dum Cadmus arat, dum victa cadit Sphinx,  
dum rogat Oedipoden genitor, dum lampade nostra  
in thalamos Iocasta venit?' sic urguet, et ultro  
vitantem aspectus etiam pudibundaque longe  
ora reducentem premit astridentibus hydris  
495 intentatque faces; deiectam in lumina pallam  
diva trahit magnoque fugit questura Tonanti.

Tunc vero accensae stimulis maioribus irae:  
arma placent, versaeque volunt spectare cohortes.  
instaurant crudele nefas; rex impius aptat  
500 tela et funestae casum prior occupat hastae.  
illa viam medium clipei conata per orbem  
non perfert ictus atque alto vincitur auro.  
tunc exsul subit et clare funesta precatur:  
'di, quos effosso non irritus ore rogavit  
505 Oedipodes flammare nefas, non improba posco  
vota: piabo manus et eodem pectora ferro

498 volant *Heinsius*  
*Heinsius*)

505 flammate P: firmate ω (Ϛ,  
506 pectora ω: tempora P

24 'At home' = in Argos, 'here' = in Thebes.



dear.<sup>24</sup> Is it not plain that the gods take pity unasked? Weapons fall, horses baulk, Fortune herself resists.' ✓

Somewhat had she pushed them wavering, but that grim Tisiphone had marked her deceit and swifter than celestial fire was upon her, upbraiding: 'Why do you oppose enterprises of war, sluggish deity, made over to peace? Begone, shameless! This is our battlefield, our day. Too late you now defend guilty Thebes. Where were you then, when Bacchus stirred up war and his orgies drove armed matrons mad? Or where were you idling while the Martian snake drank the unholy pool, while Cadmus ploughed and the Sphinx fell vanquished, while Oedipus was questioned by his father,<sup>25</sup> while Jocasta came to the marriage chamber by our torch's light?' So she urges, and as the other shrinks from her very aspect and draws her own modest countenance far back, presses her with hissing serpents and brandishes her torch. The goddess draws her cloak down over her eyes and flees to complain to the great Thunderer.

Then indeed anger is roused by sharper goads. They want battle; the troops are changed and fain to be spectators. Again they start the cruel atrocity. The impious king makes ready his darts and is first to take the chance of a deadly spear. The weapon makes to drive through the mid orb of the shield but fails to carry its impact through and is overcome by the deep-set gold. Then the exile advances and loudly utters a deadly prayer: 'Gods whom gouged<sup>26</sup> Oedipus asked not in vain to fan the flame of crime, I make no excessive plea. I shall purify my hands and tear open

<sup>25</sup> At the crossroad, obviously, but no such dialogue is in the extant sources.

<sup>26</sup> Lit. 'with gouged face' cf. 584.

THEBAID

rescindam, dum me moriens hic scepra tenentem  
 linquat et hunc secum portet minor umbra dolorem.<sup>7</sup>  
 hasta subit velox equitis femur inter equique  
 510 ilia, letum utrique volens; sed plaga sedentis  
 laxato vitata genu; tamen irrita voti  
 cuspis in obliquis invenit vulnera costis.  
 it praeceps sonipes strictae contemptor habenae  
 arvaque sanguineo scribit rutilantia gyro.  
 515 exsultat fratris credens hunc ille cruorem  
 (credit et ipse metu), totis iamque exsul habenis  
 indulget, caecusque avidos illidit in aegrum  
 cornipedem cursus. miscentur frena manusque  
 520 telaque, et ad terram turbatis gressibus ambo  
 praecipitant. ut nocte rates, quas nubilus Auster  
 implicuit, frangunt tonsas mutantque rudentes,  
 luctataeque diu tenebris hiemique sibi que,  
 sicut erant, imo pariter sedere profundo:  
 haec pugnae facies. coeunt sine more, sine arte,  
 525 tantum animis iraque, atque ignescentia cernunt  
 per galeas odia et vultus rimantur acerbo  
 lumine: nil adeo mediae telluris, et enses  
 impliciti innexaeque manus, alternaque saevi  
 murmura ceu lituos rapiunt aut signa tubarum.  
 530 fulmineos veluti praeceps cum comminus egit  
 ira sues strictisque erexit tergora saetis:  
 igne tremunt oculi, lunataque dentibus uncis  
 ora sonant; spectat pugnas de rupe propinqua  
 venator pallens canibusque silentia suadet:  
 535 sic avidi incurrunt; necdum letalia miscent  
 vulnera, sed coeptus sanguis, facinusque peractum est.

<sup>531</sup> pectora P $\omega$  (*Heinsius*)

my breast with the same steel, providing that in death he leaves me holding the sceptre and bears this grief with him, an inferior shade.' The spear goes swift between the horseman's thigh and the horse's flank, willing death to both. But the blow was evaded by a relaxing of the rider's knee; yet, though failing of its hope, the point found a target in the horse's slanting ribs. The steed rushes headlong, scorning the tautened rein and inscribing the reddening ground with a ring of blood. The other exults, believing it his brother's, as does he himself in his fear. And now the exile gives full licence to his reins and blindly dashes his greedy onset against the wounded charger. Bridles, hands, weapons mingle, steps are confused and both come crashing to the ground. Even as at night ships that the cloudy South Wind has interlocked with each other break their oars and entangle their rigging and after long struggle with darkness and storm and themselves sink together even as they are onto the ocean floor: such is the shape of the fight. They clash without rule or skill, only with passionate anger; through their helmets they see fiery hate and search faces with hostile glare. There is no ground between them, their swords are interlocked, their hands entwined, and in their rage they catch each other's sounds like signals of trumpet or bugle. Even as a rush of anger drives boars like thunderbolts against each other, raising their backs in spiky bristles; their eyes quiver with fire, their crescent<sup>27</sup> faces resound with their hooked tusks; the hunter watches the bout from a nearby rock, paling and bidding his dogs be silent: so avidly they run at one another. Not yet do they mingle death-dealing strokes, but bloodshed has begun

<sup>27</sup> Properly of the tusks; cf. on 5.331.

THEBAID

nec iam opus est Furiis; tantum mirantur et astant  
 laudantes, hominumque dolent plus posse furores.  
 fratris uterque furens cupit affectatque cruorem  
 540 et nescit manare suum; tandem irruit exsul,  
 hortatusque manum, cui fortior ira nefasque  
 iustius, alte ensem germani in corpore pressit,  
 qua male iam plumis imus tegit inguina thorax.  
 ille dolens nondum, sed ferri frigore primo  
 545 territus, in clipeum turbatos colligit artus;  
 mox intellecto magis ac magis aeger anhelat  
 vulnere. nec parcit cedenti atque increpat hostis:  
 'quo retrahis, germane, gradus? hoc languida somno,  
 hoc regnis effeta quies, hoc longa sub umbra  
 550 imperial! exsilio rebusque exercita egenis  
 membra vides; disce arta pati nec fidere laetis.'

Sic pugnant miseri; restabat lassa nefando  
 vita duci summusque cruor, poterantque parumper  
 stare gradus; sed sponte ruit fraudemque supremam  
 555 in media iam morte parat. clamore Cithaeron  
 erigitur, fraterque ratus vicisse levavit  
 ad caelum palmas: 'bene habet. non irrita vovi,  
 cerno graves oculos atque ora natantia leto.  
 huc aliquis propere sceptrum atque insigne comarum,  
 560 dum videt.' haec dicens gressus admovit et arma,  
 ceu templis decus et patriae laturus ovanti,  
 arma etiam spoliare cupit; nondum ille peractis  
 manibus ultrices animam servabat in iras.  
 utque superstantem pronumque in pectora sensit,

551 arma P $\omega$  (SB<sup>2</sup>)

<sup>28</sup> Little strips of metal.

<sup>29</sup> *Arma* in the manuscripts is irrelevant to Polynices' sufferings in exile (SB<sup>2</sup>).

and the evil deed is done. There is no more need of the Furies; they only marvel and stand by applauding, chagrined that men's madness is mightier than their own. Each furiously desires and seeks his brother's blood and knows not that his own is flowing. At length the exile rushes in and, exhorting his hand, he whose anger is the stronger and crime the juster, plunges his sword deep into his kinsman's body, where the end of the corselet barely covers the groin with feathers.<sup>28</sup> The other felt no pain as yet, but alarmed by the first chill of the steel gathered his troubled limbs behind his shield. Presently, more and more conscious of the wound, he gasps distressed. His enemy spares him not as he retreats and taunts him: 'Brother, whither do you retire? This is what comes of drowsy languor, regal repose grown feeble! This comes of sheltered rule protracted! Here you see limbs hardened by exile and want. Learn to bear privations<sup>29</sup> and not to trust happy times.'

So the wretches fight. Life yet remained, though weary, in the wicked king and a residue of blood, his feet could bear him for a little while. But he collapses on purpose and in his death throes prepares a final trick. Cithaeron starts up with the clamour and his brother, thinking himself victorious, raises hands to heaven: 'It is good. My prayers were not in vain. I see his eyes heavy, his face swimming in death. Here, someone, quick—the sceptre and the badge on his head while he still sees!' Thus speaking he moves toward the dying man and his arms—as though to bear them as a temple ornament to his triumphant country—his arms too he wills to take as spoil. But the king was not yet a ghost; he was keeping his life for avenging wrath. When he sees his brother standing over him and stooping toward his

THEBAID

565 erigit occulte ferrum vitaeque labantis  
 reliquias tenues odio supplevit, et ensem  
 iam laetus fati fraterno in corde reliquit.  
 ille autem: 'vivisne an adhuc manet ira superstes,  
 perfide, nec sedes unquam meriture quietas?  
 570 huc mecum ad manes! illic quoque pacta reposcam,  
 si modo Agenorei stat Cnosia iudicis urna,  
 qua reges punire datur.' nec plura locutus  
 concidit et totis fratrem gravis obruit armis.

Ite, truces animae, funestaque Tartara leto  
 575 polluite et cunctas Erebi consumite poenas.  
 vosque malis hominum, Stygiae, iam parcite, divae:  
 omnibus in terris scelus hoc omnique sub aevo  
 viderit una dies, monstrumque infame futuris  
 excidat, et soli memorent haec proelia reges.

580 At genitor sceleris comperto fine profundis  
 crupit tenebris saevoque in limine profert  
 mortem imperfectam: veteri stat sordida tabo  
 utraque canities, et durus sanguine crinis  
 obnubit furiale caput; procul ora genaeque  
 585 intus et effossae squalent vestigia lucis.  
 virgo autem inpositae sustentat pondera lacvae,  
 dextra sedet baculo. qualis si puppe relictā  
 exosus manes pigri sulcator Averni  
 exeat ad superos solemque et pallida turbet  
 590 astra, nec ipse diu fortis patiensque superni  
 aëris; interea longum cessante magistro  
 crescat opus, totisque exspectent saecula ripis:  
 talis init campum, comitique extrema gementi,

581 erupit P: erepsit ω in P: e ω

## BOOK 11

chest, he secretly raises his sword and eking out the meagre remnants of his ebbing life with hate, leaves the steel in his brother's heart, now happy to die. But the other: 'Do you live? Or does your anger still remain, surviving you, traitor, who shall never deserve the abodes of peace? Hither with me to the shades! There too I shall demand what was agreed, if but stands the Cnosian urn of the Agenorean judge,<sup>30</sup> whereby kings may be punished.' Saying no more, he fell and covered his brother with the weight of all his arms.

Go, fierce souls, pollute grisly Tartarus with your death and exhaust all the pains of Erebus. And you, Stygian goddesses, spare now the ills of mankind. In all lands and every age let one day only have seen such a crime. Let the monstrous infamy be forgotten by future generations and only kings remember this duel.

But when the father learned of the crime's ending, he broke out from his dark recess and on the cruel threshold brings into view his uncompleted death. His twofold hoariness<sup>31</sup> is stiff and filthy with ancient gore and hair matted with blood veils his Fury-driven head. His eye sockets sink deep with foul traces of gouged light. The girl bears the weight of his left hand on her shoulder, his right rests on his staff. It was as if the cleaver of lazy Avernus,<sup>32</sup> weary of the dead, were to leave his bark and go to the upper world to trouble sun and paling stars, himself not stout for long or patient of the upper air; meanwhile the long work grows as the skipper lags and the generations wait all along the banks: thus he enters the field and to his compan-

<sup>30</sup> Minos, son of Jupiter and Europa.

<sup>31</sup> Hair and beard.

<sup>32</sup> Charon.

## THEBAID

595 'due,' ait, 'ad natos patremque recentibus, oro,  
 iniee funeribus!' eunetatur neseia virgo  
 quid paret; impediunt iter implieitosque morantur  
 arma, viri, eurrus, altaque in strage seniles  
 defieunt gressus et dux miseranda laborat.  
 ut quaesita diu monstravit corpora elamor  
 600 virginis, insternit totos frigentibus artus.  
 nec vox ulla seni: iacet immugitque cruentis  
 vulneribus, nec verba diu temptata sequuntur.  
 dum traetat galeas atque ora latentia quaerit,  
 tandem muta diu genitor suspiria solvit:  
 605 'tarda, meam, Pietas, longo post tempore mentem  
 pereutis? estne sub hoe hominis elementia corde?  
 vincis io miserum, vincis, Natura, parentem!  
 en habeo gemitus laerimaeque per arida serpunt  
 vulnera et in molles sequitur manus impia planctus.  
 610 aeepite infandae iusta exsequialia mortis,  
 crudeles nimiumque mei. nee noscere natos  
 alloquiumque aptare licet; die, virgo, preeanti,  
 quem teneo? quo nunc vestras ego saevus honore  
 prosequar inferias? o si fodienda redirent  
 615 lumina et in vultus saevire ex more potestas!  
 heu dolor, heu iusto magis exaudita parentis  
 vota malaeque preees! quisnam fuit ille deorum  
 qui stetit orantem iuxta praereptaque verba  
 dictavit Fatis? furor illa et movit Erinys  
 620 et pater et genetrix et regna oculique eadentes;  
 nil ego: per Ditem iuro duleesque tenebras  
 immeritamque dueem, subeam sic Tartara digna  
 morte, nec irata fugiat me Laius umbra.  
 ei mihi, quos nexus fratrum, quae vulnera tracto!  
 625 solvite, quaeso, manus infestaque vincula tandem



ion as she sobs her heart out: 'Lead me,' he says, 'to my sons, cast the father, I beg, on the fresh corpses.' The girl hesitates, not knowing what he intends. Arms and men and chariots hamper their way, entangling and delaying, and in the deep carnage the old man's steps falter and his pitiful guide labours. When the girl's cry revealed the long-sought bodies, he strews all his limbs over the chill forms. Nor can the old man speak; he lies and moans upon the bloody wounds, but the words long attempted do not follow. But while the father strokes the helmets and seeks the lurking faces, at last he resolves his long, silent sighs: 'Tardy Piety, after so long do you smite my soul? Does human mercy exist in this heart of mine? Nature, you conquer, behold, you conquer this unhappy parent! See, I can groan and tears glide through these dry wounds and the impious hand follows and womanlike beats the breast. Cruel ones, too truly mine, receive due obsequies of a monstrous death. I cannot even know my sons and fit my words. Girl, tell me as I beg, which am I holding? With what respect can your cruel father now escort your funeral? Ah, would that my eyes could return to me to gouge and the power to rage against my face as of old! Ah grief and parental vows heard too well and evil prayers! Which of the gods stood beside me as I prayed and caught my words to tell to the Fates?' 'Twas madness that caused it and a Fury and my father and mother and throne and falling eyes—I had no part in it. I swear it by Dis and the darkness I love and my blameless guide, so let me enter Tartarus by a worthy death, so let not Laius shun me with angry shade! Alas, what brotherly twinings, what wounds do I touch? Release your hands, I beg, divide at last your angry bonds,

- dividite, et medium nunc saltem admittite patrem.<sup>7</sup>  
 talia dequestus paulatim insumpserat iras  
 mortis, et occulte telum, ne nata vetaret,  
 quaerebat; sed cauta manu subtraxerat enses  
 630 Antigone. furit inde senex: 'ubi noxia tela?  
 heu Furiae! num totum abiit in corpora ferrum?'  
 dicentem comes aegra levat mutumque dolorcm  
 ipsa premit, saevum gaudens planxisse parentem.  
 Olim autem inceptae clamore exterrita pugnae  
 635 regina extulerat notum penetralibus ensem,  
 ensem sceptriferi spolium lacrimabile Lai.  
 multaque cum superis et diro quæsta cubili  
 et nati furiis et primi coniugis umbris,  
 luctata est dextrae, et prono vix pectore ferrum  
 640 intravit tandem: venas perumpit aniles  
 vulnus et infelix lustratur sanguine lectus.  
 illius exili stridentem in pectore plagam  
 Ismene collapsa super lacrimisque comisque  
 siccabat plangens: qualis Marathonide silva  
 645 flebilis Erigone caesi prope funera patris  
 questibus absumptis tristem iam solvere nodum  
 coeperat et fortes ramos moritura legebat.  
 Et iam laeta ducum spes elusisse duorum  
 res Amphionias alio sceptrumque maligna  
 650 transtulerat Fortuna manu, Cadmique tenebat

628 ni nata  $\omega$ : nita P(*cod. Oxon. saec. xii*)

629 cauta ex casa P *man. rec.*, Bentley; casta  $\omega$

632 aegra  $\omega$ : atra P

639 dextrae P: -ra  $\omega$

646 solvere  $\omega$ : vulnere P

and now at least let your father come between you!' So lamenting, he little by little took on death's angers and secretly, lest<sup>33</sup> his daughter forbid, sought a weapon. But wary Antigone had removed the swords from his reach. Then in fury the old man: 'Where are the guilty weapons? Ah Furies! Has all the steel vanished into their bodies?' As he speaks, his suffering companion raises him up, suppressing her own grief in silence and happy in that her savage sire had mourned.

Some time earlier the queen, alarmed by the noise of combat begun, had brought out from a hidden place the well-known sword, the sword, lamentable spoil of sceptred Laius. Long complaint she made of the High Ones and the accursed bed and her son's madness and her first husband's shade; then she struggled with her right hand,<sup>34</sup> and with breast leaning forward finally managed to enter the steel. The wound breaks her aged veins and the hapless couch is purged with blood. Ismene collapsed upon the blow that squeaked in her meagre bosom and dried it with tears and hair as she lamented. So sorrowful Erigone weeping in the Marathonian wood beside the body of her slain father, her plaints exhausted, began to untie the sad knot<sup>35</sup> and choose sturdy branches intent on death.

And now Fortune, happy to have cheated the hopes of the two chieftains, had in her malice transferred Amphion's realm and sceptre to another: Creon held

<sup>33</sup> The very rare if not apocryphal use of *ni* = *ne* in classical writing is best discounted, I think.

<sup>34</sup> She tried to plunge the sword into her breast but her hand was too feeble. *Dextrae* is emphatically the better reading.

<sup>35</sup> Of her girdle, with which to hang herself.

- iura Creon. miser heu bellorum terminus! illi  
 pugnant fratres. hunc et Mavortia clarant  
 semina, et impensus patriae paulo ante Menoeceus  
 conciliat populis. scandit fatale tyrannis  
 655 flebilis Aoniae solium: pro blanda potestas  
 et sceptri malesuadus amor! numquamne priorum  
 haerebunt documenta novis? iuvat ecce nefasto  
 stare loco regimenque manu tractare cruentum.  
 quid, melior Fortuna, potes! iam flectere patrem  
 660 incipit atque datis abolere Menoecea regnis.  
 primum adeo saevis imbutus moribus aulae  
 (indiciū specimenque sui) iubet igne supremo  
 arceri Danaos, nudoque sub axe relinqui  
 infelix bellum et tristes sine sedibus umbras.  
 665 mox reducem Ogygiae congressus limine portae  
 Oedipodem extimuit paulum, seseque minorem  
 confessus tacite, promptanque coercuit iram;  
 sed redit in regem caecumque audentius hostem  
 increpitans, 'procul,' inquit, 'abi, victoribus omen  
 670 invisum, et Furias averte ac moenia lustra  
 discessu Thebana tuo. spes longa peracta est:  
 vade, iacent nati. quae iam tibi vota supersunt?'  
 Horruit instinctu rabido, steteruntque trementes  
 ceu visu praesente genae, seniumque recessit.  
 675 tunc natam baculumque manu dimisit, et irae  
 innixus tumido vocem de pectore rumpit:

652 clamant P $\omega$  (*Grotius*)

660 incipis  $\zeta$

661 imbutum m- P: -tus amoribus  $\omega$  (*Barth*)

674 praesente genae  $\omega$ : squalore comae P

Cadmus' power. Alas, a sorry end to the war! For him the brothers had fought. The seed of Mavors<sup>36</sup> make him illustrious and Menoeceus lately sacrificed for his country gains him favour with the people. Weep for him,<sup>37</sup> he mounts Aonia's throne, fatal to tyrants. Ah cozening power, ill-counseling love of the sceptre! Will newcomers never keep in mind the examples of their predecessors? He is glad, see, to stand in the accursed place and handle the bloody helm. Powerful indeed is Fortune when she changes for the better! He now begins to turn aside his father's heart and wipe out Menoeceus after the gift of monarchy. First, imbued with the cruel ways of a palace he gives order as an indication and specimen of his quality that the Danaï be barred from funeral fire and their luckless army and sad homeless shades left under the naked sky. Presently at the threshold of the Ogygian gate he encountered Oedipus returning. Briefly he quailed, silently confessing himself the lesser, and checked his ready anger. But soon he is the king again and boldly chides his sightless enemy. 'Get you far,' he says, 'hateful omen to victors. Turn away your Furies and purge the walls of Thebes by your departure. Your long-cherished hope is accomplished. Go, your sons lie low. What now is left you to pray for?'

Oedipus started in mad excitement, his cheeks stood quivering as though he saw, his old age fell away. Then he thrust aside daughter and staff; leaning upon anger, he lets words burst from his swelling breast: 'Have you time for

<sup>36</sup> The dragon's teeth, his ancestry. Let who will read *clamant* ('shout') but not translate 'proclaim.'

<sup>37</sup> Cf. *miserande* in 678. Taken with *Aoniae, flebilis* is innocuous at best.

## THEBAID

- 'iamne vacat saevire, Creon? modo perfida regna  
 fortunaeque locum nostrae, miserande, subisti,  
 et tibi iam fas est regum calcare ruinas?
- 680 iam tumultis victos, socios iam moenibus arces?  
 macte, potes digne Thebarum sceptrata tueri:  
 haec tua prima dies. sed cur nova contrahis amens  
 iura? quid anguste tantos metiris honores?  
 exsilium intendis. timida inclementia regum
- 685 ista! feros avidus quin protinus imbuis enses?  
 crede, licet: veniat cupidus parere satellites  
 intrepidusque secet non evitantia colla.  
 incipe! an exspectas ut pronus supplice dextra  
 sterner et immitis domini vestigia quaeram?
- 690 finge autem temptare sines? mihine ulla minaris  
 supplicia aut ullos reris superesse timores?  
 linquere tecta iubes? caelum terramque reliqui  
 sponte, atque ultricem crudelis in ora retorsi  
 non ullo cogente manum: quid tale iubere,
- 695 rex inimice, potes? fugio excedoque nefandis  
 sedibus; an refert quo funera longa measque  
 transportem tenebras? ne non gens cuncta precanti  
 concedat patriae quantum miser incubo terrae?  
 sed dulces Thebae. nimirum hic clarior ortus,
- 700 et meliora meos permulcent sidera vultus,  
 hic genetrix natique! habeas Thebana regasque  
 moenia, quo Cadmus, quo Laius omine rexit  
 quoque ego; sic thalamos, sic pignora fida capessas;  
 nec tibi sit virtus Fortunam evadere dextra,
- 705 sed lucem deprehensus ames. satis omina sanxi,

cruelty already, Creon? Only just now have you risen to perfidious royalty, my fortune's place, you pitiable being, and already 'tis your right to trample on the ruin of kings? Already do you bar the vanquished from their tombs, your allies<sup>38</sup> from the walls? Well done! You can worthily maintain the sceptre of Thebes; such is your first day. But why do you restrict your new prerogatives, fool? Why do you measure such dignity in so niggardly a fashion? You threaten exile. A timorous sort of royal inclemency, this! Why not be greedy and dip your savage sword straightway? You can do it, believe me. Let some obsequious henchman come and fearlessly sever an unflinching neck. Begin! Or are you waiting for me to fall prostrate and seek the feet of my harsh master with beseeching hand? Suppose I try, will you allow it?<sup>39</sup> Me do you threaten with any punishment or think that any terrors remain? You bid me leave this roof? I left sky and earth of my own will and turned an avenging hand against my face, none forcing me. King, my enemy, what can you command like that? I fly and leave the accursed dwelling. Or matters it where I take my long death, my darkness? Or am I to fear lest any people refuse my misery the boon of so much ground as I cover in my country? But Thebes is sweet: oh sure, sunrise is brighter here and better stars soothe my countenance, mother and sons are here! Keep Thebes city and rule it with the same omen as Cadmus ruled and Laius and I. May you so marry and get you sons as trusty! May you not have the courage to escape Fortune with your hand; when she catches you, may you love life! So much for my omens. Daughter, come, lead

<sup>38</sup> As opposed to the vanquished 'Greeks.' He means himself.

<sup>39</sup> The tyrant would not tolerate an appeal.

THEBAID

duc age, nata, procul. quid te autem luctibus addo?  
da, rex magne, ducem.'

Timuit miseranda relinqu

- Antigone mutatque preces: 'felicia per te  
regna, verende Creou, sanctasque Menoeceos umbras:  
710 da veniam afflicto dictisque ignosce superbis.  
hunc morem fandi longae fecere querelae;  
nec soli ferus iste tibi: sic Fata deosque  
alloquitur, durus luctu, facilisque nec ipsi  
saepe mihi; pridem indomito sub pectore vivit  
715 libertas misera et saevae spes aspera mortis.  
et nunc ecce tuas irritat callidus iras  
suppliciumque cupit; sed tu maioribus, oro,  
imperii potiare bonis, altusque iacentes  
praetereas, et magna ducum vereare priorum  
720 funera. et hic quondam solio sublimis et armis  
saepius opem miseris et iura, potentibus aequus  
supplicibusque, dabat, cui nunc ex agmine tanto  
una comes, necdum exsul erat. felicibus hicne  
obstat? in hunc odiis et regni viribus exis,  
725 hunc abigis tectis? an ne prope limina clarum  
ingemat et votis intempestivus oberret?  
pone metum, procul usque tua summotus ab aula  
flebit; ego erectum subigam et servire docebo,  
coetibus abducam solaque in sede recondam:  
730 exsul erit. nam quae migranti externa patebunt  
mocnia? vis Argos eat hostilesque Mycenae  
squalidus irreptet, victique ad limen Adrasti  
Aonias refrat clades, tenuemque precatur  
rex Thebanus opem? miserae quid crimina gentis  
735 pandere, quid casus iuvat ostentare pudendos?



BOOK 11

me away. But why add you to my sorrows? Give me a guide, great king.'

Poor Antigone feared to be abandoned and made a different entreaty: 'I pray you, reverend Creon, by your happy reign and Menoeceus' sacred shade, pardon the afflicted and forgive his proud words. Long plaints have given him this fashion of speech. Not to you only is he fierce. So he addresses the Fates and the gods, hard from sorrow. Often he is not easy even to me. Long in his untamed heart has lived freedom in misery and harsh hope of a cruel death. Even now, see, he is artfully provoking your wrath and would fain be punished. But do you, I beg, enjoy the larger benefits of sovereignty; from your height pass by the prostrate, and respect the mighty downfalls of former rulers. He too once sat aloft on his throne with his men-at-arms around him, gave aid and justice to the unfortunate, even-handed to the powerful and the suppliant, he who now from so great a host has but one woman to attend him—and he not yet an exile! Is he a stumbling block to the fortunate? Against him do you go forth in hatred and royal power? Him do you drive from your house? Or is it lest he groan too loudly at your door and get in your way with his untimely prayers? Fear not, he shall weep far removed from your palace. I shall subdue him when his mood rises and teach him servitude. I shall lead him from company and hide him in a solitary dwelling. He shall be an exile. For what alien cities will be open to his wandering? Would you have him go to Argos, creep in squalor into hostile Mycenaë, bring news of Aonian calamities to vanquished Adrastus' gate and beg meagre succour—a king of Thebes? What avail to expose the reproaches of our unhappy race, to display our shameful misadventures? Hide,

conde, precor, quodcumque sumus. nec longa precamur  
 dona, Creon: miserere senis, maestosque parentis  
 hic, precor, hic manes indulge ponere: certe  
 Thebanos sepelire licet.' sic orat humique  
 740 volvitur; abducit genitor saevumque minatur  
 indignans veniam. qualis leo rupe sub alta,  
 quem viridem quondam silvae montesque tremebant,  
 iam piger et longo iacet exarmatus ab aevo,  
 magna tamen facies et non adeunda senectus;  
 745 et si demissas veniat mugitus ad aures,  
 erigitur meminitque sui, viresque solutas  
 ingemit et campis alios regnare leones.

Flectitur affatu, sed non tamen omnia rector  
 supplicis indulget laerimis partemque reedit  
 750 muneris. 'haud,' inquit, 'patriis prohibebere longe  
 finibus, occursu dum non pia templa domosque  
 commacules. habeant te lustra tuusque Cithaeron;  
 atque haec eece tuis tellus habitabilis umbris,  
 qua bellum geminaeque iacent in sanguine gentes.'  
 755 sic ait, et ficto comitum vulgique gementis  
 assensu limen tumidus regale petebat.

Interea pulsi vallum exitiale Pelasgi  
 destituunt furto; nulli sua signa suosque  
 ductor: eunt taeti passim et pro funere pulchro  
 760 dedecorem amplexi vitam reditusque pudendos.  
 nox favet et grata profugos amplectitur umbra.

746 solutas  $\psi$ : -tus P: peractas  $\omega$

## BOOK 11

I pray, whatever we are. The boon I ask is not for long, Creon. Pity an old man and give me leave to lay here, I pray, my parent's sad remains, ay, here. Thebans at least may be given burial.' So she entreats grovelling. Her father leads her away, savagely threatening, scorning pardon: like to a lion under a high crag, at whom in his prime forest and mountain once trembled; now he lies inactive, disarmed by length of years, yet his face is grand and his old age best left alone; and if a sound of lowing come to his drooping ears, he rises up and remembers himself, groaning for his strength decayed and that other lions bear lordship in the plains.

The ruler is swayed by her appeal, but grants not the suppliant's tears all she asks, paring back part of his bounty: 'You shall not be banished far from your country's bounds, so long as you do not sully her sacred shrines and homes by your presence. Let the wilds have you, and your own Cithaeron. And see, this earth where the war was and two peoples lie in their blood can be habitation to your shade.' So says he, and haughtily returns to his regal threshold amid the feigned assent of his attendants and the sorrowing populace.

Meanwhile the vanquished Pelasgi leave by stealth their fatal rampart. None have their own standard and their own leader. They go silently, pell-mell, embracing an inglorious life and shameful return instead of an honourable death. Night favours them and welcome darkness shrouds the fugitives.

## LIBER XII

Nondum cuncta polo vigil inclinaverat astra  
ortus et instantem cornu tenuiore videbat  
Luna diem, trepidas ubi iam Tithonia nubes  
discutit ac reduci magnum parat aethera Phoebō:  
5 agmina iam raris Dircaea penatibus errant,  
noctis quæsta moras; quanvis tunc otia tandem  
et primus post bella sopor, tamen ægra quietem  
pax fugat et sævi meminit victoria belli.  
vix primo proferre gradum et munimina valli  
10 solvere, vix totas reserare audacia portas;  
stant veteres ante ora metus campi que vacantis  
horror: ut assiduo iactatis æquore tellus  
prima labat, sic attoniti nil cominus ire  
mirantur fusasque putant assurgere turmas.  
15 sic ubi perspicuæ scandentem limina turris  
Idaliæ volucres fulvum aspexerunt draconem,  
intus agunt natos et feta cubilia vallant  
unguibus imbellesque citant ad proelia pennas;  
mox ruerit licet ille retro, tamen æra nudum  
20 candida turba timet, tandemque ingressa volatus  
horret et a mediis etiamnum respicit astris.

<sup>3</sup> trepidas Pψ: tep- ω

<sup>8</sup> sævi . . . belli ω: b- . . . s- P

## BOOK 12

Not yet had wakeful sunrise lowered all the stars from heaven and the moon with fading horn saw day looming, when already Tithonia disperses the hurrying clouds and prepares the great ether for Phoebus' return: the Dircaean forces already wander from their scattered<sup>1</sup> homes, complaining of night's delays. Although they have repose at last and this is their first slumber after battle, yet an uneasy peace banishes rest and victory remembers fierce war. Scarce at first have they daring to step forward and dismantle the barriers of the rampart, scarce wholly to unbar the gates. Before their eyes stand their old fears and the horror of the empty plain. As for men long tossed upon the sea the earth heaves at first, so in shock they wonder that nothing opposes them and imagine that the routed squadrons are rising against them. So when Idalian birds<sup>2</sup> have seen a tawny snake climbing the threshold of a conspicuous tower, they drive their chicks inside and fence their full nests with their claws and rouse unwarlike wings to battle; though presently he hasten backward, the white flock fear the naked air and, launching at last on flight, still look back in terror from amid the stars.

<sup>1</sup> The survivors were few and far between.

<sup>2</sup> Doves.

THEBAID

Itur in exsanguem populum bellique iacentis  
 reliquias, qua quemque dolor luctusque, cruenti,  
 exegere, duces; hi tela, hi corpora, at illi  
 25 caesorum tantum ora vident alienaque iuxta  
 pectora; pars currus deflent viduisque loquuntur,  
 hoc solum quia restat, equis; pars oscula figunt  
 vulneribus magnis et de virtute queruntur.  
 frigida digeritur strages: patuere recisae  
 30 cum capulis hastisque manus mediisque sagittae  
 luminibus stantes; multis vestigia caedis  
 nulla: ruunt planctu pendente et ubique parato.  
 at circum informes truncos miserabile surgit  
 certamen, qui iusta ferant, qui funera ducant.  
 35 saepe etiam hostiles (lusit Fortuna parumper)  
 decepti flere viros; nec certa facultas  
 noscere quem miseri vitent calcentve cruorem.  
 at quibus est illaesa domus vacuique dolores,  
 aut deserta vagi Danaum tentoria lustrant  
 40 immittuntque faces, aut (quae post bella voluptas)  
 quaerunt dispersi iaceat quo pulvere Tydeus,  
 an rapti pateat specus auguris, aut ubi divum  
 hostis, an aetheriae vivant per membra favillae.  
 iam lacrimis exempta dies, nec serus abegit  
 45 Vesper: amant miseri lamenta malisque fruuntur.  
 nec subiere domos, sed circum funera pernox  
 turba sedet, vicibusque datis alterna gementes  
 igne feras planctuque fugant; nec dulcibus astris  
 victa, nec assiduo coierunt lumina fletu.

23 qua quemque ω: quacum- P

They come to the lifeless multitude, the remnants of the fallen army, each where grief and mourning, their bleeding guides, drive them. Some see weapons and bodies, but others only the faces of the slain and alien breasts beside them. Part mourn the chariots and speak to the widowed horses, since this is all that remains; part plant kisses on great wounds and complain of valour. The cold carnage is sorted out. Severed hands with sword hilts and spears come to view and arrows standing full in eyes. Many find no traces of slaughter, they rush with hands poised for lament and everywhere in readiness. But about shapeless trunks rises piteous contention, who should render what is due and lead the funerals. Often deceived, they wept for enemy warriors, as Fortune jested awhile, nor had they any sure means of knowing what blood to avoid in their misery and what to trample. But those whose homes are unscathed and whose sorrows leave them free<sup>3</sup> either range wandering through the deserted tents of the Danaï and throw firebrands or (pleasure after fight) seek dispersed in what dust Tydeus lies, whether the ravished augur's cavern yawns, or where is the enemy of the gods and whether heavenly ashes live among his limbs. Already they had consumed the day with weeping, nor did late Vesper drive them away. In their misery they love lamentation and delight in sorrows. They went not home but all night long the multitude sat around their dead taking turns to groan and scare off wild beasts with fire and breast-beating. Their eyes did not close, overborne neither by the sweet stars nor by continual tears.

<sup>3</sup> They shared the general grief but did not have to seek out a corpse.

THEBAID

- 50 Tertius Aurorae pugnabat Lucifer, et iam  
 montibus orbatis, lucorum gloria, magnae  
 Teumesi venere trabes et amica Cithaeron  
 silva rogis; ardent excisae viscera gentis  
 molibus exstructis: supremo munere gaudent  
 55 Ogygii manes; qucritur miserabile Graium  
 nuda cohors vetitumque gemens circumvolat ignem.  
 accipit et saevi manes Eteoclis iniquos  
 haudquaquam regalis honos; Argivus haberi  
 frater iussus adhuc atque exsulc pellitur umbra.
- 60 At non plebeio fumare Menoecea busto  
 rex genitor Thebaeque sinunt, nec roboram vilem  
 struxerunt de more rogum, sed bellicus agger  
 curribus et clipeis Graiorumque omnibus armis  
 sternitur; hostiles super ipse, ut victor, acervos  
 65 pacifera lauro crinem vittisque decorus  
 accubat: haud aliter quam cum poscentibus astris  
 laetus in accensa iacuit Tiryntius Oeta.  
 spirantes super inferias, captiva Pelasgum  
 corpora frenatosque, pater, solacia forti  
 70 bellorum, mactabat equos; his arduus ignis  
 palpitat, et gemitus tandem erupere paterni:  
 'o nisi magnanimae nimius te laudis inisset  
 ardor, Echionios mecum venerande penates  
 atque ultra recture puer, venientia qui nunc  
 75 gaudia et ingratum regni mihi munus acerbas:  
 tu superum convexa licet coetusque perenni  
 (credo equidem) virtute colas, mihi flebile semper  
 numen eris; ponant aras excelsaque Thebae  
 templa dicent: uni fas sit lugere parenti.

<sup>59</sup> exul ζ

<sup>69</sup> forti Pψ: -tes ω: sorti(s) ψ



A third Lucifer was striving with Aurora and already the mountains were bereaved and the glory of the woods, mighty timbers of Teumesos and Cithaeron, forest friendly to pyres, came on. The flesh of a people in destruction burns on structured piles. Ogygian spirits rejoice at the final office. The naked troop of Greeks makes pitiable moan and flits lamenting around the forbidden fire. Burial honour receives even the wicked spirit of fierce Eteocles, though by no means regal, whereas by command his brother is held still an Argive and his banished shade rebuffed.

But the king his father and Thebes do not suffer Menocceus to smoke on a plebeian mound nor did timbers build up a common, ordinary pyre; but a warlike pile is strewn with chariots and shields and all the arms of the Greeks. Himself, as victor, his hair adorned with peace-bearing laurel and fillets, lies upon the hostile heaps, not otherwise than the Tiryinthian lay joyfully on kindled Oeta as the stars claimed him. Thereon the father sacrificed living offerings, Pelasgian captives and bridled horses, solace to the battle-brave. With them the tall fire quivers, and at last the paternal lament breaks forth: 'O my son, who if too strong a passion for noble glory had not possessed you, would have ruled Echion's city along with me and after me, reverend boy, who now embitter my coming joys and the ungrateful office of monarchy: though you dwell in the vault of the High Ones and attend the companies of the gods with your immortal valour (I believe it), for me you will ever be one to weep as well as worship. Let Thebes set up altars and dedicate lofty temples; let only your father

## THEBAID

- 80 et nunc heu quae digna tibi sollemnia quasve  
largiar exsequias? nec si fatale potestas  
Argos et impulsas cineri miscere Mycenas,  
meque super, cui vita (nefas!) et sanguine nati  
partus honos. eademne dies, eadem impia bella  
85 te, puer, et diros misere in Tartara fratres?  
et nunc Oedipodi par est fortuna doloris  
ac mihi? quam similes gemimus, bone Iuppiter, umbras!  
accipe, nate, tui nova libamenta triumphii,  
accipe et hoc regimen dextrae frontisque superbae  
90 vincula, quae patri minimum laetanda dedisti.  
regem te, regem tristes Eteocleos umbrae  
aspiciant.' simul haec dicens crinemque manumque  
destruit, accensaque iterat violentius ira:  
'saevum agedum immitemque vocent si funera Lernaee  
95 tecum ardere veto; longos utinam addere sensus  
corporibus cacloque animas Ereboque nocentes  
pellere fas, ipsumque feras, ipsum unca volucrum  
ora sequi atque artus regum monstrare nefandos!  
ei mihi, quod positos humus alma diesque resolvet!  
100 quare iterum repetens iterumque edico: suprema  
ne quis ope et flammis ausit iuvisse Pelasgos;  
aut nece facta luet numeroque explebit adempta  
corpora. per superos magnumque Menoecea iuro.'  
dixit, et abreptum comites in tecta ferebant.  
105 Flebilis interea vacuis comitatus ab Argis  
(Fama trahit miseras) orbae viduaeque ruebant  
Inachides ceu capta manus; sua vulnere cuique,  
par habitus cunctis, deiecti in pectora erines

have the right to mourn. And now, alas, what worthy rites, what obsequies shall I bestow upon you? I could not, even if I had power to bring down fatal Argos and Mycenae and mingle them with your ashes and myself on top of them, me whose life (outrage!) and title have been gained by my son's blood. Did the same day, the same impious warfare send you, my boy, and the fell brothers to Tartarus? And do Oedipus and I now bear an equal lot of sorrow? How like, kind Jupiter, are the shades we mourn! Receive, my son, new offerings for your triumph, receive this that guides the hand and this that binds a proud brow,<sup>4</sup> gifts you gave your father little to his joy. Let the sad shade of Eteocles see you as king, ay, king.' Thus saying, he strips head and hand and, his wrath kindling, speaks again more violently: 'Come, let them call me cruel and merciless if I forbid Lerna's dead to burn with you. Would it were given me to add long sensation to their bodies and drive their guilty souls from heaven and Erebus, and myself to seek wild beasts and hooked beaks of birds and show them the accursed limbs of the kings! Alas that kindly soil and time shall resolve them where they lie! So again I repeat it, again I announce: Let none dare to give succour to the Pelasgi with aiding flames! Else he shall expiate his deed with his death and make up for the bodies he takes with his own. I swear it by the High Ones and great Menoeceus.' He spoke, and his attendants took him away and bore him to the palace.

Meanwhile from empty Argos comes hastening a tearful company (Rumour brings the poor souls), the bereaved and widowed daughters of Inachus, like a band of captives. Each has her own wounds, all a like guise: their hair hangs

<sup>4</sup> Sceptre and diadem.

THEBAID

accinctique sinus; manant lacera ora cruentis  
 110 unguibus, et molles planctu crevere lacerti.  
 prima per attonitas nigrac regina catervae,  
 tristibus illabens famulis iterumque resurgens,  
 quaerit inops Argia vias; non regia cordi,  
 non pater: una fides, unum Polynicis amati  
 115 nomen in ore sedet; Dirccn infaustaque Cadmi  
 moenia posthabitis velit incoluisse Mycenis.  
 proxima Lernaeo Calydonidas agmine mixtas  
 Tydeos exsequiis trahit haud cessura sorori  
 Deipyle; scelus illa quidem morsusque profanos  
 120 audierat miseranda viri, sed cuncta iacenti  
 infelix ignoscit amor. post aspera visu,  
 ac deflenda tamen, digno plangore Nealce  
 Hippomedonta ciens. vatis mox impia coniunx  
 heu vacuos positura rogos. postrema gementum  
 125 agmina Maenaliae ducit comes orba Dianae,  
 et gravis Evadne: dolet haec queriturque labores  
 audacis pueri, magni memor illa mariti  
 it torvum lacrimans summisque irascitur astris.  
 illas et lucis Hecate speculata Lycaeis  
 130 prosequitur gemitu, duplexque ad litus euntes  
 planxit ab Isthmiaco genetrix Thebana sepulcro,  
 noctivagumque gregem, quamvis sibi luget, Eleusin  
 flevit et arcanos errantibus extulit ignes.  
 ipsa per aversos ducit Saturnia calles  
 135 occultatque vias, ne plebs congressa suorum  
 ire vetet percatque ingentis gloria coepti.  
 nec non functa ducum refovcudi corpora curam

<sup>5</sup> Ino.

<sup>6</sup> *Eleusin* = Ceres (Demeter) in effect, but not in form (con-

BOOK 12

down upon their bosoms, their gowns are girt up, their torn faces stream from bloody nails, their soft arms are swollen with blows. First among the distraught, Argia, queen of the black troop, sinking upon her sorrowing handmaidens and rising again, helplessly seeks her way. She cares not for palace or father. She has one loyalty; one name, her beloved Polynices, is on her lips. She would fain leave Myeenae and dwell by Dirce in Cadmus' ill-omened city. Next Deipyle, not to be outdone by her sister, brings Calydonian women mingled with the troop of Lerna to Tydeus' funeral. She, poor soul, had heard of her lord's crime and foul gnawings, but luckless love forgives all to the fallen. After her is Nealce, harsh of aspect but pitiable withal, calling on Hippomedon with fitting lamentation. Then the wicked wife of the prophet; she will set up, alas, a vacant pyre. Last, Maenalian Diana's bereaved companion leads a band of mourners, and stately Evadne. The one grieves and complains for the ordeals of her daring boy, the other mindful of her great spouse goes grimly weeping in anger at the topmost stars. Hecate watched them from Lyeaeon groves and followed groaning and the Theban mother<sup>5</sup> bewailed them as they approached the double shore from her Isthmian tomb, and Eleusis,<sup>6</sup> though mourning for herself, wept for the night-straying flock and bore out her secret fires for the wanderers. Saturnia herself leads them through bypaths and hides their route lest the crowd of their own folk forbid their journey and the glory of their great enterprise be lost. Moreover, Iris is charged to refresh the dead bodies of the captains. She

versely, Nisus stands for Megara in 2.382). Torches were used on her rites.

THEBAID

- Iris habet, putresque arcanis roribus artus  
ambrosiaeque rigat sucis, ut longius obstent  
140 exspectentque rogam et flammam non ante fatiscant.  
Squalidus ecce genas et inani vulnere pallens  
Ornytus (hic socio desertus ab agmine, tardat  
plaga recens) timido secreta per avia furto  
debile carpit iter fractaeque innititur hastac.  
145 isque ubi mota novo stupuit loca sola tumultu  
feimineumque gregem, quae iam super agmina Lernae  
sola videt, non ille viam causasve requirit,  
quippe patent, maesto sed sic prior occupat ore:  
'quo, miserae, quo fertis iter? funusne peremptis  
150 speratis cineremque viris? stat pervigil illic  
umbrarum custos inhumataque corpora regi  
annumerat. nusquam lacrimae, procul usque fugati  
accessus hominum: solis avibusque ferisque  
ire licet. vestrisne Creon dabit acquis honorem  
155 luctibus? immites citius Busiridos aras  
Odrysiique famem stabuli Siculosque licebit  
exorare deos; rapiet fortasse precantes,  
si mens nota mihi, nec coniugalia supra  
funera sed caris longe mactabit ab umbris.  
160 quin fugitis, dum tuta via est, Lernamque reversac  
nomina, quod superest, vacuis datis orba sepulcris  
absentesque animas ad inania busta vocatis,  
aut vos Cecropiam (prope namque et Thesea fama est  
Thermodontiaco laetum remeare triumpho)

146 lernae ω: -ne PΣ

147 causasve P: -asque ω

<sup>7</sup> He does just that. But the question is stereotypic, or perhaps it is as much as to say 'you are on a fool's errand'; cf. 333, 2.351.

floods the rotting limbs with secret dews and ambrosial juices so that they hold out longer and await the pyre, not decaying before the flames.

Lo, squalid of face and pale with a bloodless wound, Ornytus (he was deserted by his comrade troop and a recent blow retards him) in timid stealth takes his feeble way through untrodden, secret ground, leaning on his broken spear. Amazed to find these lonely places stirred by a sudden commotion and to see a flock of women, only survivors of Lerna's host, he does not ask<sup>7</sup> of their journey or its reasons (for that is obvious), but sorrowfully accosts them: 'Whither, poor souls whither do you take your way? Do you hope for burial and ashes for your slain men? The warden of the dead stands there unsleeping and counts the unburied bodies for the king. Nowhere are there tears, all human access is shut away. Only birds and wild beasts may approach. Shall just Crcon respect your mourning? Sooner will there be means to appease the merciless altars of Busiris and the hunger of the Odrysian stable and the gods of Sicily.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps he will seize the suppliants, if I know his mind, and slay you, not above your husbands' bodies but far from the beloved shades. Why not flee while the way is safe and return to Lerna and give orphaned names—all that remains—to the empty sepulchres and summon the absent spirits to the vacant tombs? Or why not implore Cecropian aid—for it is close by and 'tis rumoured that Theseus is joyfully returning from victory by Thermidon?

<sup>8</sup> Busiris, king of Egypt, sacrificed strangers; Thracian Diomedes fed human victims to his horses; the Cyclopes were cannibals but not gods, so Sirens or the beings called Palici (*Aeneid* 9.585) may be meant.

THEBAID

- 165 imploratis opem? bello cogendus et armis  
 in mores hominemque Creon.<sup>9</sup> sic fatus, at illis  
 aruerunt lacrimae, stupuitque immanis eundi  
 impetus, atque uno vultus pallore gelati.  
 non secus afflavit molles si quando iuencas  
 170 tigridis Hyrcanae ieunum murmur, et ipse  
 auditu turbatus ager, timor omnibus ingens,  
 quae placeat, quos illa fames escendat in armos.

- Continuo discors vario sententia motu  
 scinditur: his Thebas tunidumque ambire Creonta,  
 175 his placet Actacae si quid clementia gentis  
 annuat; extremum curarum ac turpe reverti.  
 hic non femineae subitum virtutis amorem  
 colligit Argia, sexuque immane relicto  
 tractat opus: placet (egregii spes dura pericli)  
 180 comminus infandi leges accedere regni,  
 quo Rhodopes non ulla nurus nec alumna nivosi  
 Phasidis innuptis vallata cohortibus irct.  
 tunc movet arte dolum, quo semet ab agmine fido  
 segreget, immitesque deos regemque cruentum  
 185 contemptrix animae et magno temeraria luctu  
 provocet; hortantur pietas ignesque pudici.  
 ipse etiam ante oculos omni manifestus in actu,  
 nunc hospes miserae, primas nunc sponsus ad aras,

167 horruerunt *vel* -rant P $\omega$  (SB)

<sup>9</sup> To bury her husband in defiance of the edict.

<sup>10</sup> Amazons evidently. As generally represented, their territory lay on the south coast of the Black Sea, by the river Thermidon to the west of the river Phasis. Statius, however, usually makes them denizens of Scythia and the far north.



Creon must be forced by war and arms into mankind and its ways.' So he spoke. Their tears dried up and their mighty urge to go was paralyzed, their faces froze in a single pallor. Even so when the famished roar of a Hyrcanian tigress is wafted toward gentle heifers, the very land is troubled by the hearing; great fear seizes all: which will she choose, what shoulders will that hunger mount?

Straightway comes dissidence, opinion variously split. Some are for supplicating Thebes and haughty Creon, others would see whether the clemency of the Actaeon folk might grant some grace. Return is last in their thoughts and shameful. Here Argia conceives a sudden passion for unwomanly courage and engages in monstrous work, abandoning her sex. She resolves (stubborn hope of noble peril) to confront head on the laws of the impious monarchy,<sup>9</sup> where no bride of Rhodope, no nursling of snowy Phasis flanked by virgin cohorts<sup>10</sup> would go. Then she essays an artful stratagem<sup>11</sup> to detach herself from the faithful train and challenge ruthless gods and the bloody king, despising her life, rash with mighty mourning. Piety and chaste love urge her on. He himself is plain before her eyes in his every act: now, alas, as guest, now her betrothed be-

<sup>11</sup> Its nature has been a riddle which can now be read. Start with 173. The women divide. Some are for going to Thebes and pleading with Creon, others for going to Athens and begging Theseus to help. Argia favours neither course, but decides to bury Polynices herself. But if she were so to declare, the others might stop her. So she tells them that *she* will go to Thebes, where she has good connections, while the rest go to Athens. Presumably they agree and she can leave the party unhindered.

THEBAID

190 nunc mitis coniunx, nunc iam sub casside torva  
 maestus in amplexu multumque a limine summo  
 respiciens: sed nulla animo versatur imago  
 crebrior Aonii quam quae de sanguine campi  
 nuda venit poscitque rogos. his anxia mentem  
 aegrescit furiis et, qui castissimus ardor,  
 195 funus amat; tunc ad comites conversa Pelagas,  
 'vos,' ait, 'Actaeas acies Marathonique arma  
 elicite, aspiretque pio Fortuna labori.  
 me sinite Ogygias, tantae quae sola ruinae  
 causa fui, penetrare domos et fulmina regni  
 200 prima pati; nec surda ferae pulsabimus urbis  
 limina: sunt illic soceri mihi suntque sorores  
 coniugis, et Thebas haud ignoranda subibo.  
 ne tantum revocate gradus: illo impetus ingens  
 auguriumque animi.' nec plura, unumque Menoeten  
 205 (olim hic virginei custos monitorque pudoris)  
 eligit et, quanquam rudis atque ignara locorum,  
 praecipites gressus, qua venerat Ornytus, aufert.  
 atque ubi visa procul socias liquisse malorum,  
 'anne,' ait, 'hostiles ego te tabente per agros  
 210 (heu dolor!) expectem quaenam sententia lenti  
 Theseos, an bello proccres, an dexter haruspex  
 annuat? interea funus decrescit; et uncis  
 alitibus non hos potius supponimus artus.  
 et nunc me duram, si quis tibi sensus ad umbras,

194 furiis P: curis ω

209 tabente P: la- ω

<sup>12</sup> The betrothal ceremony was a beginning for her and Polynices. For *primus* with reference to weddings see my *Propertiana*, p. 206.

fore the primal<sup>12</sup> altar, now a gentle husband, now under his grim helmet sad in her embrace and often looking back from the outermost threshold; but no image comes to her mind more often than the naked ghost from the blood of the Aonian battlefield demanding burial. Troubled in spirit, she grows sick with her mad thoughts and in love with the dead, the most chaste of passions. Then turning to her Pelasgian companions, 'Do you,' she says, 'draw out Actaeon hosts and Marathonian arms, may Fortune smile on your pious toil. Let me, who was sole cause of the disaster, penetrate the Ogygian halls and suffer the first thunderbolts of the reign. And the gates of the fierce city will not be deaf to my knocking. My husband's parents are there and his sisters and I shall not come to Thebes as a stranger. Only do not call me back. A mighty impulse drives me thither and my soul's augury.' No more she speaks, but picks out Menoetes, him only, who was once the guide and monitor of her maiden modesty; and though new to the region and ignorant, she hastens away in the direction from which Ornytus had come. When she thought she had left afar the companions of her woes: 'Am I to wait (ah grief!) for tardy Theseus' decision while you moulder in enemy land?<sup>13</sup> Will his nobles, will his skilful<sup>14</sup> soothsayer assent to war? Meanwhile the body diminishes; and I do not expose my own limbs to the hooked birds rather than yours! Most faithful, if you have any feeling in the

<sup>13</sup> I.e. 'was I to wait?' She imagines herself as making the decision she has already made.

<sup>14</sup> Or *dexter* may mean 'favourable.'

THEBAID

- 215 me tardam Stygiis quereris, fidissime, divis.  
 heu si nudus adhuc, heu si iam forte sepultus:  
 nostrum utrumque nefas. adeo vis nulla dolenti?  
 Mors nusquam saevusque Creon? hortaris euntem,  
 Ornytel' sic dicens magno Megareia praeceps  
 220 arva rapit passu, demonstrat proxima quisque  
 obvius horrescitque habitus miseranque veretur.  
 vadit atrox visu, nil corde nec aure pavescens  
 et nimiis confisa malis propiorque timeri:  
 nocte velut Phrygia cum lamentata resultant  
 225 Dindyma, pinigeri rapitur Simoentis ad amnem  
 dux vesana chori, cuius dea sanguine lecto  
 ipsa dedit ferrum et vittata fronde notavit.
- Iam pater Hesperio flagrantem gurgite curram  
 abdiderat Titan, aliis rediturus ab undis,  
 230 cum tamen illa gravem luctu fallente laborem  
 nescit abisse diem: nec caligantibus arvis  
 terretur, nec frangit iter per et invia saxa  
 lapsurasque trabes nemorumque arcana, screno  
 nigra die, caecisque incisa novalia fossis,  
 235 per fluvios secura vadi, somnosque ferarum  
 praeter et horrendis infesta cubilia monstros.  
 tantum animi luctusque valent. pudet ire Menoeten  
 tardius, invalidaeque gradum miratur alumnae.  
 quas non illa domos pecudumque hominumque molesto

218 *anne* nusquamque?

227 fronde P $\omega$ : -nte  $\psi$

236 infesta P: infessa  $\omega$ : insessa  $\psi\Sigma$

239 pecudum P: pecorum  $\omega$  modesto P $\omega$  (*Heinsius*)

15 Ironic: 'so much for my bold talk.'

shades, you are now complaining to the gods of Styx that I am callous and slow. Alas if you are still naked! Alas if perchance you are already buried! Either way the crime is mine. So true is it that violence is nothing to the mourner, that death and cruel Creon do not exist!<sup>15</sup> You encourage me,<sup>16</sup> Ornytus, but I go anyway.' So saying, she devours the Megarian fields in headlong haste. Each one she meets points out the next stage and shudders at her appearance, respecting her misery. On she goes, grim to behold, dreading nothing in heart or ear, confident in her excess of woe, more formidable than fearing. As upon a Phrygian night when Dindymus resounds with lamentation, the leader of the band<sup>17</sup> in her madness whirls to pine-bearing Simois' river; the goddess herself had chosen her blood, given the knife, and marked her out with wool-bound wreath.

Already father Titan had hidden his flaming chariot in the Hesperian flood, to return out of other waves; but she knows not that day has gone, for sorrow beguiles her heavy toil. She is not affrighted by the dark landscape nor checks her passage through pathless rocks and boughs ready to fall and the secrets of the forest, black in cloudless day, through ploughlands slit with hidden trenches, through rivers caring not to find a ford, past the slumbers of wild beasts, and lairs dangerous with dreadful monsters; such is the power of courage and mourning. Menoetes is ashamed of his slower pace and wonders at the gait of his feeble foster child. What dwelling of beasts or men did she not strike

<sup>16</sup> Ornytus' warning of Creon's implacability (149–66) made in favour of her plan to act independently, but she needed no encouragement (SB<sup>1</sup> is to be revised on this point).

<sup>17</sup> A eunuch, hence the feminine *vesana*.

## THEBAID

- 240 pulsavit gemitu? quotiens amissus eunti  
 limes, et errantem comitis solacia flammae  
 destituunt gelidaeque facem vicere tenebrae!  
 iamque supinantur fessis lateque fatiscunt  
 Penthei devexa iugi, cum pectore anhelo
- 245 iam prope deficiens sic incipit orsa Menoetes:  
 'haud procul, exacti si spes non blanda laboris,  
 Ogygias, Argia, domos et egena sepulcri  
 busta iacere reor: grave comminus aestuat aër  
 sordidus, et magnae redeunt per inane volucres.
- 250 haec illa est crudelis humus, nec moenia longe.  
 cernis ut ingentes murorum porrigat umbras  
 campus et e speculis moriens intermicet ignis?  
 moenia sunt iuxta. modo nox magis ipsa tacebat,  
 solaque nigrantes laxabant astra tenebras.'
- 255 horruit Argia, dextramque ad moenia tendens:  
 'urbs optata prius, nunc tecta hostilia, Thebae,  
 et tamen, illaesas si reddis coniugis umbras,  
 sic quoque dulce solum, cernis quo praedita cultu,  
 qua stipata manu, iuxta tua limina primum
- 260 Oedipodis magni venio nurus? improba non sunt  
 vota: rogos hospes planetumque et funera posco.  
 illum, oro, extorrem regni belloque fugatum,  
 illum, quem solio non es dignata paterno,  
 redde mihi. tuque, oro, veni, si manibus ulla
- 265 effigies errantque animae post membra solutae,  
 tu mihi pande vias, tuaque ipse ad funera deduc,  
 si merui.' dixit, tectumque aggressa propinquaec  
 pastorale casae reficit spiramina fessi  
 ignis, et horrendos irrumpit turbida campos.

245 incipit P: inc(h)o(h)at ω

259 limina P1/r: moenia ω

with her painful groaning? How often does she lose her way, how often does the comfort of her companion torch desert her and the chill darkness overcome its flame! And now the slopes of Pentheus' ridge incline downwards before the weary wayfarers in a broad declivity, when with panting breath, now almost past his strength, Menoetes so begins to speak: 'Argia, I think that not far away, if the hope of toil performed does not flatter, lie Ogygian dwellings and bodies in need of burial. Close at hand the pulsing air is heavy and unclean, great birds return through the void. ✓ This is that cruel ground, and the city is not far. See you how the field stretches out the vast shadow of the walls and dying fires flicker here and there from the watchtowers? The city is nearby. Just now the night itself was more silent and only the stars relaxed the black darkness.' Argia shuddered, and stretching her right hand toward the walls: 'City of Thebes, once my desire, now enemy abode, and yet, if you return my husband's shade unharmed, soil dear to me even so, do you see what pomp attends me, what company surrounds me, as for the first time I come near your gates, I, daughter-in-law of great Oedipus? My prayer is not inordinate. A stranger, I ask a pyre, a lament, a corpse. Him, I beg, exiled from his realm and routed in war, him whom you did not judge worthy of his father's throne, give him back to me. And you, I beg, come, if the dead have any shape and ghosts wander free when bodies are gone, show the way, yourself conduct me to your corpse, if I have so deserved.' She spoke and entering the shelter of a shepherd's hut nearby, she rekindles the breath of her flagging torch and breaks wildly into the dread field.

THEBAID

- 270 qualis ab Aetnaeis accensa lampade saxis  
 orba Ceres magnae variabat imagine flammae  
 Ausonium Siculumque latus, vestigia nigri  
 raptoris vastosque legens in pulvere sulcos;  
 illius insanis ululatibus ipse remugit
- 275 Enceladus ruptoque vias illuminat igni:  
 Persephonen amnes silvae freta nubila clamant;  
 Persephonen tantum Stygii tacet aula mariti.  
 Admonet attonitam fidus meminisse Creontis  
 altor et occulto summittere lampada furto.
- 280 regina Argolicas modo formidata per urbes,  
 votum immane procis spesque augustissima gentis,  
 nocte sub infesta, nullo duce et hoste propinquo,  
 sola per offensus armorum et lubrica tabo  
 gramina, non tenebras, non circumfusa tremescens
- 285 concilia umbrarum atque animas sua membra gementes,  
 saepe gradu caeco ferrum calcataque tela  
 dissimulat, solisque labor vitasse iacentes,  
 dum funis putat omne suum, visuque sagaci  
 rimatur positos et corpora prona supinat
- 290 incumbens, queriturque parum lucentibus astris.  
 Forte soporiferas caeli secreta per umbras  
 Inno, sinu magni semet furata mariti,  
 Theseos ad muros, ut Pallada flecteret, ibat,  
 supplicibusque piis faciles aperiret Athenas.
- 295 atque ubi per campos errore fatiscere vano  
 immeritam Argian supero respexit ab axe,  
 indoluit visu, et lunaribus obvia bigis  
 advertit vultum placidaque ita voce locuta est:

<sup>287</sup> vitasse P: -are ω

<sup>298</sup> vultum P: currum ω



## BOOK 12

So Ceres in her bereavement, lighting her brand from Aetna's rocks, cast the image of her mighty flame here and there over the coasts of Ausonia and Sicily, following the track of the dark ravisher, vast furrows in the dust; Enceladus himself booms back to her mad outcry and his fire breaks out to light her path; rivers, woods, sea, and clouds cry 'Persephone,' 'Persephone'; only the palace of the Stygian groom cries not.

Her faithful foster father warns her in her distraction to remember Creon and lower her torch in secret stealth. The queen, lately feared all through the cities of Argos, the outrageous prayer of suitors and august hope of her nation, in hostile night, without a guide and with enemy close by, makes her lonely way. Stumbling on weapons and grass slippery with gore, she fears not the darkness or the assembly of shades gathered all around her, souls lamenting their lost limbs. Often in her blind passage she tramples on steel and weaponry, feigning unawareness. Her one concern is to avoid the fallen,<sup>15</sup> as she thinks that every body is hers and scans them keenly as they lie, turning them on their backs and bending over them complaining of the dim starlight.

As it chanced, Juno had stolen herself from the bosom of her great husband and was making her secret way through the sleep-laden darkness of heaven to the walls of Theseus, there to sway Pallas and make Athens ready to receive the pious suppliants. When from heaven's height she saw innocent Argia wearily wandering through the fields in vain, she grieved, and encountering the Moon's chariot turned her countenance thereon and spoke in gentle ac-

<sup>15</sup> She fears to tread on a body which might be her husband's.

300 'da mihi poscenti munus breve, Cynthia, si quis  
 est Iunonis honos; certe Iovis improba iussu  
 ter noctem Herculeam—veteres sed mitto querelas:  
 en locus officio. cultrix placitissima nostri,  
 Inachis Argia cernis qua nocte vagetur  
 nec reperire virum densis queat aegra tenebris?  
 305 et tibi nimbosum languet iubar: exsere, quaeso,  
 cornua, et assueto propior premat orbita terras.  
 hunc quoque, qui curru madidas tibi pronus habenas  
 ducit, in Aonios vigiles demitte Soporem.<sup>7</sup>  
 vix ea, cum scissis magnum dea nubibus orbem  
 310 protulit; expavere umbrae, fulgorque recisus  
 sideribus; vix ipsa tulit Saturnia flammās.

Primum per campos infuso lumine pallam  
 coniugis ipsa suos noscit miseranda labores,  
 quamquam texta latent suffusaque sanguine marcet  
 315 purpura; dumque deos vocat et de funere caro  
 hoc superesse putat, videt ipsum in pulvere paene  
 calcatum. fingere animus visusque sonusque,  
 ineluditque dolor lacrimas; tum corpore toto  
 sternitur in vultus animamque per oscula quaerit  
 320 absentem, pressumque comis ac veste cruorem  
 servatura legit. mox tandem voce reversa:  
 'hunc ego te, coniunx, ad debita regna profectum  
 ductorem belli generumque potentis Adrasti  
 aspicio, talisque tuis occurro triumphis?  
 325 huc attolle genas defectaque lumina: venit  
 ad Thebas Argia tuas; age, moenibus induc  
 et patrios ostende lares et mutua redde  
 hospitia. heu quid ago? proiectus caespite nudo

<sup>302</sup> placidi- P $\omega$  (*Gronovius*)

<sup>314</sup> marcet  $\psi$ : m(a)eret P $\omega$

cents: 'I have a small favour to ask, Cynthia; grant it if you have any regard for Juno. To be sure, at Jove's bidding you tripled Hercules' night, shameless—but I leave old grudges aside. See, you have a chance to do me a service. You see in what a night Argia, sced of Inachus, my most favoured worshipper, is unhappily wandering and cannot find her husband in the dense gloom. And your ray languishes in cloud. Bring out your horns, pray, and let your orbit press the earth closer than is your habit. And Sleep here, who leans forward in your chariot as he manages the dewy reins, send him down on the Aonian sentinels.' Scarce had she spoken when the goddess brought forth her great orb, cleaving the clouds. The shadows took fright and the stars were curtailed of their lustre. Saturnia herself scarce bore the flames.

First, as light poured through the plain, she recognizes her husband's cloak, her own handiwork, poor soul, though the fabric is hidden and the blood-soaked purple languishes. As she invokes the gods, thinking this to be all of the beloved body to survive, she sees himself, almost trampled in the dust. Mind and vision and voice forsook her and grief held her tears in check. Then with her whole form she lies over his face and seeks the absent spirit in kisses, pressing the blood from his hair and garments and gathering it up to treasure. Presently her utterance returns: 'Is it thus I see you, my husband, the war leader that set forth for a kingdom rightfully his, the son-in-law of potent Adrastus? Do I meet your triumph in such guise? Lift your eyes to me, eyes that see no more. Argia has come to your Thebes. Up now, lead me into the city, show me your father's house, return our hospitality. Alas, what am I about? Cast forth on the bare soil, this is your portion of

hoc patriae telluris habes. quae iurgia? certe  
 330 imperium non frater habet. nullasne tuorum  
 movisti lacrimas? ubi mater, ubi incluta fama  
 Antigone? mihi nempe iaces, mihi victus es uni.  
 dicebam: "quo tendis iter? quid sceptrata negata  
 335 poscis? habes Argos, soceri regnabis in aula;  
 hic tibi longus honos, hic indivisa potestas."  
 quid queror? ipsa dedi bellum maestumque rogavi  
 ipsa patrem ut talem nunc te complexa tenerem.  
 sed bene habet, superi, gratum est, Fortuna; peracta  
 spes longinqua viae: totos invenimus artus.  
 340 ei mihi, sed quanto descendit vulnus hiatu!  
 hoc frater? qua parte, precor, iacet ille nefandus  
 praedator? vincam volucres (sit adire potestas)  
 excludamque feras; an habet funestus et ignes?  
 sed nec te flammis inopem tua terra videbit:  
 345 ardebis lacrimasque feres quas ferre negatum  
 regibus, aeternumque tuo famulata sepulcro  
 durabit deserta fides, testisque dolorum  
 natus erit, parvoque torum Polynice fovco.'

Ecce alios gemitus aliamque ad busta ferebat  
 350 Antigone miseranda facem, vix nacta petitos  
 moenibus egressus; illam nam tempore in omni  
 attendunt vigiles et rex iubet ipse timeri,  
 contractaeque vices et crebrior excubat ignis.  
 ergo deis fratrique moras excusat et amens,  
 355 ut paulum immisso cessit statio horrida somno,  
 erumpit muris, fremitu quo territat agros

<sup>346</sup> regibus aeternumque  $\omega$ : ardebit longumque P, *om. v. 345*

<sup>352</sup> teneri  $\zeta$

BOOK 12

native earth. Wherefore the strife? 'Tis sure your brother does not rule. Was none of your kin moved to weep for you? Where is your mother, where Antigone renowned in fame? For me it seems you lie dead, for me alone you were vanquished. I used to say:<sup>19</sup> "Where are you going? Why demand a sceptre denied you? You have Argos, will reign in your father-in-law's palace. Here you have long-lasting dignity, here undivided power." Why do I complain? 'Twas I that gave you war, I that besought my sad father—only to clasp you thus! But it is well, High Ones; I thank you, Fortune. The distant hope of my journey is accomplished. I have found his body whole. Woe is me, but how deep this gaping wound! Did a brother do this? Where, I pray, does that villainous robber lie? Given access, I shall outdo the birds and shut out the wild beasts. Or does the murderer actually have a pyre? But you too your land shall not see destitute of flame. You shall burn, and win tears not to be won by kings. Forsaken loyalty shall forever endure, serving your sepulchre. Our son shall be witness to my sorrows; with a little Polynices<sup>20</sup> I shall warm my bed.'

See, poor Antigone bears other laments and another toreh to the dead, gaining not easily the lieence she sought to go out of the eity. For at all times guards attend her and the king himself orders that she be feared; the watehes are shortened and the watch fires more numerous. So she makes excuse to the gods and her brother for the delay and breaks out frantically from the walls when the grim watch yielded to sleep's onset for a little while, with a ery like the

<sup>19</sup> Not in the *Thebaid*, but this is what she should have said.

<sup>20</sup> The child's name was Thessander (see on 3.683), but the reader recalls Dido's *parvulus Aeneas* in *Aeneid* 4.328.

THEBAID

virginis ira leae, rabies cui libera tandem  
 et primus sine matre furor. nec longa morata,  
 quippe trucem campum et positus quo pulvere frater  
 360 noverat. atque illam contra videt ire Menoetes,  
 cui vacat, et carae gemitus compescit alumnae.  
 cum tamen erectas extremus virginis aures  
 accessit sonus, utque atra sub veste comisque  
 squalentem et crasso foedatam sanguine vultus  
 365 astrorum radiis et utraque a lampade vidit,  
 'cuius,' ait, 'manes, aut quae temeraria quacris  
 nocte mea?' nihil illa diu, sed in ora mariti  
 deicit inque suos pariter velamina vultus,  
 capta metu subito paulumque oblita doloris.  
 370 hoc magis increpitans suspecta silentia perstat  
 Antigone, comitemque premens ipsamque; sed ambo  
 deficiunt fixique silent. tandem ora retextit  
 Argia, corpusque tamen complexa profatur:  
 'si quid in hoc veteri bellorum sanguine mecum  
 375 quaesitura venis, si tu quoque dura Creontis  
 iussa times, possum tibi me confisa fateri.  
 si misera es (certe lacrimas lamentaque cerno),  
 iunge, age, iunge fidem: proles ego regis Adrasti  
 (ei mihi! num quis adest?) cari Polynicis ad ignes,  
 380 etsi regna vetant.' stupuit Cadmeia virgo  
 intremuitque simul dicentemque occupat ultro:  
 'mene igitur sociam (pro fors ignara!) malorum,  
 mene times? mea membra tene, mea funera plangis.  
 cedo, tene, pudet heu! pietas ignava sororis!  
 385 haec prior.' hic pariter lapsae iunctoque per ipsum  
 amplexu miscent avidae lacrimasque comasque,  
 partitaeque artus redcunt alterna gementes

BOOK 12

angry roar of a virgin lioness, striking terror into the countryside, her rage free at last and her fury for the first time without her dam. Not long did she take, for she knew the cruel field and the dust where her brother lay. Menoetes sees her coming, being unoccupied, and checks the wailings of his dear foster child. But when the sound finally reached and roused the maiden's ears and she saw her by the stars' rays and the light of both torches clothed in black with hair unkempt and face befouled with clotted blood: 'Whose body do you seek?' she says. 'And who are you that dare do it in *my* night?' For long the other says nothing but casts down her apparel over her husband's face and her own likewise, seized by a sudden fear and for a moment forgetting her sorrow. All the more does Antigone persist, chiding the suspect silence, and urges her companion and herself; but both fail her, fixed in silence. At length Argia unveils her face and speaks, but still holds the body in her arms: 'If you come to seek something along with me in this stale blood of warfare, if you too fear Creon's harsh commands, I can trust you and confess myself. If you are unhappy—and assuredly I perceive tears and lamentation—come plight troth with me, I pray you. I am the child of king Adrastus—alas, is anyone here?—at the pyre of my beloved Polynices, though kingdoms forbid.' The Cadmean maiden was amazed and trembled to boot; she breaks in upon the speaker: 'Do you fear me then (ah ignorant chance!), me, the partner in your woes? My limbs you hold, my corpse you bewail. I yield, hold him. Alas, for shame! A sister's piety is but a poor thing. *This* has first place.' Here both collapse and with joint embrace eagerly mingle tears and hair over the body, dividing the limbs between them; then they go back to his face, lamenting by

THEBAID

ad vultum et cara vicibus cervice fruuntur.  
 dumque modo haec fratrem memorat, nunc illa maritum,  
 390 mutuaque exorsae Thebas Argosque renarrant,  
 longius Argia miseros reminiscitur actus:  
 'per tibi furtivi sacrum commune doloris,  
 per socios manes et conscia sidera iuro:  
 non hic amissos, quamquam vagus exsul, honores,  
 395 non gentile solum, carae non pectora matris,  
 te cupiit unam noctesque diesque locutus  
 Antigonen; ego cura minor facilisque relinqui.  
 tu tamen ex celsa sublimem forsitan arce  
 ante nefas Grais dantem vexilla manipulis  
 400 vidisti, teque ille acie respexit ab ipsa  
 ense salutatam et nutantis vertice coni:  
 nos procul. extremas sed quis deus egit in iras?  
 nil vestrae valere preces? tibine iste negavit  
 oranti?' causas ac tristia reddere fata  
 405 coeperat Antigone; fidus comes admonet ambas:  
 'heia agite inceptum potius! iam sidera pallent  
 vicino turbata die; perferte laborem,  
 tempus erit lacrimis, accenso flebitis igne.'

Haud procul Ismeni monstrabant murmura ripas,  
 410 qua turbatus adhuc et sanguine decolor ibat.  
 huc laceros artus socio conamine portant  
 invalidae, iungitque comes non fortior ulnas.  
 sic Hyperionium tepido Phaëthonta sorores  
 fumantem lavere Pado; vixdum ille sepulcro  
 415 conditus, et flentes stabant ad flumina silvae.  
 ut sanies purgata vado membrisque reversus  
 mortis honos, ignem miscrae post ultima quacrunt

<sup>410</sup> turpatus *Wakefield*

<sup>413</sup> tepido ωΣ: tre- P



turns, and enjoy his beloved neck in alternation. As one recalls her brother, the other her husband, and each in dialogue tells again of Thebes and Argos, Argia remembers at length the sad story: 'I swear to you by the sacrament of a privy sorrow, by the dead we share, and the stars that see us: it was not his lost honours, though a wandering exile, that he craved, nor his native soil, nor his dear mother's bosom, but you only; night and day he spoke of Antigone. I meant less to him, easy to leave behind. But you perchance saw him from some lofty tower before the crime giving standards to the Greek companies, and he looked up at you from the very battle array as he saluted you with his sword and the top of his nodding helm; I was far away. But what god drove him to anger's extremity? Were his family's prayers of no avail? Did he deny you when you begged?' Antigone began to relate reasons and sad Fates, but her trusty companion admonished them both: 'Come, better get on with what you have in hand. Already the stars grow pale, troubled by the approaching day. Finish your task. There will be time for tears, you shall weep when the pyre is kindled.' ↴

Not far away a roar gave notice of Ismenos' banks, where he ran still turbid and discoloured with blood. Hither in their weakness they carry the mangled frame with effort shared, and their companion, no stronger, joins his arms. So his sisters washed smoking Phaëthon, Hyperion's son, in the warm Padus; scarce was he entombed, and the grove<sup>21</sup> stood weeping by the riverside. When the gore had been cleansed away in the water and the beauty of death had returned to the limbs, after final kisses the

<sup>21</sup> The weeping sisters were turned into poplars.

THEBAID

oscula; sed gelidae circum exanimesque favillae  
 putribus in foveis, atque omnia busta quiescunt.  
 420 stabat adhuc, seu forte, rogos, seu numine divum,  
 cui torrere datum saevos Eteocleos artus,  
 sive locum monstris iterum Fortuna parabat,  
 seu dissensuros servaverat Eumenis ignes.  
 hic tenuem nigris etiamnum advivere lucem  
 425 roboribus pariter cupidae videre, simulque  
 flebile gavisae; nec adhuc quae busta repertum,  
 sed placidus quicumque rogant mitisque supremi  
 admittat cineris consortem et misceat umbras.

Ecce iterum fratres! primos ut contigit artus  
 430 ignis edax, tremuere rogi et novus advena busto  
 pellitur; exundant diviso vertice flammae  
 alternosque apices abrupta luce coruscant.  
 pallidus Eumenidum veluti commiserit ignes  
 Orcus, uterque minax globus et conatur uterque  
 435 longius; ipsae etiam commoto pondere paulum  
 secessere trabes. conclamat territa virgo:  
 'occidimus, functasque manu stimulavimus iras.  
 frater erat; quis enim accessus ferus hospitis umbrae  
 pelleret? en clipei fragmen semustaque nosco  
 440 cingula, frater erat! cernisne ut flamma recedat  
 concurratque tamen? vivunt odia improba, vivunt.  
 nil actum bello. miseri, sic dum arma movetis,  
 vicit nempe Creon! nusquam iam regna: quis ardor?  
 cui furitis? sedate minas; tuque exsul ubique,  
 445 semper inops aequi, iam cede. hoc nupta precatur,  
 hoc soror; aut saevos mediae veniens in ignes.'

Vix ea, cum subitus campos tremor altaque tecta  
 impulit adiuvitque rogi discordis hiatus,

unhappy women seek fire. But the ashes around are cold and lifeless in the rotting pits and all the pyres are at rest. One still stood, whether by chance or the will of the gods, to which had been given the burning of Eteocles' fierce limbs; was Fortune preparing another occasion for a prodigy or had the Fury preserved the fire for discord? Here equally eager they saw that a thin flame still lived in the blackened logs and together tearfully rejoiced. Not yet had they learned whose fire it was, but they ask him, whosoever he be, to admit in peace and merey one to share his last ashes and mingle their shades.

See, once more the brothers! As soon as the consuming fire touched the limbs, the pile shook and the new arrival is driven from the pyre. The flames gush up divided at the top, flashing two tips in broken light. As though pale Oreus had set the torches of the Furies in conflict, each mass of fire threatens and tries to outstrip the other. The very logs shifted their weight and moved a little way apart. The maiden cries in terror: 'We are lost, we have stirred up dead anger. It was his brother. Who else would be savage enough to repel the approach of a stranger shade? See, I recognize the fragment of shield and this charred belt. It was his brother. Do you see how the flame pulls back and yet runs at the other? It lives, the monstrous hate, it lives! War has achieved nothing. Wretches, as thus you fight, Creon has conquered, has he not? Your kingdom is gone. Wherefore the passion? For whom do you rage? Calm your threats. And you, everywhere the exile, always denied justice, yield now. This your wife begs, this your sister; or we shall come into the fierce flames to part you.'

Scarce spoken when a sudden tremor shook the fields and tall buildings, adding to the rift in the discordant pyre.

## THEBAID

- et vigilum turbata quies, quibus ipse malorum  
 450 fingebat simulacra Sopor: ruit ilicet omnem  
 prospectum lustrans armata indagine miles.  
 illos instantes senior timet unus; at ipsae  
 ante rogum saevique palam sprevisse Creontis  
 imperia et furtum elaro plangore fatentur  
 455 seeuræ, quippe omne vident fluxisse eadaver.  
 ambitur saeva de morte animosaque leti  
 spes furit: hæc fratris rapuisse, hæc coniugis artus  
 contendunt vicibusque probant: 'ego corpus,' 'ego ignes,'  
 'me pietas,' 'me duxit amor.' deposcere saeva  
 460 supplicia et dextras iuvat insertare catenis.  
 nusquam illa alternis modo quæ reverentia verbis,  
 iram odiumque putes; tantus discordat utrinque  
 elamor, et ad regem qui deprendere trahuntur.  
 At procul Aetæis dextra iam Pallade muris  
 465 Iuno Phoroneas indueit prævia matres  
 attonitas, non ipsa minus, coetumque gementem  
 conciliat populis et fletibus addit honorem.  
 ipsa manu ramosque oleæ vittasque preeantes  
 tradit, et obtenta summittere lumina palla  
 470 et præferre docet vaevas sine manibus urnas.  
 omnis Erectheis effusa penatibus ætas  
 tecta viasque replent: unde hoc examen et una  
 tot miseræ? necdum easas novere malorum,  
 iamque gemunt. dea conciliis se miscet utrisque  
 475 cuncta docens, qua gente satae, quæ funera plangant  
 quidve petant; variis nec non affatibus ipsæ  
 Ogygias leges inmansuetumque Creonta  
 multum et ubique fremunt. Getiæ non plura queruntur

The slumber of the sentinels was disturbed; Sleep himself gave them images of woe. Straightway soldiers rush in, ranging over all in sight with an armed net. Only the old man fears them as they come on; but the women openly admit before the pyre to having flouted cruel Creon's orders, admit the theft, loudly lamenting, carefree, for they see that the corpse has all dissolved. They are ambitious of a cruel end, courageous hope for death maddens within them. Against each other they claim to have stolen the body, she her brother's, she her husband's, and win credence in turn. 'I took the body': 'I lit the fire.' 'Affection made me': 'Me love.' They demand cruel punishment and rejoice to put their hands in chains. Gone the mutual respect in their exchanges, you might think it anger and hate, so loudly they both shout at each other and drag their captors to the king.

But far away at the Actæan walls (Pallas is now benevolent) Juno goes ahead to introduce the distraught Phoronean matrons, herself no less distraught, and bespeaks the people's favour for the sorrowing company, lending dignity to their tears. She herself gives them olive branches and suppliant fillets, instructing them to lower their eyes and cover them with their mantles and to hold up urns empty without their dead. All ages pour from the Erecthean homes, filling roofs and streets: whence this swarm, they ask, so many sad women all together? Not yet apprised of the cause of the distress, they are already groaning. The goddess mingles with both assemblies, telling all, what race they come from, what deaths they are mourning, what their petition. And the women themselves talk to this one and that, everywhere denouncing Ogygian laws and ruthless Creon at large. The Getic birds make no greater moan

hospitibus tectis trunco sermone volucres,  
 480 cum duplices thalamos et iniquum Terea clamant.  
 Urbe fuit media nulli concessa potentum  
 ara deum; mitis posuit Clementia sedem,  
 et miseri fecere sacram. sine supplice numquam  
 illa novo, nulla damnavit vota repulsa.  
 485 auditi quicumque rogant, noctesque diesque  
 ire datum et solis numen placare querelis.  
 parca superstitio: non turea flamma nec altus  
 accipitur sanguis: lacrimis altaria sudant,  
 maestarumque super libamina secta comarum  
 490 pendent et vestes mutata sorte relictæ.  
 mite nemus circa cultuque insignè verendo,  
 vittatæ laurus et supplicis arbor olivæ.  
 nulla autem effigies, nulli commissæ metallo  
 forma dei: mentes habitare et pectora gaudet.  
 495 semper habet trepidos, semper locus horret egenis  
 coetibus, ignotæ tantum felicibus aræ.  
 fama est defensos acie post busta paterni  
 numinis Herculeos sedem fundasse nepotes.  
 fama minor factis: ipsos nam credere dignum  
 500 caelicolas, tellus quibus hospita semper Athenæ,  
 ceu leges hominemque novum ritusque sacrorum  
 seminaque in vacuas hinc descendentiâ terras,  
 sic sacrasse loco commune animantibus ægris  
 confugium, unde procul starent iræque minæque  
 505 regnaque, et a iustis Fortuna recederet aris.  
 iam tunc innumerae norant altaria gentes:

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<sup>22</sup> After raping Philomela Tereus cut out her tongue; she was subsequently changed into a nightingale. By poet's logic nightingale then = Philomela, collectively or individually.

## BOOK 12

with their mutilated<sup>22</sup> speech in their guest-dwellings as they cry out against a double marriage chamber and the injustice of Tereus.

In the midst of the city was an altar made over to no deity of power; gentle Meret made there her seat and the unfortunate consecrated it. Never was she without a new suppliant, no prayers did she condemn with a refusal; whoso ask are heard. Night and day they are allowed to come and propitiate the goddess by plaints alone. Frugal is her cult, no flame of incense or deep measure of blood is accepted: the altar is moist with tears and above it hang severed offerings of sad hair and clothing left when luck changed. A gentle grove surrounds, with signs of worship to be revered, laurels entwined with wool and the tree of the suppliant olive. No image is there, no shape of deity committed to metal; she joys to dwell in minds and hearts. Always the place has at hand the fearful, always bristling with gatherings of the needy; only to the fortunate is her altar unknown. The tale is told that the children of Hercules, defended in battle after the death of their divine father, founded the abode. The tale falls short of the truth. For we may fitly believe that the sky-dwellers themselves, to whom Athens has always been hospitable ground, just as they gave laws and a new man<sup>23</sup> and sacred rites and seeds hence descending into empty soils, even so hallowed in the place a common refuge for living creatures in trouble, whence anger and threats and monarchies should stand far removed and Fortune withdraw from the righteous altar. Already to countless races was that altar known. Thither

<sup>23</sup> A new (civilized) mankind.

THEBAID

- huc victi bellis patriaque a sede fugati  
 regnorumque inopes scelerumque errore nocentes  
 conveniunt pacemque rogant; mox hospita sedes  
 510 vicit et Oedipodae Furias et funus †olynti†  
 textit et a misero matrem summovit Oreste.  
 huc vulgo monstrante locum manus anxia Lerna  
 deveniunt, cedit miserorum turba priorum.  
 vix ibi, sedatis requierunt pectora curis:  
 515 ccu patrio super alta grues Aquilone fugatae  
 cum videre Pharon, tunc aethera latius implent,  
 tunc hilari clangore sonant; iuvat orbe sereno  
 contempsisse nives et frigora solvere Nilo.  
 Iamque domos patrias Scythicae post aspera gentis  
 520 proelia laurigero subeuntem Thesea curru  
 laetifici plausus missusque ad sidera vulgi  
 clamor et emeritis hilaris tuba nuntiat armis.  
 ante ducem spolia et, duri Mavortis imago,  
 virginci currus cumulataque fercula cristis  
 525 et tristes ducuntur equi truncaeque bipennae,  
 quis nemora et solidam Maeotida caedere suetae,  
 gorytique leves portantur et ignea gemmis  
 cingula et informes dominarum sanguine peltae.  
 ipsae autem nondum trepidae sexumve fatentur,

513 c(a)edit ω: caedunt P, *vulg. olim* (Kohlmann)

<sup>24</sup> Those inside him. He was not actually pursued by the Erinyes as was Orestes. His reception in Attica is the theme of Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*.

<sup>25</sup> Olynthus, a town in northeastern Greece, was taken by Philip of Macedon in 348 and the inhabitants sold into slavery, but many found refuge in Athens. Their fate became a theme for



the vanquished in war and the banished from fatherland, those who had lost their thrones and those guilty of crimes through error, assemble and ask for peace. By and by the hospitable abode conquered Oedipus' Furies<sup>24</sup> and sheltered the ruin of Olynthus (?)<sup>25</sup> and removed his mother from unhappy Orestes.<sup>26</sup> Hither comes the anguished band of Lerna, the people showing the way, and the throng of earlier unfortunates gives them place. Scarcely were they there when their cares were soothed and their hearts had rest; even as cranes put to flight over the deep by their native North Wind, when they see Pharos, then they fill the sky more widely, then they make a gladsome noise; in a cloudless heaven they are happy to have scorned the snows and to thaw their chill with Nile.

And now joyous applause and shout of the multitude sent up to the stars and cheerful trumpet announces Theseus returning in his laurelled chariot to his native city after fierce battles with Scythia's folk,<sup>27</sup> his warfare done. Before the chief spoils are led and, image of hard Mavors, virgin chariots, wagons piled with crests, sad horses, broken axes with which the women were wont to cleave forests and frozen Maeotis; light quivers are carried and belts blazing with gems and bucklers marred by the blood of their mistresses. They themselves have no fear as yet nor

declaimers (Seneca, *Controversies* 3.8, Ps.-Quintilian, *Shorter Declamations* 292). The anachronistic mention between two figures of mythology is certainly strange and generally considered unbelievable. But no satisfactory substitute has been proposed.

<sup>26</sup> His trial by the Athenian Areopagus is the main theme of Aeschylus' *Eumenides*.

<sup>27</sup> The Amazons. See on 182.

## THEBAID

- 530 nec vulgare gemunt, aspermanturque precari,  
 et tantum innuptae quaerunt delubra Minervae.  
 primus amor niveis victorem cernere vectum  
 quadriiugis; nec non populos in semet agebat  
 Hippolyte, iam blanda genas patiensque mariti  
 535 foederis. hanc patriae ritus fregisse severos  
 Athhides oblique secum mirantur operto  
 murmure, quod nitidi crines, quod pectora palla  
 tota latent, magnis quod barbara semet Athenis  
 misceat atque hosti veniat paritura marito.
- 540 Paulum et ab insessis maestae Pelopcides aris  
 promovere gradum seriemque et dona triumphii  
 mirantur, victique animo rediere mariti.  
 atque ubi tardavit currus et ab axe superbo  
 explorat causas victor poscitque benigna  
 545 aure preces, ausa ante alias Capaneaia coniunx:  
 'belliger Aegide, subitac cui maxima laudis  
 semina de nostris aperit Fortuna ruinis,  
 non externa genus, dirae nec conscia noxae  
 turba sumus: domus Argos erat regesque mariti,  
 550 non utinam et fortes! quid enim septena movere  
 castra et Agenoreos opus emendare penates?  
 nec querimur cacos: haec bellica iura vicesque  
 armorum; sed non Siculis exorta sub antris  
 monstra nec Ossaei bello cecidere bimembres.
- 555 mitto genus clarosque patres: hominum, inclute Theseu,  
 sanguis erant, homines, eademque in sidera, eosdem  
 sortitus animarum alimentaue vestra creati;

539 paritura ω: placi- P

confess their sex; they do not lament in the common fashion and scorn to plead, they only seek the shrine of virgin Minerva. First desire is to see the victor, borne by four snowy horses. Hippolyte too draws the people to herself, now bland of eye and patient of the marriage bond. Aside among themselves the women of Athens mutter, wondering that she has broken the austere usages of her country in that her hair is sleek and her bosom all covered by her mantle,<sup>28</sup> that she blends herself, a barbarian, with great Athens and comes to bear children to her foeman husband.

The sorrowful daughters of Pelops walk a little way from the altar where they sit and admire the procession of triumph gifts. They think again of their vanquished husbands. And when the victor slowed his chariot down and from its proud height enquires their reasons and with kindly ear invites their plea, the wife of Capaneus ventures before the rest: 'Warrior son of Aegeus, to whom Fortune reveals great seed of unexpected glory from our ruin, we are no foreign stock, nor conscious of heinous guilt; Argos was our home and our husbands were kings and brave—would it were otherwise! For what need was there to move seven armies and set Agenor's home to rights? Neither do we complain of their slaying. That was the law of war and the fortune of battle. They fell in fight, but they were no monsters risen in Sicilian caverns or twifformed creatures of Ossa.<sup>29</sup> I speak not of race and famous ancestry. They were human blood, renowned Theseus, men, created to the same stars, the same living lot, the same nurture as

<sup>28</sup> The Amazons left one breast bare.

<sup>29</sup> No Cyclopes or Centaurs.

THEBAID

quos vetat igne Creon Stygiaeque a limine portae,  
 ceu sator Eumenidum aut Lethaei portitor amnis,  
 560 summovet ac dubio caelique Erebi que sub axe  
 detinet. heu princeps Natura! ubi numina, ubi ille est  
 fulminis iniusti iaculator? ubi estis, Athenae?  
 septima iam surgens trepidis Aurora iacentes  
 aversatur equis; radios declinat et horret  
 565 stelligeri iubar omne poli; iam cominus ipsae  
 pabula dira ferae campumque odere volucres  
 spirantem tabo et caelum ventosque gravantem.  
 quantum etenim superesse rear? nuda ossa putremque  
 verrere permittat saniem. properate, verendi  
 570 Cecropidae; vos ista decet vindicta, priusquam  
 Emathii Thracesque dolent, quaeque exstat ubique  
 gens arsura rogis manesque habitura supremos.  
 nam quis erit saevire modus? bellavimus, esto;  
 sed cecidere odia et tristes mors obruit iras.  
 575 tu quoque, ut egregios fama cognovimus actus,  
 non trucibus monstris Sinin infandumque dedisti  
 Cercyona, et saevum velles Scirona crematum.  
 credo et Amazoniis Tanain fumasse sepulcris,  
 unde haec arma refers; sed et hunc dignare triumphum.  
 580 da terris unum caeloque Ereboque laborem,  
 si patrium Marathona metu, si tecta levasti  
 Cresia, nec fudit vanos anus hospita fletus.  
 sic tibi non ullae socia sine Pallade pugnae,  
 nec sacer invidet paribus Tirynthius actis,

571 volent *Beraldus*: adol- *Bachrens*

<sup>30</sup> Theseus had thrown this brigand from a cliff into the sea.

yourselves. Them does Creon forbid the fire and bar from the threshold of the Stygian gate, as though he were father of the Furies or ferryman of Lethe river, keeping them in doubt between heaven and Erebus. Ah primal Nature! Where are the gods, where that hurler of the unjust thunderbolt? Where are you, Athens? Now a seventh Dawn rising turns her frightened horses from them as they lie. Every heavenly beam slants its light away in horror. The very wild beasts and birds as they come close abhor the horrid carrion and the field breathing corruption, tainting sky and breeze. For how little must remain! Let him permit us to sweep up the bare bones, the rotting gore. Hasten, honoured sons of Ceerops! It befits you to be our champions before Emathians and Thracians feel distress, and any people anywhere that looks to burn on pyres and have funeral rites. For what limit shall there be to savagery? We made war, agreed; but the hate has lapsed and death buried bitter wrath. You too, as story tells us of your noble deeds, did not give Sinis or loathly Cereyon to fierce monsters and would fain have had savage Sciron cremated.<sup>30</sup> I believe that Tanais too smoked with Amazonian sepulchres, whence you bring back these arms. But deign this triumph also. Grant one labour to earth and sky and Erebus, if you freed your native Marathon from fear and the Crctan dwelling,<sup>31</sup> if the old dame<sup>32</sup> who sheltered you did not shed her tears in vain. So may you never fight a battle without Pallas to aid nor the divine Tirynthian envy

<sup>31</sup> By slaying the Marathonian bull and the Minotaur.

<sup>32</sup> Hecale by name, who entertained Theseus in her cottage before he killed the bull. Callimachus' poem on the subject, surviving only in fragments, will have explained the tears.

THEBAID

585 semper et in curru, semper te mater ovantem  
cernat, et invictae nil tale precentur Athenae.’

Dixerat; excipiunt cunctae tenduntque precantes  
cum clamore manus; rubuit Neptunius heros  
permotus lacrimis; iusta mox concitus ira  
590 exclamat: ‘quaenam ista novos induxit Erinys  
regnorum mores? non haec ego pectora liqui  
Graiorum abscedens, Scythiam Pontumque nivalem  
cum petrem; novus unde furor? victumne putasti  
Thesea, dire Creon? adsum, nec sanguine fessum  
595 crede; sitit meritos etiamnum haec hasta cruores.  
nulla mora est; verte hunc adeo, fidissime Phegeu,  
cornipedem, et Tyrias invectus protinus arces  
aut Danais edice rogos aut proelia Thebis.’  
sic ait oblitus bellique viaeque laborum,  
600 hortaturque suos viresque instaurat anhelas:  
ut modo conubiis taurus saltuque recepto  
cum posuit pugnas, alio si forte remugit  
bellatore nemus, quamquam ora et colla cruento  
imbre madent, novus arma parat campumque lacesens  
605 dissimulat gemitus et vulnera pulvere celat.  
ipsa metus Libycos servatricemque Medusam  
pectoris incussa movit Tritonia parma.  
protinus erecti toto simul agmine Thebas  
respexere angues; necdum Atticus ire parabat  
610 miles, et infelix expavit classica Dirce.

Continuo in pugnas haud solum accensa iuventus  
qui modo Caucasei comites rediere triumph:  
omnis ad arma rudes ager exstimulavit alumnos.  
conveniunt ultroque ducis vexilla sequuntur,

<sup>33</sup> Theseus' real father according to some.

your equal exploits and your mother see you always in your chariot, always triumphant, and Athens undefeated never make a prayer like ours.'

She spoke; all echo her words and stretch out their hands in clamorous entreaty. The hero son of Neptune<sup>33</sup> flushed, much moved by their tears. Then stirred by righteous wrath he exclaims: 'What Fury is this that brings strange manners of kings? Not such were the Greek hearts I left behind when I sought Seythia and snowy Pontus. Whence this new frenzy? Fell Creon, did you think Theseus vanquished? I am here, and do not believe me blood-weary. This spear still thirsts for guilty gore. There shall be no delay. Trusty Phegeus, turn this your horse and hasten to the Tyrian towers. Proclaim it: either pyres for the Danaï or battle for Thebes.' So says he, forgetting his labours of war and travel, and urges on his men, renewing their panting strength. So when a bull has recovered his brides and pasture and put fighting behind him, if perchance the forest resound with the lowing of another warrior, though his head and neck drip with a bloody rain, he prepares his arms anew and pawing the field conceals his groans, hiding his wounds with dust. Tritonia herself shook her shield, moving Libyan terrors and the Medusa that guarded her bosom. Straightway the snakes reared up and their whole cohort looked toward Thebes. The Attic soldiery was not yet preparing to march and hapless Dirce already trembled at the trumpet.

Forthwith the warriors were kindled to fight, not only those comrades in the Caucasian triumph who had just returned, but the whole land stirred up her untrained nurslings to arms. They gather and voluntarily follow the

THEBAID

- 615 qui gelidum Braurona viri, qui rura lacesunt  
 Monychia et trepidis stabilem Piraeca nautis  
 et nondum Eoo clarum Marathonā triumpho.  
 mittit in arma manus gentilibus hospita divis  
 Icarii Celeique domus viridesque Melaenae,  
 620 dives et Aegaleos nemorum Parnesque benignus  
 vitibus et pingui melior Lycabessos olivae.  
 venit atrox Alæus et olentis arator Hymetti,  
 quaeque rudes thyrsos hederis vestistis, Acharnae.  
 linquitur Eois longe speculabile proris  
 625 Sunion, unde vagi casurum in nomina ponti  
 Cresia decepit falso ratis Aegea velo.  
 hos Salamis populos, illos Cerealis Eleusin  
 horrida suspensis ad proelia misit aratris,  
 et quos Callirhoë novies errantibus undis  
 630 implicat, et raptae qui conscius Orithyiae  
 celavit ripis Geticos Elisos amores.  
 ipse quoque in pugnas vacuatur collis, ubi ingens  
 lis superum, dubiis donec nova surgcret arbor  
 rupibus et longa refugum mare frangeret umbra.  
 635 isset et Arctoas Cadmea ad moenia ducens  
 Hippolyte turmas: retinet iam certa tumentis  
 spes uteri, coniunxque rogat dimittere curas  
 Martis et emeritas thalamo sacrare pharetras.

631 *Ilissos Gronovius (cf. 8.766)*

<sup>34</sup> Scene of an Athenian victory over the Persians in 490 B.C.

<sup>35</sup> Bacchus and Ceres. The former had been welcomed by Icar(i)us, whom he introduced to wine, the latter by Celeus at Eleusis, while she was searching for Proserpine. Since neither was Athenian born, *gentilibus* must relate to cult.



leader's standard. These are the men who vex chill Brauron and the Monychian fields and Piraeus, firm set for frightened mariners, and Marathon, not yet famed for eastern victory.<sup>34</sup> The homes of Icarius and Celeus, hosts to their country's gods,<sup>35</sup> send companies to fight, and green Melaenae and Aegaleos, rich in forests, and Parnes, kind to vines, and Lycabessos, more generous to the oily olive. The fierce men of Alae came and the ploughman of fragrant Hymettus, and you, Acharnae, who clothed simple wands in ivy.<sup>36</sup> They leave Sunium, seen from far by eastern prows, where the Cretan vessel by a false sail deceived Aegeus, who would fall to give a name to the wandering sea. Salamis makes one people, Ceres' Eleusis another hang up their ploughs and go forth to grim battle; and Callirhoë those whom nine times she entwines with her meandering stream, and Ilissos likewise, that was privy to Orithyia's ravishing and hid the Getic lover<sup>37</sup> in his banks. The very hill<sup>38</sup> too is emptied for the fray, where the High Ones held their grand dispute, until a new tree arose from the contested rocks and broke the ebbing sea with its long shadow. Hippolyte would have gone, leading Arctic squadrons against Cadmus' walls, but the hope of her swelling womb, now assured, keeps her back and her husband asks her to dismiss thoughts of war and dedicate her quiver, its service done, in the marriage chamber.

<sup>36</sup> Supposed to have originated there. Bacchanals twined it around their wands.

<sup>37</sup> Boreas.

<sup>38</sup> The acropolis of Athens, where Neptune and Minerva contended for possession of Attica.

THEBAID

640       Hos ubi velle acies et dulci gliscere ferro  
 dux videt, utque piis raptim dent oscula natis  
 amplexusque breves, curru sic fatur ab alto:  
 'errarum leges et mundi foedera mecum  
 defensura cohors, dignas insumite mentes  
 coeptibus: hac omnem divumque hominumque favorem  
 645   Naturamque ducem coetusque silentis Averni  
 stare palam est; illic Poenarum exercita Thebis  
 agmina et anguicomae ducent vexilla Sorores.  
 ite alacres tantaeque, precor, confidite causae.'  
 dixit, et emissa praeceps iter incohat hasta:  
 650   qualis Hyperboreos ubi nubilus institit axes  
 Iuppiter et prima tremefecit sidera bruma,  
 rumpitur Aeolia et longam indignata quietem  
 tollit Hiems animos ventosaque sibilat Arctos;  
 tunc montes undaeque fremunt, tunc proelia caecis  
 655   nubibus et tonitrus insanaque fulmina gaudent.  
       Icta gemit tellus, virides gravis ungula campos  
 mutat, et innumeris peditumque equitumque catervis  
 exspirat protritum ager, nec pulvere crasso  
 armorum lux victa perit, sed in aethera longum  
 660   frangitur, et mediis ardent in nubibus hastae.  
 noctem adeo placidasque operi iunxere tenebras,  
 certamenque immane viris, quo concita tendunt  
 agmina, quis visas proclamet ab aggere Thebas,  
 cuius in Ogygio stet princeps lancea muro.  
 665   at procul ingenti Neptunius agmina Theseus  
 angustat clipeo, propriaeque exordia laudis  
 centum urbes umbone gerit centenaque Cretae

643 cohors P: manus  $\omega$

647 ducent  $\omega$ : ducunt P

662 tendunt P: -dant  $\omega$

When the leader sees them wishful for battle and warming with sweet steel, sees how they give hasty kisses and brief embraces to their loving children, he speaks thus from his tall chariot: 'Soldiers, who will defend with me the laws of earth and the world's covenants, think as befits our enterprise. Plain it is that all favour of gods and men and Nature our leader and the multitudes of silent Avernus stand on our side. On the other are the hosts of the Avengers, long in service at Thebes, and the snake-haired Sisters will lead the standards. Quick march then, I pray you, and trust in our great cause.' He spoke, and hurling his spear begins the rapid route. So when Jupiter takes his stand in cloud upon the Hyperborean pole and shakes the stars with the start of winter, Aeolia is fractured and Storm, chafing at long idleness, plucks up courage and the blustering Bear whistles: then mountains and waves roar, then battles are in the blind clouds, thunders and mad lightnings revel.

The smitten earth groans. Heavy hooves change the green fields. The soil, ground by countless troops of horse and foot, exhales. The gleam of arms, however, is not smothered and lost in the thick dust but broken far into the ether, and spears flash in the midst of the clouds. Night too and still darkness they add to their work. There is a mighty contest among the warriors, who from some hilloek shall announce sight of Thebes, the objective of their rapid columns, whose lance stick first in an Ogygian wall. But at a distance Neptunian Theseus compresses armies on his huge shield. On its boss he bears the beginnings of his own glory, the hundred cities and hundred walls of Crete and

## THEBAID

moenia, seque ipsum monstrosi ambagibus antri  
 hispida torquentem luctantis colla iuveni  
 670 alternasque manus circum et nodosa ligantem  
 bracchia et abducto vitantem cornua vultu.  
 terror habet populos, cum saeptus imagine torva  
 ingreditur pugnās, bis Thesea bisque cruentas  
 caede videre manus: veteres reminiscitur actus  
 675 ipse tuens sociumque gregem metuendaque quondam  
 limina et absumpto pallentem Cnosida filo.

Saevus at interea ferro post terga revinctas  
 Antigonem viduamque Creon Adrastida leto  
 admovet; ambae hilares et mortis amore superbae  
 680 ensibus intentant iugulos regemque cruentum  
 destituunt, cum dicta ferens Theseia Phegeus  
 astitit. ille quidem ramis insontis olivae  
 pacificus, sed bella ciet bellumque minatur,  
 grande fremens, nimiumque memor mandantis, et ipsum  
 685 iam prope, iam medios operire cohortibus agros  
 ingeminans. stetit ambiguo Thebanus in aestu  
 curarum, nutantque minae et prior ira tepescit.  
 tunc firmat sese, fictumque ac triste renidens,  
 'parvane prostratis,' inquit, 'documenta Mycenis  
 690 sanximus? en iterum qui moenia nostra lacesant.  
 accipimus, veniant; sed ne post bella querantur:  
 lex cadem victis.' dicit, sed pulvere crasso  
 caligare diem et Tyrios iuga perdere montes  
 695 ipse iubet pallens, mediaeque in sedibus aulae

<sup>672</sup> imagine torva ω: in agmine torvo P

himself in the windings of the monstrous cavern twisting the shaggy neck of the struggling bull, binding alternate hands and knotty arms around him, with head averted to avoid the horns. Terror seizes the folk when he goes into battle fenced by the grim picture; they see Theseus double, and double his hands reeking with carnage. He himself remembers his deeds of yore, he gazes at the comrade band and the once-dreaded threshold and the Cnosian maiden, pale as the thread gives out.

But meanwhile cruel Creon brings Antigone and Adrastus' widowed daughter on to death, their hands bound with steel behind their backs.<sup>39</sup> Both of good cheer and proud in their cagerness to die, they hold out their throats to the swords, disappointing the bloodthirsty king, when Phegeus bearing Theseus' message stands in presence. Peaceable is he with boughs of innocent olive, but war he rouses and war he threatens, loud and angry and too mindful of him that gave him mandate, dinning it in that Theseus himself is already close at hand, already covering the intervening country with his troops. The Theban stood in perplexity, cares surging within him; his menaces waver and his earlier anger cools. Then he braces himself and with false, luring smile: 'Mycenae lies prostrate,' he says. 'Was that a slight lesson we gave? See, here are more to challenge our walls. We accept it, let them come. But let them not complain after the battle. The law for the vanquished is the same.' He speaks, but sees the day darken with thick dust and the Tyrian mountains lose their ridges. He orders none the less that the people arm and that arms be brought to him, himself turning pale. In the midst of the

<sup>39</sup> What became of them? Argia survives (804).

THEBAID

Eumenidas subitas flentemque Menoeëea cernit  
 turbidus impositosque rogis gaudere Pelasgos.  
 quis fuit ille dies, tanto cum sanguine Thebis  
 pax inventa perit! patriis modo fixa revellunt  
 700 arma deis, elipeisque obducunt pectora fractis,  
 et galeas humiles et adhuc sordentia tabo  
 spicula: non pharetris quisquam, non ense decorus,  
 non spectandus equo; cessat fiducia valli,  
 murorum patet omne latus, munimina portae  
 705 exposeunt: prior hostis habet; fastigia desunt:  
 deiecit Capaneus; exsanguis et aegra iuventus  
 iam nec coniugibus suprema nec oseula natis  
 iungit, et attoniti nil optavere parentes.

Attieus interea, iubar ut elarescere ruptum  
 710 nubibus et solem primis aspexit in armis,  
 desilit in campum, qui subter moenia nudos  
 asservat manes, dirisque vaporibus aegrum  
 aëra pulverea penitus sub easside duens  
 ingemit et iustas belli flammatur in iras.  
 715 hunc saltem miseris ductor Thebanus honorem  
 largitur Danais, quod non super ipsa iacentum  
 corpora belligeras acies Martenique secundum  
 miscuit, aut lacera ne quid de strage nefandus  
 perderet, eligitur saevos potura cruores  
 720 terra rudis. iamque alternas in proelia gentes  
 dissimilis Bellona eiet; non elamor utrimque,  
 non utrimque tubae: stat debilis altera pubes  
 summissos enses nequiquam ammentaque dextris  
 laxa tenens; eedunt tellure, armisque reductis

<sup>709</sup> interea contra P: at -c ω (*Kohlmann*)

<sup>718</sup> at Ϛ

palace he sees to his dismay the Furies suddenly appear and Menoeceus weeping and the Pelasgi placed on pyres and rejoicing.<sup>40</sup> What a day was that, when the peace won by Thebes at such a cost in blood was lost! They tear down the arms lately hung in their ancestral shrines, covering their breasts with broken shields, and mean helmets and darts still filthy with gore. None is handsome with quiver or sword, none a gallant sight on his horse. Trust in the rampart fails, the walls lie open on every side. The gates demand fortifications—but the former enemy has them. Battlements are lacking—Capaneus threw them down. The men are weak and ailing, they give no last kisses to wives or children; the parents are dazed and make no prayers.

Meanwhile, when he of Attica sees beams burst in brilliance through the clouds and the sun first shine upon the arms, down he leaps onto the plain that keeps the unburied dead under the walls. Breathing deep under his dusty helm air tainted with evil vapours, he groans and flares into righteous anger of war. This respect at least the Theban chieftain paid to the hapless Danaï, that he did not mingle the fighting armies in a second battle over the very bodies of the fallen; or else virgin earth is chosen to drink cruel blood lest the miscreant waste aught of mangled slaughter.<sup>41</sup> And now Bellona rouses the two peoples to battle in different guise. The shouting is one-sided, so are the trumpets. One army stands feebly, their swords droop idly, they hold their spear straps loose in their hands. They give

<sup>40</sup> A prophetic hallucination.

<sup>41</sup> Creon is conceived as feeding the Theban soil with blood. If already saturated ground rejected it, it would go to waste.

- 725 ostentant veteres etiamnum in sanguine plagas.  
iam nec Cecropiis idem ductoribus ardor,  
languescuntque minae et virtus secunda residit:  
ventorum velut ira minor, nisi silva furentes  
impedit, insanique tacent sine litore fluctus.
- 730 Ut vero aequoreus quercum Marathonida Theseus  
extulit, erectae cuius crudelis in hostes  
umbra cadit campumque trucem lux cupidis implet,  
ceu pater Edonios Haemi de vertice Mavors  
impulerit currus, rapido mortemque fugamque
- 735 axe vehens, sic exanimis in terga reducit  
pallor Agenoridas; taedet fugientibus uti  
Thesea, nec facilem dignatur dextra cruorem.  
cetera plebeio desaevit sanguine virtus:  
sic iuvat exanimis proiectaue praeda canesque
- 740 degeneresque lupos, magnos alit ira leones.  
attamen Olenium Lamyrumque, hunc tela pharetra  
promentem, hunc saevi tollentem pondera saxi  
deicit, et triplici confisos robore gentis  
Alcetidas fratres, totidem quos eminus hastis
- 745 continuat; ferrum consumpsit pectore Phyleus,  
ore momordit Helops, umero transmisit Iapix.  
iamque et quadriiugo celsum petit Haemona curru,  
horrendumque manu telum rotat: ille paventes  
obliquavit equos; longo perlata tenore
- 750 transiit hasta duos, sitiebat vulnera nec non  
tertia, sed medio cuspis temone retenta est.  
Sed solum votis, solum clamore tremendo  
omnibus in turmis optat vocitatque Creonta.  
atque hunc diversa bellorum in fronte maniplos

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<sup>42</sup> With Haemon left in the air.



## BOOK 12

ground, draw baek their weapons, showing old gashes still bleeding. The Ceeropian eaptains too have lost some of their ardour, their threats laek force, their valour sinks in assurance of viotry, just as the anger of the winds diminishes if no forest hampers their fury and the mad waves are mute without a shore. ✓

But sea-born Theseus held forth his Marathonian oak; raised high, its eruel shadow falls upon the enemy and the gleam of the point fills the grim battlefield; as though father Mavors were driving his Edonian echariot from Haemus' summit bearing death and rout on his rapid wheels, so pale terror leads baek the panicking sons of Agenor. Theseus is weary of dealing with fugitives and his hand disdains easy blood. The valour of the rest exhausts its fury in vulgar earnage. So dogs and degenerate wolves love lifeless prey east at their feet, but anger feeds mighty lions. All the same he brings down Olenius and Lamyrus, the one as he takes arrows from his quiver, the other lifting the weight of a cruel rock, and the sons of Aleetus, brothers trusting in their family's triple strength, whom one after another he slays from a distanee with as many spears: Phyleus consumed the steel in his chest, Helops bit it with his mouth, Iapyx passed it through his shoulder. And now he makes for Haemon aloft in four-horse echariot and whirls a dreadful weapon. The other swerved his frightened steeds. Reaching its mark in its long course, the spear passed through two of them and thirsted for a third wound, but the point stuck in the intervening pole.<sup>42</sup>

But amid all the squadrons it is Creon, only Creon, for whom with vows and fearsome elamour he prays, whose name he ealls. Then he eatches sight of him on a different

- 755 hortantem dictis frustra<sup>que</sup> extrema minantem  
 conspicit; abscedunt comites: sed Thesea inssi  
 linquebant fretique deis atque ipsius armis,  
 ille tenet revocatque suos; utque aequa notavit  
 hinc atque hinc odia, extrema se colligit ira,  
 760 iam letale furens, atque andax morte futura,  
 'non enim peltiferis,' ait, 'haec tibi pugna puellis,  
 virgineas ne crede manus: hic cruda virorum  
 proelia, nos unagnum qui Tydea quique furentem  
 Hippomedonta neci Capanea<sup>que</sup> misinus umbris  
 765 pectora. quae bellum praeceps amentia suasit,  
 improbe? novae vides, quos ulciscare, iacentes?'  
 sic ait, et frustra periturum missile summo  
 afflixit clipeo. risit voces<sup>que</sup> manum<sup>que</sup>  
 horridus Aegides, ferrata<sup>que</sup> arbore magnos  
 770 molitur iactus, nec non prius ore superbo  
 intonat: 'Argolici, quibus haec datur hostia, manes,  
 pandite Tartareum chaos ultrices<sup>que</sup> parate  
 Eumenidas, venit ecce Creon!' sic latus, et auras  
 dissipat hasta tremens; tunc, qua subtemine duro  
 775 multiplicem tenues iterant thoraca catenae,  
 incidit: emicuit per mille foramina sanguis  
 iunpius; ille oculis extremo errore solutis  
 labitur, assistit Theseus gravis arma<sup>que</sup> tollens,  
 'iamne dare exstinctis iustos,' ait, 'hostibus ignes,  
 780 iam victos operire placet? vade atra dature  
 supplicia, extremique tamen secure sepulcri.'

Accedunt utrimque pio vexilla tumultu  
 permiscuntque manus; medio iam foedera bello,  
 iamque hospes Theseus, orant succedere muris

battlefront urging on his comrades by word and vainly threatening the worst. His companions fall away, whereas Theseus' men leave him as ordered, counting on the gods and their commander's arms. Creon holds his and recalls them. When he marks equal hatred on either side, he pulls himself together in uttermost ire, the fury of death, and emboldened by the coming end: 'You are not fighting here,' he says, 'with buckler-bearing girls. Think not to find virgin hands. Here are men's battles in the raw. It is we who sent great Tydeus and raging Hippomedon to their deaths and the breast of Capaneus to the shades.<sup>43</sup> What reckless folly counselled war, presumptuous wight? There they lie, those whom you would avenge, see you not?' So he says, and planted a bolt in the top of the shield, an idle cast. The grim son of Aegeus laughed at voice and hand alike, and prepares a mighty throw with his steel-tipped tree, but first thunders with haughty mouth: 'Argive ghosts, to whom this victim is offered, open wide the void of Tartarus, make ready avenging Furies, for see, Creon comes!' So he spoke, and the quivering shaft cleaves the air, then falls where a repetition of slender chains with their hard weft forms the complex corselet. Impious blood spurts out through a thousand openings and he collapses as his eyes wander in final dissolution. Theseus stands harsh beside him and taking up his arms: 'Now' says he, 'are you ready to give due fire to slain foes and bury the vanquished? Go! Dark shall be your punishment, but you are sure of a final tomb.'

From both sides the standards meet in friendly confusion; they grasp hands. In the midst of battle comes a treaty; now Theseus is a guest. They beg him to come in-

<sup>43</sup> The last claim is unjustified.

## THEBAID

- 785 dignarique domos. nec tecta hostilia victor  
 aspernatus init; gaudent matresque nurusque  
 Ogygiae, qualis thyrsos bellante subaetus  
 mollia laudabat iam mareidus orgia Ganges.  
 eeee per adversas Direaei verticis umbras  
 790 femineus quatit astra fragor, matresque Pelasgae  
 decurrunt, quales Baeëhea ad bella voeatae  
 Thyiades amentes, magnum quas poseere credas  
 aut fuisse nefas; gaudent lamenta novaeque  
 exsultant lacrimae; rapit huc, rapit impetus illic,  
 795 Thesea magnanimum quaerant prius, ane Creonta,  
 ane suos: vidui dueunt ad corpora luetus.

- Non ego, eentena si quis mea pectora laxet  
 voce deus, tot busta simul vulgisque dueumque,  
 tot pariter gemitus dignis eonatibus aequem:  
 800 turbine quo sese earis instraverit audax  
 ignibus Evadne fulmenque in pectore magno  
 quaesierit; quo more iaeens super oscula saevi  
 corporis infelix exeuset Tydea eoniunx;  
 ut saevos narret vigiles Argia sorori;  
 805 Areada quo planctu genetrix Erymanthia clamat,  
 Areada, consumpto servantem sanguine vultus,  
 Areada, quem geminae pariter flere cohortes.  
 vix novus ista furor veniensque implesset Apollo,  
 et mea iam longo meruit ratis aequare portum.  
 810 Durabisne procul dominoque legere superstes,  
 o mihi bisenos multum vigilata per annos  
 Thebai? iam certe praesens tibi Fama benignum  
 stravit iter coepitque novam monstrare futuris.  
 iam te magnanimus dignatur noscere Caesar,

<sup>800-01</sup> instraverit . . . ignibus ω: impleverit . . . ictibus P

side their walls and honour their homes. Not rebuffing them, the victor enters enemy dwellings. Ogygian mothers and brides rejoice, even as Ganges, subdued by the battling wand, praised unwarlike revels, already in liquor. See, over in the shades of Dirce's height, a cry of women shakes the stars and the Pelasgian matrons are running down like mad Thyiads summoned to Bacchic wars; you might think they were demanding some great crime, or had committed one. Lamentations rejoice, new tears exult. Impulse sweeps them hither and thither—should they first seek great-hearted Theseus or Creon or their loved ones? Widows' mourning leads them to the bodies.

Were some god to loose my breast in a hundred voices I could not in worthy effort do justice to so many pyres of captains and common folk alike, such a chorus of groanings: telling how Evadne boldly strewed herself on beloved flames, seeking the thunderbolt in the mighty breast; in what fashion Tydeus' hapless wife excuses him as she lies over the savage corpse's kisses; how Argia tells her sister of the cruel sentinels; with what lamentation the Erymanthian mother bewails the Arcadian, who keeps his beauty though his blood is spent, the Arcadian, for whom both armies wept alike. Hardly would a new frenzy and Apollo's coming have discharged the task: and my bark in the wide ocean has already earned her harbour.

My Thebaid, on whom I have spent twelve wakeful years, will you long endure and be read when your master is gone? Already, 'tis true, Fame has strewn a kindly path before you and begun to show the new arrival to posterity. Already great-hearted Caesar deigns to know you, and the

THEBAID

815 Itala iam studio discit memoratque iuventus.  
vive, precor; nec tu divinam Aeneida tempta,  
sed longe sequere et vestigia semper adora.  
mox, tibi si quis adhuc praetendit nubila livor,  
occidet, et meriti post me referentur honores.

BOOK 12

studious youth of Italy learns you and recites. Live, I pray;  
and essay not the divine Aeneid, but ever follow her foot-  
steps from afar in adoration. Soon, if any envy still spreads  
clouds before you, it shall perish, and after me you shall be  
paid the honours you deserve.





ACHILLEID

## LIBER PRIMUS

- Magnanimum Aeaciden formidatamque Tonanti  
progeniem et patrio vetitam succedere caelo,  
diva, refer. quamquam acta viri multum incluta cantu  
Maeonio (sed plura vacant), nos ire per omnem  
5 (sic amor est) heroa velis Scyroque latentem  
Dulichia proferre tuba nec in Hectore tracto  
sistere, sed tota iuvenem deducere Troia.  
tu modo, si veterem digno deplevimus haustu,  
da fontes mihi, Phoebæ, novos ac fronde secunda  
10 nocte comas: neque enim Aonium nemus advena pulso  
nec mæa nunc primis augescunt tempora vittis.  
scit Dircaeus ager neque inter prisca parentum  
nomina cumque suo numerant Amphione Thebæ.  
At tu, quem longe primum stupet Itala virtus  
15 Graiaque, cui geminæ florent vatumque ducumque  
certatim laurus (olim dolet altera vinci),  
da veniam ac trepidum patere hoc sudare parumper  
pulvere: te longo necdum fidente paratu  
molimur magnusque tibi praeludit Achilles.

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<sup>1</sup> Offspring that would have been if Jupiter had not been warned that if he married Thetis she would bear him a son greater than himself. Hence her marriage to a mortal, Peleus.

## BOOK 1

Goddess, tell of great-hearted Aeaides and offspring feared of the Thunderer and forbidden to succeed to his father's heaven.<sup>1</sup> The hero's deeds, 'tis true, are much famed in Maeonian song, but more are yet to ecelebrate. Be it your pleasure that I (so I crave) traverse the whole hero, bringing him forth by Duliehian trump as he hides in Scyros, nor stopping at Hector's drag, but singing the warrior through Troy's whole story. Only do you, Phoebus, grant me new founts if I have drained the old one with a worthy draught, and bind my hair with auspicious<sup>2</sup> leafage; for no stranger do I knock at the Aonian grove, nor are these the first fillets to amplify my temples. The land of Diree knows it, and Thebes numbers me among her forbears' ancient names along with her own Amphion.

But you, the wonder of Italy's and Greeee's manhood first by far, for whom the twin laurels of bards and captains flourish in rivalry (one of the twain is long since sad to be surpassed),<sup>3</sup> give me good leave; suffer me in my eagerness to sweat awhile in this dust. On you I work in long and not yet confident preparing, and great Aehilles is your prelude.

<sup>2</sup> *Secunda* could mean 'second,' referring to the *Thebaid*.

<sup>3</sup> Domitian's early achievements in poetry had been eclipsed by his victories in war.

ACHILLEID

- 20 Solverat Oebalio classem de litore pastor  
 Dardanus incautas blande populatus Amyclas  
 plenaque materni referens praesagia somni  
 culpatum relegerat iter, qua condita ponto  
 fluctibus invisus iam Nereis imperat Helle,  
 25 cum Thetis Idaeos—heu numquam vana parentum  
 auguria!—expavit vitreo sub gurgite remos.  
 nec mora et undosis turba comitante sororum  
 prosiluit thalamis: fervent coeuntia Phrixi  
 litora et angustum dominas non explicat aequor.
- 30 Illa ubi discusso primum subit aëra ponto,  
 ‘Me petit haec, mihi classis,’ ait, ‘funesta minatur,  
 agnosco monitus et Protea vera locutum.  
 ecce novam Priamo facibus de puppe levatis  
 fert Bellona nurum: video iam mille carinis
- 35 Ionium Aegaeumque premi; nec sufficit, omnis  
 quod plaga Graiugenum tumidis coniurat Atridis:  
 iam pelago terrisque meus quaeretur Achilles,  
 et volet ipse sequi. quid enim cunabula parvo  
 Pelion et torvi commisimus antra magistri?
- 40 illic, ni fallor, Lapitharum proelia ludit  
 improbus et patria iam se metitur in hasta.  
 o dolor, o seri materno in corde timores!  
 non potui infelix, cum primum gurgite nostro  
 Rhoeteae cecidere trabes, attollere magnum
- 45 aequor et incesti praedonis vela profunda  
 tempestate sequi cunctasque inferre sorores?

<sup>4</sup> I.e. Sparta, as in 2.59.

<sup>5</sup> While pregnant with Paris Hecuba dreamt that she gave birth to a torch which set fire to Troy. Therefore his parents exposed him.

<sup>6</sup> Or ‘parting.’ But cf. 2.4 *excusso . . . ponto*.

## BOOK 1

The Dardan shepherd had launched a fleet from Oebalus' shore. He had sweetly ravished unwary Amyclae<sup>4</sup> and was retracing his guilty way in fulfilment of his mother's prophetic dream,<sup>5</sup> where Helle, a Nereid now hidden in the sea, rules the waves she hates, when Thetis (alas for parents' auguries never vain!) down below the glassy flood took fright at Ida's oars. Straightway she leapt from her watery bower along with her bevy of sisters. The meeting shores of Phrixus seethe and the strait cannot find room for its mistresses.

As soon as she comes up into the air, shaking off<sup>6</sup> the sea: 'This fleet,' she says, 'is after me, to me a deadly menace. I recognize the warnings. Proteus told true. Raising her torch from the stern, behold, Bellona brings Priam a new daughter-in-law. I see Ionian and Aegean pressed by a thousand keels. And it is not enough that all the land of the Grecians leagues with Atreus' angry sons; soon they will be looking by land and sea for my Achilles, and himself will want to follow. For why did I trust Pelion to the child<sup>7</sup> for cradle and the grim master's cave? There, if I mistake not, he plays at Lapith battles and already measures himself with his father's spear,<sup>8</sup> the rogue. Ah pain, ah tremors too late in my mother's heart! Unhappy that I am, when first the planks of Rhoeteum fell upon our waters,<sup>9</sup> could I not have raised a mighty main and pursued the foul pirate's sails with a deep<sup>10</sup> tempest and brought all my sisters

<sup>7</sup> A bold inversion reminiscent of Statius' earlier style.

<sup>8</sup> *In hasta* does not say how he held the spear; presumably upright by his side. <sup>9</sup> They fell (i.e. were felled) as trees and put to sea as ship timber—a telescopic expression for which Dilke provides parallels. <sup>10</sup> Reaching down into the depths.

ACHILLEID

nunc quoque—sed tardum, iam plena iniuria raptae.  
 ibo tamen pelagique deos dextramque secundi,  
 quod superest, complexa Iovis per Tethyos annos  
 50 grandaevumque patrem supplex miseranda rogabo  
 unam hiemem.’

Dixit magnumque in tempore regem  
 aspicit. Oceano veniebat ab hospite, mensis  
 lactus et aequoreo diffusus nectare vultus,  
 unde hiemes ventique silent; cantuque quieto  
 55 aruigeri Tritones eunt scopulosaque cete  
 Tyrrhenique greges circumque infraque rotantur  
 rege salutato; placidis ipse arduus undis  
 eminent et triplici telo iubet ire iugales;  
 illi spumiferos glomerant a pectore cursus,  
 60 pone natant delentque pedum vestigia cauda;  
 cum Thetis:

‘O magni genitor rectorque profundi,  
 aspicias in qualis miserum patefeceris usus  
 aequor? eunt tutis terrarum erimina velis,  
 ex quo iura freti maiestatemque repostam  
 65 rupit Iasonia puppis Pagasaea rapina.  
 en aliud furto scelus et spolia hospita portans  
 navigat iniustae temerarius arbiter Idae,  
 eheu quos gemitus terris caeloque daturus,  
 quos mihi! sic Phrygiae pensamus gaudia palmae,  
 70 hi Veneris mores, hoc gratae munus alumnae?’

<sup>11</sup> Neptune's.

<sup>12</sup> Tethys is wife of Oceanus and mother of the gods in *Iliad* 14.201.

## BOOK 1

against them? Even now—but too late, the raped one's outrage is already complete. Yet I will go ('tis all I can do now) and appeal in my misery to the gods of the deep and the second Jove's<sup>11</sup> right hand elapsed in mine, by Tethys' years<sup>12</sup> and her aged father,<sup>13</sup> asking for one storm.'

She spoke and just in time beheld the mighty monarch. He was coming from Oceanus his host, cheerful from the table, his countenance relaxed with sea nectar. Hence tempests and winds are silent, his squires the Tritons sing quietly as they move, cliff-like monsters<sup>14</sup> and herds of the Tyrrhenian eirele around and below, saluting their king. Himself towers high above the placid waters and orders his team forward with his triple weapon. From their breasts they hurry their foamy course, behind they swim,<sup>15</sup> wiping out their prints with their tails. Then Thetis:

'Sire and ruler of the mighty deep, see you for what uses you have thrown open the hapless main? Sins<sup>16</sup> of the lands sail in safety since the Pagasaeon bark ruptured the laws and secluded majesty of the deep with Jason's rapine. Behold, the temerarious arbiter of unjust Ida makes voyage, freighted with another erime of theft and spoils of hospitality, to give what groans, alas, to earth and heaven, and what to me. Is it thus we balance the joys of the Phrygian palm, are these the ways of Venus, this the gift of a grate-

<sup>13</sup> Neptune's father Saturn, who had been overthrown and imprisoned by his children, cannot be meant. In Hesiod (*Theogony* 106) Tethys' father is Uranus ('Sky').

<sup>14</sup> *Scopulosa* has been interpreted as 'haunting rocks' or as referring to excrescences on the creatures' bodies.

<sup>15</sup> Neptune's horses had rears like fish.

<sup>16</sup> More strictly 'reproaches' (anything that brings discredit).

ACHILLEID

has saltem (num semideos nostrumque reportant  
Thesea?)—si quis adhuc undis honor, obrue puppes,  
aut permitte fretum! nulla inclementia: fas sit  
pro nato timuisse mihi. da pellere luctus,  
75 nec tibi de tantis placeat me fluctibus unum  
litus et Iliaci scopulos habitare sepulcri.<sup>7</sup>

Orabat laniata genas et pectore nudo  
caeruleis obstabat equis. sed rector aquarum  
invitat curru dictisque ita mulcet amicis:

80 'Ne pete Dardanium frustra, Theti, mergere classem;  
fata vetant: ratus ordo deis miscere cruentas  
Europamque Asiamque manus, consultaque belli  
Iuppiter et tristes edixit caedibus annos.

quem tu illic natum Sigeo in pulvere, quanta  
85 aspicias victrix Phrygiarum funera matrum,  
cum tuus Aeacides tepido modo sanguine Teucros  
undabit campos, modo crassa exire vetabit  
flumina et Hectoreo tardabit funere currus  
impelletque manu nostros, opera irrita, muros!

90 Pelea iam desiste queri thalamosque minores:  
crederis peperisse Iovi; nec inulta dolebis  
cognatisque utere fretis: dabo tollere fluctus,  
cum reduces Danaï nocturnaue signa Caphereus

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<sup>7</sup> Venus sprang from the sea. The questions are indignant. Is she making Neptune and the other sea-dwellers pay the price for her victory in the beauty contest on Mt Ida? Is this how she repays them for her birth?

<sup>8</sup> As the *Argo* did.

<sup>9</sup> Nobody but Statius makes Theseus an Argonaut, as he also does in 157 and *Thebaid* 5.432. One legend made Theseus Neptune's son.



BOOK I

ful nurseling?<sup>17</sup> These ships at least (do they bring back demigods<sup>18</sup> or our own Theseus?),<sup>19</sup> if any respect be left for the waters, drown them, or hand over the ocean. No cruelty: let it be lawful for me to fear for my son. Grant me to banish bereavement. Let it not please you that among so many billows I haunt one single beach and the rocks of an Ilian tomb.<sup>20</sup>

She begged, tearing her cheeks, and with bared breast tried to block the cerulean horses. But the ruler of the waters invites her to his chariot and soothes her with friendly speech: 'Seek not in vain, Thetis, to sink the Dardan fleet. The Fates forbid. 'Tis ordained and ratified of the gods that Europe and Asia mingle bloody hands. Jupiter has proclaimed war's decree and years sad with slaughter. There victorious what a son shall you see in Sigeon dust, what obsequies of Phrygian mothers, when your scion of Aeacus shall now drench the Teucrian plains in warm blood, now forbid the thickened rivers their outlets, slowing his chariot with Hector's corpse, overturning my walls —that lost labour!<sup>21</sup> Cease now to complain of Peleus and misalliance. Men shall believe you bore a son to Jupiter. Nor shall you grieve unavenged. You shall use the kindred seas. I shall let you raise the waves when the Danaï return and Caphereus puts out his nighttime

<sup>20</sup> Thetis had evidently heard (from Proteus?) that Achilles was to die at Troy and be buried on Cape Sigeum. Neptune too had foreknowledge (84–89).

<sup>21</sup> Neptune and Apollo built Troy's walls for her king Laomedon, who bilked them of their payment. But *irrita* (despite the scholiast) refers not to this but to the destined destruction of the city.

ACHILLEID

exeret et dirum pariter quaeremus Ulixem.’

- 95       Dixerat. illa gravi vultum demissa repulsa,  
 quae iam excire fretum et ratibus bellare parabat  
 Iliacis, alios animo commenta paratus,  
 tristis ad Haemonias detorquet bracchia terras.  
 ter conata manu, liquidum ter gressibus aequor  
 100 reppulit et nivcas feriunt vada Thessala plantas.  
 laetantur montes et conubialia pandunt  
 antra sinus lateque deae Sperchios abundat  
 obvius et dulci vestigia circuit unda.  
 illa nihil gavis a locis, sed coepta fatigat  
 105 pectore consilia et sollers pietate magistra  
 longaezum Chirona petit. domus ardua montem  
 perforat et longo suspendit Pelion arcu;  
 pars exhausta manu, partem sua ruperat aetas.  
 signa tamen divumque tori et quem quisque sacrarit  
 110 accubitu genioque locum monstrantur; at intra  
 Centauri stabula alta patent, non aequa nefandis  
 fratribus: hic hominum nullos experta cruores  
 spicula nec truncae bellis genialibus orni  
 aut consanguincos fracti crateres in hostes,  
 115 sed pharetrac insontes et inania terga ferarum.  
 hacc quoque dum viridis; nam tunc labor unus inermi  
 nosse salutiferas dubiis animantibus herbas,  
 aut monstrare lyra veteres heroas alumno.

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<sup>22</sup> As the Greek fleet was returning from Troy it was wrecked off Cape Caphereus, on which beacons had been lit by Nauplius in revenge for the death of his father Palamedes.

<sup>23</sup> Neptune was later to hound Ulysses in revenge for the blinding of his son, the Cyclops Polyphemus (*Odyssey* 13.125–28). Thetis’ grievance is the theme of the surviving portion of the *Achilleid*.

## BOOK 1

signals<sup>22</sup> and we both alike search for dire Ulysses.<sup>23</sup>

He had spoken. Thetis' face fell at the heavy rebuff. She had been in train to rouse the sea and make war upon the Ilian vessels, but now her mind devised other plans. Sadly she turned her arms to Haemonia's land. Thrice she made essay with her hands, thrice thrust back the liquid level with her steps and the Thessalian shallows are striking her snow-white feet.<sup>24</sup> The hills rejoice and the connubial caverns lay open their hollows; Sperchios meets the goddess in broad abounding flow and circles her footprints with his fresh water. No pleasure does she take in the scene, but again and again goes over in her mind the plan begun, and wise in love's instruction seeks out aged Chiron. High up his lofty dwelling bores through the mountain, upholding Pelion with its lengthy vault. Part was excavated by hand, part its own age had ruptured. But tokens and couches of the gods are to be seen, showing which place each deity had hallowed with his reclining and his familiar spirit.<sup>25</sup> Within spread the Centaur's lofty stalls, a contrast to his villainous brethren. Here are no darts that have tasted human blood, no ash trees fractured in festive combats, nor mixing bowls shattered upon kindred foes,<sup>26</sup> but innocent quivers and empty hides of wild beasts—these too of his salad days. For at this time unarmed his only labour was to know herbs that bring health to living things in doubtful case or to limn with his lyre the heroes of old for his pupil.

<sup>24</sup> 'Three arm-strokes and three leg-strokes bring the goddess to the shore of Thessaly' (Dilke).

<sup>25</sup> At the marriage feast of Peleus and Thetis.

<sup>26</sup> The Centaurs fight each other, not just the Lapiths, at feasts.

ACHILLEID

Et tunc venatu rediturum in limine primo  
 120 opperiens properatque dapes largoque serenat  
 igne domum, cum visa procul de litore surgens  
 Nereis; erumpit silvis (dant gaudia vires)  
 notaque desueto crepuit senis ungula campo.  
 tunc blandus dextra atque imos demissus in armos  
 125 pauperibus tectis inducit et admonet antri.

Iamdudum tacito lustrat Thetis omnia visu  
 nec perpressa moras: 'Ubinam mea pignora, Chiron,  
 dic', ait, 'aut cur ulla puer iam tempora ducit  
 te sine? non merito trepidus sopor atraque matri  
 130 signa deum et magnos utinam mentita timores?  
 namque modo infensos utero mihi contuor enses,  
 nunc planctu livere manus, modo in ubera saevas  
 ire feras; saepe ipsa—nefas!—sub inania natum  
 Tartara et ad Stygios iterum fero mergere fontes.  
 135 hos abolere metus magici iubet ordine sacri  
 Carpathius vates puerumque sub axe peracto  
 secretis lustrare fretis, ubi litora summa  
 Oceani et genitor tepet illabentibus astris  
 Pontus. ibi ignotis horrenda piacula divis  
 140 donaque—sed longum cuncta enumerare vetorque.  
 trade magis!' sic ficta parens: neque enim ille dedisset,  
 si molles habitus et tegmina foeda fateri  
 ausa seni.

<sup>136</sup> peracto P: probato ω

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<sup>27</sup> In which Thetis had dipped her infant son to make him invulnerable but omitted to immerse the ankle by which she held him.      <sup>28</sup> Proteus; cf. 32.

## BOOK I

Then as usual he was waiting at the threshold for the same to return from the hunt, hastening the repast and brightening the abode with a generous fire, when he saw the Nereid ascending from the distant beach. Out of the forest he breaks (joy gives him strength) and the ancient's familiar hoof sounded on the plain it now seldom trod. Then with courteous hand, sinking low down upon his shoulders, he leads her into his poor dwelling and warns her of the cavern.

Long does Thetis survey it all with silent gaze. Brooking no delay, she speaks: 'Where is my child, Chiron, say. Why does the boy now spend any time apart from you? Is there not good cause for my troubled sleep, for the dark portents of the gods telling my mother's heart dire fears—falsely, I pray? Now I see swords threatening my womb, now my hands bruised with lamentation, now wild beasts attacking my breasts. Often I myself (oh horror!) am bearing my son down hollow Tartarus, bearing him to dip again in the waters of Styx.<sup>27</sup> The Carpathian seer<sup>28</sup> tells me to rid me of these terrors by process of a magic rite and to purify the boy in secret seas under western sky,<sup>29</sup> where are the farthest shores of Ocean and my father Pontus<sup>30</sup> warms with ingliding stars. There awful expiations and gifts to gods unknown—but to tell it all would take too long and I am forbidden. Just hand him over.' So fabricates the mother, for the ancient would never have given the boy if she had dared tell him of effeminate habit and degrading garb.

<sup>29</sup> *Peracto* ('completed,' i.e. fully traversed) refers to the sun's daily course; hence 'western.'

<sup>30</sup> This is a puzzle. Pontus apparently = Oceanus, not, as normally, the Euxine. But Thetis was the daughter of Nereus and Oceanus' daughter Doris.

ACHILLEID

Tunc ipse refert: 'Duc, optima, quaeso,  
 duc, genetrix, humilique deos infringe precatu.  
 145 nam superant tua vota modum placandaque multum  
 invidia est. non addo metum, sed vera fatebor:  
 nescio quid magnum (nec me patria omina fallunt)  
 vis festina parat tenuesque supervenit annos.  
 olim et ferre minas avideque audire solebat  
 150 imperia et nostris procul haut discedere ab antris;  
 nunc illum non Ossa capit, non Pelion ingens  
 Pharsaliaeve nives. ipsi mihi saepe queruntur  
 Centauri raptasque domos abstractaque coram  
 armenta et semet campis fluviisque fugari,  
 155 insidiasque et bella parant tumidique minantur.  
 olim equidem, Argoos pinus cum Thessala reges  
 hac veheret, iuvenem Alciden et Thesea vidi—  
 sed taceo.'

Figit gelidus Nereida pallor:  
 ille aderat multo sudore et pulvere maior,  
 160 et tamen arma inter festinatosque labores  
 dulcis adhuc visu: niveo natat ignis in ore  
 purpureus fulvoque nitet coma gratior auro.  
 necdum prima nova lanugine vertitur aetas,  
 tranquillaeque faces oculis et plurima vultu  
 165 mater inest: qualis Lycia venator Apollo  
 cum redit et sacvis permutat plectra pharetris.  
 forte et laetus adest (o quantum gaudia formae  
 adiciunt!): fetam Pholoës sub rupe leaenam  
 perculerat ferro vacuisque reliquerat antris  
 170 ipsam, sed catulos apportat et incitat unguens.

<sup>152</sup> pharsaliaeve P: thessal- ω

<sup>155</sup> tumidique ω: timideque P

## BOOK 1

Then he replies: 'Take him, best of mothers, take him I pray and bend the gods with humble entreaty. For your hopes pass bounds and envy is much to be placated. I go not to alarm you further, but I shall tell the truth. His precocious force is brewing something big (my father's omens<sup>31</sup> do not deceive me), going beyond his scanty years. Once he would bear threats and eagerly hear commands, nor go far from my cave. Now Ossa does not contain him, nor huge Pelion, nor Pharsalian snows. The Centaurs themselves often complain to me of plundered homes and cattle carried off before their eyes and themselves driven from fields and rivers. They prepare ambush and war and make angry threats. In time gone by, when the pine of Thessaly carried Argo's kings this way, I saw youthful Alcides and Theseus—but I am mum.'

Icy pallor rivets the Nereid. The lad was there, much sweat and dust made him bigger, and yet amid weapons and hurried labours he was still sweet to look upon. A bright glow swims in his snow-white face and his hair shines fairer than tawny gold. Nor yet is his first youth changing with new down, the lights in his eyes are tranquil and much of his mother is in his face: like Apollo the hunter when he returns from Lycia and quits his fierce quiver for the quill. By chance too he comes rejoicing (ah how much does happiness add to beauty!): he had struck with steel a lioness newly whelped under Pholoë's crag and left her in her empty cavern, bringing home the cubs and

<sup>31</sup> Chiron's father was Saturn, but the reference to omens is obscure.

ACHILLEID

quos tamen, ut fido genetrix in limine visa est,  
 abicit exceptamque avidis circumligat ulnis,  
 iam gravis amplexu iamque aequus vertice matri.  
 insequitur magno iam tunc conexus amore

175 Patroclus tantisque extenditur aemulus actis,  
 par studiis aevique modis, sed robore longe,  
 et tamen aequali visurus Pergama fato.

Protinus ille subit rapido quae proxima saltu  
 flumina fumantisque genas crinemque novatur  
 180 fontibus: Eurotae qualis vada Castor anhelò  
 intrat equo fessumque sui iubar excitat astri.

miratur comitque senex, nunc pectora mulcens  
 nunc fortis umeros; angunt sua gaudia matrem.  
 tunc libare dapes Baccheaque munera Chiron  
 185 orat et attonitae varia oblectamina nectens  
 elicit extremo chelyn et solantia curas

fila movet leviterque expertas pollice chordas  
 dat puero. canit ille libens immania laudum  
 semina: quot tumidae superarit iussa novercae  
 190 Amphitryoniades, crudum quo Bebryca caestu  
 obruerit Pollux, quanto circumdata nexu  
 ruperit Aegides Minoia bracchia tauri,  
 maternos in fine toros superisque gravatum  
 Pelion: hic victo risit Thetis anxia vultu.

195 nox trahit in somnos; saxo collabitur ingens  
 Centaurus blandusque umcris se innectit Achilles,  
 quamquam ibi fida parens, assuetaque pectora mavult.

At Thetis indisonis per noctem in rupibus astans,  
 quae nato secreta velit, quibus abdere terris

176 modo  $\psi$

185 oblectamina  $\omega$ : -ne  $\Sigma$ , P (*sed* obie-)



## BOOK 1

provoking their claws. But when his mother appears on the trusty threshold, he throws them aside, picks her up and encircles her with greedy elbows, already powerful in his embrace and of height to match her. Patroclus follows, linked even then by a great love. He strains to rival such mighty deeds, equal in youthful zeal and manners but far behind in strength; yet he too was to see Pergamus, alike doomed.

Forthwith in a swift leap he approaches the nearest stream and freshens his steaming cheeks and hair in its water, like Castor entering the shallows of Eurotas with panting steed and furbishing the weary ray of his star. The ancient wonders at him, spruces him up, stroking now his chest, now his strong shoulders. Her joys torture the mother. Then Chiron begs her to taste victuals and Bacchus' gift, weaving various delights for her amazement. At last he draws out his lyre, moving the care-comforting strings, and after making light trial of them with his thumb hands them to the boy. Willingly he sings mighty seeds of glory: how many commands of his proud stepdame Amphitryon's son accomplished, with what a glove Pollux crushed cruel Bebryx, with how strong a grip the son of Aegeus encircled and broke the limbs of Minos' bull, and finally his mother's marriage bed and Pelion weighed down by the High Ones. Here Thetis' anxious countenance yielded in a smile. Night draws to slumber. The huge Centaur collapses on stone and Achilles fondly twines himself about his shoulders, though his faithful mother is there, preferring the familiar bosom.

But Thetis in the night stands beside the sea-sounding rocks. Her mind is split this way and that as she turns over what secret place she should choose for her son, in what

ACHILLEID

- 200 destinet, huc illuc divisa mente volutat.  
 proxima, sed studiis multum Mavortia, Thrace;  
 nec Macetum gens dura placet laudumque daturi  
 Cecropidae stimulos; nimium opportuna carinis  
 Sestos Abydenique sinus. placet ire per artas  
 205 Cycladas; hic spretae Myconosque humilisque Seriphos  
 et Lemnos non aequa viris atque hospita Delos  
 gentibus. imbelli nuper Lycomedis ab aula  
 virgineos coetus et litora persona ludo  
 audierat, duros laxantem Aegaeona nexus  
 210 missa sequi centumque dei numerare catenas.  
 haec placet, haec timidae tellus tutissima matri.  
 qualis vicino volucris iam sedula partu  
 iamque timens, qua fronde domum suspendat inanem;  
 providet hic ventos, hic anxia cogitat angues,  
 215 hic homines: tandem dubiae placet umbra, novisque  
 vix stetit in ramis et protinus arbor amatur.

Altera consilio superest tristemque fatigat  
 cura deam, natum ipsa sinu complexa per undas  
 an magno Tritone ferat, ventosne volucres  
 220 advocet an pelago solitam Thaumantida pasci.  
 elicit inde fretis et murice frenat acuto  
 delphinas biiugos, quos illi maxima Tethys  
 gurgite Atlanteo pelagi sub valle sonora  
 nutrierat; nullis vada per Neptunia glaucae

204 artas P: altas ω

<sup>32</sup> Quite untrue in respect of Pelion. Was the author's mind in Lemnos, with memories of Hypsipyle?

<sup>33</sup> Lemnos is not one of the Cyclades. The women of Lemnos had murdered their menfolk, as described in *Thebaid*, Book 5.

## BOOK 1

lands she should decide to conceal him. Thrace is nearest,<sup>32</sup> but much given to Mavors' pursuits. Nor does the hardy race of Macedonians please, nor yet the children of Cecrops (they would spur him to glory). Sestos and the bay of Abydos are too much in the way of ships. She decides to go through the crowding Cyclades. Here she spurns Myconos and lowly Seriphos and Lemnos, to men unfriendly,<sup>33</sup> and Delos, hospitable to all peoples. A while back she had heard from Lycomedes' unwarlike palace be vies of girls and the sound of their play along the shore, while on a mission to follow Aegaeon as he relaxed his harsh bonds and to number the god's hundred chains.<sup>34</sup> This land pleases, this is safest for the fearful mother. Even so a bird, near to giving birth, already careful, already afraid, wonders on what branch to hang her vacant house; here she foresees winds, here thinks anxiously of serpents, here of men; finally as she doubts, a shady place takes her fancy; scarce has she alighted on the stranger boughs and all at once she loves the tree. †

Another care remains for the sad goddess' weary pondering: should she herself take her son through the waters in her embrace or use mighty Triton, call on the swift winds to aid or Thaumás' daughter,<sup>35</sup> wont to feed upon the sea? Then from the deep she summons her team, a pair of dolphins, bridling them with sharp seashells. Great Tethys had reared them for her in the Atlantic ocean, deep in an echoing sea hollow. No denizen of Neptune's watery

<sup>34</sup> Apparently an extrapolation from *Iliad* 1.401ff. See Dilke.

<sup>35</sup> Iris, the rainbow, believed to draw up seawater into the clouds.

ACHILLEID

- 225 tantus honos formae nandique potentia nec plus  
 pectoris humani. iubet hos subsistere pleno  
 litore, ne nudaе noceant contagia terrae.  
 ipsa dehinc toto resolutum pectore Achillem,  
 qui pueris sopor, Haemonii de rupibus antri  
 230 ad placidas deportat aquas et iussa tacere  
 litora; monstrat iter totoque effulгурat orbe  
 Cynthia. prosequitur divam celeresque recursus  
 securus pelagi Chiron rogat udaque celat  
 lumina et abreptos subito iamiamque latentes  
 235 erecto prospectat equo, qua cana parumper  
 spumant signa fugae et liquido perit orbita ponto.  
 illum non alias rediturum ad Thessala Tempe  
 iam tristis Pholoë, iam nubilus ingemit Othrys  
 et tenrior Sperchios aquis speluncaque docti  
 240 muta senis; quaerunt puerilia carmina Fauni  
 et sperata diu plorant conubia Nymphae.

- Iam premit astra dies humilique ex aequore Titan  
 rorantes evolvit equos et ab aethere magno  
 sublaturu curru pelagus cadit; at vada mater  
 245 Scyria iamdudum fluctus emensa tenebat,  
 exierantque iugo fessi delphines erili,  
 cum pueri tremefacta quies oculique patentes  
 infusum sensere diem. stupet aëre primo:  
 quae loca, qui fluctus, ubi Pelion? omnia versa  
 250 atque ignota videt dubitatque agnoscere matrem.  
 occupat illa manu blandeque affata paventem:

<sup>228</sup> corpore Wakefield

<sup>239</sup> senior P: tenuis ω (Postgate)

<sup>36</sup> *Securus pelagi* is Virgil's (*Aeneid* 7.304). Chiron does not worry about the sea because it is Thetis' element. Cf. 684.

## BOOK 1

kingdom has such beauty of grey-blue form, such power of swimming, or more of human mind. She tells them to halt in the full sea verge, so that contact with bare earth do them no hurt. Then she herself carries Achilles, his bosom all relaxed in the sleep of boyhood, down from the crags of the Haemonian cave to the placid waters and the shore commanded to be silent. Cynthia shows the way, shining out with all her orb. Untroubled by the sea,<sup>36</sup> Chiron follows the goddess on her path and begs speedy return, hiding his moist eyes and gazing out from horse erect as they are suddenly carried away and presently hidden from sight, where for a little while foam the white traces of flight and the track dies upon the liquid flood. Him now sad Pholoë, now cloudy Othrys lament, no more to return to Thessalian Tempe, likewise Sperchios in thinner flow and the learned ancient's muted cavern. The Fauns miss his boyish songs and the Nymphs bewail long hoped-for nuptials.

Now day presses down the stars and Titan rolls his dripping steeds from out the low and level waters and the sea raised by his chariot falls from the vast sky.<sup>37</sup> But the mother had already crossed the waves and was safe on Scyros' shore, the weary dolphins had left their mistress' yoke, when the boy's sleep was shaken and his wide eyes felt daylight pouring in. At first sight of sky<sup>38</sup> he was stunned: what place is this, what waves, where is Pelion? Everything he sees is changed and strange, and he doubts to recognize his mother. She hastens to caress the frightened lad and lovingly addresses him:

<sup>37</sup> Water drips from the chariot as it rises.

<sup>38</sup> Lit. 'air' (atmosphere).

ACHILLEID

'Si mihi, care pucr, thalamos sors aequa tulisset,  
 quos dabat, aetheriis ego te complexa tenerem  
 sidus grande plagis, magnique puerpera caeli  
 255 nil humiles Parcas terrenaque fata vcrerer.  
 nunc impar tibi, nate, genus, praeclusaque leti  
 tantum a matre via est; quin et metuenda propinquant  
 tempora et extremis admota pericula metis.  
 cedamus, paulumque animos submitte viriles  
 260 atque habitus dignare meos. si Lydia dura  
 pensa manu mollesque tulit Tiryntius hastas,  
 si decet aurata Bacchum vestigia palla  
 verrere, virgincos si Iuppiter induit artus,  
 nec magnum ambigui fregerunt Cacnea scxus:  
 265 hac sine, quacso, minas nubemque exire malignam.  
 mox iterum campos, iterum Centaurica reddam  
 lustra tibi: per ego hoc decus et ventura iuventae  
 gaudia, si terras humilemque experta maritum  
 te propter, si progenitum Stygos amne severo  
 270 arnavi (totumque utinam!), cape tuta parumper  
 tegmina nil nocitura animo. cur ora reducis  
 quidve parant oculi? pudet hoc mitescere cultu?  
 per te, care pucr, cognata per aequora iuro,  
 nesciet hoc Chiron.'

Sic horrida pectora tractat  
 275 nequiquam mulcens; obstat genitorque roganti

265 *hac ex has (P) ψ, Postgate: hae P: has ω      nubemque . . .*  
*malignam P: numenque . . . malignum ω*

<sup>39</sup> The reference is to Omphale.

<sup>40</sup> Disguising himself as Diana when in pursuit of Callisto.

## BOOK 1

‘Dear boy, if a kindly lot had brought me the marriage it proffered, I should be holding you in my embrace as a grand star in the celestial regions; of the great heaven should I have borne my child nor feared lowly fates and earthly dooms. As it is, my son, your birth is unequal and death’s path blocked only on your mother’s side. Ay, and the time of danger approaches, perils moved close to the final turning point. Let us give way. Lower a little your manly spirit and deign to wear my raiment. If the Tirynthian carried Lydian wool in his hard hand and womanish spears,<sup>39</sup> if Bacchus it beseems to sweep his footsteps with a gold-embroidered robe, if Jupiter donned a virgin’s limbs,<sup>40</sup> and doubtful sexes did not rob great Caeneus of his manhood,<sup>41</sup> pray allow me this way to escape the threat and the baleful cloud. Soon I shall give you back your fields onee more, once more the Centaur’s wilds. I beg you by your handsome looks and future joys of youth: if for your sake I made trial of land and a lowly spouse, if I armed you at birth with the stern Stygian river (and would it had been all of you!),<sup>42</sup> for a little while take safe clothing, that will do no harm to your spirit. Why do you withdraw your face, what purpose is in your eyes? Are you ashamed to soften in this dress? I swear to you, dear boy, by my kindred sea, Chiron shall not know of this.’

So she wrought on his rough heart, coaxing in vain.  
Against her plea stands his father and his huge foster sire

<sup>41</sup> Caeneus changed from male to female (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 12.171ff.) and, according to one report, back again. He took part in the Calydonian boar hunt, but the epithet *magnum* seems to have no special relevance.

<sup>42</sup> See on 134.

ACHILLEID

nutritorque ingens et cruda exordia magnae  
indolis. effrenae tumidum velut igne iuventae  
si quis equum primis summittere temptet habenis:  
280 ille diu campis fluviisque et honore superbo  
gavisus non colla iugo, non aspera praebet  
ora lupis dominique fremit captivus inire  
imperia atque alios miratur discere cursus.

Quis deus attonitae fraudes astumque parenti  
contulit? indocilem quae mens detraxit Achillem?  
285 Palladi litoreae celebrabat Scyros honorum  
forte diem, placidoque satae Lycomedae sorores  
luce sacra patriis, quae rara licentia, muris  
exierant dare veris opes divaeque severas  
fronde ligare comas et spargere floribus hastam.  
290 omnibus eximium formae decus, omnibus idem  
cultus et expleto teneri iam fine pudoris  
virginitas matura toris annique tumentes.  
sed quantum virides pelagi Venus addita Nymphas  
obruit, aut umeris quantum Diana relinquit  
295 Naidas, effulget tantum regina decori  
Deidamia chori pulchrisque sororibus obstat.  
illius et roseo flammatur purpura vultu  
et gemmis lux maior inest et blandius aurum:  
atque ipsi par forma deae est, si pectoris angues  
300 ponat et exempta pacetur casside vultus.  
hanc ubi ducentem longe socia agmina vidit,  
trux puer et nullo temeratus pectora motu  
deriguit totisque novum bibit ossibus ignem.  
nec latet haustus amor, sed fax vibrata medullis

<sup>251</sup> fremit P: ge- ω



## BOOK 1

and the raw rudiments of a great nature: as though one were to try to subject a horse, haughty with the fire of unbridled youth, to his first harness; long delighting in field and river and proud beauty, he bends not his neck to the yoke nor his fierce mouth to the bit, loudly indignant to pass captive under a master's command, marvelling to learn new courses.

What deity bestowed artful trickery on the baffled mother? What mood<sup>43</sup> diverted stubborn Achilles. It fell out that Scyros was celebrating a day in honour of Pallas of the Beach. The sisterhood, daughters of mild Lycomedes, had left their native walls on the holy morning (a rare licence) to give spring's riches to the goddess and bind her austere tresses with foliage and scatter flowers upon her spear. All possessed surpassing beauty, all were dressed alike; they had reached the term of tender modesty, their maidenhood, their burgeoning years, were ripe for the marriage bed. But as Venus overwhelms the green Sea Nymphs when she joins them, as Diana's shoulders outtop the Naiads, so far does Deidamia, queen of the fair choir, shine out eclipsing her lovely sisters. Purple is fired by her rosy face, her gems have more brilliance, her gold more allure. Her form equals the goddess' own, would she but lay aside her bosom's snakes and pacify her countenance, helmet removed. When the truculent boy, whose heart no stirring had ever assailed, saw her leading her attendant column from far ahead, he stiffened and drank novel flame in all his bones. Nor does his draught of love stay hid-

<sup>43</sup> *Mens* seems best taken of Achilles' mood rather than as 'device,' a very rare if not unexampled sense. Besides, Achilles' sight of Deianira was not a device; it happened.

ACHILLEID

305 in vultus atque ora redivit lucemque genarum  
tinguit et impulsam tenui sudore pererrat.  
lactea Massagetae veluti cum pocula fuscant  
sanguine puniceo vel ebur corrumpitur ostro,  
310 flamma repens. eat atque ultro ferus hospita sacra  
disiciat turbae securus et immemor aevi,  
ni pudor et iunctae teneat reverentia matris.  
ut pater armenti quondam ductorque futurus,  
cui nondum toto peraguntur cornua gyro,  
315 cum sociam pastus niveo candore iuvenecam  
aspicit, ardescunt animi primusque per ora  
spumat amor, spectant hilares obstantque magistri.

Occupat arrepto iam conscia tempore mater:  
‘Hasne inter simulare choros et brachia ludo  
320 nectere, nate, grave est? gelida quid tale sub Ossa  
Peliacisque iugis? o si mihi iungere curas  
atque alium portare sinu contingat Achillem!’  
mulcetor laetumque rubet visusque protervos  
obliquat vestesque manu levioze repellit.  
325 aspicit ambiguum genetrix cogique volentem  
inieciturque sinus; tum colla rigentia mollit  
submittitque graves umeros et fortia laxat  
brachia et impexos certo domat ordine crines  
ac sua dilecta cervice monilia transfert;  
330 et picturato cohibens vestigia limbo  
incessum motumque docet fandique pudorem.  
qualiter artificii victurae pollice cerae

<sup>306</sup> impulsum *edd. vett.*

<sup>317</sup> obstantque P: obt- ψ: opt- ω

<sup>325</sup> cogiturque Pω (*Heinsius*)

## BOOK I

den; the brand waving in his inmost parts goes to his faee and tinges the brightness of his cheeks, wandering over then with a light sweat as they feel the impulse.<sup>44</sup> As when the Massagetæ darken their eups of milk with scarlet blood or when ivory is tainted with purple dye, such is the sudden fire manifest by various signs, paling and blushing. He would go forward and wildly disrupt the rituals of his hosts, careless of the erowd and oblivious of his years, did not modesty and reverence for the mother by his side hold him back. As when the future father and leader of the herd, whose horns have not yet finished their full eirele, looks upon the snow-white heifer who shares his pasture, his spirit takes fire and first love foams through his mouth, while the merry cowerds wateh and oppose him.

His mother is already aware of his secret; seizing her moment, she makes her move: 'My son, is it so hard to feign to dance among these girls and join hands in play? What is there like this beneath chilly Ossa and the heights of Pelion? Oh if only it were mine to join loving hearts and carry another Achilles in my bosom!' He is softened and blushes for joy, casting sly, wanton glances, and lightens the hand that pushes the garments away. His mother sees his indecision, sees that he would fain be forced, and throws the folds over him. Then she softens the stiff neck, lowers the weighty shoulders, loosens the strong arms; she subdues the unkempt hair, fixing and arranging, and transfers her necklace to the beloved neck. Constraining his steps with an embroidered hem, she teaches him how to walk and move and how to speak with modesty. As wax that

<sup>44</sup> *Impulsam*, agreeing with *lucem genarum*, which stands for *genas* (Dilke).

ACHILLEID

accipiunt formas ignemque manumque sequuntur,  
talīs erat divae natum mutantis imago.

335 nec luctata diu; superest nam plurimus illi  
invita virtute decor, fallitque tuentes  
ambiguus tenuique latens discrimine sexus.

Procedunt, iterumque monens iterumque fatigans  
blanda Thetis: 'Sic ergo gradum, sic ora manusque,  
340 nate, feres comitesque modis imitabere fictis,  
ne te suspectum molli non misceat aulae  
rector et incepti pereant mendacia furti.'

dicit et admoto non distat comere tactu.  
sic ubi virgineis Hecate lassata Therapnis  
345 ad patrem fratremque redit, comes haeret eunti  
mater et ipsa umeros exsertaque bracchia velat;  
ipsa arcu pharetraque levat vestemque latentem  
deducit sparsosque tumet componere crines.

Protinus aggreditur regem atque ibi testibus aris  
350 'Hanc tibi,' ait, 'nostri germanam, rector, Achillis  
(nonne vides ut torva genas aequandaque fratri?)  
tradimus. arma umeris arcumque animosa petebat  
ferre et Amazonio conubia pellere ritu.  
sed mihi curarum satis est pro stirpe virili;  
355 haec calathos et sacra ferat, tu frange regendo  
indocilem sexuque tene, dum nubilis aetas

336 invita P: invicta ω

343 distat P: cessat ω

347 arcum pharetrasque (-amque ψ) locat (gerit ψ) (Schrader)

348 timet Pψ: studet ψ (Gronovius)

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<sup>45</sup> *Distat* = *desinit* is unexampled, but see Hill on *Thebaid* 3.73. *Cessat* looks like a 'banalization.'

## BOOK 1

an artist's thumb will bring to life receives shape and follows fire and hand, such was the semblance of the goddess as she transformed her son. Nor did she struggle long. Charm is his in plenty and to spare, though manhood demur, and doubtful sex cheats the observer, hiding in narrow divide.

They go forward. Gently Thetis cautions and presses, over and over again: 'So then, my son, will you bear your step, so face and hands, copying your companions in fashions feigned, lest the ruler suspect you nor let you join the soft quarters and the falsehood of our artful enterprise go for nothing.' So she speaks, nor ceases<sup>45</sup> her trimming and touching. So when Hecate<sup>46</sup> returns weary from virginal Therapne to her father and brother, her mother attends her as she walks, herself covering shoulders and bared arms, herself relieving of bow and quiver, drawing down the girt-up gown and proudly ordering the dishevelled locks.

Forthwith she accosts the king and there calling the altars to witness she speaks: 'I give this girl, oh king, the sister of my Achilles (see you not how fierce she looks, how like her brother?) into your keeping. High-mettled, she asked for weapons on her shoulders and a bow, asked to shun wedlock Amazon fashion. But I have enough to worry about on my man-child's account. Let her convey the baskets<sup>47</sup> and the holy things, do you rule and tame the forward wench and keep her in her sex, till it is time for mar-

<sup>46</sup> Diana, 'here identified with the Arcadian and Spartan Artemis, so that the relations mentioned here are Jupiter, Latona, and Apollo' (Dilke).

<sup>47</sup> As in the Athenian festival of the Canephoria.

ACHILLEID

- solvendusque pudor; neve exercere protervas  
 gymnadas aut lustris nemorum concede vagari.  
 intus ale et similes inter seclude puellas;  
 360 litore praecipue portuque arcere memento.  
 vidisti modo vela Phrygum: iam mutua iura  
 fallere transmissae pelago didicere carinac.'
- Accedit dictis pater ingenioque parentis  
 occultum Aeaciden (quis divum fraudibus obstet?)  
 365 accipit; ultro etiam veneratur supplice dextra  
 et grates electus agit: nec turba piarum  
 Scyriadum cessat nimio defigere visu  
 virginis ora novae, quantum cervice comisque  
 emineat quantumque umeros ac pectora fundat.  
 370 dehinc sociare choros castisque accedere sacris  
 hortantur ceduntque loco et contingere gaudent.  
 qualiter Idaliae volucres, ubi mollia frangunt  
 nubila, iam longum caeloque domoque gregatae,  
 si iunxit pinnas diversoque hospita tractu  
 375 venit avis, cunctae primum mirantur et horrent;  
 mox propius propiusque volant, atque aëre in ipso  
 paulatim fecere suam plausuque secundo  
 circumeunt hilares et ad alta cubilia ducunt.
- Digreditur multum cunctata in limine mater,  
 380 dum repetit monitus arcanaque murmura figit  
 auribus et tacito dat verba novissima vultu.  
 tunc excepta freto longe cervice reflexa  
 abnatat et blandis affatur litora votis:  
 'Cara mihi tellus, magnae cui pignora curae

371 locum  $\psi$

381 voto  $\psi$

## BOOK 1

riage and relaxing of modesty. Don't let her practice wanton wrestlings<sup>45</sup> or wander in woodland wilds. Raise her indoors, shut her among girls like herself. Especially be sure to keep her away from the beach and the harbour. You saw the Phrygian sails the other day. Ships have now learned to cross the sea and violate mutual laws.'

The father assents to her words and accepts Achilles disguised by parental craft—who should resist divine deccits? He even reverences her with suppliant hand and thanks her for choosing him. The flock of duteous Scyrian girls continue to stare relentlessly at the new maiden's face, marvelling how she outtops them by neck and hair, how broad she spreads her chest and shoulders. Then they urge her to share their dances and join their chaste rituals, yielding her place and rejoicing in the contact. As with Idalian birds when they break soft clouds, long congregated in their home and in the sky:<sup>49</sup> if a stranger bird coming from a distant region join her feathers, at first they all wonder and fear, but presently they fly closer and closer and still in the air little by little they make her one of their own, merrily circling her with auspicious flap of wing, leading her to their lofty roost.

The mother lingers long at the threshold as she leaves, repeating her admonitions, planting secret mutterings in his ears and giving last words with muted countenance. Then the waters receive her and she swims away. Afar, she turns back her neck and speaks flattering vows to the shore: 'Land dear to me, to whom I have consigned the

<sup>45</sup> Customary for Spartan girls. *Gymnades* may include any athletic exercise.

<sup>49</sup> Or 'their heavenly home,' the dovecot (*hendiadys*).

ACHILLEID

- 385 depositumque ingens timido commisimus astu,  
 sis felix taceasque, precor, quo more tacebat  
 Creta Rheae; te longus honos aeternaque cingent  
 templa nec instabili fama superabere Delo,  
 et ventis et sacra fretis interque vadosas
- 390 Cycladas, Aegaeae frangunt ubi saxa procellae,  
 Nereidum tranquilla domus iurandaque nautis  
 insula; ne solum Danaas admitte carinas,  
 ne, precor! "Hic thiasi tantum et nihil utile bellis:"  
 hoc famam narrare doce, dumque arma parantur
- 395 Dorica et alternum Mavors interfurit orbem  
 (cedo equidem) sit virgo pii Lycomedis Achilles.<sup>7</sup>
- Interea meritos ultrix Europa dolores  
 dulcibus armorum furiis et supplice regum  
 conquestu flammata movet; quippe ambit Atrides
- 400 ille magis, cui nupta domi, facinusque relatu  
 asperat Iliacum: captam sine Marte, sine armis  
 progeniem caeli Spartaeque potentis alumnam,  
 iura, fidem, superos una calcata rapina.  
 hoc foedus Phrygium, haec geminac commercia terrae!
- 405 quid mancat populos, ubi tanta iniuria primos  
 degrassata duces? coeunt gens omnis et aetas:  
 nec tantum exciti, bimari quos Isthmia vallo  
 claustra nec undisonae quos circuit umbo Malcae,  
 sed procul, admotas Phrixi qua semita iungi
- 410 Europamque Asiamque vctat, quasque ordine gentes  
 litore Abydeno maris alligat unda superni.

<sup>50</sup> When Jupiter was born on Cretan Mt Ida, in secret from his murderous father Saturn.

<sup>51</sup> Once a floating island.



## BOOK I

child I love so much, a trust indeed, in fearful cunning, good fortune be with you; and I pray, keep my secret as Crete kept Rhea's.<sup>50</sup> Enduring worship and shrines eternal shall gird you, nor shall unsteady Delos<sup>51</sup> surpass your fame. Sacred shall you be to wind and wave, a quiet home for the Nereids among the shallows of the Cyclades when Aegean tempests shatter the rocks, an island for sailors' prayers: only grant not access to Danaan keels, grant it not, I pray. "Here are only dances, nothing for warriors' use"—so teach Rumour to tell; and while Doric arms are making ready and Mavors rages between two worlds<sup>52</sup> (let him for all I care), be Achilles good Lycomedes' maiden.'

Meanwhile avenging Europe sets righteous wrath astir, aflame with sweet fury of arms and suppliant complaint of kings. For Atreus' son, he the more whose wife is still at home,<sup>53</sup> makes canvass, honing Ilium's crime in the telling. Heaven's progeny, he says, nursling of mighty Sparta, is taken prisoner without war or weapons; laws, good faith, and the High Ones trampled in a single larceny. Such is Phrygian compact, such the commerce of two continents! What should the peoples expect, when so foul an outrage has descended on their leaders? All races, all ages flock together. Not only are they aroused whom Isthmus bars with rampart of double sea and the sounding waves of Malea's cape encircle,<sup>54</sup> but far away where Phrixus' track forbids the junction of Europe and Asia, close though they come, those peoples that the wave of the upper sea binds in their

<sup>52</sup> Europe and Asia.

<sup>53</sup> Agamemnon.

<sup>54</sup> The Peloponnesians; cf. *Thebaid* 7.15f.

ACHILLEID

fervet amor belli concussasque erigit urbes.  
 aera domat Temese, quatitur navalibus ora  
 Eubois, innumera resonant incude Mycenae,  
 415 Pisa novat currus, Nemeë dat terga ferarum,  
 Cirrha sagittiferas certat stipare pharetras,  
 Lerna gravis clipeos caesis vestire iuvençis.  
 dat bello pedites Actolus et asper Acarnan,  
 Argos agit turmas, vacuantur pascua ditis  
 420 Arcadiæ, frenat celeres Epiros alumnos,  
 Phocis et Aoniae iaculis rarescitis umbræ,  
 murorum tormenta Pylos Messenaque tendunt.  
 nulla immunis humus; velluntur postibus altis  
 arma olim dimissa patrum, flammisque liquescunt  
 425 dona deum; ereptum superis Mars cfferat aurum.  
 nusquam umbræ veteres: minor Othrys et ardua sidunt  
 Taygeta, exuti viderunt aëra montes.  
 iam natat omne nemus; caeduntur robora classi,  
 silva minor remis. ferrum lassatur in usus  
 430 innumeros, quod rostra liget, quod muniat arma,  
 belligeros quod frenet equos, quod mille catenis  
 squalentis nectat tunicas, quod sanguine fumet  
 vulneraque alta bibat, quod conspirante veneno  
 impellat mortes; tenuant umentia saxa

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<sup>55</sup> The translation is mechanical, since there seems to be no coherent sense to be got out of *quasque . . . superni. Maris superni* is thought to be used vaguely for the waters north of the Hellespont—Propontis and Euxine; whereas Abydos is on its Asiatic side.

<sup>56</sup> Probably Tamassus in Cyprus, a source of copper; see Dilke.

## BOOK 1

sequence on Abydos' coast.<sup>55</sup> War-lust seethes, starting up the shaken cities. Temesc<sup>56</sup> tames bronze, Euboea's shore quivers with dockyards, Mycenae resonates with countless anvils,<sup>57</sup> Pisa makes new chariots, Nemea gives wild beasts' hides, Cirrha vies in stuffing arrow-bearing quivers, Lerna is clothing heavy shields with slaughtered bullocks. Aetolian and fierce Acarnanian give footsoldiers to the war, Argos drives her squadrons, the pastures of rich Arcadia are emptied,<sup>58</sup> Epiros bridles her swift nurslings,<sup>59</sup> the shades of Phocis and Aonia are thinned for javelins, Pylos and Messena stretch mural catapults.<sup>60</sup> No area is excused. Ancestral weapons long disused are plucked from lofty doorposts, gifts to the gods melt in flame. Mars puts gold taken from the High Ones to savage purpose. The ancient shades are gone: Othrys shrinks and Taygetus' heights subside. Stripped mountains see the sky. Now every forest is afloat. Oaks are felled for the fleet, lesser timber for oars. Iron is wearied into countless uses, to rivet prows, to protect weapons,<sup>61</sup> to bridle warhorses, to weave tunics scaly with a thousand chains, to smoke with blood and drink deep wounds, to thrust in death with poison for partner.

<sup>57</sup> The Cyclopes were credited with building in the area. The following place names have mythological associations (Oenonians, Hercules, Apollo), except for Lerna, which will stand for the Argolid, rich in cattle. Argos in 419, also = Argolis, as a source of cavalry calls for a revision which never came.

<sup>58</sup> Of sleep, for food or clothing.

<sup>59</sup> Horses.

<sup>60</sup> As for Messena, 'possibly Statius is thinking of Ithome in 464–59 BC when the Athenians under Cimon, who were experienced in siege warfare, helped the Spartans (Thucydides 1.102)' (Dilke).

<sup>61</sup> To tip wooden shafts.

ACHILLEID

435 attritu et pigris addunt mucronibus iras.  
 nec modus aut arcus lentare aut fundere glandes  
 aut torrere sudes galeasque attollere conis.  
 hos inter motus pigram gemit una quietem  
 Thessalia et geminis incusat Fata querellis,  
 440 quod senior Peleus nec adhuc maturus Achilles.  
 Iam Pelopis terras Graiumque exhauserat orbem  
 praecipitans in transtra viros insanus equosque  
 Bellipotens. fervent portus et operta carinis  
 stagna suasque hiemes classis promota suosque  
 445 attollit fluctus; ipsum iam puppibus acquor  
 deficit et totos consumunt carbasa ventos.  
 Prima ratis Danaas Hecateia congregat Aulis,  
 rupibus expositis longique crepidine dorsi  
 Euboicum scandens Aulis mare, litora multum  
 450 montivagae dilecta deae, iuxtaque Caphereus  
 latratum pelago tollens caput. ille Pelasgas  
 ut vidit tranare rates, ter monte ter undis  
 intonuit saevaeque dedit praesagia noctis.  
 coetus ibi armorum Troiae fatalis, ibi ingens  
 455 iuratur bellum, donec sol annuus omnes  
 conficeret metas. tunc primum Graecia vires  
 contemplata suas; tunc sparsa ac dissona moles  
 in corpus vultumque coit et rege sub imo  
 disposita est. sic curva feras indago latentes  
 460 claudit et admotis paulatim cassibus artat.  
 illae ignem sonitumque pavent diffusaque linquunt  
 avia miranturque suum decrescere montem,

62 Whetstones.

63 Presumably these were put in the holds.

64 Diana's.

## BOOK I

They grind down moistened stones<sup>62</sup> and add wrath to lazy sword points. No limit to the bending of bows, the casting of sling bolts, the charring of stakes, the raising of helmets with erests. Amid these busy doings only Thessaly laments her sluggish tranquillity, upbraiding the Fates with double complaint for that Peleus is old and Achilles still too young.

Now the Lord of War had drained the lands of Pelops and the Grecian world, madly flinging men on to the thwarts, and horses.<sup>63</sup> The harbours hum and the bays covered with keels, and as the fleet moves forward it raises its own storms and billows. The sea itself is now too small for the vessels and the sails devour all the winds.

First Heeate's<sup>64</sup> Aulis gathers the Danaan boats, Aulis climbing the Euboean sea with jutting cliffs and the embankment of her long chine, shores very dear to the mountain-ranging goddess, and nearby Caphereus raising his head for the sea to bark at. When he saw the Pelasgian boats sailing by, he thundered thrice with mountain and thrice with waters, presaging a cruel night.<sup>65</sup> There was the armament's assembly dooming Troy, there mighty war is sworn till annual sun complete full course.<sup>66</sup> Then first did Greece survey her might, then the scattered, dissonant mass gathers into body and countenance, disposed under a single monarch. So the curving net pens in the hiding beasts, constraining them in toils tighter and tighter drawn; terrified by fire and noise they leave the wide wilderness and wonder that their mountain is shrinking until

<sup>65</sup> The wreck of the Greek fleet; cf. 93.

<sup>66</sup> 'The delay of a whole year seems to be Statius' own invention' Dilke. But what he says is that the army swore to remain in service for a year (optimistically: the war lasted nine years).

ACHILLEID

donec in angustam ceciderunt undique vallem;  
 inque vicem stupuere greges socioque timore  
 465 mansuescunt: simul hirtus aper, simul ursa lupusque  
 cogitur et captos contempsit cerva leones.

Sed quamquam et gemini pariter sua bella capessant  
 Atridae famamque avida virtute paternam  
 Tydides Sthenelusque premant, nec cogitet annos  
 470 Antilochus septemque Ajax umbone coruscet  
 armenti reges atque aequum moenibus orbem,  
 consiliisque armisque vigil contendat Ulixes:  
 omnis in absentem belli manus ardet Achillem,  
 nomen Achillis amat et in Hectora solus Achilles  
 475 poscitur; illum unum Teucris Priamoque loquuntur  
 fatalem. quis enim Haemoniis sub vallibus alter  
 creverit effossa reptans nive? cuius adortus  
 cruda rudimenta et teneros formaverit annos  
 Centaurus? patrii propior cui linea caeli,  
 480 quemve alium Stygios tulerit secreta per amnes  
 Nereis et pulchros ferro praestruxerit artus?  
 haec Graiae castris iterant traduntque cohortes.  
 cedit turba ducum vincique haud maesta fatetur.  
 sic cum pallentes Phlegraea in castra coirent  
 485 caelicolae iamque Odrysiam Gradivus in hastam  
 surgeret et Libycos Tritonia tolleret angues  
 ingentemque manu curvaret Delius arcum,  
 stabat anhela metū solum Natura Tonantem  
 respiciens, quando ille hicmes tonitrusque vocaret  
 490 nubibus, igniferam quot fulmina posceret Aetnen.

<sup>458</sup> Natura] iam turba *Baehrens*

<sup>67</sup> Diomedes' charioteer. His father was Capaneus.

## BOOK 1

they have dropped from every side into a narrow vale; in turn the herds fall amazed and sharing fright grow tame. The bristling boar and bear and wolf are driven together and the stag despises trapped lions.

Together the two sons of Atreus wage their war, Tydeus' son and Sthenelus<sup>67</sup> press their Fathers' fame with greedy valour, Antiloehus thinks not of his years,<sup>68</sup> Ajax with his shield boss flashes seven lords of the herd<sup>69</sup> and a circle to match a city wall, watchful Ulysses vies in arms and counsel: but all the warrior host burns for absent Achilles, Achilles' name they love, only Achilles demand against Hector, speak only of him as the doom of Teuerians and Priam. For who but he down in Haemonia's valley grew up crawling in hollowed snow? Whose raw rudiments and tender years did the Centaur undertake and shape from birth? Whose lineage is closer to ancestral sky? Whom else did a Nereid take through Styx' river in secret and block his fair limbs against steel? Such talk do the Greek cohorts in their camp repeat and pass on. The throng of captains yields and cheerfully acknowledges defeat. So when the pale sky-dwellers gathered to the camp at Phlegra and Gradivus was already rising to the height of his Odrysian spear, Tritonia rearing her Libyan snakes, the Delian bending his huge bow, Nature<sup>70</sup> stood panting with terror, eyes upon the Thunderer alone—when would he summon storms and thunder from the clouds, how many bolts ask of fire-bearing Aetna?

<sup>68</sup> I.e. his youth. In *Iliad* 15.569 he is called the youngest of the Achaeans, but with the implication of youthful vigour rather than immaturity.

<sup>69</sup> Ajax' shield had seven layers of oxhide.

<sup>70</sup> *Natura* thus personalized is decidedly odd.

ACHILLEID

Atque ibi dum mixta vallati plebe suorum  
 et maris et belli consultant tempora reges,  
 increpitans magno vatem Calchanta tumultu  
 Protesilaus ait (namque huic bellare cupido  
 495 praecipua et primae iam tunc data gloria mortis):  
 'O nimium Phoebi tripodumque oblite tuorum  
 Thestoride, quando ora deo possessa movebis  
 iustius aut quianam Parcarum occulta recludes?  
 cernis ut ignotum cuncti stupeantque fremantque  
 500 Aeaciden? sordet vulgo Calydonius heros  
 et magno genitus Telamone Aiaxque secundus;  
 nos quoque—sed Mavors et Troia arrepta probabunt.  
 illum neglectis (pudet heu!) ductoribus omnes  
 belligerum ceu numen amant. dic ocius: aut cur  
 505 sarta comis et multus honos? quibus abditus oris  
 quave iubes tellure peti? nam fama nec antris  
 Chironis patria nec degere Peleos aula.  
 heia, irrumpe deos et Fata latentia vexe,  
 laurigerosque ignes, si quando, avidissimus hauri!  
 510 arma horrenda tibi saevosque remisimus enses,  
 numquam has imbelles galea violabere vittas,  
 sed felix numeroque ducum praestantior omni,  
 si magnum Danais pro te dependis Achillem.'

Iamdudum trepido circumfert lumina motu  
 515 intrantemque deum primo pallore fatetur

496 quianam P: quaenam ω recludis Garrod, fort. recte

499 fremantque ψ: prema- Pψ: peta- ψ

513 dependis (de *in ras.*) P: porten- ω: deprehen- ψ

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<sup>71</sup> *Quaenam* ('what secrets will you reveal?') is out of line, the relevant question being not 'what will you tell us?' but 'why won't



BOOK I

While the kings there, surrounded by their mingled followings of common folk, take counsel on times for sailing and fighting, Protesilaus amid great commotion upbraids the prophet Calchas; for he above the rest is eager for battle, already granted the glory of first death: 'Son of Thestor, too forgetful of Phoebus and your tripods, when will you have better cause to move lips possessed by deity or why will you hide the secrets of the Parcae?<sup>71</sup> See you how all are amazed at the unknown seed of Aeacus and clamour for him? Calydon's hero<sup>72</sup> is as dross among the folk, so too great Telamon's son<sup>73</sup> and Ajax the second, I also; but Mavors and captured Troy will be the proof. Him (alas, 'tis shame) all adore like a deity of war, neglecting their leaders. Say quickly—or why the wreath upon your hair and so much honour? In what region does he hide, in what land do you tell us to seek him? For Rumour has it that he is not living in Chiron's cavern nor yet in his father Peleus' palace. Up with you! Break in upon the gods and harry the skulking Fates. Breathe in the laurelled fire,<sup>74</sup> greedy as never before. We have left you free of dread weapons and cruel swords; never shall a helmet profane these your unwarlike fillets. But fortunate are you and above all the number of our captains if you pay down great Achilles to the Danai in exchange for yourself.'<sup>75</sup>

This while the son of Thestor has been glaring around him in nervous agitation and his first pallor confesses the

you tell us?' *Recludere* usually means 'reveal,' but the converse sometimes in the jurists. In *Silvae* 3.4.98 the reading is doubtful. *Recludis* may well be right. <sup>72</sup> Diomedes.

<sup>73</sup> The big Ajax.

<sup>74</sup> Probably metaphorical, as Dilke's parallels suggest. <sup>75</sup> As your substitute in the fighting force.

ACHILLEID

Thestorides; mox igne genas et sanguine torquens  
 nec socios nec castra videt, sed caecus et absens  
 nunc superum magnos deprendit in aethere coetus,  
 nunc sagas affatur aves, nunc dura Sororum  
 520 licia, turiferas modo consulit anxius aras  
 flammaramque apicem rapit et caligine sacra  
 pascitur. exsiliunt crines rigidisque laborat  
 vitta comis, nec colla loco nec in ordine gressus.  
 tandem fessa tremens longis mugitibus ora  
 525 solvit, et oppositum vox eluctata furorem est:  
 'Quo rapis ingentem magni Chironis alumnum  
 femineis, Nerei, dolis? huc mitte: quid aufers?  
 non patiar: meus iste, meus. tu diva profundi?  
 et me Phoebus agit. latebris quibus abdere temptas  
 530 eversorem Asiae? video per Cycladas artas  
 attonitam et turpi quaerentem litora furto.  
 occidimus: placuit Lycomedis conscia tellus.  
 o scelus! en fluxae veniunt in pectora vestes.  
 scinde, puer, scinde et timidae ne cede parenti.  
 535 ei mihi, raptus abit! quaenam haec procul improba virgo?'  
 Hic nutante gradu stetit amissisque furoris  
 viribus ante ipsas tremefactus corrui aras.  
 tunc haerentem Ithacum Calydonius occupat heros:  
 'Nos vocat iste labor: neque enim comes ire recusem,  
 540 si tua cura trahat. licet ille sonantibus antris  
 Tethyos aversae gremioque prematur aquosi

521 apicem Pψ: -es ψ

529 at Sandstroem

530 altas Pω (SB; cf. 204)

76 So in *Thebaid* 1.510.

77 Pyromancy.

## BOOK 1

entering god. Presently he rolls fiery bloodshot eyes, nor sees comrades and camp, he is sightless and somewhere else. Now he catches unawares<sup>76</sup> the great gatherings of the High Ones in heaven, now talks to prescient birds, now anxiously consults the harsh threads of the Sisters, now incense-bearing altars, snatching the tip of flames and feeding on sacred murk.<sup>77</sup> His hair starts up, the fillet on his stiff locks is in trouble, his neck is distorted, his steps disordered. At last in trembling he opens his weary mouth in long-drawn howls and his voice struggles free from opposing frenzy: 'Whither, oh Nereid, are you hailing great Chiron's mighty foster child with your woman's wiles? Send him here. Why do you carry him away? I shall not suffer it. He is mine, mine. Are you a goddess of the deep? Me too does Phoebus drive. In what hiding place do you strive to conceal Asia's overthrower? I see you adaze among the crowding Cyclades, seeking a shore for an unseemly trick. We are undone! Lycomedes' conniving land was your choice. Oh crime! See, flowing garments come upon his breast. Tear them, boy, tear them, nor yield to your timid mother. Alas, away he goes, kidnapped. Who is this shameless girl yonder?'

Here staggering he halted and losing the strength of madness collapsed quivering before the very altar. Then Calydon's hero accosts the hesitant Ithacan: 'Us this labour calls; for I should not refuse to go with you if your care should draw me.'<sup>78</sup> Though he be held down in the echoing caverns of distant Tethys and watery Nereus' bosom, you

<sup>78</sup> I.e. 'if your mission should draw me along.' As senior Ulysses would be in charge, but Diomedes would join him if invited. Not 'if your anxiety should induce you to go' (Dilke).

Nereos, invenies. tu tantum providus astu  
 tende animum vigilem fecundumque erige pectus:  
 non mihi quis vatum dubiis in casibus ausit  
 545 Fata videre prior.' subiecit gavisus Ulixes:  
 'Sic deus omnipotens firmet, sic annuat illa  
 virgo paterna tibi! sed me spes lubrica tardat:  
 grande quidem armatum castris inducere Aehillem,  
 sed si Fata negent, quam foedum ac triste reverti!  
 550 vota tamen Danaum non intemptata relinquam.  
 iamque adeo aut aderit mecum Peleus heros,  
 aut verum penitus latet et sine Apolline Calehas.'

Conclamant Danaï stimulatque Agamemno volentes.  
 laxantur coetus resolutaque murmure laeto  
 555 agmina discedunt, quales iam nocte propinqua  
 e pastu referuntur aves, vel in antra reverti  
 melle novo gravidas mitis videt Hybla catervas.  
 nec mora, iam dextras Ithacesia carbasus auras  
 poscit, et in remis hilaris sedere iuventus.

560 At proeul occultum falsi sub imaginē sexus  
 Aeaciden furto iam noverat una latenti  
 Deidamia virum; sed opertae conscia culpa  
 cuncta pavet tacitasque putat sentire sorores.  
 namque ut virgineo stetit in grege durus Achilles  
 565 exsolvitque rudem genetrix digressa pudorem,  
 protinus elegit comitem, quamquam omnis in illum  
 turba coit, blandeque novas nil tale timenti  
 adnovet insidias: illam sequiturque premitque  
 improbus, illam oculis iterumque iterumque resumit.  
 570 nunc nimius lateri non evitantis inhaeret,

<sup>544</sup> adsit *Schrader, fort. recte*

## BOOK I

shall find him. Only in foreseeing craft exert your wakeful mind and rouse your fertile brain.<sup>79</sup> No prophet, I trow, would dare in doubtful case to see the Fates before you.' Gladly Ulysses replies: 'So may the god almighty confirm, so your father's Virgin<sup>80</sup> grant you! But hope is slippery and gives me pause. A grand thing indeed to bring Achilles in arms into camp. But were the Fates to deny, how sad and shameful to return! Yet I will not leave the prayers of the Danai unattempted. Either the hero son of Pelcus shall be here with me right soon or truth lurks deep and Calchas lacks Apollo.'

The Danai shout and Agamemnon spurs on the willing pair. The gathering dissolves and the troops disperse and depart, joyfully murmuring; like as at nightfall the birds come back from pasture or mild Hybla sees her swarms return to their grotto laden with new honey. Without delay the Ithacan canvas asks for a fair wind and the merry youth sit at the oars.

But far away Deidamia, she only, already in secret dalliance knew Aeacides for a man, concealed as he was beneath semblance of false sex. But conscious of her hidden fault, she is afraid of everything and thinks her silent sisters perceive. For when rough Achilles stood in the maidens' company and his mother's departure relaxed his callow modesty, forthwith he chose his companion, though the whole throng came at him together, and in winning manner sets new traps for the unsuspecting girl, pursuing her, besetting her, the rogue, making eyes at her again and yet again. Now he clings too closely to her side (nor does she

<sup>79</sup> *Pectus*, seat of the intelligence as well as the emotions.

<sup>80</sup> Pallas Athene, protector of Diomedes' father Tydeus.

ACHILLEID

nunc levibus sertis, lapsis nunc sponte canistris,  
 nunc thyrso parcente ferit, modo dulcia notae  
 fila lyrae tenuesque modos et carmina monstrat  
 Chironis ducitque manum digitosque sonanti  
 575 infringit citharae, nunc occupat ora canentis  
 et ligat amplexus et mille per oscula laudat.  
 illa libens discit, quo vertice Pelion, et quis  
 Aeacides, puerique auditum nomen et actus  
 assidue stupet et praesentem cantat Achillem.  
 580 ipsa quoque et validos proferre modestius artus  
 et tenuare rudes attrito pollice lanas  
 demonstrat reficitque colos et perdita dura  
 pensa manu; vocisque sonum pondusque tenentis,  
 quodque fugit comites, nimio quod lumine sese  
 585 figat et in verbis intempestivus anhelet,  
 miratur; iam iamque dolos aperire parantem  
 virginea levitate fugit prohibetque fateri.  
 sic sub matre Rhea iuvenis regnator Olympi  
 oscula securae dabat insidiosa sorori  
 590 frater adhuc, medii donec reverentia cessit  
 sanguinis et versos germana expavit amores.  
 Tandem detecti timidae Nereidos astus.  
 lucus Agenorei sublimis ad orgia Bacchi  
 stabat et admissum caelo nemus; huius in umbra

572 motae *Heinsius*

<sup>81</sup> Pushed over by him (or Deianira herself?). The contents, such as fruit or sweetmeats, are meant.

<sup>82</sup> 'And (a point which escapes her companions)': Dilke, following R. D. Williams. But neither asks *why* the following detail escapes the other girls and what that would signify in the context.

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avoid him), now hits her with light garlands, now with baskets that fall over on purpose,<sup>81</sup> now with gentle wand. Now he shows her the familiar lyre's sweet strings, the slender measures and Chiron's songs, guiding her hand and making her fingers strike the sounding instrument. Now he seizes her lips as she sings and twines embraces and praises her in a thousand kisses. Willingly she learns what peak is Pelion, who is Aeacides, wondering and wondering at the boy's name and decds as she hears them, and sings of Achilles to his face. She too on her side shows him how to advance his strong limbs more decorously and how to draw out raw wool with his thumb's friction, repairing the distaff and the skeins that his rough hand has spoiled. She marvels at the sound of his voice and his weight as he holds her, how he avoids her companions<sup>82</sup> and fixes her with too intent a gaze and pants abruptly as he speaks. Just as he is about to reveal the cheat, she flees with girlish inconstancy and forbids him to confess. So the young ruler of Olympus under mother Rhea would give guileful kisses to his unsuspecting sister, still only her brother, until the reverence due to shared blood gave way and the sister feared love changed.<sup>83</sup>

At last the timorous Nereid's trick was exposed.<sup>84</sup> A wood stood high for the rites of Agenorean<sup>85</sup> Bacchus, a forest rising to the sky. In its shade pious matrons were

<sup>83</sup> Alarmed by the change from brotherly affection to amorous ardour.

<sup>84</sup> The line was bracketed by Garrod (and Dilke), and Goold would put it in place of 772. But it makes an appropriate enough introduction to the narrative that follows.

<sup>85</sup> Bacchus' mother Semele was Agenor's granddaughter.

ACHILLEID

- 595 alternam renovare piae trieterida matres  
 consuerant scissumque pecus terraque revulsas  
 ferre trabes gratosque deo praestare furores.  
 lex procul ire mares; iterat praecepta verendus  
 ductor, inaccessumque viris edicitur antrum.
- 600 nec satis est: stat fine dato metuenda saccrdos  
 exploratque aditus, ne quis temerator oberret  
 agmine femineo: tacitus sibi risit Achilles.  
 illum virgineae ducentem signa catervae  
 magnaue difficili solventem brachia motu
- 605 (et sexus pariter decet et mendacia matris)  
 mirantur comites. nec iam pulcherrima turbae  
 Deidamia suae tantumque admota superbo  
 vincitur Aeacidæ, quantum premit ipsa sorores.  
 ut vero e tereti demisit nebrida collo
- 610 errantesque sinus hedera collegit et alte  
 cinxit purpurcis flaventia tempora vittis  
 vibravitque gravi redimitum missile dextra,  
 attonito stat turba metu sacrisque relictis  
 illum ambire libet pronosque attollere vultus.
- 615 talis, ubi ad Thebas vultumque animumque remisit  
 Euhius et patrio satiavit pectora luxu,  
 scerta comis mitramque levat thyrsumque virentem  
 arnat et hostiles invisit fortior Indos.
- Scandebat roseo medii fastigia caeli
- 620 Luna iugo, totis ubi Somnus inertior alis  
 defluit in terras mutumque amplectitur orbem.

602 sibi risit Pψ: subr- ω

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<sup>86</sup> The Bacchic festival at Thebes held every other year (Greek inclusive reckoning).

<sup>87</sup> The thyrsus.

<sup>88</sup> Wreathed with ivy.



## BOOK 1

wont to renew the alternating triennial,<sup>86</sup> bearing dismembered cattle, tree trunks torn from the soil, offering the god his favorite frenzies. By law men must go far away. The venerable monarch repeats the rule, the grot is proclaimed out of bounds for males. And that is not enough. At the appointed boundary stands a priestess, figure of fear, searching the approaches lest a violator appear among the female band. Silently Achilles laughed to himself. As he leads the standard of a virgin troop and clumsily waves his great arms (his sex and his mother's lies are equally becoming), his companions marvel; no more is Deidamia the fairest of her throng, beside proud Aeacides her stature is surpassed by as much as she herself outtops her sisters. But when he dropped the fawnskin from his rounded neck, collecting the straying folds with ivy and binding his flaxen temples with purple fillets and brandishing the wreathed missile<sup>87</sup> with heavy hand, the throng stood amazed and afraid; leaving their rites, they are fain to gather round him and lift their downcast faces. Even as when Eubius at Thebes has relaxed countenance and spirit and satisfied his heart with his native luxury, he lifts garland and headband from his locks and arms the green<sup>88</sup> wand and visits his Indian foes stronger than ever.<sup>89</sup>

Moon in her rosy chariot was scaling the slope of mid-heaven, the hour when Sleep at his most torpid glides down to earth with all his wings and embraces the silent

<sup>89</sup> The comparison, variously explained, seems somewhat confused, but (a) in both cases 'luxury' is followed by activity and (b) Bacchus' activity is martial, Achilles' Dionysiac, though their accoutrements are similar; not, however, identical, since Bacchus 'arms' his wand with a metal tip.

ACHILLEID

- eonsedere e hori paulumque exercita pulsu  
 aera tacent, tenero eum solus ab agmine Achilles  
 haec seeum: 'Quonam timidae eommenta parentis  
 625 usque ferēs, primumque imbelli earcere perdes  
 florem animi? non tela lieet Mavortia dextra,  
 non trepidas agitare ferās? ubi eampus et amnes  
 Haemonii? quaerisne meos, Sperchie, natatus  
 promissasque eomas? an desertoris alumni  
 630 nullus honos, Stygiasque procul iam raptus ad umbras  
 dieor, et orbatus plangit mea funera Chiron?  
 tu nunc tela manu, nostros tu dirigis arcus  
 nutritosque mihi scandis, Patrocle, iugales?  
 635 ast ego pampineis diffundere bracchia thyrsis  
 et tenuare eolus (pudet haec taedetque fateri)  
 iam seio. quin etiam dilectae virginis ignem  
 aequaevamque faeem eaptus noctesque diesque  
 dissimulas. quonam usque premes urentia peetus  
 vulnera? teque marem (pudet heu!) nec amore probabis?  
 640 Sie ait et densa noetis gavisus in umbra  
 tempestiva suis torpere silentia furtis  
 vi potitur votis et toto peetore veros  
 admovet amplexus; vidit ehorus omnis ab alto  
 astrorum et tenerae rubuerunt eornua Lunae.  
 645 illa quidem elamore nemus montemque replevit;  
 sed Baeehi comites, discussa nube soporis,  
 signa ehoris indieta putant; fragor undique notus  
 tollitur, et thyrsos iterum vibrabat Achilles,  
 ante tamen dubiam verbis solatus anicis:  
 650 'Ille ego (quid trepidas?) genitum quem eaerula mater

643 vidit P: risit ω

BOOK I

globe. The dances subside, the beaten bronze falls mute awhile, and Achilles, solitary from the tender band, thus communes with himself: 'How long shall you endure the devices of your timid mother and squander the prime flower of courage in unmanly durance? May you not carry Mars' weapons in your hands nor hunt affrighted beasts? Where are Haemonia's plain and rivers?<sup>90</sup> Sperchius, do you miss my swims and promised tresses?<sup>91</sup> Or care you naught for your deserter foster son, and am I already talked of as snatched away to the shades of Styx, and does Chiron lament my death bereaved? Patroclus, do you now aim my darts and my bow and mount the team that was reared for me? While *I* now know how to spread my arms with wands of vine and spin thread (shame and disgust to confess it!). And more, you conceal your passion for your beloved girl, your coeval fire, night and day, a prisoner. How long will you suppress the wound that burns your breast nor even in love (for shame!) prove yourself a man?'

So he speaks. And happy that in the night's thick darkness timely silence lies inert upon his dalliance, he gains his desire by force, launching veritable embraces, with all his heart. All the choir of stars saw it from on high and the young Moon's horns blushed red. The girl filled wood and mountain with her cries, but Bacchus' companions shake aside their cloud of slumber and think it a signal for the dance. From all sides the familiar shout is raised and Achilles once more brandishes the wands. First though he comforts the doubting girl with friendly speech: 'I am he (why do you tremble?) that my sea-green mother almost

<sup>90</sup> From Virgil, *Georgics* 2.486f.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. *Iliad* 23.141ff.

paene Iovi silvis nivibusque immisit alendum  
 Thessalicis. nec ego hos cultus aut foeda subissem  
 tegmina, ni primo te visa in litore: cessi  
 te propter, tibi pensa manu, tibi mollia gesto  
 655 tympana. quid defles magno nurus addita ponto?  
 quid gemis ingentes caelo paritura nepotes?  
 sed pater—ante igni ferroque excisa iacebit  
 Scyros et in tumidas ibunt haec versa procellas  
 660 moenia, quam saevo mea tu conubia pendas  
 funere: non adeo parebimus omnia matri.  
 [vade sed ereptum celes taceasque pudorem.]  
 Obstipuit tantis regina exterrita monstris,  
 quamquam olim suspecta fides, et comminus ipsum  
 horruit; et facies multum mutata fatentis.  
 665 quid faciat? casusne suos ferat ipsa parenti  
 seque simul iuvenem promat, fortassis acerbis  
 hausurum poenas? et adhuc in corde manebat  
 ille diu deceptus amor: silet aegra premitque  
 iam commune nefas; unam placet addere furtis  
 670 altricem sociam, precibus quae victa duorum  
 annuit. illa astu tacito raptumque pudorem  
 surgentemque uterum atque aegros in pondere menses

651 paene iovis P: peneis (*Gustafsson: Peliacis edd. vett., vel propter homoeoteleuton respuendum*) 661 abest in P $\omega$ , secl.

*Kohlmann* 663-64 damnavit *Garrod*

666 iuvenem promat SB: -mque premat P (SB)

672 surgentemque P $\psi$ : tu- $\psi$

92 A spurious line follows, absent in most manuscripts: 'Go, but hide your ravished modesty in silence.'

BOOK 1

bore to Jove and sent to Thessaly's woods and snows to be reared. Nor should I have donned this habit, these shameful clothes, if I had not seen you at the shore's verge; on your account I yielded, for you I handle wool and bear womanish drums. Why do you weep? You have joined the great sea, a daughter-in-law. Why do you moan? You shall bear mighty grandsons for the sky. As for your father—Scyros shall lie razed by fire and sword and these walls be overturned and pass into swollen tempests before you shall expiate my nuptials by a cruel death. Not so in all things shall I obey my mother.<sup>92</sup> ↙

The princess was stunned, horrified by such monstrous happenings, even though she had long suspected his good faith; and she dreaded himself at close quarters and his face was greatly changed as he confessed. What was she to do? Should she take her misfortunes to her father, bring forward<sup>93</sup> along with herself the young man, perhaps to receive a cruel punishment? And the love so long frustrated<sup>94</sup> still lingered in her heart. She suffers in silence, suppressing the crime that both now shared. Only her nurse she decides to make partner in her cheat, who consented, unable to resist the prayers of the pair. With secret guile she<sup>95</sup> hid the ravishing and the swelling womb and the ailing months as the weight grew, until telltale Lucina

<sup>93</sup> (*Iuvenemque*) *premat* is inelegant before *premitque* in 668 and decidedly not a *mot juste*. Failure to perceive that *simul* is a preposition (or rather postposition) will account for the corruption.

<sup>94</sup> Or 'deceived' by Achilles' disguise. Not = *dissimulatus*.

<sup>95</sup> The nurse.

occuluit, plenis donec stata tempora metis  
attulit et partus index Lucina resolvit.

- 675 Iamque per Aegaeos ibat Laertia flexus  
puppis, et innumeras mutabant Cycladas aerae;  
iam Paros Olearosque latent; iam raditur alta  
Lemnos et a tergo decrescit Bacchica Naxos,  
ante oculos crescente Samo; iam Delos opacat  
680 aequor: ibi e celsa libant carchesia puppi  
responsique fidem et verum Calchanta precantur.  
audii Arquitenens Zephyrumque e vertice Cynthi  
impulit et dubiis pleno dedit omina velo.  
it pelagi segura ratis: quippe alta Tonantis  
685 iussa Thetin certas Fatorum vertere leges  
arcebant aegram lacrimis ac multa tumentem,  
quod non erueret pontum ventisque fretisque  
omnibus invisum iam tunc sequeretur Ulixem.

- 690 Frangebat radios humili iam promus Olympo  
Phoebus et Oceani penetrabile litus anhelis  
promittebat equis, cum se scopulosa levavit  
Scyros; in hanc totos emisit puppe rudentes  
dux Laërtiades sociisque resumere pontum

<sup>676</sup> innumeras  $\psi$ : -rae P $\omega$ , Dilke      Cyclades auras P $\omega$  (edd.  
cett.: -des oras Dilke (oras iam Garrod))

<sup>684</sup> pelagi  $\psi$ : -go P $\psi$       <sup>686</sup> timentem P: gem-  $\omega$  (Klotz)

<sup>96</sup> Again the geography is freakish. As Dilke remarks, there is no evidence that Statius ever visited Greece.

<sup>97</sup> According to Dilke, *pelagi* makes as good sense as *pelago*; he does not mention 233, on which see my note. *Pelago* ('through the sea') is surplusage and leaves *segura* rather lame. *Pelagi* on the other hand has a point: the ship had nothing to fear from the

## BOOK 1

brought the time appointed, the course complete, and delivered the child.

And now the Laertian ship was passing through Aegean windings and one after another the winds brought on the countless Cyclades. Now Paros and Olearos hide, now lofty Lemnos is shaved and Bacchic Naxos dwindles behind as Samos grows larger to view. Now Delos shadows the waters.<sup>96</sup> There from the tall stern they pour cups in libation and pray the oracle be trusty and Calchas true. The Bearer of the Bow heard them and urged Zephyr from Cynthus' peak, and filled the canvas as an omen to doubters. With no fear of the sea<sup>97</sup> the vessel makes her way. For the Thunderer's high commands did not suffer Thetis to change the Fates' sure decrees.<sup>98</sup> Sick she was with tears and much incensed<sup>99</sup> for that she could not stir up the sea and even then pursue hated Ulysses with all its winds and waves.

Already Phoebus was bearing downwards and breaking his rays on Olympus' lower verge, as he promised a penetrable shore<sup>100</sup> to his panting steeds, when rocky Scyros reared up. Towards her the captain son of Laërtes loosed all tackle from the stern, bidding his comrades take back

sea because she was fulfilling destiny. These considerations far outweigh the superior manuscript authority, whatever that may amount to.

<sup>96</sup> Thetis had to obey Jupiter, who had commanded what Fate had decreed; cf. 81–83.

<sup>99</sup> The palaeographically negligible change of *timentem* to *tumentem* is needed because *quod non erueret* does not explain Thetis' fears.

<sup>100</sup> I.e. the sea near the shore.

ACHILLEID

imperat et remis Zephyros supplere cadentes.  
 695 accedunt iuxta, et magis indubitata magisque  
 Scyros erat placidique super Tritonia custos  
 litoris. egressi numen venerantur amiae  
 Aetolusque Ithacusque deae. tunc providus heros,  
 hospita ne subito terrerent moenia coetu,  
 700 puppe iubet remanere suos; ipse ardua fido  
 cum Diomede petit. sed iam praevenerat arcis  
 litoreae servator Abas ignotaque regi  
 ediderat, sed Graia tamen, succedere terris  
 carbasa. procedunt, gemini ceu focdere iuncto  
 705 hiberna sub nocte lupi: licet et sua pulset  
 natorumque fames, penitus rabiemque minasque  
 dissimulant humilesque meant, ne nuntiet hostes  
 cura canum et trepidos moneat vigilare magistros.  
 sic segnes heroes eunt campumque patentem,  
 710 qui medius portus eclsamque interiacet urbem,  
 alterno sermone terunt; prior occupat acer  
 Tydides:

‘Qua nunc verum ratione paramus  
 scrutari? namque ambiguo sub pectore pridem  
 verso, quid imbelles thyrsos mercatus et aera  
 715 urbibus in mediis Baccheaque terga mitrasque  
 huc tuleris varioque aspersas nebridas auro?  
 hisne gravem Priamo Phrygibusque annabis Achillem?’

Illi subridens Ithacus paulum ore remisso:  
 ‘Haec tibi, virginea modo si Lycomedis in aula est  
 720 fraude latens, ultro confessum in proelia ducent  
 Peliden; tu cuncta citus de puppe memento  
 ferre, ubi tempus erit, clipeumque his iungere donis,



## BOOK 1

the sea and make up for the falling Zephyrs with their oars.<sup>101</sup> Closer they approach, more and more plainly it was Seyros and Tritonia above, guardian of the tranquil shore. The Aetolian and the Ithacan disembark and adore the divinity of the friendly goddess. Then the prudent hero commands his men to remain on board lest they alarm the stranger town with their sudden throng. He himself seeks the high ground along with trusty Diomedes. But already Abas, warder of the coastal tower, had been before them, announcing to the king that unknown sails, albeit Greek, were approaching land. They go forward like two wolves in league on a winter's night; though hunger, their own and their eubs', pushes them, they quite dissemble their ravening threats and move meekly, lest watchdogs announce the enemy and warn the fearful shepherds to keep vigil. Even so the heroes walk slowly and pass in converse the open plain that lies between the harbour and the lofty town. Tydeus' lively son begins the dialogue:

'How do we now set about probing the truth? For I have long been pondering in perplexity why you bought in the towns these unwarlike wands and cymbals and Baebie hides<sup>102</sup> and headbands and fawnskins variously sprayed with gold. Will you arm Achilles, bane to Priam and Troy, with *these*?'

The Ithacan's face relaxed a little and he answers him with a smile: 'These, look you, will draw Peleus' son to the war, freely confessing, if indeed he is fraudulently hiding in Lyeomedes' virgin hall. You must be sure to bring them all quickly from the boat when the time comes and to add a

<sup>101</sup> I.e. start rowing again.

<sup>102</sup> Drums.

qui pulcher signis auroque asperrimus astat;  
 nec sat erit: tecum lituo bonus adsit Agyrtes  
 725 occultamque tubam tacitos apportet in usus.’

Dixerat, atque ipso portarum in limine regem  
 cernit et ostensa pacem praefatus oliva:  
 ‘Magna, reor, pridemque tuas pervenit ad aures  
 fama trucis belli, regum placidissime, quod nunc  
 730 Europamque Asiamque quatit. si nomina forte  
 huc perlata ducum, fidit quibus ultor Atrides:  
 hic tibi, quem tanta meliorem stirpe creavit  
 magnanimus Tydeus, Ithaces ego ductor Ulixes.  
 causa viae (metuam quid enim tibi cuncta fateri,  
 735 cum Graius notaque fide celeberrimus?)—imus  
 explorare aditus invisaque litora Troiae,  
 quidve parent.’

Medio sermone intercipit ille:  
 ‘Annuerit Fortuna, precor, dextrique secudent  
 ista dei! nunc hospitio mea tecta piumque  
 740 illustrate larem.’ simul intra limina ducit.  
 nec mora, iam mensas famularis turba torosque  
 instruit. interea visu perlustrat Ulixes  
 scrutaturque domum, si qua vestigia magnae  
 virginis aut dubia facies suspecta figura;  
 745 porticibusque vagis errat totosque penates,  
 ceu miretur, obit: velut ille cubilia praedae  
 indubitata tenens muto legit arva Molosso

723 astat  $\psi$ : hasta P: ardet  $\psi$     post 723 versum excidisse  
 suspicor                    724 haec P $\omega$  (Garrod)

733 ithacus P: -cis  $\omega$  (Dilke)

735 imus P $\omega$ : unus  $\zeta$ , fort. recte

746 adit P $\omega$  (Heinsius)

## BOOK 1

shield to these gifts, standing beautified with reliefs and rough with much gold \* \* \*<sup>103</sup> Nor shall this suffice. Let Agyrtes, the good bugler, be with you and carry a hidden trumpet for a secret purpose.'

So he spoke. Just at the threshold of the gate he sees the king and shows an olive branch, prefacing peace: 'Great rumour, methinks, has long since reached your ears, gentlest of kings, of the savage war that is now shaking Europe and Asia. If perchance the names of the captains on whom the avenging son of Atreus relies have been carried hither, here you have the son whom high-hearted Tydeus begot, one better than his mighty breed. I am Ulysses, leader of Ithaca. The reason for our journey (for why should I be afraid to tell you everything, Greek as you are and renowned for good faith)—we come to explore the approaches of Troy and her hated shores, and what they are planning.'

The other interposes in mid speech: 'May Fortune, I pray, assent and favouring gods prosper your enterprise. Now be my guests and honour my roof and righteous home.' With the words he leads them inside the threshold. Straightway the throng of servitors set up tables and couches. Meantime, Ulysses' eyes scan and scrutinize the house, looking for traces of a tall maiden or a face whose doubtful lineaments prompt suspicion. He roams through the rambling colonnades and visits all the dwelling, as though in admiration. Even so your hunter, who knows for certain his quarry's lair, traverses the fields with his mute

<sup>103</sup> A line mentioning the spear (854 and 879) seems to be missing after 723. If it ended with *hasta*, that could have ousted *astat* or *astet* in 723.

ACHILLEID

venator, videat donec sub frondibus hostem  
 porrectum somno positosque in caespite dentes.  
 750     Rumor in arcana iamdudum perstrepat aula,  
 virginibus qua fida domus, venisse Pelasgum  
 ductores Graiamque ratem sociosque receptos.  
 iure pavent aliae, sed vix nova gaudia celat  
 Pelides avidusque novos heroas et arma  
 755     vel talis vidisse cupit. iamque atria fervent  
 regali strepitu et picto discumbitur auro,  
 cum pater ire iubet natas comitesque pudicas  
 natarum. subeunt, quales Maeotide ripa,  
 cum Scythicas rapuere domos et capta Getarum  
 760     moenia, sepositis epulantur Amazones armis.  
 tum vero intentus vultus ac pectora Ulixes  
 perlibrat visu, sed nox illataque fallunt  
 lumina et extemplo latuit mensura iacentum.  
 attamen erectumque genas oculisque vagantem  
 765     nullaque virginei servantem signa pudoris  
 defigit comitique obliquo lumine monstrat.  
 quid nisi praecipitem blando complexa moneret  
 Deidamia sinu nudataque pectora semper  
 exsertasque manus umerosque in veste teneret  
 770     et prodire toris et poscere vina vetaret  
 sacpius et fronti crinale reponeret aurum?  
 [Argolicis ducibus iam tunc patuisset Achilles.]  
 Ut placata fames epulis bis terque repostis,

756 auro ex aulro P: ostro ω

767 quid P: quod ω

772 abest in Pψ, secl. Kohlmann

BOOK 1

Molossian, till he may see his foe stretched sleeping in the shade, fangs resting on the turf.

The while a rumour is noised in the privy palae, where the maidens have their safe dwelling, that chieftains of the Pelasgi have come, a Greek ship and her crew been welcomed. The rest are afraid, as well they may be; but Peleus' son hardly hides his sudden joy and eagerly desires to see the stranger heroes and their achievements, even in his present guise. And now the halls are alive with regal noise and they lie down on embroidered gold, when the father gives order for his daughters and his daughters' elastic companions to come in. They enter like Amazons on Maeotis' bank, when they feast with weapons laid aside after plundering Seythian homes and captured towns of the Getae. Then indeed Ulysses gazes intently, gauging faces and figures; but night and the lamps that are brought in deceive him, and as soon as they lie down their measurements are concealed. Even so, he marks one with face erect and roving eyes, that observes no mark of maiden modesty, and with a sidelong glance points her out to his companion. What if Deidamia had not given the hasty youngster a warning, embracing him in her fond bosom, had not always held his bared chest and naked arms and shoulders in her gown and told him more than once not to go forward from the couch and ask for wine and replaced the golden hairband on his brow?<sup>104</sup>

When appetite was assuaged with banquet twice and

<sup>104</sup> A line (772: 'even then would Achilles have been revealed to the Argive chieftains') is missing in some manuscripts including P, while others have variant equivalents. It is probably spurious, added because *quid nisi* was not understood.

ACHILLEID

- rex prior alloquitur paterisque hortatur Achivos:  
 775 'Invideo vestris, fateor, decora inclita gentis  
 Argolicae, coeptis; utinam et mihi fortior aetas,  
 quaeque fuit, Dolopas cum Scyria litora adortos  
 perdomui, fregique vadis, quae signa triumphi  
 vidistis celsa murorum in fronte, carinas!  
 780 saltem si suboles, aptum quam mittere bello—  
 nunc ipsi viresque meas et cara videtis  
 pignora: quando novos dabit haec mihi turba nepotes?'  
 Dixerat, et sollers arrepto tempore Ulixes:  
 785 'Haut spernenda cupis; quis enim non viscere gentes  
 innumeras variosque duces atque agmina regum  
 ardeat? omne simul roburque decusque potentis  
 Europae meritos ultro iuravit in enses.  
 790 rura urbesque vacant, montes spoliavimus altos,  
 omne fretum longa velorum obtexitur umbra;  
 tradunt arma patres, rapit irrevocata iuventus,  
 non alias unquam tantae data copia famae  
 fortibus aut campo maiore exercita virtus.'  
 Aspicit intentum vigilique haec aure trahentem,  
 795 cum paveant aliae demissaque lumina flectant,  
 atque iterat: 'Quisquis proavis et gente superba,  
 quisquis equo iaculoque potens, qui praevalet arcu,  
 omnis honos illic, illic ingentia certant  
 nomina: vix timidae matres aut agmina cessant  
 800 virginea; <a> multum steriles damnatus in annos  
 invisusque deis, si quem haec nova gloria segnem  
 praeterit.' exisset stratis, ni provida signo  
 Deidamia dato cunctas hortata sorores

*post 780 versum subditivum habent dett. nonnulli*  
<sup>800</sup> *add. Baehrens*

## BOOK I

thrice renewed, the king first addresses the Achaeans, cheering them on with the wine bowl: 'Renowned ornaments of the Argive rae, I envy your undertaking, I confess it. Would that my own age were sturdier, as it was when I thrashed the Dolopes as they assailed Seyros' shores and broke them in the water—you have seen the tokens of that triumph high up on the walls, the keels. At least if I had offspring meet to send forth to war—but now you see for yourselves my strength and my dear children. When shall this throng give me new grandsons?'

He spoke, and wily Ulysses seized his moment: 'Not to be scorned is your desire. For who would not burn to see the countless peoples and the captains and the columns of kings? All the strength and glory of mighty Europe has together freely sworn allegiance to our just arms. Countryside and cities are empty, we have stripped the lofty mountains, the whole sea is veiled with a long shadow of sails; fathers hand over their weapons, young men snatch them, not to be recalled. Never at any other time was opportunity of such great renown given to the brave or valour employed in a wider field.'

He sees him all attention, drinking in his words with a vigilant ear, while the other girls are afraid and turn their eyes down and away. And he repeats: 'Whosoever is of proud rae and ancestry, whoever knows how to handle horse and javelin or excels with the bow, all honour is there, there great names contend. Scarce do timid mothers or troops of maidens hold back. Ah, condemned is he to barren years and much hated of the gods whom this new glory passes by in idleness.' Achilles would have leapt up from the couch, if wary Deidamia had not admonished all

ACHILLEID

- liquisset mensas ipsum complexa. sed haeret  
 805 respiciens Ithacum coetuque novissimus exit.  
 Ille quoque incepto paulum ex sermone remittit,  
 pauca tamen iungens: 'At tu tranquillus in alta  
 pace mane carisque para conubia natis,  
 quas tibi sidereis divarum vultibus aequas  
 810 Fors dedit. ut me olim tacitum reverentia tangit!  
 is decor et formae species permixta virili.'  
 occurrit genitor: 'Quid si aut Bacchea ferentes  
 orgia, Palladias aut circum videris aras?  
 et dabimus, si forte novus cunctabitur Auster.'  
 815 excipiunt cupidi et tacitis spes addita votis.  
 cetera depositis Lycomedis regia curis  
 tranquilla sub pace silet, sed longa sagaci  
 nox Ithaco, lucemque cupit somnumque gravatur.  
 Vixdum exorta dies et iam comitatus Agyrte  
 820 Tydides aderat praedictaque dona ferebat.  
 nec minus egressae thalamo Scyreides ibant  
 ostentare choros promissaque sacra verendis  
 hospitibus. nitet ante alias regina comesque  
 Pelides: qualis Siculae sub rupibus Aetnae  
 825 Naidas Ennaeas inter Diana feroxque  
 Pallas et Elysii lucebat sponsa tyranni.  
 iamque movent gressus thiasisque Ismenia buxus  
 signa dedit, quater aera Rheae, quater enthea pulsant  
 terga manu variosque quater legere recursus.  
 830 tunc thyrsos pariterque levant pariterque reponunt  
 multiplicantque gradum, modo quo Curetes in actu  
 quoque pii Samothraces eunt, nunc obvia versae

806 quoque Pψ: quidem ψ



## BOOK I

her sisters by a signal and left the tables clasping him; but he lingers looking back at the Ithacan and is the last to leave the assembly.

Ulysses lets go something of the speech he had begun, but adds a few words: 'But do you stay tranquil in peace profound, preparing marriages for your beloved daughters, Fortune's gift, whose starry countenances equal goddesses. How silent reverence touches me this while! What charm, what beauty mingled with manly shape!' The father answers: 'What if you see them bearing Bacchus' sacred emblems or surrounding Pallas' altar? And we shall let you see, if a new South Wind shall tarry.' Eagerly they take him up and hope joins their silent prayer. The rest of Lycomedes' palace is silent in tranquil peace. But for the sagacious Ithacan the night is long; he yearns for the daylight, chafing at slumber.

Scarcely had dawn risen when Tydeus' son with Agyrtes at his side was at hand, bearing the gifts aforesaid. The maids of Scyros too left their chamber and came to show their dances and promised rites to the honoured guests. Before them all glistens the princess and her companion, Peleus' son; even as under Sicilian Aetna's crags among the Naiads of Henna shone Diana and bold Pallas and the spouse of the Elysian king. Now they are on the move and the Ismenian boxwood<sup>105</sup> gives signals to the choirs. Four times they clash Rhea's cymbals, four times beat the frenzied drums, four times wind their shifting movements back. Then together they raise their wands, together lower them, and multiply their steps. Sometimes they move in the manner of the Curetes or pious Samothracians, now

<sup>105</sup> The Theban flute used by Bacchanals.

ACHILLEID

pectine Amazonio, modo quo citat orbe Lacaenas  
 Delia plaudentesque suis intorquet Amyclis.  
 835 tunc vero, tunc praecipue manifestus Achilles  
 nec servare vices nec bracchia iungere curat;  
 tunc molles gressus, tunc aspernatur amictus  
 plus solito rumpitque choros et plurima turbat.  
 sic indignantem thyrsos acceptaque matris  
 840 tympana iam tristes spectabant Penthea Thebae.  
 Solvuntur laudata cohors repetuntque paterna  
 limina, ubi in mediae iamdudum sedibus aulae  
 munera virgineos visus tractura locarat  
 Tydides, signum hospitii pretiumque laboris,  
 845 hortaturque legant, nec rex placidissimus arcet.  
 heu simplex nimiumque rudis, qui callida dona  
 Graiorumque dolos variumque ignoret Ulixem!  
 hic aliae, qua sexus iners naturaque ducit,  
 aut teretes thyrsos aut respondentia temptant  
 850 tympana, gemmatis aut nectunt tempora limbis;  
 arma vident magnoque putant donata parenti.  
 at ferus Aeacides, radiantem ut cominus orbem  
 caclatum pugnas (saevis et forte rubebat  
 bellorum maculis) acclinem conspicit hastac,  
 855 infremuit torsitque genas, et fronte relicta  
 surrexere comae; nusquam mandata parentis,  
 nusquam occultus amor, totoque in pectore Troia est.  
 ut leo, materno cum raptus ab ubere mors  
 accepit pectique iubas hominemque vereri  
 860 edidicit nullasque rapi nisi iussus in iras,  
 si semel adverso radiavit lumine ferrum,  
 eiurata fides domitorque inimicus, in illum

<sup>847</sup> vafrumque *Heinsius*

## BOOK 1

they turn to face each other in an Amazonian comb,<sup>106</sup> now ply the ring in which Diana summons the girls of Laconia and twists them clapping in her own Amyclae. Then, ay then above all is Achilles manifest. He cares not to keep turns or link arms; more than usual he scorns womanish steps and dress, disrupting the choirs and causing untold confusion. So Thebes already sad watched Pentheus indignant at his mother's wands and the drums he had accepted. ✓

The band disperse amid applause and seek again their father's threshold, where Tydeus' son had previously placed the gifts to catch the maidens' eyes in the midmost apartments of the palace, as a token from guest to host and a reward for their labour. He encourages them to choose, nor does the mild king forbid. Alas, too simple and inexperienced, he knows not of cunning presents and Grecian wiles and shifty Ulysses. The other girls, as their unadventurous sex and nature leads them, try smooth wands or responsive drums or bind their temples with jewelled sashes; they see the weapons and think them presents for their great parent. But when fierce Acacides views close at hand the shining round, chased with battles (and by chance it was ruddy with cruel spots of war), as it leaned against the spear, he cried out and rolled his eyes, the hair stood up from his forehead. Forgotten his mother's charge, forgotten his hidden love, Troy is in all his heart. As a lion snatched from his mother's dugs learns manners, taught to let his mane be combed, to respect man, and never to fly into a rage unless ordered; but if once steel flashes out in front of him, he forswears his faith and his tamer becomes

<sup>106</sup> 'Evidently a dance in which the two rows interlaced like the teeth of two combs' (Dilke).

ACHILLEID

- prima fames, timidoque pudet servisse magistro.  
 ut vero accessit propius luxque aemula vultum  
 865 reddidit et simili talem se vidit in auro,  
 horruit erubuitque simul. tunc acer Ulixes  
 admotus lateri summissa voce: 'Quid haeres?  
 scimus,' ait. 'tu semiferi Chironis alumnus,  
 tu caeli pelagique nepos, te Dorica classis,  
 870 te tua suspensis expectat Graecia signis,  
 ipsaque iam dubiis nutant tibi Pergama muris.  
 heia, abrumpe moras! sine perfida palleat Ide,  
 et iuuet haec audire patrem, pudeatque dolosam  
 sic pro te timuisse Thetin.' iam pectus amictu  
 875 laxabat, cum grande tuba sic iussus Agyrtes  
 insonuit; fugiunt disiectis undique donis  
 implorantque patrem commotaque proelia credunt.  
 illius intactae cecidere a pectore vestes,  
 iam clipeus breviorque manu consumitur hasta  
 880 (mira fides) Ithacumque umeris excedere visus  
 Aetolumque ducem: tantum subita arma calorque  
 Martius horrenda confundit luce penates,  
 immanisque gradu, ceu protinus Hectora poscens,  
 stat medius trepidante domo, Peleaque virgo  
 quaeritur.  
 885           Ast alia plangebat parte resectos  
 Deidamia dolos, cuius cum grandia primum  
 lamenta et notas accepit pectore voces,  
 haesit et occulto virtus infracta calore est.  
 demittit clipeum regisque ad lumina versus  
 890 attonitum factis inopinaque monstra paventem,  
 sicut erat, nudis Lycomedem affatur in armis:

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<sup>107</sup> Carried by Achilles the spear seems shorter than before.

## BOOK 1

his foe, his first hunger is for him and he is ashamed to have obeyed a timid master. But when the lad came close and the rival radiance gave back his face and he saw himself as he was in the gold likeness, he shuddered and blushed both together. Then when Ulysses approached him and speaking softly: 'Why do you hesitate?' he says. 'We know. You are half-beast Chiron's fosterling, grandson of sea and sky. The Dorian fleet attends you, your Greece expects you with flying standards and Pergamus herself nods to you with walls already tottering. Up now, no more delay! Let treacherous Idoon turn pale, let your father rejoice to hear the news and wily Thetis be ashamed to have so feared for you.' Already he was loosening the clothing from his chest, when Agyrtes blew a loud blast from his trumpet as ordered. They flee, throwing the presents in all directions, and entreat their father, believing battle joined. The garments fall untouched from Achilles' breast, his hand devours the shield and shortened<sup>107</sup> spear (strange but true) and his shoulders seem taller than the Ithacan and Aetolian captains; with so fearsome a light do the sudden weapons and martial ardour confound the dwelling. Towering he stands in the centre of the trembling house, as though calling for Hector forthwith. Peleus' daughter is to seek.

But in another quarter Deidamia bewails the trick discovered. When he heard her loud lament and his mind received the familiar voice, he paused and valour yielded to hidden passion. He drops the shield and turning to face the king's threshold as he sits stunned by what has passed and fearing things strange and sudden he addresses Lycomedes in naked weaponry, just as he was: 'Mother Thetis

ACHILLEID

'Me tibi, care pater (dubium dimitte pavorem),  
 me dedit alma Thetis. te pridem tanta manebat  
 gloria. quaesitum Danais tu mittis Achillem,  
 895 gratior et magno, si fas dixisse, parente  
 et dulci Chirone mihi. sed corda parumper  
 huc adverte libens atque has bonus accipe voces:  
 Peleus te nato socerum et Thetis hospita iungunt  
 allegantque suos utroque a sanguine divos.  
 900 unam virgineo natarum ex agmine poscunt.  
 dasne? an gens humilis tibi degeneresque videmur?  
 non renuis? iunge ergo manus et concipe foedus  
 atque ignosce tuis. tacito iam cognita furto  
 Deidamia mihi; quid enim his obstare lacertis,  
 905 qua potuit nostras possessa repellere vires?  
 me luere ista iube; pono arma et reddo Pelasgis  
 et maneo. quid triste fremis? quid lumina mutas?  
 iam socer es.' natum ante pedes prostravit et addit:  
 'iamque avus. immitis quotiens iterabitur ensis?  
 910 turba sumus.' tunc et Danai per sacra fidemque  
 hospitii blandusque precum compellit Ulixes.  
 ille, etsi carae comperta iniuria natae  
 et Thetidis mandata movent prodique videtur  
 depositum tam grande deae, tamen obvius ire  
 915 tot metuit fatis Argivaque bella morari;  
 fac velit: ipsam illic matrem sprevisset Achilles.  
 nec tamen abnuerit genero se iungere tali:  
 vincitur. arcanis effert pudibunda tenebris  
 Dcidamia gradum, veniae nec protinus amens

<sup>905</sup> repellere vir (*sine ras.*) P: evadere flammas ω (*Kohlmann*)

<sup>916</sup> versus suspectus (*vide Dilke*)

BOOK 1

gave me to you, dear father. Banish doubts and fears. Long has such glory awaited you. 'Tis you who send Achilles to the Danai, for whom they search; better loved by me, if it be lawful to say so, than my great parent and dear Chiron. But pay willing heed awhile and take my words in kindly part. Peleus and Thetis your guest join you as father-in-law to their son and bring their gods from either line in support. They ask for one among your maiden train of daughters. Do you give her? Or do you think us a low, degenerate family? You do not refuse? Then join hands and make the covenant, and pardon your child.<sup>108</sup> Already is Deidamia known to me in secret dalliance. For what could resist these arms? Once I had her, how could she repel my strength? Bid *me* pay for it. I put the weapons aside and return them to the Pelasgi and stay here.<sup>109</sup> Why the gloomy growl? Why change your look? Already you are my father-in-law.' He laid the babe at his feet and adds: 'And already a grandfather. How often will the cruel sword fall? We are a group!' Then the Danai too constrain the king, invoking the rites and faith of hospitality, and Ulysses with soft entreaty. Moved though he was by the discovery of his daughter's wrong and by Thetis' charge, though feeling that the goddess' grand trust is betrayed, he fears to oppose so many destinies and delay the Argive war. Suppose he so desired, Achilles would have spurned even his mother in this. And after all he would not refuse to join himself to such a son-in-law. He yields. Deidamia emerges in shame from secret darkness and in her distraction she does not at

<sup>108</sup> Achilles himself need not be included in *tuis*; cf. *Thebaid* 7.547.

<sup>109</sup> No more is heard of this proposal.

ACHILLEID

- 920 credit et opposito genitorem placat Achille.  
 Mittitur Haemoniam, magnis qui Pelea factis  
 impleat et classem comitesque in proelia poscat.  
 nec non et geminas regnator Scyrius alnos  
 deducit genero viresque excusat Achivis.
- 925 tunc epulis consumpta dies, tandemque relectum  
 foedus et intrepidus nox conscia iungit amantes.  
 Illius ante oculos nova bella et Xanthus et Ide  
 Argolicaeque rates, atque ipsas cogitat undas  
 auroramque timet. cara cervice mariti
- 930 fusa novi lacrimas iam solvit et occupat artus:  
 'Aspiciamne iterum meque hoc in pectore ponam,  
 Aeacide? rursusque tuos dignabere portus,  
 an tumidus Teucrosque lares et capta reportans  
 Pergama virgineae noles meminisse latebrae?
- 935 quid precer, heu! timeamve prius? quidve anxiam mandem,  
 cui vix flere vacat? modo te nox una deditque  
 inviditque mihi. thalamis haec tempora nostris?  
 hicne est liber hymen? o dulcia furta dolique,  
 o timor! abripitur miserae permissus Achilles.
- 940 I (neque enim tantos ausim revocare paratus),  
 i cautus, nec vana Thetin timuisse memento,  
 i felix nosterque redi! nimis improba posco:  
 iam te sperabunt lacrimis planctuque decorae  
 Troades optabuntque tuis dare colla catenis
- 945 et patriam pensare toris, aut ipsa placebit  
 Tyndaris, incesta nimium laudata rapina.  
 ast egomet primae pucrilis fabula culpae

925 relectum P: receptum ω



## BOOK 1

first believe that she is pardoned and puts Achilles forward to placate her father.

Word goes to Haemonia, to fill Peleus with these great doings and ask for ships and battle companions. The Seyrian ruler also launches two vessels for his son-in-law, making excuse to the Achaeans for his meagre strength. The day was passed in feasting and finally the covenant was revealed and accomplice night joins the fearless lovers.

Before her eyes were new wars and Xanthus and Ide and the Argive ships; she thinks of the very waves and fears the dawn. Embracing her new husband's dear neck, she lets her tears now have way and clasps his limbs: 'Shall I see you again and lay myself on your breast, Aeacides? Will you once more think your refuge worthy? Or when you proudly bring back Teucrian homes and captured Pergamus, will you wish to forget your maidenly hiding place? What should I beg, alas, or what fear first? What charge in my anxiety can I give you, when I have scarce time to weep? One single night has just given you to me and grudged you. Is this the period for our nuptials? This free Hymen? Ah stolen sweets, ah guile! Ah fear! Woe is me, Achilles is given and snatched away. Go! I would not dare to recall such mighty preparations. Go, but have a care. Remember, Thetis' fears were not idle. Go and luck be with you, and come back still mine. I ask too much, overbold. Soon the pretty Trojan girls with their tears and beating of breasts shall hope for you and pray to submit their necks to your chains, bartering country for couch; or Tyndareus' daughter herself will please you, praised<sup>110</sup> overmuch for a wanton rape. As for me, you will tell of me

<sup>110</sup> Celebrated rather. Is Deidamia excusing herself?

ACHILLEID

narrabor famulis aut dissimulata latebo.  
 quin age, duc comitem; cur non ego Martia tecum  
 950 signa feram? tu pensa manu Baccheaque mecum  
 sacra, quod infelix non credit Troia, tulisti.  
 attamen hunc, quem maesta mihi solacia linqis,  
 hunc saltem sub corde tene et concede precanti  
 hoc solum, pariat ne quid tibi barbara coniunx,  
 955 ne qua det indignos Thetidi captiva nepotes.’  
 Talia dicentem non ipse immotus Achilles  
 solatur iuratque fidem iurataque fletu  
 spondet et ingentis famulas captumque reversus  
 Ilion et Phrygiac promittit munera gazae.  
 960 irrita ventosae rapiabant verba procellae.

948 narrabor, thalamis *Schrader*

950 pensa  $\omega$ : thyrsa P

952 *anne* ac tamen?

## BOOK 1

to your slaves, a boyish story of first fault, or you will say nothing about me, no one will know. But come, take me with you. Why should I not carry Mars' banners at your side? With me you handled wool<sup>111</sup> and Bacchus' holy gear, a thing unhappy Troy will not believe. But this babe that you leave me for my sad comfort, him at least hold in your heart and this only grant me, that no barbarian wife bear child for you, no captive give Thetis unworthy grandsons.'

As thus she speaks, Achilles comforts her, himself not unmoved, swearing fidelity and guaranteeing what he swears with tears. He promises strapping handmaidens and captured Ilium and gifts of Phrygian treasure on his return.<sup>112</sup> The airy gusts swept his vain words away.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. 581–83. The neuter plural *thyrsa* is not found in Latin though there are Greek examples.

<sup>112</sup> The illogical *reversus* is compared by Dilke with phrases like *puer memini* instead of *memini me puerum*.

## LIBER SECUNDUS

Exiit implicitum tenebris umentibus orbem  
Oceano prolata dies, genitorque coruscae  
lucis adhuc hebetem vicina nocte levabat  
et nondum excusso rorantem lampada ponto.  
5 et iam punicea nudatum pectora palla  
insignemque ipsis, quae prima invaserat, armis  
Aeaciden (quippe aura vocat cognataque suadent  
aequora) prospectant cuncti iuvenemque ducemque  
nil ausi meminisse pavent; sic omnia visu  
10 mutatus rediit, ceu numquam Scyria passus  
litora Peliacoque rates escendat ab antro.  
tunc ex more deis (ita namque monebat Ulixes)  
aequoribusque Austrisque litat fluctuque sub ipso  
caeruleum regem tauro veneratur avumque  
15 Nerea: vittata genetrix placata iuvenca.  
hic spumante salo iaciens tumida cxta profatur:  
'Paruimus, genetrix, quamquam haut toleranda iuberes,  
paruimus nimium: bella ad Troiana ratesque  
Argolicas quaesitus eo.' sic orsus et alno  
20 insiluit pcnitusque Noto stridente propinquis  
abripitur terris: et iam ardua ducere nubes  
incipit et longo Scyros discedere ponto.  
Turre procul summa lacrimis comitata sororum  
commissumque tenens et habentem nomina Pyrrhum

## BOOK 2

Dawn rising from Ocean frees the world from its envelope of dank shadows and the father of flashing light raises his torch still dull from neighbouring night and dewy with sea not yet shaken off. And now all look to Aeacides, as with breast stripped of purple cloak he shines with the arms on which he had first seized (for the breeze summons and the kindred seas persuade); they fear him as warrior and captain, not daring to remember aught. So he returned all changed to view, as though he had never endured Scyros' shores and were embarking from Pelion's cavern. Then to the gods (for so Ulysses counselled) and the seas and the South Winds he pours customary libation and at the very water's edge worships the cerulean king and his grandfather Nereus with a bull. His mother was placated with a wreathed heifer. Here he speaks as he casts the swollen entrails on the foaming billow: 'Mother, I obeyed you though your commands were more than I could bear, too much I obeyed: I go to the Trojan war and the Argive ships. They have looked for me.' So he spoke and leapt on board. The whistling South Wind snatched him far from the neighbouring land. And now lofty Scyros begins to muster mists and leave the stretching sea.

Far away perched on top of a tower, companioned by her weeping sisters and holding Pyrrhus her charge (so was

ACHILLEID

- 25 pendeat coniunx oculisque in carbasa fixis  
 ibat et ipsa freto, et puppem iam sola videbat.  
 ille quoque obliquos dilecta ad moenia vultus  
 declinat viduamque domum gemitusque relictæ  
 cogitat: occultus sub corde renascitur ardor  
 datque locum virtus.
- 30 Sentit Laërtius heros  
 maerentem et placidis aggressus flectere dictis:  
 ‘Tene,’ inquit, ‘magnæ vastator debite Troiæ,  
 quem Danaæ classes, quem divum oracula poscunt,  
 erectumque manet reserato in limine Bellum,  
 35 callida femineo genetrix violavit amictu  
 commisitque illis tam grandia furta latebris  
 speravitque fidem? nimis o suspensa nimisque  
 mater! an hæc tacita virtus torperet in umbra,  
 quæ vix audito litui clangore refugit  
 40 et Thetin et comites et quos suppresserat ignes?  
 nec nostrum est quod in arma venis sequerisque precantis;  
 venisses.’ dixit; quem talibus occupat heros  
 Aeacius: ‘Longum resides exponere causas  
 maternumque nefas; hoc excusabitur euse  
 45 Scyros et indecores, Fatorum crimina, cultus.  
 tu potius, dum lene fretum Zephyroque fruuntur  
 carbasa, quæ Danais tanti primordia belli,  
 ede: libet iustas hinc sumere protinus iras.’  
 Hic Ithacus paulum repetito longius orsu:  
 50 ‘Fertur in Hectorea, si talia credimus, Ida  
 electus formæ certamina solvere pastor  
 sollicitas tenuisse deas, nec torva Minervæ  
 ora nec aetherii sociam rectoris amico

<sup>42</sup> dixit Pψ: ultro ψ

## BOOK 2

he named), his wife fixed her gaze upon the sails. She herself went on the waters, and now only she saw the vessel.<sup>1</sup> Achilles too turns his face aside towards the beloved walls and thinks of the widowed house and the sobs of the deserted one. Fire hidden in his heart is reborn and valour yields place.

The hero son of Laërtes perceives his sorrow and essays to turn him with gentle speech: 'Destined sacker of great Troy, demanded of the Danaan fleet and the oracles of the gods, awaited by War standing tall at his unbarred threshold, did your crafty mother defile you with woman's apparel and commit so grand a cheat to that hiding place and hope the secret would be kept? Too fearful she, too much a mother! Was such valour to lie torpid in silent shade? Trumpet blast scarce heard, it fled Thetis and companions and passion suppressed. 'Tis not our doing that you come to arms and follow our entreaties. You would have come.' Aeacus' hero scion puts in: "Twere long to set out the causes of my tarrying and my mother's crime. By this sword shall Scyros and the unseemly habit be excused, reproach of destiny. You rather tell me how so great a war began for the Danai, while the sea is calm and the sails enjoy the Zephyr. I am fain to draw just wrath from the tale here and now.'

Then spoke the Ithacan, taking from way back the story: "Tis said that in Hector's Ida, if we believe such things, a shepherd was chosen to settle a beauty contest. He kept the goddessess in suspense, nor looked he kindly on Minerva's stern visage nor on the consort of the heav-

<sup>1</sup> In her imagination.

- lumine, sed solam nimium vidisse Dionen.  
 55 atque adeo lis illa tuis exorta sub antris  
 concilio superum, dum Pelea dulce maritat  
 Pelion, et nostris iam tunc promitteris armis.  
 ira quatit victas; petit exitialia iudex  
 praemia; raptori faciles monstrantur Amyclae.  
 60 ille Phrygas lucos, Matris penetralia caedit  
 turrigeræ veritasque solo procumbere pinus  
 praecipitat terrasque freto delatus Achaeas  
 hospitis Atridae (pudet heu miseretque potentis  
 Europæ!) spoliat thalamos, Helenaque superbus  
 65 navigat et captos ad Pergama devehit Argos.  
 inde dato passim varias rumore per urbes,  
 undique inexciti sibi quisque et sponte coimus  
 ultores: quis enim illicitis genialia rumpi  
 pacta dolis facilique trahi conubia raptu  
 70 ceu pecus armentumve aut vilis messis acervos  
 perferat? haec etiam fortes iactura moveret.  
 non tulit insidias divum imperiosus Agenor  
 mugitusque sacros et magno numine vectam  
 quaesiit Europen aspernatusque Tonantem est  
 75 vi generum; raptam Scythico de litore prolem  
 non tulit Aeetes ferroque et classe secutus  
 semideos reges et ituram in sidera puppim:

<sup>61</sup> veritasque P: veti- ω

<sup>75</sup> ut generum Pω (*Gronovius*)

<sup>2</sup> He bethinks him of an earlier origin, the apple of discord thrown by Strife at Peleus' marriage feast.

<sup>3</sup> *Dulce* seems to be an adverbial accusative, in extension of usages like *dulce loquentem*. Surely not 'pleasant Pelion.'



## BOOK 2

enly ruler, but only at Dione, and at her too much. Or rather,<sup>2</sup> that dispute started in your cave at the gathering of the High Ones, when Pelion made sweet<sup>3</sup> wedlock for Peleus and you were already promised to our arms. Anger convulses the losers. The arbiter seeks his fatal reward. Amyclae,<sup>4</sup> easy prey, is shown to the ravisher. He fells the forests of Phrygia, sanctuaries of the tower-crowned Mother,<sup>5</sup> and brings down to earth pines ashamed<sup>6</sup> to fall. Borne overseas to Achaea's land, he despoils the bedchamber of his host (alas, 'tis shame and pity upon mighty Europe!) and proud in possession of Helen sets sail, carrying captured Argos to Pergamus. Thence the rumour spreads everywhere through the various cities. Unsummoned we gather from all quarters, each for himself of his own will, avengers. For who should brook that marriage pacts be broken by lawless guile and wives dragged off in easy rape, like flock or herd or paltry heaps of corn? Such loss would move even the strong. Lordly<sup>7</sup> Agenor endured not treachery of the gods, the sacred lowings, and made quest for Europa, great deity's burden, spurning the Thunderer as son-in-law by force.<sup>8</sup> Aeetes endured not his daughter's ravishing from Scythia's shore; with steel and ships he follows the princely demigods and

<sup>4</sup> I.e. Sparta.

<sup>5</sup> Cybele.

<sup>6</sup> Because they were to be used for a shameful purpose (rape of Helen).

<sup>7</sup> *Insidiosus* in Dilke's text is a curious error 'of perseveration.'

<sup>8</sup> *Ut (generum)* is superfluous if not foolish (how else but as son-in-law *could* Agenor have spurned Jupiter?).

ACHILLEID

nos Phryga semivirum portus et litora circum  
 Argolica incesta volitantem puppe feremus?  
 80 usque adeo nusquam arma et equi, fretaque invia Grais?  
 quid si nunc aliquis patriis rapturus ab oris  
 Deidamian eat viduaque e sede revellat  
 attonitam et magni clamantem nomen Achillis?  
 illius ad capulum rediit manus ac simul ingens  
 85 impulit ora rubor; tacuit contentus Ulixes.

Excipit Oenides: 'Quin, o dignissima caeli  
 progenies, ritusque tuos elementaque primae  
 indolis et, valida mox accedente iuventa,  
 quae solitus laudum tibi semina pandere Chiron  
 90 virtutisque aditus, quas membra augere per artes,  
 quas animum, sociis multumque faventibus edis?  
 sit pretium longas penitus quaesisse per undas  
 Scyron et his primum <me> arma ostendisse lacertis.'

Quem pigeat sua facta loqui? tamen ille modeste  
 95 incohat, ambiguus paulum propiorque coacto:  
 'Dicor et in teneris et adhuc reptantibus annis,  
 Thessalus ut rigido senior me monte recepit,  
 non ullos ex more cibos hausisse nec almis  
 uberibus satiasset famem, sed spissa leonum  
 100 viscera semianimisque lupae traxisse medullas.  
 haec mihi prima Ceres, haec lacti munera Bacchi,  
 sic dabat ille pater. mox ire per invia sccum  
 lustra gradu maiore trahens visisque docebat  
 arridere feris nec fracta ruentibus undis

<sup>93</sup> primum P $\omega$  (*Schenkl*: primos *Wilamowitz*) ostendisse  
 lacertis P: *varia*  $\omega$  post 100 versum excidisse suspicor

## BOOK 2

the star-destined bark.<sup>9</sup> Shall we endure a Phrygian half-man roaming around Argive coasts and harbours with his filthy boat? So true is it that our arms and horses are no more and the seas impenetrable to men of Greece? How if one were now to come to carry off Deidamia from her native land, pluck her in dismay from her widowed dwelling as she calls on great Achilles' name?' The other's hand went to his swordhilt and a deep flush struck his face. Ulysses was content and said no more.

Oeneus' son takes over: 'Nay, most worthy scion of heaven, why not tell your right favouring comrades of your ways, the rudiments of earliest nature and what Chiron showed you as presently strong manhood came on; the seeds of glory, the path to valour, the arts to make your body grow and your mind. Let it be worth while that I have sought Scyros over the length of waves and been the first to show weapons to these arms of yours.'

Whom would it irk to tell of his own deeds? Yet he begins modestly, a little hesitant, rather as if constrained: 'They say that in my tender years, still crawling, when the old man of Thessaly received me on his stark mountain, I took no ordinary food nor satisfied hunger from nurturing breasts, but tore at the tough flesh of lions and offal of a she-wolf still half alive. This was my first bread, this the gift of happy Bacchus,<sup>10</sup> thus that father of mine used to feed me. Presently he taught me to go with him through the trackless wilderness, drawing me on with his wider stride, and to laugh when I saw wild beasts and not to fear rocks

<sup>9</sup> Argo, which would become a constellation.

<sup>10</sup> But nothing has been said about what Achilles had to drink—unless a line has fallen out after 100.

ACHILLEID

- 105 saxa nec ad vastae trepidare silentia silvae.  
iam tunc arma manu, iam tunc cervice pharetrae,  
et ferri properatus amor durataque multo  
sole geluque cutis; tenero nec fluxa cubili  
membra, sed ingenti saxum commune magistro.
- 110 vix mihi bisenos annorum torserat orbis  
vita rudis, volucris cum iam praevertere cervos  
et Lapithas cogebat equos praemissaque cursu  
tela sequi; saepe ipse gradu me praepete Chiron,  
dum velox aetas, campis admissus agebat
- 115 omnibus, exhaustumque vago per gramina passu  
laudabat gaudens atque in sua terga levabat.  
saepe etiam primo fluvii torpore iubebar  
ire supra glaciemque levi non frangere planta.  
hoc puerile decus. quid nunc tibi proelia dicam
- 120 silvarum et saevo vacuos iam murmure saltus?  
numquam ille imbelles Ossaea per avia danmas  
sectari aut timidus passus me cuspide lynceas  
sternere, sed tristes turbare cubilibus ursos  
fulmineosque sues, et sicubi maxima tigris
- 125 aut seducta iugis fetae splunca leaenae.  
ipse sedens vasto facta exspectabat in antro,  
si sparsus nigro remcarem sanguine; nec me  
ante nisi inspectis admisit ad oscula telis.  
iamque et ad ensiferos vicina pube tumultus
- 130 aptabar, nec me ulla feri Mavortis imago  
praeteriit. didici, quo Paeones arma rotatu,  
quo Macetae sua gaesa citent, quo turbine contum  
Sauromates falcemque Getes arcumque Gclonus  
tenderet et flexae Balcaricus actor habena
- 135 quo suspensa trahens libraret vulnera tortu  
inclusumque suo distingueret aëra gyro.

## BOOK 2

shattered by rushing torrents and the silences of the vast forest. Even then arms were in my hand, even then a quiver at my neck, precocious love of steel, skin hardened by sun and frost in plenty, limbs not loosened by soft bedding, but a rock shared with my huge master. Scarce had my raw life turned twice six years when he had me run faster than the swift stags and Lapith horses and chase the darts I flung. Often would Chiron himself, while his age ran swift, pursue me at gallop all over the plains in headlong career, and when I was exhausted in my wanderings through the meads he would joyfully praise me and hoist me onto his back. Often too at the first freezing of the river he would bid me walk over it nor break the ice with lightsome foot. Such was my boyish glory. Why tell you of forest fights and glens now empty of savage growls? He would never let me chase unwarlike deer through Ossa's wilds or lay timid lynxes low with my spear; I must rouse grim bears from their dens and boars like thunderbolts or mayhap a mighty tigress' lair or a hidden cavern on the mountain that housed a lioness and her cubs. Himself would sit in his vast cave and wait for my exploits: would I return splashed with black blood? Nor did he admit me to his kiss until he had inspected my weapons. And now I was making ready for affrays of the sword with neighbour folk; no aspect of fierce Mavors passed me by. I learned how the Paeonians whirl their arms, how the Macetae speed their javelins, with what a spin the Sarmatian plies his stake, the Gete his falchion, the Gelonian his bow, how the Balearic driver of the twisted sling swings his missile aloft with balanced pull, marking out the air he comprises in its circle. I could

ACHILLEID

vix memorem cunctos, etsi bene gessimus, actus.  
nunc docet ingentes saltu me iungere fossas,  
nunc caput aërii scandentem prendere montis,  
140 quo fugitur per plana gradu, simulacraque pugnae:  
excipere inmissos curvato umbone molares  
ardentesque intrare casas peditemque volantis  
sistere quadriiugos. memini, rapidissimus ibat  
imbribus assiduis pastus nivibusque solutis  
145 Sperchios vivasque trabes et saxa ferebat,  
cum me ille inmissum, qua saevior impetus undae,  
stare iubet contra tumidosque repellere fluctus,  
quos vix ipse gradu totiens obstantc tulisset.  
stabam equidem, sed me referebat concitus annis  
150 et latae caligo fugae; ferus ille minari  
desuper incumbens verbisque urgere pudorem.  
nec nisi iussus abi: sic me sublimis agebat  
gloria, nec duri tanto sub teste labores.  
nam procul Oebalios in nubila condere discos  
155 et liquidam nodare palen et spargere caestus  
ludus erat requiesque mihi; nec maior in istis  
sudor, Apollineo quam fila sonantia plectro  
cum quaterem priscosque virum mirarer honores.  
quin etiam sucos atque auxiliantia morbis  
160 gramina, quo nimius staret medicamine sanguis,  
quid faciat somnos, quid hiantia vulneca claudat,  
quae ferro cohibenda lucis, quae cederet herbis,  
edocuit monitusque sacrae sub pectore fixit  
iustitiae, qua Peliacis dare iura verenda  
165 gentibus atque suos solitus pacare bifformes.  
hactenus annorum, comites, elementa meorum  
et memini et meminisse iuvat: scit cetera mater.'

BOOK 2

scarce recall all I did, though I did it well. Anon he teaches me to span great ditches in a jump, to climb and grasp an airy mountain peak as if racing over the level; in mock battle to receive flying boulders on my curving shield boss, to enter burning huts and stop hurtling chariots on foot. I remember when Sperchios was flowing his fastest, fed on continual rains and melted snow, carrying live trees and rocks; Charon would tell me to get in where the torrent's current was fiercest and stand against it, repelling the swollen waves that he himself would hardly have withstood with so many feet. I stood, but the angry river and the mist of his broad rush took me back. He bore down on me with savage threats and scolded to shame me. I did not leave till ordered, so high glory urged me, and before so mighty a witness labours were light. For to hide Oebalian quoits far up in the sky and knot holds in the slippery wrestling match and scatter boxing gloves were my play and relaxation, and toil therein no greater than when I plucked the sounding strings with Apollo's quill and marvelled at the glories of the men of old. He even taught me of juices and grasses to aid in sickness, of medicine to stanch fast-flowing blood, what brings sleep, what closes gaping wounds, what plague should be checked by steel, what yields to herbs; and he fixed in my mind the precepts of sacred justice, whereby he used to give laws for Pelion's tribes to reverence and pacify his own twiforms. So far, comrades, I remember the training of my early years and joy in the memory. My mother knows the rest.'

141 *curvato*  $\omega$ : *scutato* P

142 *ardentesque intrare*  $\omega$ :

*-tesque errare* P: *-tes penetrare* Robertson





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“Argive” and “Theban” after an entry includes allies. Parentheses indicate allusions. References to verses judged spurious are asterisked.

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- \*Tyrrhēnus: adj. 56
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 742; 761; 784; 847; 866; 911.  
 2.12; 85. Cf. 693; 2.30. *See*  
*also* Ithacesius, Ithacus  
 (Ūranus): Sky, father of  
 Oceanus: cf. 50
- Venus: 70; 293. *See also* Dione
- \*Xanthus: river of Troy 927
- \*Zephyrus: 682; 2.46. -ri 694

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