

THE POETICS OF KINSHIP: NARRATIVE AND POETIC TECHNIQUE IN VERGIL, OVID,
AND STATIUS

by

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(Under the Direction of Sarah Spence)

ABSTRACT

This thesis traces the development of the theme of kinship and posits that it is connected to the virtue of *pietas* in the Latin epics of Vergil, Ovid, and Statius. In the *Aeneid*, the theme of kinship operates on two complementary levels: the literary and narrative. Even as the nature of *pietas* becomes more problematic in the narrative, so also Vergil's devotion to his literary forefathers diminishes as the epic develops. In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid responds to Vergil's use of kinship by focusing on the taboos of incest and familial violence. Ovid shows that these two transgressions of *pietas* represent narrative progress and composition while also symbolizing different modes of poetic allusion. Statius' epic rewrites these two earlier epics, simultaneously undermining the ethical system of the *Aeneid* and calling into question Ovid's claim of literary immortality at the end of the *Metamorphoses*.

INDEX WORDS: Vergil, *Aeneid*, Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Statius, *Thebaid*, allusion, intertextuality, kinship, *pietas*, epic.

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DEDICATION
MEIS PARENTIBUS

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Introduction

I argue in this thesis that kinship and family are symbolic of the development of poetry: Homer is Vergil's literary father, Vergil is Ovid's, and so on. This is, I think, a very Roman way of understanding the relationship between texts. For example, Quintilian likens literary genres to the Roman *familia*. When he describes the Roman textual critics who came before him, Quintilian describes their stern editorial practices (*Inst. Orat.* 1.4.3):

quidem ita severe sunt usi veteres grammatici ut non versus modo censoria quadam virgula notare et libros qui falso viderentur inscripti tamquam subditos summovere familia permiserint sibi, sed auctores alios in ordinem redegerint, alios omnino exemerint numero.

Indeed the old *grammatici* made use of such severity that not only did they allow themselves to mark with a certain condemning mark verses and books which seemed to have been written spuriously, just as if they removed those in their care from the family, but also they brought some authors back into the canon, and others they quickly excised all together.

I am unaware of an example in which the understanding of a genre as a family is so explicitly codified in Greek literature.¹ Certain Greek authors use similar metaphors. In Plato's *Symposium*, for example, Diotima claims that men reproduce and protect their offspring out of a desire for some type of immortality (207b-207d); Diotima concludes, however, that in lieu of children many men opt to produce poetry in order to earn undying glory for all time (208c: καὶ κλέος ἐς τὸν αἰὲν χρόνον ἀθάνατον καταθέσθαι). To Diotima, poetry is a type of poetic offspring, but nowhere is this relationship as explicitly codified as it is in Quintilian.

¹ My understanding of the significance of this passage in the *Symposium* has benefitted from the insights of Charles Platter. I should note that I do not wish to claim that kinship is not an important theme in the Greek corpus. Wohl (2005) 153, although primarily focused on tragedy, serves as a good starting point for those interested in kinship in Greek literature.

And the metaphor of the poetic family is not limited to Quintilian. In a variation of the theme, Statius in the *Silvae* portrays Lucan as the son of Calliope (*Silv.* 2.7.36-38):

natum protinus atque humum per ipsam
 primo murmure dulce vagientem
 blando Calliope sinu recepit.

And Calliope took him in her pleasant lap as soon as he was born while still on the ground² and wailing sweetly with his first murmur.

As Carole Newlands asserts, Calliope accepts the poetically gifted (*dulce vagientem*) as her son (cf. *Silv.* 2.7.41: *puer*).³ Calliope, the muse of epic poetry, by accepting the baby Lucan into her family also accepts Lucan as a representative of her own genre, epic poetry. In this case, as in Quintilian, a genre of poetry is likened to a family unit and poetic authority is translated into the image of family descent. In connection with this theme, Mariana Ventura has also argued that in *Silvae* 5.3, a poem posthumously published and dedicated to Statius' recently deceased father, the poet likens his genetic father to his literary father, Vergil.⁴

Therefore the metaphor of literary genre as family is a particularly Roman method of thinking of literary history. Given the key role that familial devotion, or *pietas*, plays in the *Aeneid* and post-Vergilian epic, I posit that there is a relationship in Latin epic beginning with Vergil between the two modes of kinship, the narrative/thematic and the literary. By observing the dynamics of this relationship it is possible to observe not only how poets relate to one another within a tradition, but also how they do so by redefining and subverting the themes and values established by their predecessors.

² See Newlands (2011) ad *Silv.* 2.7.36-38.

³ Newlands (2011) ad *Silv.* 2.7.36-40.

⁴ See Ventura (2010) *passim*.

CHAPTER 1

THE PRODIGAL SON: VERGIL ON BREAKING EXPECTATIONS

Before Vergil introduces his hero by name, he characterizes him by his *pietas* (*Aen.* 1.10: *insignem pietate virum*). Aeneas' identity is not defined by his name or by who he is as an individual; rather, Vergil shows his hero as a man subordinated to the demands placed upon him by outside forces. As the plot of the *Aeneid* progresses, Aeneas' devotion to the demands of *pietas* weakens; Oliver Lyne summarizes the inconsistencies of *pietas* well:

Aeneas has to learn to become someone dutiful and subordinate, the *heros pius*, a paradoxical and unblessed role. And he does so of course at great cost and far from consistently. How could it be otherwise? Such is the character and situation of Aeneas, potentially defined even in his first scene, with the assistance of *allusion*, the process of comparing and contrasting: a hero in a role shot through with paradox and pain.⁵

Lyne's point, in part, is that Aeneas' *pietas*, his defining quality, is one based on a paradoxical contrast. Aeneas' definition as a hero is qualified: he seeks glory, but not the individualistic glory sought by his Homeric predecessors. Aeneas' role as "*heros pius*" is, in other words, subordinated on two levels. First, the individual is subordinated to family, state, and gods. Secondly, *pietas* works in a metaliterary sense to circumscribe a text within a textual tradition. As Lyne has it, how better to understand Aeneas' paradoxical *pietas* than to look to his speech in the epic in which the *vir pietate insignis*, alluding to his Homeric self, begs to be released from his life (or, even, from his subordination to the whims of the gods and fate).

In this chapter we aim to explore the dynamics between the two levels of subordination which we have just defined. In the first two sections we will explore how Vergil establishes and

⁵ Lyne (1987) 107, emphasis my own.

then subsequentially questions a model of *pietas*, specifically the familial aspect of *pietas*.⁶ In the following three sections, we will argue that Aeneas' wavering devotion to familial *pietas* is mirrored in Vergil's rebellion from his poetic fathers.

Establishing a Model

Venus, witnessing the despair of her son and his comrades at sea in Book One, hurries to her father Jupiter and asks him why Aeneas, fated to found a new city and empire, is allowed to suffer so much; has, she asks, Jupiter's will been changed (*Aen.* 1.237: *quae te, genitor, sententia vertit?*)? Denis Feeney has noted that Venus' concerns are legitimate: Rome's future dominance, though described as demanded by the *fata*, is not so much demanded by fate as it is by what Jupiter says (*Aen.* 1.261: *fabor*).⁷ Given the apparent malleability of Aeneas', and therefore Rome's, fate, Venus cannot base the rhetorical force of her speech upon the inevitability of what is decreed by the fates. Venus therefore ends her speech by asking two simple questions: is Aeneas' suffering on the sea the reward of *pietas*, and is this how Jupiter offers Venus and her people power (*Aen.* 1.233: *hic pietatis honos? sic nos in sceptris reponis?*)? The goddess appeals not to fate but to the cardinal virtue of *pietas*, Aeneas' defining quality, as the currency with which Aeneas' survival is purchased.

The *pietas* to which Venus alludes in the conclusion of her speech can be interpreted in two ways: it could refer to Aeneas' devotion to the gods and the debt which he is owed, in the sense of *do ut des*; or it could mean the familial relationship which connects Aeneas to Venus and her father (*Aen.* 1.256: *natae*) Jupiter. Though we do not need to distinguish absolutely between these two senses, the second of our two possible interpretations is more strongly felt in the current passage. Others have argued that Jupiter's tone is noticeably paternal, and, therefore,

⁶ On the many different relationships governed by *pietas*, see Austin (1971) ad *Aen.* 1.10.

⁷ Feeney (1991) 139-140.

in noting that Aeneas and his people are descendants of Venus, Jupiter implicitly admits that he, also, is an ancestor to the Romans.⁸ The legitimacy of Rome's power, *sceptra* in Venus' speech, is bolstered by the demands placed upon Jupiter because of the devotion (*i.e.*, *pietas*) due to his daughter Venus and grandson Aeneas (*Aen.* 1.253).

Given this relationship between future Roman power and *pietas*, it is all the more striking that Jupiter in his own speech describes the achievement of the future Romans through an infamous familial duo (*Aen.* 1.292-296):

cana Fides et Vesta, Remo cum fratre Quirinus
iura dabunt; dirae ferro et compagibus artis
claudentur Belli portae; Furor impius intus
saeva sedens super arma et centum vinctus aënis
post tergum nodis fremet horridus ore cruento.

Old Fides and Vesta, and deified Romulus with his brother Remus, will make the laws; the dread gates of war will be closed with iron and firm bolts; *impius* Furor, sitting inside on top of its savage arms and bound behind its back with 100 bronze knots will scream, horrifying with its gory mouth.

Others have noted how troubling this passage is.⁹ Most striking is the fact that the deified Romulus and his brother Remus will give laws to the future Romans. This, of course, is not true; the fratricidal violence at the foundation of Rome is a common motif in Roman literature. In his *Epodes* Horace goes so far as to claim that familial violence is a recurring event in Roman history, from Romulus and Remus to the civil discord of the first century BCE.¹⁰ Whatever

⁸ On the paternal tone of the speech, see Tarrant (2012) ad *Aen.* 12.435-440. Tarrant draws a connection between Aeneas' speech to Ascanius (examined in further detail below) and Jupiter's speech to Venus: "Together the passages link four generations (Jupiter>Venus and Anchises>Aeneas>Iulus) in a chain of instruction and exhortation that the *Aeneid* itself enacts and extends into the future." That the Romans are portrayed in Jupiter's speech as descendants of Venus, see Feeney (1991) 139; Feeney also notes that Juno, at the end of the poem, refers to the future Romans as *tuorum* (*Aen.* 12.820: *pro Latio obtestor, pro maiestate tuorum*).

⁹ See O'Hara (1990) 151-163, Putnam (1995) 12, Perkell (1999) 43-44, and Fratantuono (2007) 11-13.

¹⁰ *Ep.* 7.17-20: *acerba fata Romanos agunt / scelusque fraternae necis, / ut immerentis fluxit in terram Remi / sacer nepotibus cruor.*

world Vergil is portraying in this image, it is not of his own.¹¹ In Vergil's contemporary Rome, the Gates of War, those of the temple of Janus, are closed not once, but twice; as Richard Tarrant has recently argued, this repetition emphasizes the fleeting nature, not the persistence, of the peace offered by the newly stabilized empire.¹²

If Romulus and Remus are the quintessential font of all future Roman civil discord, why do the brothers here rule together in concord? It is possible to argue that these lines betray some anxiety over the peace which Rome has gained at the time of the composition of the *Aeneid*. Venus' speech, as it mirrors the conclusion of Jupiter's speech, appeals to the orderly relationship between family members set up by *pietas*. Venus' question, "*hic pietatis honos?*" is answered by Jupiter's promise of a future in which even the archetypal warring brothers Romulus and Remus rule in a world where the force of *Furor impius* has been mitigated. *Imperium* is gained and is marked by a society which pays heed to the ethics of kinship. Even Romulus and Remus can be reunited peacefully in this idealized golden age.¹³

The connection between family and empire is often exploited by the characters of the *Aeneid* in order to guide Aeneas on his journey. One of Aeneas' primary sources of motivation is his devotion to Ascanius. The growth of Aeneas' familial devotion is important in the progression of Book Two. After Hector appears to Aeneas in a dream and tells him that Troy is lost, Aeneas prepares himself for what he knows is a fruitless battle (*Aen.* 2.314-317):

arma amens capio; nec sat rationis in armis,
sed glomerare manum bello et concurrere in arcem
cum sociis ardent animi; furor iraque mentem
praecipitat, pulchrum mori succurrit in armis.

¹¹ See Putnam (2012) 14: "this dream of a time to come."

¹² Tarrant (2012) 27.

¹³ The promise of the reconciliation of Romulus and Remus is an *adynaton*, something which is impossible. *Adynata*, it is worth remembering, are commonly used in depictions of the golden age in Augustan literature. See, e.g., *Ecl.* 4.39-45, cf. the less hopeful words of Horace at *Ep.* 16.25-34. See Hardie (2009a) 4.

Mindlessly I take up arms; and there is not enough reason in arms, but my mind burns to assemble a band in warfare and to charge into the citadel together with my allies; fury and anger drive my mind headlong, and the thought occurs to me that it is beautiful to die at arms.

Others have noted the repetition of *arma* in this passage; in what is his earliest point as protagonist in the mythological narrative of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas is a strikingly Homeric figure. Rather than a man marked by his piety (*Aen.* 1.10), Aeneas remembers himself as being under the control of *furor* and *ira*. James Abbot has noted, however, that even in these lines the reader senses that Aeneas is not behaving as one expects; *amens* is used at many points in the *Aeneid* to signify that a character is behaving uncharacteristically.¹⁴ Aeneas' actions are reckless not so much because his own safety is in danger but rather because he is disregarding the safety of his family. Vergil makes us aware of this fact when, shortly after arming himself, Aeneas sees Panthus fleeing with his "little grandson" and "conquered gods" (*Aen.* 2.320: *victosque deos parvumque nepotem*). M. Owen Lee argues that *pious* Aeneas should be reminded at such a sight of his paternal obligations and return home to defend his family.¹⁵

As he witnesses Neoptolemus kill Polites and Priam, Aeneas' mind is forced out of its haze. His epic bravery is replaced by *horror* (*Aen.* 2.559) as he feels the effects of his own *pietas*. His concerns are, in order, his father, his wife, and his son (*Aen.* 2.560-563); Venus

¹⁴ Abbot (2012) 48-49.

¹⁵ Lee (1979) 37. Horsfall (2008) ad loc. disagrees: "Troy's defenders are not yet convinced that the fight is lost...Aeneas cannot begin his founding of Rome by bolting from Troy, *just* because he is a family man" (emphasis Horsfall's). Lee's interpretation is most likely correct. As Petrini (1997) 32, following Servius, observes, Vergil departs from Homer in making Panthus' son a youth rather than an adult (cf. *Il.* 15.521-522). Vergil's rewriting of Homer allows him to connect the *nepos* of Panthus with Ascanius. The unnamed boy is described as *parvus*, a word used 8 times in Book Two, six of those times being applied to Ascanius. Panthus will accompany Aeneas, abandoning his grandson, and die (*Aen.* 2.429-430). It is possible to interpret the "mindlessness" (*amens*) of Aeneas (*Aen.* 2.314) and Panthus (*Aen.* 2.321) as their disregard for their fatherly responsibilities (see our point on *amens* above); cf. Horsfall (2008) ad *Aen.* 2.321. As Michael Putnam, *per litteras*, has informed me, the overwhelming of *pietas* by *furor* and *ira*, in connection with *Aen.* 12: 946-947: *Aeneas furiis accensus et ira / terribilis*, further condemns Aeneas' actions at the end of the epic.

reechoes these concerns in the same order (*Aen.* 2.596-598). As Venus asks why Aeneas rages (*Aen.* 2.595: *quid furis*) and what has brought on such anger (*Aen.* 2.594: *iras*) in him, she rebukes him for being under the influence of *furor iraque* (*Aen.* 2.316) when he initially entered the fray.

Lee Fratantuono is correct in claiming that when Aeneas initially leaves for battle “no Homeric hero would condemn [him] for his behavior...his words are redolent with sentiments they all would understand and approve.”¹⁶ Aeneas’ Homeric bravery is subsequently replaced, however, with the more Vergilian trait of familial concern (*Aen.* 2.726-729):

et me, quem dudum non ulla iniecta movebant
tela neque adverso glomerati examine Grai,
nunc omnes terrent aurae, sonus excitat omnis
suspensum et pariter comitique onerique timentem.

And now every breeze terrifies me, whom until recently neither any hurled missile nor the Greeks with their crowd amassed against me were affecting, and every sound excites me in suspense, fearing equally for my companion and my burden.

Aeneas is no longer concerned with fighting and dying a noble death in the manner of a Homeric hero; as has been noted before, as Aeneas makes his way out of Troy, he also leaves behind the trappings of his Homeric self in the place that Homer made famous.¹⁷ The most famous image of the escape from Troy is Aeneas carrying Anchises on his shoulders and leading his son by the hand (*Aen.* 2.708-711). The image is not originally Vergil’s or even Roman;¹⁸ at issue is what is often missing from the picture. Creusa, Aeneas’ wife, is told to follow at a distance behind her husband (*Aen.* 2.711: *et longe servet vestigia coniunx*).¹⁹ The fact that Aeneas and Creusa are

¹⁶ Fratantuono (2007) 47.

¹⁷ See Johnson (1999) 63.

¹⁸ See Horsfall (2008) ad *Aen.* 2.707 with bibliography.

¹⁹ The tradition of Creusa’s role in the Aeneas myth is a complicated one. Not even Creusa’s name (she is elsewhere called Eurydice) is firmly fixed; see Horsfall (2008) ad *Aen.* 2.738. Allusions to the Orpheus and Eurydice myth suggest that Vergil was aware of the alternate name; see Fratantuono (2007) 70-71. It

(mysteriously) separated engenders a problematic interpretive question. Is the reader to cast some blame on Aeneas for losing his wife? We must address this problem, for if Aeneas is found guilty of losing his wife, his *pietas* comes into question.

Aeneas is, indeed, guilty of allowing his wife to become lost.²⁰ He says that it must have been one of the gods (*nescio quod...male numen amicum*) who caused him to lose track of his wife (*Aen.* 2.735), but W.R. Johnson is correct that these are the words of a man trying to deal with his own guilt.²¹ In fact, how the narrator Aeneas remembers Creusa throughout Book Two shows that he is haunted by her loss. Aeneas, when he first mentions her, calls Creusa *deserta* (*Aen.* 2.562) and the last word he hears his wife utter while she lives is *relinquor* (*Aen.* 2.678).²² It comes as no surprise to the reader that Creusa is missing when Aeneas reaches their proposed meeting-point.²³

Upon realizing that his wife is lost, Aeneas' instinctual reaction is to go back into the city. In a way eerily similar to his earlier futile expedition, Aeneas describes himself as *amens* (*Aen.* 2.744 cf. 2.314) and girds himself in his arms (*Aen.* 2.749 cf. 2.317). When he returns to the city, Aeneas comes upon the *imago* of his wife, who tells Aeneas that he will eventually

is possible to argue that this helps to explain Creusa's question at *Aen.* 2.678: *et coniunx quondam tua dicta relinquor*? The *quondam* does not, necessarily, look back to the mythological past of the *Aeneid*, but rather to the literary past in which Creusa's name really was Eurydice. For more on the different traditions of the Creusa myth (in some of which Creusa escapes from Troy with Aeneas), see Hughes (1997) 401-403 and, for iconographical representations, Austin (1966) ad *Aen.* 2.795 and Gantz (1993) 715-716.

²⁰ Horsfall (2008) ad *Aen.* 2.707-720 and 711, following Servius and Donatus, sees no issue with Aeneas' choice to have Creusa follow *longe*: "Creusa is not invited to act as an armed rearguard." Admittedly, our qualified condemnation of Aeneas is based upon different considerations than the tactical. Nonetheless to Aeneas' tactics in his escape are questionable.

²¹ Johnson (1999) 55.

²² Horsfall (2008) ad *Aen.* 2.562 notes the pathos of *deserta*.

²³ The description of the meeting-place, the *templum desertae Cereris* (*Aen.* 2.713-714) has spurred some scholarly discussion. Specifically, the adjective *deserta* has attracted comments, usually interpreted as an example of enallage; see Horsfall (2008) ad *Aen.* 2.714. Williams (1996a) ad loc. follows Servius, arguing that the adjective alludes to the Proserpina myth. The adjective, if it does allude to the Proserpina myth, is all the more fitting in the current context because Creusa, elsewhere described as a victim of rape (*Aen.* 2.738: *erepta*) is also, as we argued above, described by Aeneas as *deserta* when he first mentions her (*Aen.* 2.562).

arrive in Hesperia (*Aen.* 2.780-781). Christine Perkell has convincingly argued that Creusa's words, far from vindicating Aeneas, damn her husband.²⁴ Our reading of the scene is sympathetic with Perkell's but we should place more emphasis on the last words Aeneas hears from Creusa's *imago*: *iamque vale et nati serva communis amorem* ("and now farewell, and keep safe the love of our shared son").²⁵ The most important thing that Creusa would have her husband remember is his love for their son, i.e., that he not forget his paternal duties (*pietas*). As Perkell notes, in the *Aeneid* obligations of *pietas* are usually due only to male relatives.²⁶ Creusa's command to Aeneas underscores such a claim; Aeneas' duty is not to trace backwards the footsteps he enjoined his wife to follow (*Aen.* 2.753-754: *vestigia retro / observata sequor*), but rather to care for his son.

Part of Aeneas' humanity is lost in Troy with Creusa, who bids him to cast aside his individualistic grief (*Aen.* 2.784: *lacrimas...pelle*) and seek a new seat of power for himself (*Aen.* 2.783: *regnum*). His personal emotions are left behind in favor of the common good of the Trojans/future Romans.²⁷ His individuality is not completely at odds with this new goal: as Perkell notes, Aeneas' imperialistic duty also appeals to his sense of *pietas* inasmuch as it is aligned with his obligations to his (particularly male) relatives.²⁸ Creusa is the character who codifies such a relationship; when she tells Aeneas to care for their son, she describes Ascanius

²⁴ Perkell (1981) 360-362.

²⁵ Creusa, at many points in Book Two, calls to mind the Orpheus and Eurydice narrative of *Georgics* Four (see also note 19 above); for a recent account of the connections, see Gale (2003) 337-339 with bibliography. There is an important difference, however, between Orpheus/Eurydice and Aeneas/Creusa: the latter have a son and the former are childless. Sarah Spence has pointed out to me that the distinction may be a metaliterary one: Vergil may be encoding the importance of Orpheus' experiences in the *Georgics* as a poetic son which must be remembered by author and reader (literary parents whose relationship begets meaning).

²⁶ Perkell (1981) 362.

²⁷ Putnam (1965) 47 argues that "the hell of Troy, and the presence of Creusa therein, offer in subtle conjunction an attraction for all that is human in Aeneas."

²⁸ Perkell (1981) 371.

as *communis natus*. Ascanius, and his father's love for him, is *communis* for two reasons.

Ascanius is *communis* because he is the son of Creusa and Aeneas. In another sense, Ascanius is *communis* because he is, as an ancestor of the future Romans, important to the community.

Ascanius represents the hopes of not only his father Aeneas for a successful heir but also of the Romans and their *imperium*.²⁹

Questioning the model

In many ways, Book 10 serves as a counterpoint to Book Two. In the previous section we argued that as he leaves Troy, Aeneas earns his status as *pius* by setting aside the Homeric *arma* supplied to him by his *furor*. In this section, we will argue that in *Aeneid* 10 the abstracted quality of Aeneas' *pietas* is lost to him and is transferred to his enemy. Aeneas' *aristeia* in Book 10 symbolizes a return to Aeneas' Homeric self and his abandonment of his own devotion to father and son.

Putnam has recently argued that the language used in Aeneas' *aristeia* emphasizes the familial relationships of those whom the Trojan hero kills. Aeneas' first victims are spared from immediate death (*Aen.* 10.517-519):

Sulmone creatos
quattuor hic iuvenes, totidem quos educat Ufens,
viventis rapit.

This man snatches up four living youths sprung from Sulmo and just as many
whom Ufens is raising.

Although the youths are taken alive, we discover that they are to be sacrificed to the shades of Pallas. The lines, then, are clearly indebted to *Iliad* 21, where Achilles takes 12 captives to sacrifice to his companion Patroclus. Putnam has recently shown, however, that the differences

²⁹ This is exactly the point which Jupiter, via Mercury, makes to Aeneas in Book Four (*Aen.* 4.273-276) *si te nulla movet tantarum gloria rerum / [nec super ipse tua moliris laude laborem,] / Ascanium surgentem et spes heredis Iuli / respice, cui regnum Italiae Romanaque tellus / debetur.*" It is not Aeneas' own glory, but the hopes of Aeneas' son and heir, explicitly linked to *regnum Italiae*, to which Mercury appeals.

between the captives of Aeneas and Achilles may be more important than their similarities.³⁰ In the *Iliad* Achilles' captives are κοῦροι (*Il.* 21.27), translated by Vergil as *iuvenes*. Homer explains the logic behind Achilles' choice of youths by stressing Patroclus as the son of Menoetius (*Il.* 21.28: Πατρόκλοιο Μενoitιάδαο); the boys are fitting sacrifices (*Il.* 21.28: ποινήν) because they most closely approximate Patroclus in age and (as sons) status. In the *Aeneid*, although the reader is aware that the victims will be sacrificed to Pallas, Vergil does not highlight Pallas' name like Homer does. Instead, Vergil chooses to emphasize the familial connections the boys share with their fathers.³¹

Vergil does not grant emotional distance by leaving the victims unnamed, rather he makes clear that Aeneas' act of retribution will leave two parents bereft of children and in mourning. In this context Aeneas' actions are all the more horrifying. Turnus, as he is on his way to kill Pallas, exclaims *cuperem ipse parens spectator adesset* (*Aen.* 10.443: "I wish that his father himself [i.e., Evander] were here looking on"). Turnus' words are horrifying because of his explicit wish to force Evander to witness his son's death; in Aeneas' case, it is the poet who reveals the familial devastation the hero's actions will have. Nevertheless, it is possible to argue that the reader's response to the two situations is similar. Turnus' words reveal that he wants not only to kill Pallas but also to bring emotional suffering to Evander.³² The explanation of the narrator reveals to the reader that Aeneas' actions, whether intentionally or not, will have similar effects on Ufens and Sulmo.

After Aeneas chooses his victims, his actions more explicitly reveal that his *pietas* is called into question. Others have argued that Aeneas' devotion to his father and Anchises' vision

³⁰ Putnam (2012) 22-25.

³¹ Putnam (2012) 24.

³² See Stahl (1981) 158.

of Roman rule in the underworld becomes complicated as Aeneas refuses to spare suppliants.³³

The loss of Aeneas' *pietas* is most clear, however, in his killing of Lausus.

Aeneas wounds Lausus after the boy has successfully prevented his enemy from killing his father (*Aen.* 10.789-802). Aeneas, however, is the stronger warrior and will not be stopped (*Aen.* 10.811-812):

quo moriture ruis maioraque viribus audes?
fallit te incautum pietas tua.

Where are you rushing as you are about to die, and do you dare deeds greater than your courage? Your *pietas* deceives you in your recklessness.

Many have marked the irony that Aeneas should charge another of trusting too much in *pietas*, his own cardinal virtue.³⁴ The irony is made explicit when Aeneas notices what he has done (*Aen.* 10.821-824):

At vero ut vultum vidit morientis et ora,
ora modis Anchisiades pallentia miris,
ingemuit miserans graviter dextramque tetendit,
et mentem patriae subiit pietatis imago.

But indeed as Anchises' son looked at the countenance of the dying youth and his face, his face growing pale in marvelous ways; feeling compassion he groaned deeply and stretched out his right hand, and the image of paternal *pietas* came over his mind.

The words *patriae pietatis imago* call to mind not only Lausus' devotion to his father but also Aeneas' devotion to his father (however problematic it has become).³⁵ Pallas has become an *imago*, a "reflection" not only of *pietas* but also of Aeneas himself. It is possible to claim that Aeneas condemns not only Lausus, this youthful reflection of Aeneas, but also Aeneas himself. Beginning with the death of Pallas and Magus' allusion to Anchises and the dictum of Book Six,

³³ Putnam (2012) 26-30, Fratantuono (2007) 305, and Lee (1979) 85-88.

³⁴ Putnam (1995) 135, Williams (1996b) ad *Aen.* 10.812, Johnson (1976) 73.

³⁵ Putnam (2012) 47. On the ambiguity of meaning, see Williams (1995) ad loc., cf. Harrison (1991) ad loc.

Aeneas is forced to balance the demands between two competing sources of *pietas*, his *pietas* to his father and the “*pietas* of vengeance” demanded by Pallas’ death.³⁶ We can argue that the latter sense is “deceiving” Aeneas and preventing him from following the demands of his father as he kills suppliant after suppliant.

Putnam has argued that Pallas, an *imago* reminding Aeneas of his familial duties, recalls *Aeneid* Two and particularly Creusa’s *imago*.³⁷ If we are correct in arguing that Aeneas is deceived by one source of *pietas* at the expense of following the commands of Anchises in the underworld, there is a connection between the *aristeia* of Aeneas and the fall of Troy. Aeneas has already been forced to face a situation in Book Two in which two competing sources of *pietas* made contradictory demands. As Aeneas attempts to flee from Troy with his father, wife, and son, Anchises refuses to leave the city. On the one hand, Aeneas is Anchises’ son and cannot leave him behind, but on the other he is the father of Ascanius; remaining in Troy with Anchises means certain death for Aeneas and his son. Aeneas’ response to Anchises is telling (*Aen.* 2.657-658): *mene efferre pedem, genitor, te posse relicto / sperasti tantumque nefas patrio excidit ore* (“Father, did you think that I would be able to leave with you left behind? And does such an unspeakable thing escape from your fatherly mouth?”). Aeneas cannot leave his father behind; such a thing would be *nefas*. He knows that this spells doom for his family. Aeneas can either save his wife and son or he can stay with his father to die along with those in his care. Importantly, Aeneas’ answer is to take up arms (*Aen.* 2.668: *arma, viri, ferte arma*).

Consistently throughout the *Aeneid* when he is faced with two conflicting demands made by different sources of *pietas*, Aeneas reverts to the forces of rage and *arma*. In *Aeneid* Two, the problems of these conflicting forms of *pietas* are mitigated by the final words of Creusa which,

³⁶ Putnam (2012) 20, 30.

³⁷ Putnam (1995) 140-144.

however tenuously, absolve Aeneas of the crime of following one call of *pietas* at the expense of another. Book 10 offers up no Creusa, and the reader is forced to dwell on the fact that Aeneas is not as *pius* as we have been led to believe.

Towards a literary genealogy

In one of the most emotionally charged scenes in the *Aeneid*, Anchises approaches his son in the Fields of the Blessed (*Aen.* 6.684-688):

isque ubi tendentem adversum per gramina vidit
Aenean, alacris palmas utrasque tetendit,
effusaeque genis lacrimae et vox excidit ore:
“venisti tandem, tuaque exspectata parenti
vicit iter durum pietas?”

And when he saw Aeneas coming towards him through the grass, swiftly he stretched out both of his hands, and tears were shed on his cheeks, and his voice broke out from his mouth, “Have you come at last? And has your *pietas*, expected by your father, conquered the harsh road?”

Anchises’ language is indebted to Ennius’ dream of Homer appearing to him in the *Annales*.³⁸

Although Ennius’ account is no longer extant, we may rely on Lucretius’ allusion to the scene at *DRN* 1.120-126.³⁹ So, for example, *effusaeque genis lacrimae* looks back to Lucretius’ allusion to Ennius, *lacrumas effundere salsas* (*DRN* 1.125).⁴⁰ It is Anchises’ status as *pater* at *Aen.* 6.679 and the metaliterary implications of that fact, however, which are important to our argument.

It has been argued that *pater* Anchises (*Aen.* 6.679) is a metaphorical representation of the literary *pater* Ennius.⁴¹ Aeneas’/Vergil’s *pietas* to Anchises/Ennius leads to a (re)telling of

³⁸ For more on the sources of Anchises’ speech, see Hardie (1986) 69-83, Highet (1972) 233-241, Hardie (2009) 163-164.

³⁹ That Lucretius closely followed Ennius’ account, see Skutsch (1985) 155. Fragments of Ennius are numbered according to Skutsch (1985).

⁴⁰ Skutsch (1985) 155. Anchises’ description as *alacris* somewhat out of place; there may well be wordplay in *alacris* (i.e. *ala*, “wing”) as an allusion to Homer’s reincarnation as a peacock in the *Annales* (*Ann. frag.* 9: *memini me fieri pavom*).

⁴¹ So Hardie (1993) 104. Austin (1977) ad *Aen.* 6.679 argues that the sense of *pater* (not, he argues, so much genetic father but rather a term for political responsibility) is borrowed from Ennius’ *Annales frag.*

Rome's future history in the form of a genealogical descent starting with Aeneas and extending to contemporary Rome. Anchises' account of Roman history is largely faithful to Ennius' similar version in the *Annales*, so close that the last line of Anchises' catalogue (*Aen.* 6.846: *unus qui nobis cunctando restituit rem*) is, with the exception of one word, a quotation of *Ann.* frag. 363 (*unus homo nobis cunctando restituit rem*).⁴²

It is tempting to follow Austin's claim that "Virgil pays his own debt of *pietas* to his great poet ancestor."⁴³ Vergil's debt to Ennius in the speech of Anchises, however, is not as benign as it appears. Sergio Casali has shown that Anchises corrects and subverts Ennius' account of Rome.⁴⁴ Anchises/Vergil exploits what is a "chaotic" mythic tradition: the genealogy of Aeneas' descendants.⁴⁵ The problem is an old one and has at its roots the historical debate over the amount of time between the Trojan War and the foundation of Rome. Ennius follows an early tradition in which Romulus is the grandson of Aeneas. In the *Aeneid*, however, Rome is not founded until more than 300 years after the fall of Troy, and Romulus is Aeneas' distant descendant (*Aen.* 1.272-273: *ter centum totos regnabitur annos / gente sub Hectorea*).⁴⁶ Vergil presses the issue of Ennius' calculation error.⁴⁷ As Casali observes, Anchises is preoccupied with counting the generations of his descendants (*Aen.* 6.679-682; 716-718):⁴⁸

22: *teque pater Tiberine tuo cum flumine sancto*. On this fragment, alluded to by Vergil in Aeneas' prayer to the river Tiber (see esp. *Aen.* 8.72: *tuque, o Tybri tuo genitor cum flumine sancto*); see Skutsch (1985) 184-186. That the underworld is a typical place to reflect on poetic predecessors, see Hardie (1998) 53 n. 1.

⁴² Hardie (1993) 103.

⁴³ Austin (1977) ad *Aen.* 6.846.

⁴⁴ Casali (2007) *passim*.

⁴⁵ I borrow the term "chaotic" from Horsfall (1990), see esp. 467.

⁴⁶ See Horsfall (1974) 111-112 and Casali (2007) 104-105.

⁴⁷ The dating of the foundation of Rome to the eighth century BCE was established by Fabius Pictor (fl. late second century BCE), and Ennius probably had access to Fabius' work by the time that he was writing the *Annales* (ca. 185 BCE). Feeney (2007) 99 and 255 n. 182 argues that "Ennius wanted to keep to the mainstream Hellenistic foundation stories that associated Rome's beginnings directly with the heroic age."

⁴⁸ Casali (2007) 125-126.

At pater Anchises penitus convalle virenti
 inclusas animas superumque ad lumen ituras
 lustrabat studio *recolens*, omnemque suorum
 forte *recensebat numerum*, carosque nepotes...
 has equidem *memorare* tibi atque *ostendere* coram
 iampridem, hanc prolem cupio *enumerare* meorum,
 quo magis Italia mecum laetere reperta.

But father Anchises, deep within the green valley, going over in his mind the imprisoned souls and the souls about to go to the light above, was looking over them, and by chance he was reckoning the entire number of his own, and his dear offspring...“truly I want to tell of these souls to you and for some time also wanted to reveal them to you face to face, and to count out this progeny of my descendants so that you may rejoice all the more with me in discovered Italy.

Vergil calls attention to the fact that Ennius miscounted the number of generations between Aeneas and Romulus; the catalogue and its list of names are polemical in that it rewrites and undermines Ennius’ version of history. In a certain sense, Anchises’ obsession with counting and putting events in their proper historical order shows that he is a better annalist than the literary model upon whom he is based, Ennius.

The initial deference of literary *pietas* espoused by Anchises/Vergil to Ennius is just as polemical as it is reverential. Is the subversive nature of Anchises’ Ennian allusion felt in the narrative of Anchises’ description of Rome’s future glory? It has been argued previously that elements of Anchises’ catalogue counteract the hopeful, pro-Augustan reading of the text.⁴⁹ This is one answer to our question, but if we slightly alter the method of argumentation we see an important parallel in Vergil’s metapoetic and narrative worlds.

Brutus’ first reward at the foundation of the Republic is that he is forced to kill his own sons (*Aen.* 6.819-823):

consulis imperium hic primus saevasque securis
 accipiet, natosque pater nova bella moventis

⁴⁹ Horsfall (1995) 145 calls this rhetorical method “genealogical protreptic.” For a reading of measured hope, see Tarrant (1982). On the cautionary voice in the catalogue and in Anchises’ speech overall, see Feeney (1986) and O’Hara (1990) 91-94, 163-172.

ad poenam pulchra pro libertate vocabit,
infelix, utcumque ferent ea facta minores:
vincet amor patriae laudumque immensa cupido.

This man will be the first to accept consular *imperium* and the harsh axes, and the father will call his sons, who are making new wars, to justice for the sake of beautiful liberty; an unlucky man, however later men will tell of his deeds: love of fatherland and immeasurable desire of praise will win out.

One of the horrors of war is that parents must bury their children, but Brutus' predicament goes even further, for it is the father himself who must kill his own children.⁵⁰ I am particularly struck, however, by *infelix*; the adjective articulates not necessarily Brutus' lack of luck but his lack of children.⁵¹ The word alludes to Dido who is characteristically *infelix*. The comparison to be made, however, is not between Dido and Brutus, but rather between Aeneas and Brutus. Aeneas explains to Dido one of the reasons for his departure (*Aen.* 4.354-355):

me [sc. admonet] puer Ascanius capitisque iniuria cari,
quem regno Hesperiae fraudo et fatalibus arvis.

The boy Ascanius, whom I cheat of Hesperia's reign and the fated fields, and the wrong done to his dear head [admonish] me.

D.J. Stewart argues that "the Dido story is a metaphor for what any politician must be prepared to do: to sacrifice every last personal tie, if necessary, to help keep the political enterprise going."⁵² Stewart and, for the most part, the *Aeneid* itself ignore one problematic scenario. Ascanius' role in the *Aeneid* is twofold: he is the object of Aeneas' paternal obligations and he represents the promise of future Roman *imperium*. In Vergil's epic the roles of father and statesman are rarely brought into conflict. One of the exceptions, as we have observed, is Brutus' sons. In the case of Brutus, Vergil draws attention to the fact that the demands of the state are contradictory to his paternal obligation to protect his children. The *nova bella* which these sons

⁵⁰ As O'Sullivan (2009) 451 observes, Herodotus claims that one of the evils of war is that it upsets the natural order of things. See Herodotus 1.87.4.

⁵¹ Petrini (1997) 57; for *infelix* meaning "without children" see, e.g., Pease (1935) ad *Aen.* 4.68.

⁵² Stewart (1972-1973) 660.

hope to make are inherently civil and bring not only Roman against Roman but also father against son. And although Aeneas' words to Dido in Book Four do not explicitly mention such a possibility, Mark Petrini has noticed the discomfiting connection between Aeneas' words of the promise of empire, *hic amor, haec patria est* (*Aen.* 4.347) and Anchises' words, *vincet amor patriae laudumque immensa cupido*.⁵³

The most important line of the passage, in a literary sense, is *utcumque ferent ea facta minores*. We know very little about how poets before Vergil treated the topic of Brutus being forced to condemn his own sons to death. Fragments of Accius' *fabula praetexta*, the *Brutus*, survive, but there is no mention of the episode upon which Vergil focuses.⁵⁴ The Romanized Greek historiographer Polybius, however, allows us to see how the myth may have been interpreted in the second century BCE (Plb. 6.54.5):

καὶ μὴν ἀρχὰς ἔχοντες ἔνιοι τοὺς ἰδίους υἱοὺς παρὰ πᾶν ἔθος ἢ νόμον ἀπέκτειναν, περὶ πλείονος ποιούμενοι τὸ τῆς πατρίδος συμφέρον τῆς κατὰ φύσιν οἰκειότητος πρὸς τοὺς ἀναγκαιοτάτους.

And truly some of the men in power, against every custom or convention, killed their own sons, making more of the benefit of the fatherland than of their natural relationship to their kin.

Can we assume, then, that Vergil's accusation of the *minores* is, in part, an accusation of previous evaluations of the story? We may still be able to connect Vergil's accusation with Accius' play. Accius probably produced his play shortly after the victory of Decimus Junius Brutus in 136 BCE. The play most likely reinforced this Brutus' celebration by making a connection to his (mythological) ancestor.⁵⁵ If this were one of the works which Vergil had in

⁵³ Petrini (1997) 58.

⁵⁴ No consensus in the naming of the genres of tragedies appears to have been reached in antiquity; still, it seems that *fabulae togatae* were original Roman plays based on Roman subjects. See Beare (1951) 256-258.

⁵⁵ See Conte (1994) 105.

mind, *minores* could be taken more literally to mean “descendants,” both genetic and poetic.⁵⁶ In any case, the language of poetic descent is marked: younger generations of writers, according to Anchises, have misinterpreted the tragedy latent within Brutus’ establishment of a new Roman order.

The Brutus story therefore represents a rebellion which happens at two levels within the text. At the level of myth and narrative, the threat of familial civil war is brought to the foreground. A literary reading of the text yields a complementary conclusion: later generations of readers and writers have misinterpreted the myth, disregarding the fact that Brutus is ultimately *infelix*.

We have seen two examples of how Vergil complements a narrative focused on genealogy with the idea of the poetic family: Anchises undermines Ennius’ account of Aeneas’ descendants and corrects the misreadings of Brutus’ killing of his sons. The common link between these two separate instances is that the younger poetic generation (i.e., Vergil) has reinterpreted the accepted readings of its poetic predecessors. The ominous undertones which scholars have long seen in Anchises’ speech, that the promise of empire glosses over the price at which a golden age must be purchased, is replayed at a poetic level. Anchises/Vergil shows how previous poets have misinterpreted the stories of Rome’s foundation.

(Dis)Honoring the Father

In the twelfth book of the *Aeneid*, as Aeneas prepares to hunt down Turnus, the Trojan hero speaks to his son for the first and only time in the epic (*Aen.* 12.435-440):

disce, puer, virtutem ex me verumque laborem,

⁵⁶ Vergil’s (roughly) contemporary Livy treats the subject in much the same way as Vergil, highlighting the suffering of Brutus. See Liv. 2.5: *cum inter omne tempus pater volutusque et os eius spectaculo esset eminente animo patrio inter publicae poenae ministerium*. Livy is also revolutionary in having his Brutus have an emotional response to the situation. In Livy’s sources Brutus appeared unmoved as he watched his sons die; see Ogilvie (1965) ad Liv. 2.5.8.

fortunam ex aliis. nunc te mea dextera bello
 defensum dabit et magna inter praemia ducet.
 tu facito, mox cum matura adoleverit aetas,
 sis memor et te animo repetentem exempla tuorum
 et pater Aeneas et avunculus excitet Hector.

Son, learn courage and true hard work from me but fortune from others. Now through war my right hand will give you defense and will lead you among great plunder. You, when soon your mature age has peaked, make certain that you remember and let both Father Aeneas and Uncle Hector rouse you as you recall in your mind the examples of your ancestors.

Defensum dabit is an unusual version of *defendo*, and commentators since Servius have remarked on the decidedly non-epic *avunculus*.⁵⁷ Lyne has shown that Aeneas' only words to his son do not strike the ear as one of a caring father, but rather of a teacher divorced from any paternal feelings.⁵⁸

These lines, moreover, contain what Lyne calls "a disturbing further voice."⁵⁹ The first two lines of the speech resemble Ajax's words in Sophocles' *Ajax* (Aj. 550-551):

ὦ παῖ, γένοιτο πατρός εὐτυχέστερος,
 τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ὅμοιος: καὶ γένοι' ἄν οὐ κακός.

Son, may you be more fortunate than your father, but like him in respect to other things: then you would not be base.

Lyne, though certainly not alone in this, finds the allusion disquieting: the disparity between Ajax' suicide and Aeneas' imminent victory calls into question the quality of Aeneas' victory.⁶⁰ Lyne is followed by Vassiliki Panoussi, whose most recent assessment of the allusion to Ajax is significant to our purposes:

Sophocles' Ajax, in his preceding monologue, came to the agonizing realization that he had failed to succeed his father, Telamon, in honorable repute through lack of fortune; he now looks upon his son to win heroic accolades in the line of male

⁵⁷ See Tarrant (2012) ad loc. As Tarrant points out, *avunculus* only occurs once (Silius Italicus' *Pun.* 3.248) in post-Vergilian epic.

⁵⁸ Lyne (1987) 192-193.

⁵⁹ Lyne (1987) 9.

⁶⁰ Lyne (1987) 8-9.

succession...In this light, Aeneas' advice to Ascanius looks forward to a similar contingency.⁶¹

Panoussi invites consideration of an important theme in the speech: "male succession." Aeneas' speech makes it clear, especially in the concluding lines, that he wants his son to emulate his father and uncle. Lyne, looking within Vergil's text to Apollo's advice to Ascanius at *Aen.* 9.641-656, questions the moral quality of Aeneas' speech, which urges his son to continue fighting; Apollo's speech, in contrast, hints at a time when war may not be necessary.⁶² We will return to this point, but Panoussi picks up on another allusive tactic that Vergil employs. Aeneas' speech is further aligned with Ajax's in that both of them allude to the same source text: Hector's farewell speech to Astyanax in the *Iliad*.

The comparison between Ajax/Aeneas and Hector is damning. Hector prays that his son may be a better man and warrior than his father: καί ποτέ τις εἴποι πατρός γ' ὅδε πολλὸν ἀμείνων / ἐκ πολέμου ἀνιόντα (*Il.* 6.479-480: And may some man say of the boy returning from war, "This man is far better than his father"). Ajax, on the other hand, prays that his son may be like him in all ways other than fortune and says that his son must take on his father's "savage customs" (*Aj.* 548: ὁμοῖς... ἐν νόμοις πατρός).⁶³ Aeneas falls prey to the same comparison: if

⁶¹ Panoussi (2009) 215, following the argument of Winnington-Ingram (1980) 30-31 on Ajax in Sophocles' tragedy.

⁶² Lyne (1987) 200-206. Aeneas "tells Ascanius to follow *his* and Hector's *exempla*. He does so, even as he himself displays that troubling quality of greed for war, *avidus pugnae* (430)" (emphasis Lyne's). Lyne compares Aeneas *avidus pugnae* with Apollo's appearance to Ascanius, which prevents the boy from becoming *avidus pugnae* (*Aen.* 9.660-661: *avidum pugnae dictis ac numine Phoebi / Ascanium prohibent* [sc. *Dardanidae*]). The intratextual allusion invites further comparison with Anchises' command for Aeneas to establish peace (*Aen.* 6.852). The speech of Apollo is more deeply in contact with Anchises' words. Michael Putnam has pointed out to me that Apollo's command *parce bello* (*Aen.* 9.656) looks back to Anchises' *parcere subiectis* (*Aen.* 6.853) and, more discomfortingly, to Anchises' command to Julius Caesar, *tuque prior, tu parce* (*Aen.* 6.834). See Putnam (forthcoming) for an investigation of Vergil's use of the verb *parcere* in the *Aeneid*.

⁶³ See Brown (1965) 120 for the comparison. See also Finglass (2011) ad *Aj.* 550-551.

Ascanius follows his father's advice exactly he will not be better as a warrior than his father, he will only be an equal.⁶⁴

Regardless of how we interpret a comparison between the hopes of Aeneas and Hector for their sons, it is possible to interpret Vergil's allusion to Homer in another way. Often, Vergil creates meaning by differing from his Homeric source. This is especially true when Aeneas, in the same speech in which he invokes Hector, promises to defend his son by fighting (*Aen.* 12.436-437: *mea dextera bello / defensum dabit*). It is Hector, and not Aeneas, who is damned by this "correction."⁶⁵ Hector ultimately cannot defend his son Astyanax. Aeneas' hope, as Panoussi observes, is to preserve the line of male succession.⁶⁶ In this way Aeneas is more successful as a father than Hector.

Philip Hardie has argued that the continuation and preservation of the family line in the *Aeneid* symbolizes the poet's awareness of the metaphorical familial inheritance of the genre of epic and its subject matter.⁶⁷ Hardie argues that:

Aeneas succeeds Hector as the bearer of Trojan hope for the future, and with that succession goes the replacement of Astyanax by Ascanius as the essential link between the present generation of heroes and the heroes and rulers of the future.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ It may be possible to interpret this in a Bloomian way, as Hardie (1993) 119 does with a similar situation in Book Nine: "If the hero must strive to be the best, or to win the world for his throne, the poet is always challenged to be supreme in the supreme genre. Telemachus and Ascanius are faithful sons, but, in the need to be warned off shooting the father's bow or winning the war in Latium in the father's absence, we perhaps catch the ever-present desire and its attendant anxiety." This may be true, but as Sarah Spence reminds me, Vergil also offers a moment in which it is not the present (poetic endeavor) but rather the future (poetry) which is important; see, for instance, Venus' appeal to Jupiter at *Aen.* 10.45-46: *liceat dimittere ab armis / incolumem Ascanium, liceat superesse nepotem*. For more on placing hope in one's poetic successors, see our comments on the *sphragis* of Statius' *Thebaid* in Chapter Three.

⁶⁵ I borrow the term "correction" from Thomas (1986) 185; correction is a specific type of allusion in which "the poet provides unmistakable indications of his source, then proceeds to offer detail which contradicts or alters that source."

⁶⁶ Panoussi (2009) 215.

⁶⁷ See Hardie (1993) 88-119.

⁶⁸ Hardie (1993) 91.

Hardie does not cite Aeneas' words to Ascanius in Book 12 in this context, but this seems to be the metaliterary tactic deployed by Vergil in the speech. If we return, for example, to Hector's speech in the *Iliad* alluded to here, we see that Vergil's model encodes an anxiety of inheritance. Hector prays to "Zeus and the other gods" to grant that Astyanax grow up to be the ruler of Troy (*Il.* 6.476-478: Ζεῦ ἄλλοι τε θεοὶ δότε... καὶ Ἰλίου ἱφί ἀνάσσειν). This mythic possibility never comes to pass. It is possible, however, that a Roman reading this speech would think of the lines from the *Iliad* that justify the existence of the Aeneas-legend (*Il.* 20.307-308):

νῦν δὲ δὴ Αἰνεΐαο βίῃ Τρώεσσιν ἀνάξει
καὶ παίδων παῖδες, τοῖ κεν μετόπισθε γένωνται.

But indeed at that point the power of Aeneas and his children's children, who will later come to be, will rule the Trojans.

The lines, spoken by Poseidon, were problematic in antiquity because of the word Τρώεσσιν; after the Aeneas-legend becomes connected with Rome, ancient scholar-critics must have proposed textual variants to explain away the problem.⁶⁹ Vergil himself seems to have been aware of the issue as he translates into Latin an emended version of these lines at *Aen.* 3.97-98 (*hic domus Aeneae cunctis dominabitur oris / et nati natorum et qui nascentur ab illis*).⁷⁰

It is possible to argue that Vergil is subverting Homer's authority in Aeneas' speech. Vergil accomplishes this by showing how Homer metaphorically fails to keep one of his poetic families alive. Homer's Hector fails to protect his progeny; it is Vergil's Aeneas, and the line engendered by Aeneas, which here takes on poetic and political significance. To clarify: Hector is not, in Aeneas' speech, a negative example to be avoided or surpassed, but rather a source of *exempla* (*Aen.* 12.439) for Ascanius to emulate. A look back to Vergil's citation of the Ajax

⁶⁹ See Gruen (1992) 12.

⁷⁰ Casali (2007) 107. The emendation to "all" rather than "Trojans" is also attested in Homeric scholia and in Strabo (Strab. 13.1.53: τινὲς δὲ γράφουσιν "Αἰνεΐαο γένος πάντεσσιν ἀνάξει, καὶ παῖδες παίδων," τοὺς Ῥωμαίους λέγοντες: "but some write, "The race of Aeneas will rule over all, along with Aeneas' children's children," by which they mean, "the Romans").

myth will prove, however, that our poet is alluding to a myth which is encoded to subvert the Homeric tradition.

Vergil's allusion to Sophocles' *Ajax* is an allusion to a text which is, in many respects, anti-Homeric. Bernard Knox argues that the death of Ajax "is the death of the old Homeric (and especially Achillean) individual ethos."⁷¹ Knox asserts that at the end of the play "a heroic age has passed away, to be succeeded by one in which action is replaced by argument."⁷² The heroic code, so important to Homer's world and poetics, fails to stand up to Odysseus' use of rhetoric.⁷³

We have simplified, however, what is a controversial dilemma. What was Vergil's source for his allusion to the Ajax myth? Macrobius (*Sat.* 6.1.58) provides us with one possible source for Vergil's allusion. It is not (only) Sophocles' but also the Roman poet Accius' Ajax to whom Vergil alludes. Accius' Ajax says to his son: *virtuti sis par, dispar fortunis patris*. Scholarly opinion is divided as to whether it is Accius or Sophocles who is the primary referent.⁷⁴ In a certain sense, it could be argued that it does not matter, for it seems clear that Accius' words are themselves a rough translation of the lines of Sophocles cited above. Nevertheless, we must consider the context in which the two referents are spoken. For Sophocles, the context is readily apparent; the play relates Ajax's suicide after the arms of Achilles are awarded to Odysseus.

⁷¹ Knox (1961) 20-21.

⁷² Knox (1961) 2. Knox's interpretation is not without its followers; see, e.g. Burton (1981) 11 and Segal (1995) 17. The argument, however, has met with much resistance; see most recently Finglass (2011) 44-46 with citations. It is far beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the critical problems of Sophocles' play. Nevertheless, we may justify following Knox's interpretation by pointing out that his argument seems to be one which is not without ancient precedent. See, for instance, our comments on Ovid's *Iudicium Armorum* in the *Metamorphoses* below.

⁷³ Using the Ajax myth to subvert the "old Homeric individual ethos" is not a tactic originally Sophoclean. Pindar seems to have been the first poet to have expressed the injustice of Ajax losing the armor of Achilles to Odysseus. Pindar undermines Homer's authority, saying that it was by lying that Homer made Odysseus seem greater than he truly was (*Nem.* 7.20-27). For Pindar's emphasis of lying as the source of a poet's power, see Ledbetter (2003) 70-73.

⁷⁴ Most recently, see Panoussi (2009) 214-215 n. 60, summarizing the representative opposed arguments of Jocelyn (1965) 128 (arguing for the primacy of Accius) and Wigodsky (1972) 95-97 (arguing that Sophocles is the primary referent).

Accius' tragedy is fragmentary and our reconstruction of the episode from which our quotation has been pulled requires some informed guess-work.⁷⁵ Accius' tragedy, the *Armorum Iudicium*, must have dedicated more space to the rhetorical competition between Odysseus and Ajax than did Sophocles' play.

It is now well known that in Ovid's version of the *iudicium* in the *Metamorphoses* the opposition of Odysseus and Ajax operates on two levels: the narrative and the literary. As Sophia Papaioannou argues, Odysseus' speech, representing the Ovidian method of epic composition, overcomes Ajax's speech, symbolizing a more traditional (Vergilian) epic narrative.⁷⁶ Is it possible that Ovid's metaliterary tactics are indebted to Accius'? Perhaps, but it is far more likely that the Ajax myth is naturally suited to show the power of dynamic, new poetry over older poetry.

Aeneas' speech to Ascanius belies a literary rebellion from the Homeric poetic family (symbolized by Hector) by alluding to the genre of tragedy.⁷⁷ At this interpretative level it does not much matter whether Vergil alludes to Sophocles directly or through the intermediary text of Accius' tragedy. In either case Vergil counterbalances the epic voice of the *Aeneid* with a tragic one. Vergil's literary rebellion, however, does not occur simply at the generic level. David Quint has shown that the *Aeneid* establishes a focalization of power (political and poetic) away from the Greek East to the Roman West.⁷⁸ Macrobius' claim that Vergil was influenced more by Accius than Sophocles thus reflects this shift of power on a literary level. Accius' words, based on a Greek source, are a translation of literary superiority from the Greek to the Latin language.

⁷⁵ The attempt of Jocelyn (1965) 127-129 to reconstruct the scene has not been met with critical approval; see Tarrant (2012) ad *Aen.* 12.435-436.

⁷⁶ Hopkinson (2000) 9-22 first proposed such a reading; see Papaioannou (2007) 153-206.

⁷⁷ Panoussi (2009) 2-3 argues that the tension between the genres of epic and tragedy prevent the *Aeneid* from becoming a text that is monolithic poetically and politically. See also Harrison (2007) 208-209.

⁷⁸ See Quint (1993) 60.

In this section we have attempted to prove two points about Aeneas' only speech to Ascanius. First, we have attempted to show that it invokes patrilineal succession not only at the narrative level (Aeneas → Ascanius) but also at the literary level (Homer → Sophocles/Accius → Vergil). We argued that the polemical, anti-Homeric voice is made clearer by a reference to the Ajax myth, which is encoded even in Greek literature with a preference for poetic novelty as opposed to Homeric poetry.

Unheard Voices

The importance of familial *pietas* is a critical aspect of any interpretation of the end of the *Aeneid*. Turnus invokes Aeneas' sense of *pietas* as he begs his foe to spare his life (*Aen.* 12.932-936):

utere sorte tua. miseri te si qua parentis
tangere cura potest, oro (fuit et tibi talis
Anchises genitor) Dauni miserere senectae
et me, seu corpus spoliatum lumine mavis,
redde meis.

Use your chance. I pray, if any concern of a miserable parent is able to affect you, pity Daunus' old age—Anchises was also such a father to you—and return me or, if you prefer, my corpse robbed of the light, to my family.

Turnus' words recall many moments in the *Aeneid*, but one of the most strongly felt allusions is to Anchises' words to Aeneas in the underworld (*Aen.* 6.851-853):

tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
(hae tibi erunt artes), pacique imponere morem,
parcere subiectis et debellare superbos.

You, Roman, remember to rule the peoples with empire (these will be your skills), and to impose a custom for peace, to spare the humbled and to war down the proud.

The allusion undermines Aeneas' defining quality, *pietas*.⁷⁹ We have argued above that Aeneas' devotion to his father and his precepts have become shaken at many points in the epic.⁸⁰ Aeneas seems to show an almost readerly recognition of Turnus' unwitting allusion to Anchises words. Aeneas, affected by Turnus' *sermo*, is described as *cunctans*, "delaying;" this adjective brings us back to Anchises' speech, reminding us of the final Roman which Anchises introduces to Aeneas, Quintus Fabius Maximus Cunctator.⁸¹ Aeneas begins, ever so briefly, to enact the events of Anchises' advice in the underworld. His ultimate failure, then, is a rebellion against his father's wishes; Aeneas' devotion to his family and the ethics of kinship are thereby called into question.

Servius believed that Aeneas' killing of Turnus reaffirms his *pietas*, presumably because of the bond shared between Aeneas and his surrogate son Pallas.⁸² We need not agree with this justification, but we should admit that Vergil emphasizes a connection between Pallas and Ascanius in Aeneas' response to Turnus (*Aen.* 12.943-944; 947-949):

notis fulserunt cingula bullis
Pallantis pueri, victum quem vulnere Turnus
straverat atque umeris inimicum insigne gerebat...
"tunc hinc spoliis indute meorum
eripiare mihi? Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas
immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit.

⁷⁹ Putnam (1999) 223.

⁸⁰ See also Johnson (1965) 363.

⁸¹ *Aen.* 6.846-847: *tu Maximus ille es, / unus qui nobis cunctando restituis rem*. See also Putnam (1995) 157 and 167-168 n. 10.

⁸² See Servius ad *Aen.* 12.940. Here we assume that it is possible to interpret Pallas as a surrogate son to Aeneas; see, for example, Lee (1979) 6 and Fratantuono (2007) 248-249. In the *Aeneid* overall, Pallas does not exclusively (or even predominantly) represent a son-figure to Aeneas. He is also a sexualized object of Aeneas' passions, aligned with Dido; see Putnam (1995) 27-49, esp. 39. There is, nevertheless, a strong verbal parallel between Pallas and Ascanius in Book 12; both are described as *pueri* (the only two uses of the word in Book 12). The connotation of the word *puer* is not, however, a necessarily affectionate one, though it can mean a "son" (see OLD s.v. 2). Often *puer* is a term for an unrelated, young male; see Dickey (2002) 192. On the confusion surrounding the connotations of the term in Book 12, see Tarrant (2012) ad *Aen.* 12.435 ("a likely inference is that *puer* is generalizing") cf. ad *Aen.* 12.943 ("focalized through A[eneas], and suggesting both affection and a sense of quasi-parental responsibility").

With its known studs flashed the sword-belt of the boy Pallas, whom, overcome by a wound, Turnus had spread out and he was bearing on his shoulders the harmful emblem...“Would you, having put on the spoils of one of my own, be snatched from me away from here? With this wound Pallas, Pallas slaughters you and exacts vengeance from your sullied blood!”

The reader is encouraged to turn back to Aeneas’ speech to Ascanius earlier in Book 12. The word *puer*, which in Book 12 occurs only twice, modifies both Pallas (*Aen.* 12.943) and Ascanius (*Aen.* 12.435). In his speech to Ascanius, Aeneas had promised to lead his son *inter praemia* (*Aen.* 12.437), but it is Aeneas himself who has been led amongst the *spolia* of Pallas. Aeneas promised to defend his son (*Aen.* 12.437), but it is his inability to defend Pallas that drives Aeneas to act.

The comparison between the two passages is all the more striking because Aeneas’ words to Ascanius are themselves modeled upon Anchises’ words in the underworld (*Aen.* 6.847-853):

excudent alii spirantia mollius aera
(credo equidem), vivos ducent de marmore vultus,
orabunt causas melius caelique meatus
describent radio et surgentia sidera dicent:
tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
(hae tibi erunt artes), pacique imponere morem,
parcere subiectis et debellare superbos.

Others will more gently forge breathing bronze (I truly believe it), others will lead life-like faces from marble, others will plead cases better and trace the courses of the sky on its axis and tell of the rising stars: you, Roman, remember to rule the peoples with empire (these will be your skills), and to impose a custom for peace, to spare the humbled and to war down the proud.

Both speeches heavily emphasize their didactic commands (*tu facito*; *tu memento*); both use a generalizing word to describe the addressee (*puer*; *Romane*); Anchises and Aeneas circumscribe the areas in which they can teach excellence (*fortunam ex aliis*; *excudent alii*); finally, in the two speeches the addressee is urged to be mindful of what they have heard (*sis memor*; *memento*).⁸³

⁸³ For the connection between *tu facito* and *tu regere*, see Tarrant (2012) ad *Aen.* 12.438; that *puer* looks back to *Romane*, see Tarrant (2012) ad *Aen.* 12.435.

Despite the allusive markers alluding to Anchises' speech, Aeneas' words to Ascanius do not reinforce Anchises' own words. Aeneas' emphasis upon *bellum*, in counterpoint to Anchises' advice urging moderation, is especially striking. Aeneas' insistence that *bellum* yields defense leaves the option of *clementia* at best only implicit and at worst non-preferable, and the phrase does not at all address a future time of peace (*pacique imponere morem*).

Aeneas disregards his father's insistence on moderation and instead resorts to violence. In this way, Aeneas is similar to Neoptolemus. Connections between Aeneas in Book 12 and Neoptolemus have been established.⁸⁴ Equally striking is Priam's accusation that Neoptolemus is nothing like his own father (*Aen.* 2.540-541: *at non ille, satum quo te mentiris, Achilles / talis in hoste fuit Priamo*) and Neoptolemus' response in which he admits that, by his actions, he is not his father's heir: he is outside of his father's *gens* (*Aen.* 2.549: *degeneremque Neoptoleum narrare memento*). The alignment between Neoptolemus and Aeneas is disturbing not only because of the manner in which the two men kill their enemies, but also because it exposes what is left implicit at the end of the *Aeneid*: Aeneas is not the type of man his father expected him to be.⁸⁵

The problem of the influence of one's ancestors plays out not only on the narrative level but also on a metaliterary one. The end of the *Aeneid* is in one sense problematic because it shows Aeneas ignoring the dictates of his father and going against his *pietas*; in a literary way,

⁸⁴ See Putnam (1965) 172, 175, 177, and 188.

⁸⁵ This does not mean that Aeneas' actions lack any justification. Putnam (2012) 114-117 has the fairest interpretation of Aeneas: "To spare, to throw away the weapons of vengeance... would be to abandon the personal for the impersonal. It would replace the all-too-available propensity for physical reprisal for hurt inflicted with a spiritual dogma that dispenses with vendetta and with the use of mortal force against a vanquished suppliant." Turnus has taken away an object of Aeneas' affection, and Aeneas is faced with a dilemma that has no resolution. To spare Turnus is to deny Aeneas the right of the idiosyncratic and personal in favor of an impersonal (Roman) order; to kill Turnus, however, is to call into question the very quality, *pietas*, which marks Aeneas as an individual (*Aen.* 1.10: *insignem pietate virum*). There is no easy solution (at the interpretive or narrative level) to the events of the end of the *Aeneid*. See also Edgeworth (2005).

the end of the *Aeneid* is also discomfoting because Vergil ignores the tradition established by his literary father Homer in the *Iliad*. Vergil proposes a similar type of reading method in the Neoptolemus episode of Book Two.

As he looks upon the man who killed his son, Priam prays to the gods that Neoptolemus suffer for forcing a father to watch the death of his son (*Aen.* 2.537-539). Priam then accuses Neoptolemus of behaving so differently than his father (*Aen.* 2.540-543):

at non ille, satum quo te mentiris, Achilles
talis in hoste fuit Priamo; sed iura fidemque
supplicis erubuit corpusque exsanguie sepulcro
reddidit Hectoreum meque in mea regna remisit.

But that Achilles, from whom you feign to be fathered, was not such in being an enemy to Priam; but he respected the laws and faith of the suppliant and returned Hector's lifeless corpse for burial and sent me back to my kingdom.

In Homer's epic, Achilles is moved by Priam's grief because he remembers his own father, Peleus. Such an appeal to Neoptolemus' emotions and the ethics of kinship inevitably fails; in his speech to Priam, the son of Achilles shows how little he cares for his father's exemplary actions (*Aen.* 2.547-549):

referes ergo haec et nuntius ibis
Pelidae genitori. illi mea tristia facta
degeneremque Neoptolemum narrare memento.

Then you will retell these deeds and will go as a messenger to my father, the son of Peleus. Remember to tell him about my sorry deeds and degenerate Neoptolemus.

Neoptolemus recognizes the point that Priam is making: the Greek hero names himself *degeneris*, literally one who is outside the *genus*, the family line, and therefore, presumably, not suspect to the virtues (or vices) of the family. It is striking, given his self-proclaimed status as *degeneris*, that Neoptolemus refers to Achilles as his father, the son of Peleus. As Horsfall

argues, *Pelidae* acknowledges Priam's allusion to *Iliad* 24.⁸⁶ Horsfall also argues that *nuntius* alludes to Odysseus telling Achilles of Neoptolemus' exploits in Book 11 of the *Odyssey*.⁸⁷ These allusions to the Homeric corpus, all the more noticeable because they are marked by words like *referre*, *narrare*, and *meminisse*, reinforce Priam's point that Neoptolemus is not affected by any sense of *pietas*.⁸⁸ The allusion of *Pelidae* to the *Iliad* shows how disparate the familial devotion of Achilles and Neoptolemus is; the allusion to the *Odyssey* reinforces that point and also corrects the positive tone which Odysseus assigns to the actions of Achilles' son.

The scene is unsettling for two reasons. First, Neoptolemus is not moved by Priam's appeal to Achilles' exemplary behavior. Vergil, just as he does in the conclusion of the epic, makes the scene more disturbing by condemning the positive readings of two Homeric scenes alluded to in Neoptolemus' response to Priam. In a sense, Vergil is also *degeneris* as he moves outside of the traditional narrative archetypes established by his predecessor Homer.

If these two passages are connected, it is striking that both combine a break in patrilineal succession not only at the narrative but also at the literary level. At the end of the epic, Vergil's break with the Homeric tradition provides an unsettling closure that calls further into question the moral dilemma of the end of the epic. The departure of Aeneas and Vergil from genetic and poetic patrilineal succession offer the reader two connected instances of the ultimate failure of *pietas* at the end of the *Aeneid*.

⁸⁶ Horsfall (2008) ad *Aen.* 2.548.

⁸⁷ Horsfall (2008) ad *Aen.* 2.547.

⁸⁸ For more on these intertextual markers, see Hinds (1998) 1-5.

Chapter 2

KINSHIP AND *POIESIS* IN THE *METAMORPHOSES*: HOW TO RELATE (TO) THE PAST

Denis Feeney has argued that the worlds of poetic and religious interpretation and criticism are necessarily intertwined: the gods offer rich literary and cultural histories which grant the opportunity for (or force) an author to confront the past.⁸⁹ One importance of the gods and their role in any genre (much less one as circumscribed as epic), therefore, is that they bridge two gaps: one between the past and the present and the other between the world of myth and that of culture. Feeney, exploring the importance of this intersection in the *Metamorphoses*, argues that apotheosis is an important symbolic representation of the interpretive possibilities of any reading of Ovid's epic: the apotheosis of Julius Caesar and the expected deification of Augustus not only guarantee for them the reverential respect of gods but also, in the context of the *Metamorphoses*' troubling representation of the arbitrary wrath of divinities, testify to Augustus' power as sole (and sometimes wrathful) ruler.⁹⁰

Feeney's analysis of apotheosis attempts to expose political interpretations of the *Metamorphoses*. There is, however, an alternative method of interpretation, acknowledged by Feeney in a brief footnote.⁹¹ In one of the last instances of apotheosis in the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid replicates a line from Ennius' *Annales* (*Met.* 14.812-816):

“tu mihi concilio quondam praesente deorum
(nam memoro memorique animo pia verba notavi)
'unus erit, quem tu tolles in caerula caeli'
dixisti: rata sit verborum summa tuorum!”
adnuit omnipotens...

⁸⁹ Feeney (1991) 1-4; see also Feldherr (2010) 11.

⁹⁰ Feeney (1991) 220-224.

⁹¹ Feeney (1991) 208 n. 71.

“You once in the presence of the council of the gods said to me (for I remember and noted your *pia* words in my remembering mind), ‘There will be one whom you will bear into the blue of heaven.’ Let the sum of your words be established.” The all-powerful god nodded his assent...

In these lines Mars reminds Jupiter of Romulus’ promised deification. The lines are a *locus classicus* for scholars interested in intertextuality because line 814 is an exact quotation of Ennius’ *Annales* fr. 33.⁹² Gian Biagio Conte offers one interpretation of the importance of Ovid’s repetition of his epic forefather:

Jupiter had *really* made the promise, because Ennius had said so in his great national epic. This quality was appreciated by Ovid, the formulator of a national political ideology (in this context myth is no longer distinguishable from history and is annexed to the order of real events), but Ennius’s presence serves another, more strictly literary purpose as well. On the plane of narrative technique the line is less a tribute to Ennius’s authority than an appeal to evidence originating outside of the text.⁹³

Stephen Hinds has developed and applied Conte’s hermeneutic technique to Mars’ citation of Ennius, showing that Ovid signals his allusion by employing the common metapoetic trope of memory (*memoro memorique animo*).⁹⁴ Connecting this instance of poetic memory with another example in Ovid’s Ariadne in the *Fasti* (*Fast.* 3.473: *memini*), Hinds argues that “Mars’ and Ariadne’s memories function as figures for Ovid’s acts of allusion to Ennius and to Catullus; but

⁹² All fragments of Ennius are numbered following Skutsch (1985). The context of frag. 33 within the *Annales* is disputed; see Skutsch (1985) *ad Ann.* frag. 30-44. As Conte (1986) 57-58 shows, Ovid’s Ennian allusion is also used in an identical situation at *Fast.* 2.497-498: “*unus erit, quem tu tolles in caerula caeli*” / *tu mihi dixisti: sint rata dicta Iovis*. Although the *Fasti* shows a different generic conflict than the *Ars Amatoria*, we may still observe the phenomenon, first noted by Sharrock (1994) (see, e.g. 177), that Ovid uses elegiac meter to show variations between different genres: the dactylic hexameter of the couplet, more suitable to the epic mode, usually contains ideas more in line with the genre of epic; we may support Sharrock’s point by noting that in the case of the quotation of an epic source in an elegiac poem, the poet must use his hexameter line to allude to epic subject matter. For more on Ovid’s quotation of Ennius in the *Fasti* and its comparison with the allusion in the *Metamorphoses*, see Miller (1993) 163. For more on Ovid’s generic use of the two competing meters of the elegiac couplet, see Sharrock (1994) 173-183.

⁹³ Conte (1986) 59, emphasis his.

⁹⁴ Conte (1986) 60-63 argues that the narrative act of remembering reflects the reader’s act of remembering another work (and vice versa).

also, Ovid's acts of allusion to Ennius and Catullus function as figures for Mars' and Ariadne's memories."⁹⁵

Alessandro Barchiesi in a forthcoming monograph, on the other hand, shows the metapoetic importance of the *concilium deorum*. The *concilium deorum* (such as the one mentioned by Mars above) is a stock scene in epic that reaches back to the Homeric corpus; Ovid establishes his *concilium* as the most recent iteration of the many *concilia* that have taken place in the genre of epic, and he thereby encourages intertextual interpretations of his text. Barchiesi likens this literary phenomenon to the *concilium* of the real world, the Roman senate, in which there were ever new individuals who, nonetheless, came largely from the same *gentes* which comprised the senate in the past.

Feeney, Conte, Hinds, and Barchiesi argue along a similar path of reasoning that the symbols and creative techniques of poetry are metaphors based on human experiences in the real world (memory, politics, etc.). We have argued that Ovid uses two such metaphorical representations, the tropes of the *concilium deorum* and memory, to highlight his allusive technique in Mars' quotation of Ennius' *Annales*.

There remains another marker employed by Ovid in his allusion to Ennius, this one based on the Roman concept of devotion (*pietas*). Bömer notes that Jupiter's words are *pia*, "faithful," in the sense that Jupiter is performing his duties as a father of Mars and, therefore, an ancestor of Romulus.⁹⁶ The words, however, are *pia* in another sense. Ovid's words are "faithful" to the words of his own poetic father, Ennius. *Pietas* is, in this instance, representative of Ovid's exact quotation of Ennius.

⁹⁵ Hinds (1998) 16.

⁹⁶ Bömer (1986) ad *Met.* 14.812-813.

Ovid emphasizes the importance of his faithfulness (*pietas*) to and poetic memory of his predecessors for his method of poetic creation through Mars' parenthetical remark. Mars claims that he stores Jupiter's *pia verba* in his mindful *animus*; we must remember that the *animus* represents Ovid's poetic genius at many points in the *Metamorphoses* and especially in the proem (*Met.* 1.1: *fert animus*).⁹⁷ It is possible to argue that Mars' *animus*, so mindful (*memori*) of the past, symbolizes Ovid's method of poetic creation which emphasizes the use of allusion (poetic memory) through the faithful (*pia*) representation of literary history (*verba*).⁹⁸

In this chapter we will explore the dynamics of *pietas* and kinship in the *Metamorphoses* and argue that these two social forces are emblematic of the creation and narration of poetry. First, we will examine the incest-narratives of Byblis and Myrrha and show that the theme of incest also represents Ovid's allusions to his own oeuvre. We will then examine Ovid's conspicuous avoidance of the Oedipus myth and, in the final section, show how the theme of familial *nefas*, common in Ovid's Theban narratives, gives us some insight into Ovid's allusive method of poetic creation.

Allusion and In(ter)cest

Books Nine and Ten offer us the two primary narratives of incest in the *Metamorphoses*: the stories of Byblis and Myrrha.⁹⁹ In these stories, as William Anderson has noted, Ovid has much to say about the problematic nature of *pietas*.¹⁰⁰ In these episodes Ovid takes a particular interest in exposing the weakness of familial devotion as a guiding principle. We will return to

⁹⁷ For more on Ovid's use of *animus*, see Wheeler (1999) 213-214 n. 7 and 8 with bibliography.

⁹⁸ Sarah Spence reminds me that the adjective *memori* recalls Vergil's use of the word at *Aen.* 1.4 (*saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram*). In the case of the *Aeneid*, Juno also is mindful of the mythological/poetic past (see *Aen.* 1.27-28).

⁹⁹ Ovid alludes to other myths in which incest figures prominently at other points in the *Metamorphoses* but not in the same detail which marks the stories of Byblis and Myrrha. See Nagle (1983) 304 n. 13.

¹⁰⁰ See, e.g., Anderson (1972) ad *Met.* 10.323-328.

the importance of Ovid's use of paradoxical *pietas*; however, first we will consider the literary significance of the theme of incest.

Ellen Oliensis has shown that in the *Aeneid* incest is an inherently regressive action or “a recursive movement in time and space.”

In so far as incestuous unions come to figure narrative regress, the plot of the epic depends on the separation of maternal origins from marital ends; otherwise, Aeneas will reproduce only the past, not the future.¹⁰¹

Philip Hardie, basing his argument on that of Oliensis, argues that the “recursive movement in time” of incest occurs not only within the plot but also at the literary level.¹⁰² He examines the myth of Pygmalion and the creation of his statue-wife as an example, he claims, of an incestuous relationship:

The example of Pygmalion suggests incest as a model for the relationship between the artist or writer and his creation, figuring a forbidden desire for the artist's own “child.” forbidden both because the relationship is too close, but also because it is an impossible desire for an object that exists on the other side of the unbridgeable divide between the world of biological process and the unchanging world of mimetic representations.¹⁰³

Hardie, in the conclusion of his argument, claims that incest regresses in literary history as well and often represents the literary tactic of allusion.¹⁰⁴ It has been noted, for example, that Ovid follows Nicander in making Byblis and Caunus twins (*Met.* 9.453: *prolem gemellam*), an otherwise unattested detail in the other variations of the myth.¹⁰⁵ Hardie has argued that Ovid's choice to make the brother and sister twins reflects on his decision to make Apollo (the ancestor

¹⁰¹ Oliensis (1997) 306-307.

¹⁰² Hardie (2006) 26.

¹⁰³ Hardie (2006) 27; Hardie admits that he is influenced by the psychoanalytic approach to plot development developed by Brooks (1984).

¹⁰⁴ Hardie (2006) 41.

¹⁰⁵ See Anderson (1972) ad *Met.* 9.450-453.

of Byblis and Caunus) and Diana twins as well (*Met.* 6.336: *edidit...geminos Latona*);¹⁰⁶ these latter twins' relationship in Ovid, Hardie claims, is often sexualized to expand upon Vergil's relationship between Aeneas (likened by imagery to Apollo) and Dido (similar in imagery to Diana).¹⁰⁷ The incestuous relationship and its inherently recursive nature thematizes Ovid's allusive technique.

Hardie argues forcefully that incest, which is inherently retrogressive, is a moniker for intertextuality in the *Metamorphoses*. But his method of reading would gloss over the importance of an instance in which Ovid acknowledges a different metaliterary significance of incest (*Met.* 9.507-512):

At non Aeolidae thalamos timuere sororum!
unde sed hos novi? cur haec exempla paravi?
quo feror? obscenae procul hinc discedite flammae
nec, nisi qua fas est germanae, frater ametur!
si tamen ipse meo captus prior esset amore,
forsitan illius possem indulgere furori.

The sons of Aeolus certainly did not fear the bedchambers of their sisters! But from what source have I learned of these? Why have I prepared these examples? Where am I carried? Withdraw far away from here, incestuous passions, and, unless it is in a way appropriate for a sister, let the brother not be loved! But still, if only he himself sooner were taken with my love, perhaps I would be able to indulge myself in his passion.

The example of the sons of Aeolus is the second in a pair of mythic exempla, the first of which (*Met.* 9.497-499: examples of gods who have married their siblings), Byblis concludes, does not apply to mortals.¹⁰⁸ These lines also show the allusive nature of incest. Byblis fantasizes about a

¹⁰⁶ Ovid is not the first to make Apollo and Diana twins; the first reference of this closer relationship is Pindar's *Paean* 12. Hesiod, for instance, says only that the two are brother and sister, and this seems to be the older account. For more, see Gantz (1993) 97.

¹⁰⁷ For more, see Hardie (2006) 29-31, 39. For more on the theme of incest and its metapoetic use in the *Aeneid*, see Bleisch (1996).

¹⁰⁸ For more on the dynamics of the competing moral demands of the divine and human in the *Metamorphoses* see Chapter Five of Feeney (1991) *passim*, especially 195-197 (focusing on Books Nine and Ten).

past in which it had been Caunus who had first fallen in love with her (*captus prior esset amore*). This is not only the fantasy of an elegiac lover but also an implicit nod to an earlier (if not the earliest) version of the myth in which it is Caunus who falls in love with his sister.¹⁰⁹ But we may expand our interpretation of incestuous allusion in this case by examining the sources that Ovid employs. Whereas Hardie privileges allusions to authors other than himself, in the Byblis and Caunus episode Ovid demonstrably prefers self-referentiality to allusions to other authors.¹¹⁰ Anderson has noted that the Augustan audience would have been struck by Byblis' comments at line 508, saying that "it must have been amusing...for Ovid himself had published in *Her.* 11 the letter of Canace...to Macareus, her brother-lover."¹¹¹ Indeed, to the knowledgeable reader, Byblis' questions are not so much rhetorical as they are instructive markers of Ovid's allusive technique. If Anderson notes a hint of playfulness in such a tactic, we are not to be surprised, since Stephen Hinds has shown that allusion (from the verb *ludere*) is an inherently playful process.¹¹² In this case, we may further observe that the trope of poetic memory (*novi*) plays a role in marking out the allusion.

In this example, the use of incest as a marker for the intertextual process is particularly fitting. Ovid has alluded to a story within his own corpus. The story of Byblis and Caunus is connected by the intertextual theme of incest with the story of the sons of Aeolus, and this incestuous relationship is reflected in Ovid's incestuous allusion to another of his own works. Ovid's allusion in the *Metamorphoses* to his *Heroides* is, therefore, reminiscent of an endogamous rather than an exogamous union.

¹⁰⁹ See Anderson (1972) ad *Met.* 9.450-665 and Bömer (1977) ad *Met.* 9.450-665.

¹¹⁰ See Hardie (2006) 39-40.

¹¹¹ Anderson (1972) ad *Met.* 9.507-508.

¹¹² Hinds (1998) 21-25, contra Thomas (1986) 172 n. 8.

The allusive referents of Byblis' letter, however, are not limited to a single epistle of the *Heroides*. Upon deciding to reveal her feelings to her brother, Byblis considers how best to confront Caunus. She doubts her ability to confess her love to her brother face to face and thinks that her sense of shame will prevent her from speaking (*Met.* 9.515: *si pudor ora tenebit*). She decides instead to write a love letter (*Met.* 9.516: *littera...arcana*). Others have noted that Byblis' epistle is reminiscent of Phaedra's love-letter in Euripides' *Hippolytus*.¹¹³ While Euripides' tragedy is most likely one of the texts with which Ovid is engaging, our minds are more readily drawn to another. Ovid is more likely referring to his own *Heroides*, the importance of which as a referent text is revealed by Byblis' citation of it. Ovid alludes to the Phaedra myth and not to Euripides' version but rather to his own (*Her.* 4.1-2):¹¹⁴

quam nisi tu dederis, caritura est ipsa, salutem
mittit Amazonio Cressa puella viro.

The Cretan girl sends the Amazonian man the health which she herself will lack
unless you will have given it.

These lines, the incipit of Phaedra's letter to Hippolytus in the *Heroides*, are echoed in the salutation of Byblis' own epistle (*Met.* 9.530-531):

quam, nisi tu dederis, non est habitura salutem,
hanc tibi mittit amans.

The lover sends you this health which she will not have unless you will have
given it.

¹¹³ For a recent account, see Westerhold (2011) *passim*, especially 3-6 with bibliography.

¹¹⁴ Galinsky (1975) 33-35 notes the importance of the *Heroides* to the Byblis scene, but he does not cite the lines noted above; Galinsky's claim is interesting that the allusion lets "the reader be a critical observer" and does not "let him be naively or romantically drawn into a fictitious story, because that would lessen" the "sophisticated pleasure" Ovid wants his reader to get from the story. I would agree that it is possible to interpret Ovid's allusion to the *Heroides* as a warning to Byblis herself who cannot remember that the very letter she cites ends in disaster. For more on this type of instructive allusion to the *Heroides*, see Kennedy (2006) 57-74.

Line 9.530 of the *Metamorphoses* is a nearly exact replica of the hexameter of Ovid's opening couplet in the fourth letter of the *Heroides*; the first four words and the final word of both texts are identical and the future participle *habitura*, negated by *non* in the *Metamorphoses*, is synonymous with the future participle *caritura* in the *Heroides*.

In the *Heroides* the salutary formula of the letter's author wishing health for the addressee is used only three times: in the fourth, eleventh, and sixteenth epistles of the *Heroides*. We will remember that Byblis has already alluded to the letter of Canace to her brother, and this letter, also, is a model for the opening of Byblis' letter in the *Metamorphoses* (*Her.* 11.1-2):¹¹⁵

Aeolis Aeolidae quam non habet ipsa salutem
mittit...

The daughter of Aeolus sends the son of Aeolus the health which she herself does not have...

Ovid has created an intertextual nexus in which the reader is invited to compare Byblis in the *Metamorphoses* with Phaedra and Canace. Ovid emphasizes the entry of the *Metamorphoses* into the epistolary mode at two points: by Byblis' allusion to *Heroides* 11 and by the fact that Byblis composes a letter.¹¹⁶ In this way Ovid is encouraging us to use another of his own texts as a source text for his own *Metamorphoses*; this is further proof that Ovid is emphasizing the metapoetic incestuous nature of his allusions in the Byblis-narrative.

¹¹⁵ The text is uncertain; most modern editors do not retain the lines, following our earliest manuscript (G, from the ninth century) which does not retain the lines. Knox (1995) ad loc. ignores the issue and omits the lines, and Michalopoulos (2006) ad *Her.* 16.1-2 implicitly denies the authenticity of the lines (one can only assume this from the fact that Michalopoulos cites all of the examples we have cited here as parallels of one another except for *Her.* 11). This is not to say, however, that a scholarly consensus has been reached. The authenticity of the *saltus* formula in *Heroides* 16, for instance, has had to be defended: see Williams (1994) 105 ff. Most importantly, the authenticity of *Her.* 11.1-2 has recently been defended by Reeson (2001) ad loc.

¹¹⁶ On the allusion to *Heroides* 11, see page 39 above. For more on the act of writing in the *Metamorphoses*, see page 42 below.

Having observed the self-referential “incest” in which Ovid engages in Byblis’ letter, we may return to a point we noted above on the effect of incest on the development of plot. Oliensis and Hardie have argued that incest is a retrogressive force at the narrative level.¹¹⁷ This phenomenon is particularly evident in the Byblis narrative. For example, Joseph Farrell has shown that the composition of Byblis’ letter is an example of an “iterative act.”¹¹⁸ As Farrell observes, in the drafting of her letter Byblis initially accomplishes nothing (*Met.* 9.523-525):¹¹⁹

incipit et dubitat; scribit damnatque tabellas;
et notat et delet; mutat culpatque probatque;
inque vicem sumptas ponit positasque resumit.

She begins and she hesitates; she writes and she throws away the pages; she marks down words and then erases them; she changes things and both finds fault with them and approves them; and alternatively she puts aside what she began and she resumes what she set aside.

When Byblis musters the courage to send her letter, Caunus does not respond positively to his sister’s amorous advances. Byblis, rather than accepting the fact that she will never achieve the object of her desire, fashions many excuses why her letter had no effect on her brother: he could not see her tears; she should have been coy; her message reached her brother at an inopportune time (*Met.* 9.585-594). The narrative threatens to enter an infinite spiral of recurrent rejected attempts when Byblis attempts to woo her brother repeatedly (*Met.* 9.631-634):

cum pigeat temptasse, libet temptare. modumque
exit et infelix committit saepe repelli.
mox ubi finis abest, patriam fugit ille nefasque,
inque peregrina ponit nova moenia terra.

Although it is shameful to have tried, it is permissible to try again. She embarks on every course of action, but the unlucky girl begins to be repelled often. Soon, when there is no end in sight, Caunus flees his fatherland and its *nefas* and he places new walls in a foreign land.

¹¹⁷ See pages 37-38 above.

¹¹⁸ Farrell (1998) 320; Farrell borrows the term “iterative act” from the work of Gérard Genette, see Genette (1980) 116.

¹¹⁹ Farrell (1998) 319.

Anderson has noted that *saepe repelli* implies that Byblis makes many attempts to gain her brother's affection.¹²⁰ The words *finis abest* imply that there would be no end to Byblis' romantic appeals to Caunus. Ovid's epic is defined by metamorphosis and change, but the cyclical nature of the Byblis story has the ability to recur infinitely and frustrate the narrative progression of the *Metamorphoses*.

Ovid's allusive incest to his own body of work in Byblis' narrative is a replaying of stories he has told before. Given this interpretation, it is plausible that the plot of the *Metamorphoses* in the Byblis episode will only progress when Ovid alludes to works other than his own. It is significant, then, that Ovid draws the most explicit attention to departing from the repetitive nature of Byblis' attempts at incest by means of an allusion to Vergil's *Aeneid* (*Met.* 9.633-640):

mox ubi finis abest, patriam fugit ille nefasque,
 inque peregrina ponit nova moenia terra.
 tum vero maestam tota Miletida mente
 defecisse ferunt, tum vero a pectore vestem
 diripuit planxitque suos furibunda lacertos;
 iamque palam est demens, invisosque penates
 deserit, et profugi sequitur vestigia fratris.

Soon, when there is no end in sight, Caunus flees his fatherland and *nefas* and he places new walls in a foreign land. Then indeed they say that the sad daughter of Miletus had completely lost her mind, then indeed she tore the robe from her chest and she furiously struck her arms. And now she is openly mindless, and she left behind her hated household gods and follows the footsteps of her exile-brother.

Examining the Myrrha episode, Michael Putnam has observed that Ovid's use of the theme of flight is redolent of Vergil's use of exile.¹²¹ Indeed, Ovid draws special attention with Caunus' flight to Aeneas' status as exile. Caunus, like Aeneas at *Aen.* 1.2-7, is a *profugus* who lays the

¹²⁰ Anderson (1972) ad *Met.* 9.630-632.

¹²¹ Putnam (2001) 177. Putnam's comment on the theme of shadows (*umbrae*) and flight (*fugere*) merit special attention; see below.

foundation for *moenia*.¹²² Byblis, furthermore, follows the footsteps of her brother in the same way that Creusa follows Aeneas' footsteps (*Aen.* 2.711: *servet vestigia coniunx*); in both cases, the female is not able to reunite with the male.¹²³

In the span of the 25 lines following Byblis' flight in pursuit of her brother, Ovid concludes the tale with her metamorphosis into a spring. The rapidity with which the narrative reaches its conclusion is only achieved, however, when Ovid moves away from his self-allusive (or, incestuously allusive) program and looks outside of his own corpus for an intertextual model.

We have established a model for an intertextual reading of one of Ovid's two primary scenes of incestuous love. We have argued that incest, at the level of plot and allusion, is recursive; Ovid makes use of both levels in the Byblis episode by retarding narrative progress when he alludes to his own work and by quickly concluding the episode after an allusion to the *Aeneid*.¹²⁴

¹²² It is not Aeneas himself, of course, who founds the "walls of lofty Rome," but Vergil is clearly making a connection between Aeneas' actions and the foundation of Rome and her walls.

¹²³ Ovid's/Byblis' *sequitur vestigia* is a further, albeit failed, attempt at narrative recursion in the *Metamorphoses*. This counterbalances the image of following footsteps in *Aeneid* Two: Aeneas puts his armor back on and descends into Troy as he retraces his footsteps (*Aen.* 2.753-754: *repeto et vestigia retro / observata sequor*). Thus, at the very moment when narrative progression resumes in the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid alludes to a narrative recursion in the *Aeneid*. It may further be significant that in an episode so marked by incestuous allusion, Ovid alludes to the story of Aeneas' escape from Troy, a scene which Vergil bases on his own account of Orpheus and Eurydice in Book Four of the *Georgics*. When Ovid begins to look outside of his corpus, he looks to Vergil and catches his predecessor in the act of metaliterary incest.

¹²⁴ There are two noteworthy allusions to the *Aeneid*: the first (*Met.* 9.613-617) to Dido's speech in Book Four (*Aen.* 4.365-367) and the second to Books One and Two of Vergil's epic. The first of these allusions does not produce narrative progression. If as noted above at pages 37-38, however, Hardie is correct that Ovid is exposing the incestuous undertones of the relationship between Dido and Aeneas, then it is possible to argue that incest has not been eradicated at the allusive level. It is also notable that, as Anderson (1972) and Bömer (1977) ad *Met.* 9.613 observe, Ovid uses the trope of the inhumanity of the lover a strikingly large number of times in the *Metamorphoses*. It may be that, just as we observed with Phaedra (pages 39-40), a trace of an allusion can be detected, but the reader of the *Metamorphoses* is encouraged to approach these other texts through the focalization of Ovid's own narrative.

Scholars have long drawn comparisons between the stories of Byblis and Myrrha. The two narratives form a logical pair and they have proven fertile ground for studying the effects of different narrators in the *Metamorphoses*: while Ovid narrates Byblis' tale, Orpheus sings of Myrrha.¹²⁵ One of the main differences between the two narratives is the level of sympathy with which each poet/narrator interacts with his subject. One reason for this is that Myrrha is much more self-aware of her crime than is Byblis. Byblis is initially unable to understand her feelings for her brother (*Met.* 9.464-465: *sed nondum manifesta sibi est, nullumque sub illo / igne facit votum, verumtamen aestuat intus*); Myrrha is immediately aware of what she desires (*Met.* 10.321-322: *di, precor, et pietas sacrataque iura parentum, / hoc prohibete nefas scelerique resistite nostro*). The consequence of Myrrha's self-awareness, as Betty Rose Nagle has argued, is that the plot of the Myrrha episode, containing more action, proceeds more briskly than does the Byblis story, which is mostly monologue.¹²⁶

Conversely, the story of Myrrha's affair with her father is not recursive at the level of plot, and I would posit that this is, in part, because Ovid is mainly concerned in the episode with drawing connections to the *Aeneid* rather than with his own works. Julia Dyson has argued that Myrrha's visit to her father Cinyras' bedroom at night is modeled on Aeneas' visit to Anchises in the underworld. Myrrha's representation as a cow accepting her father on her back (10.326: *ferre patrem tergo*), in a disturbing way, alludes to Aeneas carrying his father out of Troy, and Dyson notes Ovid's adaptation of Vergil's *procul, o procul este profani* (*Aen.* 6.258) in *procul hinc natae, procul este parentes* (*Met.* 10.300).¹²⁷

¹²⁵ See Nagle (1983) *passim*. For more on "internal narrators" in the *Metamorphoses*, see Barchiesi (2001) 49-79.

¹²⁶ See Nagle (1983) 306, who describes the Byblis narrative as being "static."

¹²⁷ Dyson (1998-1999) 163. Cf. Putnam (2001) 171: "The ritual of poetry becomes for a moment a ritual of execration with the usual *profani* replaced by *natae* and *parentes*."

Putnam's analysis of the Myrrha episode complements our argument.¹²⁸ Ovid's use of the *Aeneid* in the Myrrha episode effects an end of incest narratives in the *Metamorphoses*, allowing the plot to develop in other directions. Putnam points out an allusion, all the more striking because of a numerical parity, between *Met.* 10.475 (*pendent nitidum vagina deripit ensem*) and *Aen.* 10.474-475 (*At Pallas magnis emittit viribus hastam / vaginaque cava fulgentem deripit ensem*).¹²⁹ The *Metamorphoses* nearly yields a horrifying example of sin begetting sin, as Cinyras, upon discovering that he has committed incest, attempts to kill his own daughter. Putnam argues that the exile that Myrrha is forced into in many respects looks back to the flight of Turnus' soul to the underworld at the end of the *Aeneid* (*Aen.* 12.952: *vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras*).

We have observed that in the Byblis narrative, recursion of plot was averted at the same point when Ovid alluded to Vergil. Given this observation, we may interpret the significance of Ovid's Vergilian allusions in the Myrrha episode. At the beginning of the episode Orpheus claims that he will sing of dreadful things (*Met.* 10.300: *dira canam*); the appearance of the verb *canere* in Orpheus' proem may recall the first line of Vergil's *Aeneid*.¹³⁰ Dyson and Putnam demonstrate that Vergil's influence on the Myrrha narrative as it progresses never wanes, and

¹²⁸ The following paragraphs are very much indebted to Putnam (2001). Although Putnam does not explicitly claim that the end of the theme of incest is matched by the end of the narrative of the *Aeneid*, he argues (179-180) that the flight of Myrrha from her father is evocative of the final moments of Vergil's epic.

¹²⁹ More work remains to be done on these types of allusions; for another instance of linear equivalence between a referent and referencing text, see my introduction to Chapter Three.

¹³⁰ Some may claim that such a general word is not enough to constitute an allusion; however, as Fowler (1997) 20 argues, the word *arma*, a word which occurs about 3000 times in extant Latin literature by Fowler's reckoning, has the ability in post-Vergilian verse to bring the *Aeneid* to the reader's mind. The allusion was not lost on Statius. When Statius begins his epic he makes a similar motion to the beginning of his *Aeneid* (*Theb.* 1.4: *gentisne canam primordia dirae*); it is possible that Statius, who is writing his own epic about an incestuous family, alludes back with his *dirae gentis* to Ovid's *dira*, thereby framing his own allusion to Vergil with a similar allusion made by another of his epic predecessors. Orpheus' *dira* and the closural force which Ovid's allusions to Vergil have in the Myrrha episode may remind us of Aeneas' spear, an *exitium dirum hasta ferens* (*Aen.* 12.924) which, as Putnam (1995) 203-206 has shown, imparts a similar closure (*exitium*) to the *Aeneid*.

Myrrha's final flight from her homeland, the dénouement of her story, mirrors the conclusion of the *Aeneid*. The Myrrha narrative, although it devolves into incestuous unions at the level of plot, does not suffer from the same degree of recursion as does Ovid's retelling of the account of Byblis.

The Myrrha episode, therefore, stands in stark contrast to the Byblis story. In the case of the latter, we argued above that Ovid's incestuous allusive technique engenders a narrative that almost devolves into recursion. Myrrha's tale, however, is marked by a rapidity of narrative that, in part, finds its impetus in Ovid's exogamous allusive program in the progression of the episode.

The weight of the (epic) past: Ovid's Oedipus myth

The theme of incest brings us to a vexed problem in Ovidian studies. Nowhere in the *Metamorphoses* does Ovid give a detailed account of the Oedipus myth. In the pages that follow we will examine the few gestures Ovid makes to Oedipus. As we shall discover, many of these gestures are misleading allusions: Ovid, when he hints at the story of Oedipus and his descendants, seems to draw attention to the fact that he does not relate the myth in any detail.

Many scholars have been struck by Ovid's choice to deny narrative space to Oedipus. Ingo Gildenhard and Andrew Zissos, following the conclusions of Froma Zeitlin, argue that Ovid's omission of the Oedipus myth is a departure from the classical *modus operandi* for the narration of any Theban narrative, which should include the stories of Cadmus, Laius and Oedipus, and Dionysus and Pentheus.¹³¹ Gildenhard and Zissos argue that Ovid alludes openly to Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* in the Tiresias and Narcissus episodes of Book Three of the *Metamorphoses*, thereby intertextually aligning his Theban narrative with the paradigm.¹³²

¹³¹ Gildenhard and Zissos (2000) 130, following Zeitlin (1990).

¹³² See Gildenhard and Zissos (2000) *passim*, especially 132-133.

The efforts of Gildenhard and Zissos are insightful and show many thematic and structural parallels between the *Metamorphoses* and the *Oedipus Rex*. Nevertheless, Gildenhard and Zissos have attempted a microcosmic fix for a macrocosmic problem. Nagle has noted, with some surprise, the absence of the Oedipus myth from the *Metamorphoses*; the deficiency in the *Metamorphoses* of what was, according to Zeitlin, such an important myth for Attic drama is shocking, but Gildenhard and Zissos do not look beyond Book Three of the *Metamorphoses* and account for the systemic problem.¹³³ The effects of Oedipus' absence are surely felt in Book Three, but they are more strongly felt at other points in the text. In the following exempla we will not attempt to account for why Ovid avoids retelling extended Oedipus episodes; rather, we will take stock of some of the recurring imagery of familial violence and poetic composition. This analysis will, at the end of the chapter, lead to an account of Ovid's use of *pietas* and *nefas* in the Althaea episode of the *Metamorphoses*.

The myth of Oedipus and his family is alluded to at four points in Ovid's epic. Two of these instances are tantalizing allusions rather than extended narrative accounts. For example, Pythagoras refers to Thebes as the city of "the sons of Oedipus" (*Met.* 15.429: *Oedipodioniae*

¹³³ Nagle (1983) 304 n. 13; Gildenhard and Zissos (2000) *passim*. The efforts of Gildenhard and Zissos to establish verbal allusions in the *Metamorphoses* are particularly unconvincing, and Gildenhard and Zissos (2000) 133 admit that "the intertextual extravaganza Ovid stages between his own text and Sophocles' is characterized not by specific verbal resonances but rather by structural and thematic parallels;" we need look no further than Gildenhard and Zissos (2000) 129 to see that "sequences of thematic patterns, though, are rather ubiquitous 'surface phenomenon' which can be traced in various ways throughout the entire poem, and which hardly ever explain Ovid's poetry in and of themselves." Zissos and Gildenhard (2000) 131, however, insist that they are attempting an intertextual approach to the text; one may wonder whether Gildenhard and Zissos set a sharp criterion between allusion and intertext, as they emphasize authorial intent ("Ovid signals the [sc. intertextual] connection"); cf. Fowler (1997) 15 who argues against the importance of the author. In any case, the problem of Gildenhard's and Zissos' interpretation of intertextuality undermines their argument. For example, Gildenhard and Zissos (2000) 132 argue that Tiresias' prophecy that Narcissus would be happy if only he did not know himself (*Met.* 3.348: *si se non noverit*) invokes the same Delphic "know thyself" trope as do Jocasta's words at *OT* 1068 (ὦ δύσποτμ', εἴθε μήποτε γνοίης ὃς εἶ. "Unlucky man! If only you may not know who you are"). The reader of Ovid's text may be struck by the particularly cryptic Delphic language, but this is a trope and tropes naturally elude tidy reconstruction and one-to-one parallels; see Hinds (1998) 46-47.

quid sunt, nisi nomina, Thebae?).¹³⁴ Hardie claims that Thebes has “become a byword for the great city annihilated...in Pythagoras’ discourse on mutability.”¹³⁵ Ovid’s attentive reader will remember that in the ecphrasis of Thebes on the crater given to Aeneas in Book 13 (a scene which we will examine in more detail below), Ovid draws attention to the fact that the name of the city, only marked by its famous seven gates, is left out from the artistic representation (*Met.* 13.686: *hae pro nomine erant et quae foret illa docebant*). Pythagoras, therefore, testifies to the insignificance of the Theban myth to Ovid’s narrative.

In another abridged nod to Oedipus, Ovid makes an allusion to the solving of the Sphinx’s riddle in Cephalus’ narration (*Met.* 7.759-765):

carmina Laiades non intellecta priorum
 solverat ingeniis, et praecipitata iacebat
 immemor ambagum vates obscura suarum:
 [scilicet alma Themis nec talia linquit inulta!]
 protinus Aoniis inmittitur altera Thebis
 pestis, et exitio multi pecorumque suoque
 rurigenae pavere feram.

The son of Laius had solved the songs not understood by the talents of older men, and the vague poet was tossing herself headlong, forgetful of her own riddles. Of course, nourishing Themis does not leave such things unpunished! Immediately another plague is sent to Aonian Thebes, and many people in the countryside were frightened of the beast in the destruction of themselves and their flocks.

Nagle notes that Ovid elides the name of Oedipus, instead referring to him ironically as the son of Laius (Laius is, of course, dead by the time Oedipus solves the riddle of the Sphinx).¹³⁶ The problem, more striking to modern commentators, in these lines is the issue of textual corruption in line 762. The line makes relatively little sense as it stands. Anderson notes that *alma* is odd in the context of the passage, and Bömer observes with some confusion that Themis was of

¹³⁴ See Gildenhard and Zissos (2000) 130 n. 10.

¹³⁵ Hardie (1990) 225. The epithet may suggest that Thebes’ ruin came at the hands of two of these “sons of Oedipus” (Eteocles and Polynices).

¹³⁶ Nagle (1983) 304 n. 13.

relatively little cult importance in Thebes aside from having a temple dedicated to her along with Zeus and the fates (Paus. 9.25.4).¹³⁷ Some editors have chosen to move 762 after 763, but this does not solve the problem.¹³⁸

As Anderson has commented, line 762 is in many of the manuscripts either deleted or included as a marginal note; this fact leads me to suppose that the line is an interpolation introduced into the text to explain something that, the original interpolator felt, needed more explication.¹³⁹ The issue then becomes how we are to interpret *talia*. The gloss, it seems, attempts to explain why Thebes is beset by a new monster. Anderson expresses some frustration over *talia*: “[Line 762] makes little sense in its position, for what does *talia* refer to? Why should Themis be avenging wrongs of or to the Sphinx?”¹⁴⁰ One possible explanation is that our ancient commentator has made a reference to the punishment of Oedipus’ further actions in Thebes after he defeats the Sphinx. In any case, the interpolator seems to have noticed an issue in Ovid’s rendition of the Oedipus myth: he does not narrate Oedipus’ incestuous union with his mother.

Ovid, in fact, draws the reader’s attention to his failure to tell a complete version of the Oedipus myth. The poet refers to the Sphinx as a *vates*, and this invites a comparison between the Sphinx’s and Ovid’s roles as poet. The Sphinx is described in the *Metamorphoses* as *immemor*, and it is difficult to discern how to correctly interpret this fact in the context of the narrative. Bömer suggests that the Sphinx is *immemor* in the sense that something that is dead cannot remember anything.¹⁴¹ As an alternative, we can interpret *immemor* as functioning on the metaliterary level as a trope of poetic allusion. The Sphinx does not, in the *Metamorphoses*,

¹³⁷ Anderson (1972) ad *Met.* 7.762 and Bömer (1976) ad *Met.* 7.762.

¹³⁸ See, e.g., the Loeb edition of Miller (revised by Goold).

¹³⁹ Anderson (1972) ad *Met.* 7.762. As Keith Dix has suggested, *scilicet* strikes him as precisely the type of device a scholiast would use to begin his gloss on the text.

¹⁴⁰ Anderson (1972) ad *Met.* 7.762. See also Fratantuono (2011) 200.

¹⁴¹ Bömer (1976) ad *Met.* 7.761.

repeat her riddle and she is therefore *immemor* in the sense that she does not “call to mind” texts in which the riddle is mentioned.¹⁴² It is possible to take this interpretation one step further and claim that Ovid as *vates* is unmindful of the progression of the Oedipus myth after the defeat of the Sphinx.¹⁴³ *Immemor*, in contrast to the other examples of *memor* that we have noted above, alerts the reader to Ovid’s avoidance of relating the myth in any greater detail.¹⁴⁴

As Philip Hardie has noted, the story of Thebes in Books Three and Four of the *Metamorphoses* is an “anti-*Aeneid*,” not least of all in that it makes explicit the implied possibility in the *Aeneid* of civil discord.¹⁴⁵ As Hardie notes, it is not within the Theban narrative but rather later in the *Metamorphoses* that Ovid invites explicit comparison between the story of Thebes and the foundation of Rome (*Met.* 13.679-689):

prosequitur rex et dat munus ituris,
 Anchisae sceptrum, chlamydem pharetramque nepoti
 crater Aeneae, quem quondam miserat illi
 hospes ab Aoniis Therses Ismenius oris.
 miserat hunc illi Therses, fabricaverat Alcon
 Lindius et longo caelaverat argumento.
 urbs erat, et septem posses ostendere portas.
 (hae pro nomine erant et quae foret illa docebant.)
 ante urbem exequiae tumulique ignesque rogique
 effusaeque comas et apertae pectora matres
 significant luctum

The king escorts them and gives a gift to the ones about to leave: a scepter for Anchises, a cloak and quiver for Ascanius, and for Aeneas a mixing bowl which Therses, the Ismenian guest from the Aonian shores, had once sent him. Therses sent this to him, Lindian Alcon had fashioned it and had engraved it with an extended narrative. There was a city, and you would have been able to point out seven gates—these were there in place of a name and were explaining which city it was. In front of the city funeral processions and burial mounds and flames and

¹⁴² For more on the origins and content of the riddle, see Gantz (1993) 494-498. Gantz traces the origins of the Sphinx’s ravaging of Thebes to the seventh century BCE, but notes that the earliest literary reference to the riddle is from a fragment of Pindar.

¹⁴³ It is worth noting, however, that Oedipus’ murder of his father is implicitly acknowledged by the use of the patronymic *Laiades* at *Met.* 7.759.

¹⁴⁴ See pages 33-36 and 39.

¹⁴⁵ See Hardie (1990) *passim*, especially 230.

funeral pyres and mothers, who have disheveled hair and have exposed their breasts, signify mourning.

The audience would most likely think back to the seven against Thebes. The numerical imagery of seven, although in the passage above applied to the seven gates of Thebes, guides the reader's mind towards the myth. Furthermore there are funeral rituals taking place in front of the city; the question of burial for the Argives and Polynices forms the conclusion of the story of the seven. Therefore by emphasizing the funerary imagery of the ecphrasis by devoting over two hexameters to it tempts the reader into associating the myth with a Thebaid. Finally, the audience's imagination has already been led to the type of fratricidal violence that marks the war between Eteocles and Polynices by the similar situation of Anius' sons and daughters (*Met.*

13.660-666):

effugiunt, quo quaeque potest: Euboea duabus
et totidem natis Andros fraterna petita est.
miles adest et, ni dedantur, bella minatur:
victa metu pietas consortia corpora poenae
dedit; et timido possis ignoscere fratri:
non hic Aeneas, non qui defenderet Andron,
Hector erat, per quem decimum durastis in annum.

They flee, each wherever she can: Euboea is sought by two and their brother's Andros is sought by just as many daughters. The warrior is present and threatens wars unless the girls are surrendered. *Pietas*, overcome by fear, handed over the kindred bodies for the price; and you might be able to forgive the fearful brother: there was no Aeneas here to defend Andros, no Hector through whom you endured into the tenth year.

The story of the betrayal of Anius' daughters by their brothers in no way directly alludes to the story of the seven. However, the fact that fraternal piety is mentioned by Ovid in such close proximity to a story from the Theban cycle in which the number seven and funeral imagery are emphasized guides the reader's thoughts to the story of the seven against Thebes. Why Ovid should have chosen to avoid these Theban narratives so conspicuously is a question beyond the

scope of this thesis.¹⁴⁶ Nevertheless, Ovid's treatment of the Theban myth, and especially his use of fraternal violence, will help us to recognize Ovid's understanding of his own place within literary history.

In the previous sections of our argument we have observed an oddity in Ovid's narrative: rather than marking his engagement with a story from the literary past, Ovid draws attention to the fact that his expansive narrative does not yield space to an extended retelling of an Oedipal narrative.¹⁴⁷ The shortness of these famously long narratives (see note 146), however, yields the interpretive consequence that the imagery used at the moments when Ovid engages these myths is given more emphasis. The theme, more recognizable because of the compression of plot, which Ovid chooses to emphasize, is familial violence.¹⁴⁸ In the final section of this chapter, we will attempt to qualify Ovid's appropriation of his epic past. We will show that the poet uses the intersection of *pietas* and *nefas* metaphorically to symbolize poetic creation, a type of "faithful rebellion" in which the accounts of Ovid's predecessors are followed but also manipulated to fit into his epic project.

¹⁴⁶ I wonder, however, if Oedipus' treatment in classical epic is encoded in the literary tradition to be naturally opposed to Ovidian poetics. Ovid's poetry is remarkably Callimachean: as Hinds (1987) 19 observes, Ovid's narrative is described by the opposed words of epic length (*perpetuum*) and Callimachean brevity (*deducite*); cf. Sharrock (1994) 174-175. Statius' proem in the *Thebaid* marks out the expansive nature of the Theban cycle (*Theb.* 1.7: *longa retro series*), and indeed Propertius at many points juxtaposes the epic length of a Theban narrative and the elegiac brevity of his own poetry (Prop. 1.7.1-2, 5: *dum tibi Cadmeae dicuntur, Pontice, Thebae / armaque fraternae tristitia militia...nos, ut consuemus, nostros agitamus amores*. See also Prop. 2.1.19-21: *non ego Titanas canerem, non Ossan Olympo / impositam, ut caeli Pelion esset iter, / nec veteres Thebas, nec Pergama nomen Homeri*). In the context of Roman poetry, then, a Theban narrative (one of which, we may remember, is described in Ovid's ecphrasis at *Met.* 13.684 as a *longum argumentum*) is naturally unsuitable to Ovid's project of Callimachean brevity. It is possible that Ovid's refusal to relate a *Thebaid* at any length is itself a Callimachean choice, in that Callimachus also condemns the "one long song" (*Aet.* fr. 1.3), perhaps responding to the *Thebais* of the fourth century BCE poet Antimachus of Colophon. For more on the possibility that Callimachus condemns longer, heroic epics (and specifically the type which focuses on one individual hero), see Harder (2012) ad *Aet.* fr. 1.3.

¹⁴⁷ On Ovid's aim of expansiveness and comprehensiveness in the *Metamorphoses*, see Galinsky (1975) 3-4 and Hinds (1998) 104.

¹⁴⁸ See above pages 52-53 and notes 135 and 143.

Pium nefas: the devoted sinner and the faithful poet

In Ovid's only allusion to the story of the Seven against Thebes in the *Metamorphoses*, he employs the imagery of paradoxical familial devotion, a common motif in the epic (*Met.* 9.403-408):

fientque pares in vulnere fratres,
subductaque suos manes tellure videbit
vivus adhuc vates, ultusque parente parentem
natus erit facto pius et sceleratus eodem.

The brothers will become equal because of a wound, and the prophet, still alive, will see his own *manes* after the ground is drawn out from underneath him, and his son, having avenged one parent against another, will be faithful and sinful in the same deed.

In this passage Ovid retells the final events of the war of the seven against Thebes. The brothers (*fratres*) are Polynices and Eteocles, the sons of Oedipus who kill one another in man to man combat. As Anderson notes, Ovid's account of the war is novel in that the scene of brotherly battle, which usually forms the climax of the story, is placed before the story of Amphiaraus (*vates*).¹⁴⁹ Amphiaraus' wife Eriphyle sends the seer, who has prophesied his own doom in the Theban expedition, because she has been bribed with the necklace of Harmonia. Amphiaraus' final request to his son, Alcmaeon, is that he kill (*ultus*) his mother. In this way Alcmaeon is placed in a situation in which *pietas* makes two opposed demands. His devotion to his father urges him to kill his mother, an act which his filial devotion would deny.

The theme of this conflict of familial interests, which I might call paradoxical *pietas*, is a common one throughout the *Metamorphoses*.¹⁵⁰ Ovid at many points in the narrative emphasizes ways in which an individual's *pietas* leads to crime against a family member. For example, *Met.*

¹⁴⁹ Anderson (1972) ad *Met.* 9.406-408.

¹⁵⁰ The theme of paradoxical *pietas* has been relatively ignored in the scholarship on the *Metamorphoses*. Galinsky (1975) has a keen eye for paradox in the *Metamorphoses* (see index s.v. paradox); Anderson (1972) ad *Met.* 9.406-408 notes the theme, but only cites one further example at *Met.* 6.635. Nagle (1983) 301 has observed that the theme exists, calling it "*pietas* perverted."

9.408, above, is a recapitulation in imagery and vocabulary of the events which lead to the foundation of Thebes (*Met.* 3.1-5):

iamque deus posita fallacis imagine tauri
se confessus erat Dictaeaeque rura tenebat,
cum pater ignarus Cadmo perquirere raptam
imperat et poenam, si non invenerit, addit
exilium, facto pius et sceleratus eodem.

And now, after the deceitful appearance of the bull was put aside, the god had revealed himself and he was reaching the Dictaeian fields, when the unknowing father orders Cadmus to search everywhere for his raped sister and, if he will not have found her, Agenor adds a punishment—exile—*pius* and sinful in the very same deed.

It is the metaliterary implications of *pietas* and kinship which have been of interest to us in this chapter, and so we should pose the question of whether it is fair to associate some level of literary significance to the theme of paradoxical *pietas*. Mars' citation of a line from Ennius' *Annales* may serve as evidence that we are able *prima facie* to assume the importance of *pietas* to poetic creation and allusion. I have argued that *pietas*, or "faithfulness," is emblematic not only of Mars' relationship with Jupiter but also of Ovid's relationship with Ennius. Jupiter's *pia verba* in the *Metamorphoses* are "faithful" to his son Mars just as Ovid's words, since they are a word-for-word quotation of the *Annales*, are "faithful" to Ennius.

It is possible to observe Ovid's poetic mind at work in his telling of the myth of Althaea, a famous case of paradoxical *pietas*. In the myth, Althaea, the mother of Meleager, has been given a piece of wood which guarantees Meleager's life. The young man kills two of Althaea's brothers during the Calydonian boar hunt and Althaea consequently throws the piece of wood into the fire, causing her son to die. Ovid alerts his audience to his use of the paradoxical *pietas* theme when he claims that Althaea is "faithful in her unfaithfulness" (*Met.* 8.477: *impietate pia est*). She reiterates the paradoxical imagery (*Met.* 8.483-484):

ulciscor facioque nefas; mors morte pianda est,
in scelus addendum scelus est, in funera funus.

I seek vengeance and I perform *nefas*; death must be expiated by death, crime must be added to crime, funeral onto funerals.

Ovid's Althaea claims that she is performing something which is *nefas*, "unspeakable." This *nefas*, she argues, is demanded by her *pietas* (*pianda*). Anderson argues that "the future passive participle expresses a necessity that Althaea feels, not one to which we automatically give assent."¹⁵¹ Indeed, Ovid seems to have encouraged such a response when Althaea herself questions the morality of her actions (*Met.* 8.499-500):

mens ubi materna est? ubi sunt pia iura parentum
et quos sustinui bis mensum quinque labores?

Where is my motherly mind? Where are the pious laws of parents and the ten months during which I endured pains?

This is a daring move on Ovid's part; Ovid has his Althaea consider breaking from the dictated mythological/poetic tradition and spare her son.¹⁵² We are already equipped, however, to understand the poetic impossibility of such a novel rendition of the Althaea story, for we know the answer to Althaea's second question, "Where are the faithful laws of parents?" They are nowhere within Althaea's own poetic tradition. While the laws Althaea speaks of are "faithful" in a moral sense, they are unfaithful in a poetic sense; the mythological tradition demands that Althaea murder Meleager. Ovid has already made it explicitly clear that Althaea is "faithful," unambiguously so to the poetic tradition, in her moral *impietas*.

As Althaea hesitates further, she alludes to her motherly nature (*Met.* 8.506-508):

et cupio et nequeo. quid agam? modo vulnera fratrum

¹⁵¹ Anderson (1972) ad *Met.* 8.483.

¹⁵² The sympathy with which Ovid treats Althaea is itself a departure from another famous account of the myth. In a choral ode in Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*, the chorus calls Althaea's actions exemplary of θηλυκρατής ἔρως (*Ch.* 600), "a passion destructive to women;" for more on the meaning of θηλυκρατής, see Garvie (1986) ad *Ch.* 599-602.

ante oculos mihi sunt et tantae caedis imago,
nunc animum pietas maternaque nomina frangunt.

I both desire and am unable. What should I do? Now the wounds of my brothers and the image of so much gore are before my eyes; now *pietas* and the name of mother break my will.

As Ovid's Althaea wavers, desiring to complete the deed but unable to do so (*et cupio et nequeo*), she claims that piety and her motherly nature (*materna nomina*) break her *animus*, her will to kill her son.¹⁵³ As Anderson has noted, *pietas* here is strictly Althaea's devotion to her son; her definition attempts to ignore the previously emphasized paradoxical *pietas*.¹⁵⁴ As we observed above, such a one-sided definition of devotion is doomed to failure in a narrative governed by paradoxical *pietas*.

It is possible to interpret the final line quoted above so that the one-sided *pietas* of Althaea's motherly nature threatens to force her (and Ovid) to commit a different kind of *nefas* than the one she initially planned (*Met.* 8.483: *facioque nefas*). The *nefas* of killing her son, Althaea admits, is demanded by her faithfulness (*pianda*); this *pietas*, Althaea's duty towards her brothers, is also representative of Ovid's faithfulness to the established poetic tradition. The alternative *pietas* to her son demands its own *nefas*, not only in the moral sense that her brothers' deaths would go unavenged but also in the poetic sense: the possibility of Althaea sparing her son is *nefas*, unspeakable or unable to be represented, because it goes against the version of the myth accepted and transmitted by Ovid's poetic predecessors.

¹⁵³ It may, once again, be the case that *animus* is here representative of the seat of poetic creation and narration: the text at once demands and shudders from telling and reenacting the story. See page 36, n. 97 above. Sarah Spence has suggested to me that *et cupio et nequeo* is reminiscent of Catullus 85 (*odi et amo. quare id faciam, fortasse requires. / nescio, sed fieri sentio et excrucior*); Althaea, at the very moment when she is most willing to spare her son and neglect her brothers, alludes to Catullus, a poet famous for his affection for his brother (Catullus 101); for more on Catullus' epigram, see Feldherr (2000) with bibliography.

¹⁵⁴ See *Met.* 8.477, cited above on page 56.

In this chapter I have aimed to establish a literary reading of two taboos of Roman familial dynamics in the *Metamorphoses*. First, I argued that by means of the theme of incest Ovid draws attention to his self-allusive program in the Byblis episode, a metaliterary tactic which begets narrative stagnation only to be eradicated by exogamous intertexts. I have also observed the poetic valence of words such as *pietas*, *impietas*, and *nefas* to show how Ovid encodes his devotion to the literary tradition by the metaphor of familial reciprocity.

To conclude, I might turn to Maurizio Bettini's seminal work on the dynamics of kinship:

In the familial system, a father will be assigned both a specific appellation (*pater*) and a precise legal or institutional function, as well as a set pattern of attitudes in reciprocity with a son.¹⁵⁵

Bettini observes that this central relationship was not always congenial: a Roman father was expected to be stern and impose at the familial level the good of the *gens* and state at large.¹⁵⁶ If we are correct that *pietas* is an ideal of continuity at the poetic level as well, we stand to gain some insight into Ovid's relationship with his literary fathers.

When he describes Ovid's allusively laden epic project, Feeney notes with some surprise the poet's apparent lack of the Bloomian anxiety of influence: "Although his book is drenched with allusion to poetic predecessors, his attitude towards these forebears is...remarkably unanxious."¹⁵⁷ There is little doubt that Ovid's appropriation of his literary past is remarkably masterful. However, given what I have been arguing above, I might interpret Althaea's confession that "*pietas* breaks her *animum*" (*Met.* 8.508) in a more literary way. It is possible that Ovid's devotion to the literary tradition is also a threatening force to his project of epic *nova*

¹⁵⁵ Bettini (1991) 1.

¹⁵⁶ See Bettini (1991) 50-51.

¹⁵⁷ Feeney (1991) 225, see also Hinds (1998) 104.

(*Met.* 1.1: *in nova fert animus*) and that this *pietas* is representative of what Hardie calls “the ever-present desire and its attendant anxiety.”¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ Hardie (1993) 119.

Chapter 3

THE END OF THE LINE: THE *THEBAID* AND THE REINTERPRETATION OF THE
AENEID AND *METAMORPHOSES*

At the middle point of *Thebaid* 10, after the death of Hopleus and Dymas, the poet suspends the action of the epic and states his aspirations for poetic fame, in spite of the fact that his poetry rises from an “inferior lyre” (*Theb.* 10.445-446: *quamvis mea carmina surgant / inferiore lyra*). Gordon Williams comments on Statian intertextuality, “In a curious way the poet’s communication with the reader is not mediated at the level of the text; instead the poet is somehow in direct contact with the reader, above the head, as it were, of the text.”¹⁵⁹ The poet makes an “above-the-head” nod to the reader at *Theb.* 10.448 by naming Nisus and Euryalus, the pair that inspired Hopleus and Dymas. Furthermore, the symmetry in the placement of Statius’ and Vergil’s programmatic statements, which are also connected by common language, is not coincidental (*Theb.* 10.445-446, cf. *Aen.* 9.446-449).¹⁶⁰ Williams’ method of looking beyond the text for meaning, however, will only allow us to proceed so far. I am not aware, for instance, of anyone noting the tension between the inferior status of the poet’s lyre (i.e., presumably, the conceit that the poet is less famous/skilled than Vergil) and the fact that the music produced by the lyre soars upward (*carmina surgant*). If *inferiore* places Statius below Vergil, Statius’ poetry is quickly ascending to Vergil’s higher position.

Throughout the *Thebaid* Statius measures his epic against the poetry of his predecessors. In the past, the ostensible deference which the poet shows has been taken as a mark of Statius’

¹⁵⁹ Williams (1986) 223.

¹⁶⁰ Williams (1986) 218, in fact, argues that “the relation to the episode of Vergil is thus purely structural.”

overwhelming anxiety of influence.¹⁶¹ More recently, scholars have explored how Statius uses his “secondary” status as a source of poetic creativity;¹⁶² the poet’s reception of Vergil and Ovid has proven particularly useful in the interpretation of the *Thebaid*. Peter Davis, however, marks an unfortunate trend: “it has become a commonplace of Statian criticism that, if *Thebaid* invokes Virgil as model, then *Achilleid* sees Statius using Ovid.”¹⁶³ Articles and monographs tend to favor one predecessor over the other. The few examples of readings which aim to consider both remain exceptions that prove a trend.¹⁶⁴

In this chapter, I aim to show how Statius rewrites both predecessors. I argue that the *Thebaid*, by incorporating the poetry of Vergil and Ovid, condemns not only the ethical system established at the end of the *Aeneid* but also the poetic superiority expressed by Ovid. The first section of the chapter is a reading of the arrival of Polynices in Argos; this section will provide an example of my methodology of considering the importance of more than one source. In the following section I argue that the proem of the *Thebaid* reprobamatizes the moral dilemma of Turnus’ death by alluding to the *Aeneid* and the *Metamorphoses*. In section three I demonstrate that Menoeceus’ sacrificial suicide under the influence of the goddess Virtus rewrites the alignment of *pietas* and *furor* and, at the same time, allows Statius to make a claim of poetic superiority over Vergil and Ovid. The final two sections of the chapter show that the end of the

¹⁶¹ I borrow the term “anxiety of influence” from Bloom (1973). On the dangers of taking Statius at his word on his inferiority as a poet, see Hinds (1998) 91-95, Dominik (1994) 174-175, Hardie (1993) 110-113, and Feeney (1991) 340.

¹⁶² I borrow the term “secondary” from Hinds (1998) 91 ff. which also gives a brief overview of the reappraisal of the conventional view of Statius’ poetry. Statius’ self-deprecating words (see below on the *sphragis*) earned him an unsympathetic reception in the early 20th century. Dominik (1996) 129 traces the renaissance of Statius studies to Germany in the 1950’s. As Dominik notes, however, some extremely important work had been undertaken earlier; especially important, for example, is Legras (1905), which continues to be cited widely today.

¹⁶³ Davis (2006) 129; Davis does admit, however, that some work is being done to trace the importance of Ovid to the *Thebaid*, citing Keith (2002).

¹⁶⁴ See, e.g., Parkes (2009).

mythological narrative and the *sphragis* of the *Thebaid* correct the end of both the *Aeneid* and the *Metamorphoses*.

Polynices and the influence of those who came before

Neil Bernstein has recently argued that an important theme of the first Book of the *Thebaid*, and indeed the poem at large, is the importance of parentage.¹⁶⁵ To launch us into our investigation of Book 1, let us look to the initial exchange between Tydeus and Polynices with Adrastus. Polynices and Tydeus, having arrived and quarreled with one another, are approached by Adrastus. The king calms them and asks the pair from where they have come and from whom they are descended. Polynices' response is telling (*Theb.* 1.465-467):

'nec nos animi nec stirpis egentes—'
ille refert contra, sed mens sibi conscia fati
cunctatur proferre patrem.

“We are lacking in neither spirit nor lineage—” That one responds, but his mind, conscious of what is fated for him, hesitates to mention his father.

Polynices, though he does eventually tell Adrastus of his noble birth, refuses to name his father.

Polynices admits that he is descended from Cadmus (*Theb.* 1.681: *Cadmus origo partum*) and that his mother is Jocasta (*Theb.* 1.682: *est genetrix Iocasta mihi*).¹⁶⁶ Bernstein is correct that this is an attempt at obfuscation. It is not unheard of to define oneself as the son of a mother, but it is somewhat rare in the *Thebaid* (Parthenopaeus, son of Atalanta, is an obvious exception that proves the norm, *Theb.* 9.789). More importantly, Polynices aligns himself with a distant rather than recent male relative, thereby presumably attempting to push Oedipus' paternity out of mind.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Bernstein (2008) 65.

¹⁶⁶ Jocasta is not necessarily a more positive influence on Polynices. See Augoustakis (2010) 62-66 and Keith (2000) 1996 on Jocasta as the *impia belli / mater* (*Theb.* 7.483-484).

¹⁶⁷ Bernstein (2008) 70-71.

Philip Hardie has argued that post-Vergilian epics can be read as literary/familial heirs to Vergil and the *Aeneid*.¹⁶⁸ Similarly, Mariana Ventura has argued that in the third poem of the posthumously published fifth book of *Silvae* Statius likens Vergil to his own father as a sort of literary paternal figure.¹⁶⁹ I would like to examine the literary corollary of Polynices' tactic of hiding his lineage.

Alison Keith has argued that the primary source for the fashioning of Polynices' character, especially in Book 1, is Ovid's portrayal of Cadmus in Books Three and Four of the *Metamorphoses*. For instance, Keith points out that Polynices, who wanders *Hyanteos...per agros* (*Theb.* 1.183), is likened to Cadmus in exile; the adjective *Hyanteus* alludes back to the *Metamorphoses*, where the word first appears in Latin.¹⁷⁰ Things become more problematic, however, as Keith pursues her point:

Statius dubs both Cadmus and Polynices "the Tyrian exile" (*Tyrri...exsulis*, 1.153-54; *Tyrius...exsul*, 3.406) on the model of the Ovidian Cadmus, himself a Tyrian (*Met.* 3.35: *Tyria...de gente profecti*; 3.129: *Sidonius hospes*; 4.572: *Sidone profectus*) and an exile (*Met.* 3.6-7: *orbe pererrato...profugus*).¹⁷¹

I admit, especially given the progression of Keith's argument, that the alignment between Cadmus and Polynices as Tyrian exiles is striking; Polynices being described as a Tyrian is nonsensical unless the adjective looks outside the text for its meaning. The text of the *Thebaid* does not, however, encourage an argument such as Keith is making: is it true that "the model of the Ovidian Cadmus, himself a Tyrian" is necessarily who the reader has in mind upon reading *Tyrius exsul* in the *Thebaid*? I thought more readily of another Tyrian exile, driven out of the city

¹⁶⁸ Hardie (1993) 98-99.

¹⁶⁹ Ventura (2010).

¹⁷⁰ Keith (2002) 387. The word technically refers to the inhabitants of Boeotia from *before* the arrival of Cadmus, for which fact Keith does not account (although her point of an Ovidian intertext would be unaffected). Ovid seems to have adapted the word from Apollonius' *Arg.* 3.1242. See Bömer ad *Met.* 3.147 and Hunter (1989) ad *Arg.* 3.1242.

¹⁷¹ Keith (2002) 387.

by an act of impiety: *Dido Tyria regit urbe profecta* (*Aen.* 1.340: “Driven out from the city of Tyre, Dido reigns”). Indeed, it would seem that my intertext informs Keith’s at *Met.* 3.35; yet another allusion to the *Aeneid* lies behind the *profugus* of *Met.* 3.7, the same word used of Aeneas in the second line of Vergil’s epic.

I do not wish, at this point, to claim that Statius is here alluding to Vergil. Rather I would propose a different logic. First, it is impossible for Statius to allude to Ovid’s story of Thebes without calling Vergil’s narrative to mind. Indeed, the *Metamorphoses* itself hearkens back, in its descriptions of Cadmus’ status as an exile, to Vergil’s *Aeneid*. Hardie has noted, for example, the symmetry between the exile narratives that are told in the third books of both the *Aeneid* and the *Metamorphoses*.¹⁷² Furthermore, Hardie claims, Ovid may have noticed that Vergil himself used Dido’s Tyrian origins in order to look back to the story of Thebes (e.g. Dido seeing double just as Pentheus at *Aen.* 4.469-470).¹⁷³ If we wish to claim that *Tyrius exsul* looks back to Ovid, we must at the same time admit that it also is indebted to Ovid’s source material.¹⁷⁴

I would like to further complicate Keith’s claim by showing ways in which the *Thebaid* alludes to the *Aeneid*. D.E. Hill shows a structural symmetry between the first 300 lines of the *Thebaid* and the *Aeneid*; for example, Statius’ divine council (*Theb.* 1.197-302) leads to Mercury being sent from Olympus (*Theb.* 1.303-311), and these two scenes resemble the divine council (*Aen.* 1. 223-296) and Mercury flying down from heaven (*Aen.* 1.297-304) in the first book of the *Aeneid*.¹⁷⁵ At a key moment in the *Thebaid*, Statius looks back to the second half of the *Aeneid*, specifically Evander’s account in *Aeneid* Book Eight of Hercules killing Cacus (*Theb.* 1.483-487):

¹⁷² Hardie (1990) 226.

¹⁷³ Hardie (1990) 228.

¹⁷⁴ For the interpretative possibility of texts with multiple sources, see Fowler (1997) 16.

¹⁷⁵ Hill (2008) 55. For more on these structural similarities, see Hill (1990).

tergo uidet huius inanem
 impexis utrimque iubis horrere leonem,
 illius in speciem quem per Teumesia tempe
 Amphitryoniades fractum iuuenalibus annis
 ante Cleonaei uestitus proelia monstri.

On this man's back he sees that a lion's skin bristles with matted mane on both sides, into the appearance of that broken lion which Amphitryon's son wore in his youthful years throughout the Teumesian valleys before the battle of the Cleonaeon monster.

It has previously been noted that Polynices' garb in the *Thebaid* is the same worn by Hercules in his battle against Cacus.¹⁷⁶ It is also structurally significant that Evander and Adrastus both receive foreign royalty into their households and provide military aid to their guests.

Furthermore, this mention of Hercules in the *Thebaid* anticipates another allusion to the story of Hercules and Cacus when Adrastus tells the story of Coroebus, a myth informed by Evander's story in the *Aeneid*.¹⁷⁷ Ruth Parkes has also suggested that this scene, and a similar scene in Book 4 where Polynices is wearing the lion skin again, is used by Statius in order to show how poorly Polynices measures up as a successor to Hercules' heroic status.¹⁷⁸

So far, we have seen how Vergil's Hercules narrative might serve as the key allusive referent to the portrayal of Polynices. However, I would like to complicate things and return to an observation that I made above. Statius alludes to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* at times when Ovid himself is looking back, in turn, to Vergil. The inverse of this point is true as well: even if the *Aeneid* is the primary referent, the *Metamorphoses* can still be seen as a key intermediary text.

First, let us observe a structural parallel between Ovid's Theban cycle and the first book of the *Thebaid*. I cited earlier Hill's claim that there is a structural parallel between the opening

¹⁷⁶ See Caviglia (1973) ad loc.

¹⁷⁷ See Vessey (1973) 101.

¹⁷⁸ Parkes (2009) 486: Polynices "is setting off to kill his fellow citizens rather than save them from danger. Bent on Theban devastation, he is more like the Teumesian lion, Hercules' prey."

300 lines of the *Thebaid* and the *Aeneid*.¹⁷⁹ Next, I showed that Statius initially follows the structure of *Aeneid* Book One and then follows the structure of Evander's reception of Aeneas. Hardie has noted a similar progression in the Theban narrative of the *Metamorphoses*: a story of exile (Cadmus wandering) leading to a story of city-foundation by means of killing a monster (Cadmus kills the serpent).¹⁸⁰ It is clear, then, that both the *Thebaid* and the Theban story in the *Metamorphoses* contain similar structural echoes of the *Aeneid*. Coincidentally, Keith notes that Cadmus, similar to his ancestor Polynices, also wears a lion's skin.¹⁸¹ Just as we could not rule out the *Aeneid*'s importance when the *Metamorphoses* served as the primary referent for the *Thebaid*'s portrayal of Polynices, so also we cannot deny that the *Metamorphoses* mediates the reception of the *Aeneid* in the *Thebaid*.

The goal of the preceding pages has been twofold. First, I hope to have set out a method of reading intertextually which aims to consider the significance of multiple source texts rather than only one.¹⁸² Secondly, I have attempted to set out what I see to be a metaliterary statement of allusive technique in Polynices' attempt at avoiding naming Oedipus as his father.

The Proem

Fraternas acies alternaque regna profanis
decertata odiis sontesque evolvere Thebas
Pierius menti calor incidit. unde iubetis
ire, deae? gentisne canam primordia dirae,
Sidonios raptus et inexorabile pactum

¹⁷⁹ Hill (2008) 55.

¹⁸⁰ Hardie (1990) 226-227. Hardie names Book 3 of the *Aeneid* as the exile narrative lining up with that of *Metamorphoses* Book 3. I would argue that Book 1 (*Aen.* 1.2: *fato profugus*) could equally well serve as an exile narrative, especially given the fact that it tells the story of two exiled nation builders, Dido and Aeneas. See Perkell (forthcoming), entry on exile in the *Aeneid* from the *Vergil Encyclopedia*, for more on the theme of exile.

¹⁸¹ Keith (2002) 388.

¹⁸² Barchiesi (2001) 138-139, in describing how Silius Italicus deals with the dual influence of Naevius and Ennius, argues that "the reproduction of stories through figurative art, and the transcription of artifacts into verbal ecphrasis, both act as markers of the intertextual appropriation that fuels with its complexity every new epic enterprise."

legis Agenorae scrutantemque aequora Cadmum?

Pierian fire falls upon my mind to explain the brotherly battle lines and the alternating reigns, fought over in impious hatred, and guilty Thebes. From where do you bid me go, goddesses? Should I sing about the origins of the furious race, the Sidonian rape and the severe pact of the ruling of Agenor and Cadmus searching the seas?

Statius does not hesitate to demarcate his subject matter: *fraternas acies* makes certain the fact that the *Thebaid* will be a story of familial strife. Add to this the fact that Statius calls Thebes guilty (*sontes*), and it is evident that Statius judges this familial strife to be morally corrupt.¹⁸³ This claim of moral degeneracy is extremely important. Randall Ganiban puts it well: Statius “memorializes his horrific theme but never lets us forget its criminality (*profanis...odiis* and *sontes...Thebas*).”¹⁸⁴ The *Thebaid* begins by showing how the power of hatred has affected a relationship which should otherwise be governed by *pietas*.

I would like to lean more heavily upon the word *odium* in line 2. *Odium* is the last word that Turnus speaks at *Aen.* 12.938: *ulterius ne tende odiis*. As Michael Putnam claims, “Turnus offers his victorious opponent the chance not only to relent in his longstanding anger [i.e., *odium*] but to embrace what we have regularly seen, in Vergil’s ethical universe, to be its opposite, namely *pietas*.”¹⁸⁵ Turnus invokes the name of Anchises and, intratextually, his words at *Aen.* 6.853: *parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*. The *odium* which Aeneas in no way curbs is a symbolic antithesis to his heroic trait of *pietas*, and specifically, his devotion to his father.¹⁸⁶ I would like to add to Putnam’s point. Vergil elsewhere in the *Aeneid* pits the power of hatred against the bonds of family (*Aen.* 7.335-336):

¹⁸³ See Vessey (1986) 2970 on the importance of *sons* in the proem and its other iterations in the *Thebaid*.

¹⁸⁴ Ganiban (2007) 45.

¹⁸⁵ Putnam (1999) 223; Putnam traces his definition of *odium*, “longstanding anger,” back to Cicero’s *Tusc.Disp.* 4.9.21. Vessey (1986) 2969 n. 17 notes the same Ciceronian passage in glossing the *odium* of the beginning of the *Thebaid*, though he draws no parallel with the *Aeneid*.

¹⁸⁶ For more on the relationship between Books 6 and 12 of the *Aeneid* see most recently Putnam (2012) 20. See also Johnson (1965) on the failure of *pietas* at the end of the *Aeneid*.

tu potes unanimos armare in proelia fratres
atque odiis versare domos.

You [i.e., Allecto] are able to call like-minded brothers into battle and also to overturn households with hatred.

It would be a mistake to claim that the *odium* of the *Thebaid* looks back exclusively to either of the citations that I have mentioned above. It would be equally wrong to claim that the uses of *odium* that we have outlined above do not point to the same conflict of competing forces.¹⁸⁷ Statius' ancient commentator Lactantius Placidus, for example, notes of *profanis odiis* (*Theb.* 1.1-2), "*PROFANIS ...quia nefas erat germanos odia retinere.*"¹⁸⁸ Lactantius and many modern scholars have caught on: the *Thebaid* will pit *odium* against *pietas* again and again in its narrative.¹⁸⁹ In other words, the *Thebaid* begins by calling to mind the very interpretive problem with which the *Aeneid* ends.¹⁹⁰

So far we have been working under the assumption that the *Thebaid* at this point is engaging with earlier poetry rather than simply developing its own narrative. Awareness of the literary past is a perfectly acceptable axiom in Roman poetry, for its discourse is so firmly grounded in the utterances of the past; this is especially true for the genre of epic.¹⁹¹ The intertextual tactics that Statius deploys in his proem, however, are extraordinary and significant for our argument. Statius admits that he has some trouble pinning down how far back he ought to

¹⁸⁷ Whether a conscious allusion to the *Aeneid* exists in the word *odiis* or not is unimportant; see Hinds (1998) 34: "The fact that language renders us always already acculturated guarantees that there is no such thing as a wholly non-negotiable confluence, no such thing as zero-interpretability." Michael Putnam has pointed out another intertextual significance to me linking the proem of the *Thebaid* with the conclusion of the *Aeneid*: *ire, deae* (*Theb.* 1.4) is almost an anagram of *dirae*, reminiscent of the *dea dira* at *Aen.* 12.914.

¹⁸⁸ The commentary of Lactantius Placidus on Statius' *Thebaid* dates to the fifth or sixth century CE.

¹⁸⁹ See Vessey (1973) 64, Ganiban (2007) 45-47, McNelis (2007) 50-51, among others.

¹⁹⁰ It is not, of course, absolutely necessary to see any anxiety in the end of the *Aeneid*. See, for example, Stahl (1981). To my mind, however, one must at the very least give ear to the tragic voices throughout the epic (e.g. Dido, Camilla, and Turnus); see Spence (1999) 158-161 for an example of a synthesis of the dueling voices of the poem; cf. Putnam (2012) 114-117.

¹⁹¹ I particularly have in mind the works of Gian Biagio Conte (esp. 1986), Stephen Hinds (esp. 1998), Don Fowler (esp. 1997), and Alessandro Barchiesi (esp. 2001).

trace the origins of the brotherly conflict of the *Thebaid*; the story of Thebes is one marked by an intergenerational impiety.¹⁹² Gianpiero Rosati has argued that Statius is engaged in a metaphorical conflict with the Muses (i.e., the literary past): *alterna regna* establishes the story as a *Thebais*, but it is not until *Theb.* 1.16-17, after recounting multiple other Theban myths (i.e. previous poems), that Statius settles on telling of the *Oedipodae confusa domus*.¹⁹³

We have already noticed, for example, that Ovid's account of the founding of Thebes in the *Metamorphoses* informs the characterization of Polynices in the first book of the *Thebaid*. In fact, Statius alludes in the proem of the *Thebaid* to Ovid's narrative of Thebes, giving a catalogue of the events which happened in Books Three and Four of the *Metamorphoses*. As Hardie has noted, "the *longa retro series* of Stat. *Theb.* 1.4-16 is virtually a summary of Ovid's Theban books," calling on the reader to compare Statius' *series* with the *serieque malorum* of *Met.* 4.564.¹⁹⁴

Although Statius promises that he will not tell us Ovidian narratives all over again (*Theb.* 1.16-17: *limes mihi carminis esto / Oedipodae confusa domus*), they consistently recur in the *Thebaid*.¹⁹⁵ But we should qualify the Ovidianism of the proem.¹⁹⁶ Statius contemplates singing (*Theb.* 1.4: *canam*) the *primordia* of Thebes. The importance of the use of the verb *canere*, as

¹⁹² For more on this superabundance of impiety and Statius' choice of mythic theme, see Ahl (1986) 2817.

¹⁹³ Rosati (2002) 232-233. The primary epic source for a *Thebais* would have been that of Antimachus of Colophon composed in the 4th Century BCE. For our frustrated evidence for the earlier Greek *Thebais*, see Lloyd-Jones (2002) with further bibliography.

¹⁹⁴ Hardie (1990) 226 n. 13; cf. Keith (2002) 382-383.

¹⁹⁵ See recently Keith (2002) 383 and Heinrich (1999) 171, *pace* Vessey (1973) 64.

¹⁹⁶ The Ovidian elements of the proem are many. Statius' poetic genius, his *mens* (*Theb.* 1.3: *menti*) is a synonym for Ovid's, *animus* (*Met.* 1.1); Lucretius *DRN* 3.94: *primum animum dico, mentem quam saepe vocamus*. The elliptic invocation of the unnamed Muses (*deae*) in the *Thebaid* is strikingly reminiscent of the same occurrence in the *Metamorphoses*. Note also how *gentis...primordia dirae* (*Theb.* 1.4) reflects Ovid's concern in the *Metamorphoses* of starting *primaque ab origine* (*Met.* 1.3); cf. Vessey (1986) 2971: "*primordia* suggests a dim antiquity, if not the origin of the *mundus* itself."

opposed to *dicere* (cf. *Met.* 1.1: *dicere*), cannot be overstated. *Canere*, a word that cannot fail to call the *Aeneid* to the reader's attention, governs an Ovidian catalogue.

I would also like to suggest one possible method of interpreting this confluence of sources. Statius' allusion to Ovid's Theban narrative strengthens Statius' reading of the end of the *Aeneid* (*Met.* 3.3-5):¹⁹⁷

cum pater ignarus Cadmo perquirere raptam
imperat et poenam, si non invenerit, addit
exilium, facto pius et sceleratus eodem.

When the unknowing father orders Cadmus to search everywhere for his raped sister and, if he will not have found her, Agenor adds a punishment—exile—*pius* and sinful in the very same deed.

This is Ovid's account of the *Thebaid's inexorabile pactum* (*Theb.* 1.5). We noted above that the *Thebaid* begins where Vergil's poem ended; in other words, the *Thebaid* begins just as the *Aeneid* ends by complicating a relationship that should be governed by *pietas* with the power of *odium*. As we can see above, Ovid begins his own *Thebais* in much the same way that Statius opens his. The Ovidian phrase *facto pius et sceleratus eodem* would be one way of reading the end of the *Aeneid*. In sum, Statius calls into question the ethical system of the *Aeneid* in two ways: by using the words and images of his own text, and by alluding to other texts which pose the same question to the *Aeneid* which the *Thebaid* poses.

Menoceus and the pollution of Pietas

David Vessey called Menoeceus "the highest example of *pietas* in the *Thebaid*."¹⁹⁸ The young son of Creon has tended to attract scholarly attention given that he seems to be a disparate voice in a narrative of total madness.¹⁹⁹ In the following pages we will construct a reading of the Menoeceus episode that sees his suicide as an act of non-generative violence that accomplishes

¹⁹⁷ I borrow the term "Ovid's Theban narrative" from Hardie (1990).

¹⁹⁸ Vessey (1973) 117.

¹⁹⁹ See, e.g., Vessey (1971), Vessey (1973) 117-133, Heinrich (1999), and Ganiban (2007) 137-145.

nothing outside of sustaining the typical familial violence of Theban history. We will argue that this episode rewrites the killing of Turnus in the *Aeneid*, an act which can be read as an act of generative violence.²⁰⁰ Concurrently, we argue that allusions to the poetry of Vergil and Ovid in the Menoeceus episode in Book 10 can be read as Statius' claim of poetic power over his sources.

A curious and often-commented-upon simile prefaces the goddess Virtus' intrusion into the Theban battlefield as she changes her appearance to become Manto, daughter of Tiresias (*Theb.* 10.639-649):

sed placuit mutare genas, fit prouida Manto,
 responsis ut plana fides, et fraude priores
 exuitur uultus. abiit horrorque uigorque
 ex oculis, paulum decoris permansit honosque
 mollior, et posito vatum gestamina ferro
 subdita; descendunt vestes, torvisque ligatur
 vitta comis (nam laurus erat); tamen aspera produnt
 ora deam nimique gradus. sic Lydia coniunx
 Amphitryoniaden exutum horrentia terga
 perdere Sidonios umeris ridebat amictus
 et turbare colus et tympana rumpere dextra.

But it pleased her to change her face, she becomes the prophetess Manto, so that there might be complete trust in the prophecy, and she sheds her previous appearance with deceit. The severity and power went away from her eyes, a small amount of her seemliness remained and her strength was softened,²⁰¹ and the garments of prophets were put on after her sword had been set aside; the garments hang on her, and the fillet (for it was of laurel) is fastened in her savage hair; nevertheless her harsh demeanor and too long gait betray her a goddess. Thus the Lydian wife laughed that Amphitryon's son, after he stripped the bristling hide, destroys the Sidonian cloak with his shoulders and upsets the distaff and breaks the drum with his right hand.

²⁰⁰ I use the term "generative violence" throughout the following pages; I have borrowed the term from Heinrich (1999). Heinrich has derived this term in response to René Girard's work on the "sacrificial crisis." See Girard (1977); for Girard's reception in the classics see Hardie (1993) 20-22 and Heinrich (1999) with bibliography.

²⁰¹ Cf. Williams ad loc.

R. D. Williams calls the concluding simile “wholly inappropriate in the context of the transformation of the majestic goddess Virtus: Hercules’ plight is comical and ridiculous.”²⁰² Others have more recently defended Statius in his imagery. Denis Feeney, on the one hand, has noted that Virtus’ disguise “as a pacific creature” foreshadows the fact that she will not drive on acts of military prowess (her typical function), but rather instigates “the potentially indecorous bathos of the suicide” of Menoeceus.²⁰³ If Williams’ protest is correct, Virtus’ inappropriateness is balanced by the inappropriateness of Menoeceus’ ritual suicide.²⁰⁴ Elaine Fantham, for her part, hears nothing inappropriate or comedic in the simile: “Statius must have chosen this image because it makes the strongest contrast between (Herculean) inner strength and its humble female medium.”²⁰⁵

Indeed, as Feeney himself notes, it is almost a *figura etymologica* that Vir-tus, a feminine deity representing all that is masculine, in her transformation into a woman should be likened to Hercules, the hero who best represents manly valor, clothing himself as a woman.²⁰⁶ Fantham notes that the language of Virtus’ transformation, particularly *exuitur* and the *vitta* which Virtus wears at 645, looks back to Allecto’s transformation in Book 7 of the *Aeneid* (*Aen.* 7.416: *exuit*, *Aen.* 7.418: *vitta*).²⁰⁷ Perhaps this is true, but the verb *mutare* is the Ovidian word for metamorphosis. At any rate, we should pursue the metapoetic implications of *honos mollior*. This phrase points not only outside the text but also outside the genre of epic. We should note, for instance, that *honos*, the stuff of heroic martial epic, becomes “softer,” *mollior*. The quality of *molliis*, of course, is antonymous with the epic quality of *gravitas*. We should look to elegy, the

²⁰² Williams ad *Theb.* 10.646f.

²⁰³ Feeney (1991) 384-385.

²⁰⁴ See below on the failure of Menoeceus’ *devotio*.

²⁰⁵ Fantham (1995).

²⁰⁶ See Feeney (1991) 384 n.225, citing Cicero’s *Tusc.* 2.43: *appellata est enim a viro virtus*.

²⁰⁷ Fantham (1995).

genre defined as *mollis*.²⁰⁸ In the third book of the *Ars Amatoria*, Ovid makes a remark on the appearance of the goddess Virtus (*Ars* 3.21-26).²⁰⁹

“Accipe me, Capaneu! cineres miscebimus” inquit
Iphias, in medios desiluitque rogos.
Ipsa quoque et cultu est et nomine femina Virtus:
Non mirum, populo si placet illa suo.
Nec tamen hae mentes nostra poscuntur ab arte:
convenient cumbae vela minora meae.

“Accept me, Capaneus! We will mix our ashes,” says the daughter of Iphis, and she leapt down into the midst of the funeral pyre. Even Virtus herself is a woman by her icon and the gender of her name: no wonder that she pleases her own people. Nevertheless these are not the minds asked for by my skill. Smaller sails will be suitable for my skiff.

Here also Ovid makes mention of the peculiar fact that Virtus is feminine in grammatical gender and cult icon.²¹⁰ Indeed, I would propose that Statius’ Virtus is informed by this passage. Note, for example, that Capaneus, the foil for Menoeceus in Book 10 of the *Thebaid*, his wife Evadne (*Iphias*), and Evadne’s dedicated suicide (mentioned by Statius at *Theb.* 12.800-802) are invoked. Furthermore, shortly before the passage cited above Ovid mentions the seer Amphiaraus (*Ars* 3.13: *Oeclides*), his wife and her crime (*Ars* 3.13 *scelere...Eriphylae*, cf. *Theb.* 4.193-213), and his descent, while still alive (*Ars* 3.14: *vivus*, cf. *Theb.* 8.1ff.), into Hell. These stories figure prominently in the *Thebaid*.²¹¹ Especially with the clustering of Capaneus and Virtus, two of the most prominent figures in *Thebaid* 10, and with a play on Virtus’ gender-

²⁰⁸ See, e.g., Propertius 1.8. In this poem, addressed to one Ponticus, who coincidentally is writing a *Thebais* and the *armaque fraternae trisitia militia* (1.7.2), Propertius says that if Ponticus should ever wish to move away from writing epic to writing elegy, *et frustra cupies mollem componere versum* (1.7.19). The *Ars Amatoria* is not, strictly, elegy. The current consensus is that the *Ars Amatoria* and the other so-called eratodidactic works are didactic poems written on elegiac themes, a hybrid genre; see Watson (2002) 145-149, that elegy has didactic elements, cf. Conte (1989) esp. 467 on how Ovid exploits the limitations of elegy in the *Ars* and *Remedia*.

²⁰⁹ Fantham (1995) cites two instances of the story of Hercules and Omphale in elegy (Propertius’ 4.9.49-50 and Ovid’s *Her.* 9.57-70). My thanks go to Alex Tasioulis for pointing me to the *Ars*.

²¹⁰ For more on the temples dedicated to Virtus in Rome, see note 213 below.

²¹¹ Of particular relevance is Eriphyle, whose very name means “family strife.” Ruth Parkes’ commentary sheds much light on the episode in which Argia gives Eriphyle the necklace of Harmonia (*Theb.* 4.187 ff.). Indeed, Ovid seems to inform that episode also; see Parkes (2012) ad *Theb.* 4.200-210.

bending nature, Statius at least had this passage in mind as he wrote of Virtus entering the human realm.²¹²

The text seems to push us to associate Virtus with figures outside of the text. Indeed, as we move forward in our argument we will see just how richly Virtus is intertextually characterized in the *Thebaid*. But we should keep at the back of our minds this passage from the *Ars*. The goddess Virtus operates on two levels. First, as we shall see, she operates as a reincarnation of the Vergilian Allecto. Second, she calls to mind Ovid and the influence which his poetry has over Statius' language and imagery. Both of these levels will become important to our understanding of the Menoeceus narrative.

After Tiresias has given a prophecy that Menoeceus must die in order to bring about Theban safety, the goddess Virtus descends from the sky to inform the boy of his duty. Where Statius chooses to situate Virtus' place in the heavens is quite telling to our reading since she is *Iovis solio iuxta* (*Theb.* 10.631).²¹³ Feeney notes the striking resemblance of this description to the location of the Furies next to the throne of Jupiter at *Aen.* 12.849 (*Iovis ad solium*).²¹⁴ Statius

²¹² The play on the gender of Virtus in the *Thebaid* may also look back to the *Ars Amatoria* in a less direct way than we have noted above. The *Ars* is a gendered text which gives advice to both men, in the first two books, and women, to the shock of a constructed male audience at *Ars* 3.7-10. The *Ars*, therefore, is a cross-gendered text aimed at a male and female readership; see Green (2006) 11-14. Gibson (2003) 19-21 may also be correct that Ovid supplants the female role of the *lena* in the third book of the *Ars*, adding to the complex gender dynamics of the work.

²¹³ Virtus is a specifically martial goddess, the deified Valor of the battlefield; see Feeney (1991) 382-385. There is evidence of two temples dedicated jointly to Honos and Virtus. One of these, dating back the 3rd century BCE, was situated just outside the Porta Capena; this was renovated by Vespasian; The location of the other temple, dedicated by Marius, is unknown. Platner and Ashby claim that it was on the slope of the Capitoline. This location would lend topographical significance to Statius' *Iovis solio iuxta*, as the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus was also situated on the Capitoline. Richardson (1987) 246, however, argues against a site on the Capitoline, claiming instead that the temple was "on the edge of the Forum Romanum." See also Platner and Ashby (1929) 258-260, Richardson (1992) 189-190, and *LTUR* vol. 3 31-34.

²¹⁴ Feeney (1991) 383. Feeney also notices, along with Fantham (1995), and Ganiban (2007) 143 n.100, that Statius has already alerted us to the nefarious side of Virtus earlier in his epic. Virtus has been in the company of such deities as Ira and Furor at two points in the *Thebaid* (*Theb.* 4.661-662; 7.48-51). Cf.

goes on to make further allusions likening the actions of Virtus to those of the Fury Allecto in the *Aeneid* (*Theb.* 10.672-673; 677):

sic ait, et magna cunctantis pectora dextra
permulsit tacite seseque in corde reliquit...
...letique inuasit amorem

Thus she speaks, and she silently stroked the great chest of the delaying [youth] with her right hand and she leaves herself behind in [the boy's] heart...And he [i.e., Menoeceus] gained a love of death.

Fantham has argued that Statius here alludes to Turnus when he is infected by the Fury Allecto (*Aen.* 7.449-450; 457; 461):

cunctantem et quaerentem dicere plura
reppulit...
fixit sub pectore taedas...
saeuit amor ferri...

[Allecto] pushed [Turnus] back as he delays and seeks to say more...she fixed her torch underneath [Turnus'] breast...Love of the sword rages.

Menoceus hesitates (*cunctantis*) similarly to Turnus (*cunctantem*); just as Virtus leaves herself in the heart of Menoeceus (*in corde*), so also Allecto pierces Turnus in his chest (*sub pectore*); the desire of death (*leti...amorem*) of Menoeceus hearkens back to Turnus' desire of the sword (*amor ferri*).²¹⁵ Statius has gone to extraordinary lengths to align Virtus with the Vergilian Furies.

As Menoeceus proceeds under the influence of this intertextual fury, he is approached by his father who attempts to dissuade the boy from fulfilling the prophecy of Tiresias.²¹⁶

Vessey (1973) 117 who says that Thebes "is in the grip of...Furor...Menoceus presents an antidote...[as] he is untainted by the craven emotions to which his fellow Thebans have fallen victim."

²¹⁵ Fantham (1995). The sensuality of *permulsit* (*OLD* s.v. *permulceo* 1) in the *Thebaid* might remind one of a similar tone when Allecto infects Amata (*Aen.* 7.349-350: *ille inter vestis et levia pectora lapsus / volvitur attactu nullo*), as Erika Hermanowicz has reminded me.

²¹⁶ I borrow the term "intertextual fury" from Ganiban (2007) 144.

Menoceus feigns ignorance of the prophecy; he creates the lie that Haemon, his brother, has been wounded (*Theb.* 10.727-729):²¹⁷

sed gravis unanimi casus me fratris ad urbem
sponte refert: gemit Inachia mihi saucius Haemon
cuspidē.

But the oppressive wound of the like-minded brother brings me willingly back to the city: wounded by an Inachian spear Haemon groans to me.

Menoceus has created the fiction of Haemon being wounded and has therefore metaphorically committed an act of familial violence.²¹⁸ The words *unanimi fratris* constitute yet another allusion to the Furies in the *Aeneid*. At *Aen.* 7.335 Juno describes Allecto as one who is able to cause like-minded brothers (*unanimos fratres*) to arm for battle. Once again Statius makes it quite clear that Menoeceus is acting under the influence of the Vergilian Furies.

The surface reading of the text takes Menoeceus at his word and sees here an exemplar of *pietas*. A more nuanced intertextual reading recognizes the Theban boy's lie for what it is. Menoeceus is under the control of the force of *furor* and he is willing to resort to the fratricidal violence which is Virtus' intertextual domain.

It is shocking, then, that Statius chooses to align Virtus with Pietas, a goddess who represents the ethical norms of family relationships. Ganiban has suggested that Statius combines the forces of *pietas* and *furor* so as to comment upon the same alignment that takes place at the end of the *Aeneid*. At *Aen.* 12.830-840 Jupiter, the deity of *pietas*, reconciles himself with Juno's *furor* and subsequently makes use of her power (i.e., the *Dirae* of *Aen.* 12.845).²¹⁹ I must disagree with Ganiban, however, when he goes on to state:

²¹⁷ For more on the role of deceit in the Menoeceus episode see Feeney (1991) 383 n.222.

²¹⁸ Ganiban (2007) 144.

²¹⁹ Ganiban (2007) 142-144.

The very recall of the Virgilian passage that displayed control and order in the *Aeneid* but that is transformed into something suggesting lack of control further points to the weaker powers of the *Thebaid*'s Jupiter.²²⁰

I am not so much concerned with Ganiban's assessment of Jupiter in the *Thebaid* as I am with his suggestion that Jupiter somehow loses control at the end of the *Aeneid*. Ganiban is troubled by the *Aeneid*'s Jupiter, I think, because he leans too heavily on sustaining a dichotomy between the "competing Virgilian visions of the world...: those of Jupiter and of Juno."²²¹ A much better question to ask of the end of the *Aeneid*, especially in its relation to Menoeceus' suicide, is whether or not Vergil gives us an instance of "generative violence."

Sarah Spence has taken just such a reading of Turnus' death. Spence accomplishes this by arguing that the end of the *Aeneid* looks back to Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, especially given that the second iteration of Pallas' repeated name at *Aen.* 12.948 could call Minerva to mind.²²²

Spence argues:

While the *Aeneid* begins as a poem about transgression and opposition between forces, it ends, however tentatively, as a poem about transformation and reconciliation. At the end of the poem, Turnus is sacrificed to Pallas and his groan places his spirit arguably beneath the earth where he and Camilla will enrich the soil of Rome as the Augustan Eumenides. It is not just Juno who is appeased at the end but Pallas as well, and it's not just Troy that has come to Italy, but Lavinium that has moved to the Palatine.²²³

²²⁰ Ganiban (2007) 143-144.

²²¹ Ganiban (2007) 144. Ganiban is so firmly set in this dichotomy, I suppose, because he is determined to see in the *Aeneid* an Augustan and anti-Augustan voice; see, for example, Ganiban (2007) 6. Feeney (1991) 151-152, on the other hand, notes the differences between Jupiter and Juno (and admits to the anxieties of the rage at the end of the poem) but allows their reconciliation to have a closural force on the narrative. In any case, I caution against relegating the allusivity between the *Thebaid* and the *Aeneid* to one which is *primarily* interested in politics; see, for example, the warning of Johnson (1976) 16.

²²² See Spence (1999) 156-158. Barchiesi (2001) 139-140 claims that the repetition of names is emblematic of intertextuality.

²²³ Spence (1999) 160-161.

Though we might pose some questions of this interpretation, Spence's intertext is sound.²²⁴ We ought not to forget that Aeneas is *furiis accensus* (*Aen.* 12.946), and while modern editions do not capitalize it, the distinction between "burned by fury" and "burned by the Furies," the goddesses of Aeschylus' play, would have been nonexistent for ancient readers and listeners. Aeneas is being burned by the same deities that Jupiter used to begin the ending of the epic at *Aen.* 12.845, although in this earlier instance they are called *Dirae* and not *Furiae*. In both instances, there is a realignment of what has been the dichotomy of *pietas* and *furor*: Jupiter, the god of *pietas*, aligns himself with Juno, the goddess of *furor*. The reconciliation of these two deities anticipates Aeneas allowing his *pietas* for Pallas to bring him to give vent to his *furor*.²²⁵

If the killing of Turnus can be seen as an instance of generative violence brought about by the alignment of *pietas* and *furor*, then we can see that, in the *Thebaid*, the marriage of *pietas* and *furor* engenders an act of *non-generative* violence: Menoeceus' sacrificial suicide accomplishes nothing in the scheme of the epic save an extension of the familial violence that plagues Thebes.

Throughout the Menoeceus episode the reader is reminded that the boy's sacrifice is supposed to grant safety to the Thebans: Tiresias' prophecy promises *salus* (*Theb.* 10.611), Menoeceus is hailed as *auctor pacis* and *servator* (*Theb.* 10.684). Menoeceus prays immediately before his suicide that the temples (*templa*) and homes (*domos*) of Thebes be safe from future harm (*Theb.* 10.768-769). His death, however, accomplishes neither safety nor peace for Thebes.

²²⁴ For example, it seems paradoxical that killing can end "the ongoing cycles of vengeance" (158); in the *Oresteia* Athena prevents ongoing violence by voting to spare Orestes' life. See also Panoussi (2009) 109-112.

²²⁵ For more on the (problematic) reconciliation of Juno in Book 12, and specifically its relationship with Juno's reconciliation in Ennius' *Annales*, see Feeney (1984).

At *Theb.* 10.881 Capaneus lays waste to the same temples (*templa*) and homes (*domos*) which Menoeceus had sought to save.²²⁶

The lamentation of Menoeceus' mother Eurydice further calls into question the efficacy of the Theban youth's suicide. At *Theb.* 10.789-790 soldiers bear the boy's adored corpse (*corpus adoratum*) back into the city and place him on his ancestral seat (*patria in sede*). Almost immediately thereafter (*mox*) they seek war again after paying homage (*repetunt bella peractis laudibus*). Statius makes it clear by *mox* and the iterative force of *repetunt bella* that Menoeceus' death has done nothing to stop the ongoing war. Tiresias' promise of safety has not been fulfilled. In fact, the only thing that Menoeceus' death immediately accomplishes is more familial violence (*Theb.* 10.802-803; 811-813):

tu, saeve Menoeceu,
tu miseram ante omnes properasti extinguere matrem...
ast egomet Danaos Capaneaue tela verebar:
haec erat, haec metuenda manus ferrumque quod amens
ipsa dedi.

You, harsh Menoeceus, you hastened before everyone else to kill your miserable mother...But I was afraid of the Argives and Capaneus' missiles: this, this was the hand that was to be feared and the sword which I myself mindlessly gave.

It is clear, then, that Eurydice is painting Menoeceus' suicide as a violent act against her. At *Theb.* 10.806-809 Eurydice bemoans the fact that Menoeceus is so different from herself (*tam diversa mihi*) because he is influenced too much (*nimirum*) by his descent on his father's side from the serpent of Mars (*Martius anguis*). Alan Heinrich points out that Menoeceus' "suicidal *virtus* is nothing less than the incarnation of the *amor mortis* that has been at work in the

²²⁶ Heinrich (1999) 185-188; as Heinrich notes, Statius has changed the order of events as they occurred in Euripides' *Phoenissae* (see 1090ff.) by removing the genre-dictated messenger's speech. This allows Statius to compare and contrast Menoeceus and Capaneus more readily. See also Fantham (1995) for further pessimistic connotations on Statius' pairing of the two heroes.

fratricidal history of Thebes.”²²⁷ Menoeceus has proven to be not an *auctor pacis* but rather the opposite, an *auctor belli*, for he has provided yet another instance of the typical Theban familial violence.

Hardie claims, “Modern readers will find in the epics of [the early empire] some of the most penetrating readings available of the *Aeneid*.”²²⁸ Indeed, Statius recognizes and problematizes Vergil’s attempt at a marriage of *pietas* and *furor*. Vergil ends his *Aeneid* with an act of sacrificial violence that is instigated by the alignment of the forces of *pietas* and *furor* on both the divine (Jupiter and Juno) and human (*pius* Aeneas becoming *furiis accensus*) planes. In the *Thebaid*, the alignment of these two forces prolongs the horrors of the epic rather than providing the poem with closural force.

On one level then, we can see that Statius has responded to Vergil’s ethical system. I, however, would like to return to a point we made at the outset of this section, namely, that Virtus’ initial characterization in Book 10 of the *Thebaid* mimics her description in *Ars Amatoria* Book Three. Let us look to Menoeceus’ fall as Virtus and Pietas lower the boy’s body to the ground (*Theb.* 10.780-782):

ast illum amplexae Pietas Virtusque ferebant
leniter ad terras corpus; nam spiritus olim
ante Iouem et summis apicem sibi poscit in astris.

But Pietas and Virtus, having embraced the body, were bearing it gently to the ground; for long before²²⁹ his spirit demanded Jove the peak in the highest stars for himself.

²²⁷ Heinrich (1999) 179. See also Keith (2000) 62: “Although Menoeceus is the child of her womb, his character proves his autochthonous origin and true line of descent from the snakes teeth sown in *tellus*, mother Earth.”

²²⁸ Hardie (1993) 22. On Girard’s term “sacrificial crisis” and its importance to our interpretation of this scene, see note 200 above.

²²⁹ See Williams (1972) ad loc.

Virtus, and the gender-switching in which she has in Book 10 been engaged, is an Ovidian character and can be read as a symbolic representation of Ovid's influence on Statius. In much the same way it is possible to read the goddess Pietas as the embodiment of Vergil's influence.²³⁰ It is extremely important that Statius makes such a marked distinction (*olim ante*) between the boy's body and his spirit. Virtus and Pietas, or Ovid and Vergil, remain behind while Menoeceus' spirit, or we might say Statius and his poetry, ascends to the heavens and demands a place amongst the stars.²³¹ To demand such a position is, by Statius' time, a rather common metaphor for poetic fame.²³² I am reminded of Ovid's *pars melior* (*Met.* 15.875) which he claims will live on above the high stars (*Met.* 15.875-876: *super alta...astra*). If we then understand Menoeceus' *spiritus* as Statius' *pars melior*, we can see that the Flavian poet's stellar trajectory overshoots that of his predecessors still carrying the inconsequential body to the ground.

Creon, Theseus, and Aeneas

It is not uncommon to read the final duel between Creon and Theseus in *Thebaid* 12 as a response to the duel between Aeneas and Turnus at the end of the *Aeneid*. To my knowledge it has gone unnoted that Statius also alludes to the end of the *Aeneid* earlier in Book 12 in a speech by Creon. In the following pages we shall see how Statius provides the reader with two different readings of the end of the *Aeneid* represented in Creon and Theseus.

²³⁰ See Ganiban (2007) 36 for the importance of Vergilian *pietas* to the genre of epic after the *Aeneid*. I would add that Statius calls the *Aeneid divina* at *Theb.* 12.816 in the *sphragis* of the *Thebaid*, which I will analyze below.

²³¹ Such a polemical allegorized reading of the *Thebaid* is anticipated by recent readings of the contest for Achilles' armor in Book 13 of the *Metamorphoses*. The contest has been read as one between Ulysses, symbolizing the new and versatile type of epic poetry as represented by the *Metamorphoses*, and Ajax, representing older epic poetry like the *Aeneid* and the Homeric corpus. Hopkinson (2000) 9-22 first proposed such a reading; see also Papaioannou (2007) 153-206.

²³² Cf. Horace's *Od.* 1.1.35-36: *quodsi me lyricis vatibus inseres / sublimi feriam sidera vertice*. Ascending to the stars and demanding a place amongst the gods is also a common image used of emperors ascending to heaven. Cf. Lucan's *B.C.* 1.45-59, with all of its ironic (under)tones, on which see Feeney (1991) 299-300; cf. also *Theb.* 1.22-31, on which see Rosati (2008) 184ff. and Ahl (1986) 2819-2822. In fact, it would seem that many poets connected their poetic immortality to the immortality of the emperor; see Feeney (2002) 184-185 on Horace's relationship with Augustus.

Book 12 of the *Thebaid* begins with the aftermath of the duel of Polynices and Eteocles; around one day has passed since Menoeceus' death. Creon performs funeral rites for his son on top of an elaborately constructed pyre (*Theb.* 12.60-71). These lines encourage us to think back to the *Aeneid*. At *Theb.* 12.68-69, Creon sacrifices living (*spirantes*) captives (*captiva corpora*) as offerings to the dead Menoeceus (*inferias*). At this the reader is most likely to think back to the eight living sacrifices Aeneas gives to the shade of Pallas at *Aen.* 11.81-84.²³³ This allusion primes the reader for a more pointed, polemical allusion in Creon's decree forbidding burial for the Argives (*Theb.* 12.93; 101-103):

accensaque iterat violentius ira:

...

suprema

ne quis ope et flammis ausit iuvisse Pelasgos;
aut nece facta luet numeroque explebit adempta
corpora. per superos magnumque Menoecea iuro.

With his anger incensed he speaks again more violently... "Let no one dare to have aided the Argives with last rites and flames; or he will pay for the deeds done with his death and will satisfy in number the rescued bodies. I swear this by the gods and great Menoeceus."

We will remember that Aeneas is *furiis accensus et ira / terribilis* (*Aen.* 12. 946-947) whereas Creon speaks with "incensed anger" (*accensa ira*). Just as Creon mentions his son as the guarantor of his actions, Aeneas also names Pallas as the sponsor of Turnus' sacrificial death (*Aen.* 12.948: *Pallas...Pallas*). Creon forbids burial just as Aeneas presumably denies burial for

²³³ See Pollmann *ad Theb.* 12.60-104. Though a reader may just as likely think back to Achilles slaughtering captives as living sacrifices to Patroclus (*Il.* 23.171-177), we cannot help but to think of Aeneas; the *Aeneid* scene itself certainly looks back to the *Iliad* and Statius will make use of the intertextual relationship between the ends of these two epics as he writes of Theseus killing Creon (see below). Though in this chapter I focus more on the *Aeneid*, Book 12 of the *Thebaid* shows Statius' skill as a reader in using the conflicting utterances of earlier texts in creating meaning. For more on Statius' tactic of so called "combinatorial allusion," see Hardie (1989). For more on the theoretical underpinning of such a reading, see Fowler (1997) 16: "Previous texts leave 'traces' in later texts, and the relationship between those traces, whether figured as additive or combative, is a central concern of any study of intertextuality: but the traces left are always multiple."

Turnus.²³⁴ For all of these parallels there is an important difference. Aeneas has forbidden burial to only one enemy while Creon has denied last rites to thousands; both literally and literarily, Creon is speaking more violently, *violentius*, than Aeneas.

Statius has set up Creon to represent one ending of the *Aeneid*.²³⁵ This represented ending is one with which many critics of the 20th century are familiar, for it is a reading of the so-called “pessimistic school.”²³⁶ Both Aeneas and Creon, acting under the influence of their passionate anger, deny their enemies the basic right of burial.

It is all the more important, then, that Statius goes on to provide a corrective ending to the *Aeneid*. Theseus, having arrived to aid the Argive women in securing burial for their family members, faces off in a duel with Creon. Theseus wounds Creon and (*Theb.* 12.778-781):

adstitit Theseus gravis armaque tollens,
 “iamne dare extinctis iustos” ait “hostibus ignes,
 iam victos operire placet? vade atra dature
 supplicia, extremique tamen secure sepulcri.

Stern Theseus lifting up the man’s arms stands near and says, “Now is it pleasing to give the proper flames to the dead enemy? Now is it pleasing to bury the conquered? Go ahead, [you] about to pay the dread penalty, and sure, nevertheless, of final burial.

²³⁴ The text of the *Aeneid* leads us to suppose that Aeneas does not offer burial to his fallen enemy; this is, perhaps, an ancient interpretation, for otherwise I find it difficult to explain why Statius has Theseus’ last words in the epic ensure burial for his enemy. On the end of the *Aeneid*, see Freund (2008) esp. 70-78. Freund suggests, “Die Bitte des sterbenden Hektor (*Il.* 22,337-343) wird letztlich doch erfüllt.” The text of the *Aeneid*, Freund suggests, allows no such reading. This reading is indebted to the final chapter of Putnam (1965) esp. 200.

²³⁵ Some interpreters may accuse this of being too allegorical. Feeney (1991) 364-391, however, claims that Statius’ art rests in part on his use of allegory.

²³⁶ What exactly I mean by using the term “pessimistic” is difficult to express; the term is a complicated idea defined and redefined by a dialogue stretching back decades. The thoughts of Johnson (1976) 15-16 best encapsulate what we have to learn from a “pessimistic” reading: “it [i.e., a pessimistic reading] tries to deal with the world in which Vergil shaped his fictions and does not project the symbolic world in the poem back onto the difficult world that he lived and wrote in... The question, Can our civilization be saved? is, I suppose, valid enough... [but] it is an unreasonable question to ask Vergil because Vergil does not know any more about the answer than we do.” To attempt to simplify this, we might say that a pessimistic reading of the poem is a reading that allows us, by a comparison of Vergil’s “real” and “poetic” worlds, to be aware of the anxiety which the text urges but does not mitigate.

Many scholars have pointed to the allusions to the *Aeneid* within these lines. Statius describes Theseus as “stern” (*gravis*) just as Aeneas is *acer* at *Aen.* 12.938; the use of the word *arma*, furthermore, cannot but help in solidifying an allusion to Vergil’s poem.²³⁷ Theseus goes on to say that Creon, whom he has described as a sacrificial victim (*hostia*) at 771, will pay a penalty (*dature / supplicia*) just as Aeneas tells Turnus at *Aen.* 12.948-949, that he will pay a penalty (*poenam*) with his wicked blood (*scelerato sanguine*) as Pallas figuratively kills him in the manner of ritual sacrifice (*immolat*).²³⁸ Furthermore, just as the significance of the Fury sent by Jupiter is emphasized in *Aeneid* 12 so also is the presence of the Furies noted in the duel between Creon and Theseus (*Theb.* 12.772-773: *ultricesque parate / Eumenidas*).²³⁹ The most important departure is that Theseus guarantees Creon burial after his death (*extremique secure sepulcri*), thus aligning the *Thebaid* with the *Iliad* rather than with the *Aeneid*.²⁴⁰ Theseus’ actions, therefore, represent a corrective ending to the *Aeneid*.

It is possible to argue, therefore, that Theseus brings the warfare of the epic to a close by killing a character who on one level represents a pessimistic reading of the *Aeneid*. The pessimistic ending represented by Creon symbolizes Aeneas committing an act of *nefas* by

²³⁷ Pollmann *ad Theb.* 12.778.

²³⁸ McNelis (2007) 162 and Braund (1996) 4. On the sacrificial imagery of the *Aeneid* see Hardie (1993) 33-34, Dyson (2001), Conte (2007) 154-155, and Warren (2001). See also note 37 above.

²³⁹ Some, such as Delarue (2000) 312-313, have seen the shift to the term Eumenides in the twelfth book of the *Thebaid* as important; as Ganiban (2007) 201 n.78 points out, however, Statius has referred to the Furies as the Eumenides outside of Book 12. Ganiban has missed, however, that Statius, who can otherwise term them *Dirae* or *Furiae*, names the Furies exclusively Eumenides the 4 times he mentions them in Book 12 (12.433, 559, 696, 773). It is possible, then, that Statius has picked up on the importance of Aeschylus’ *Eumenides* to the end of the *Aeneid*, for which see Spence (1999) esp. 158-161. Just as the *Aeneid* ends with an anger that, whether comforting or not, operates within a logical and predictable system, so too does the *Thebaid* wherein the transformed Eumenides signal an end to the familial violence sustained by the Furies throughout the rest of the narrative. This is not to say that the *Aeneid* provides a strictly comforting ending in its recollection of the “sacrificial crisis” of the *Eumenides*; see Panoussi (2009) 104-109. We have also in this assessment overlooked many of Theseus’ shortcomings. He is not necessarily a positive figure; see Coffee (2009), Ganiban (2007) 207-232, Dominik (1994) 92-98 for optimism and pessimism in the *Thebaid*; see Ganiban (2007) 5-6 and McNelis (2007) 160-161 with bibliography for more on the polyvocality of the *Thebaid*.

²⁴⁰ McNelis (2007) 155-159 shows the debt that the twelfth book of the *Thebaid* owes to the *Iliad*.

denying his enemy the basic human right of burial. Theseus, on the other hand, corrects this reading of the *Aeneid* by assuring his enemy of burial after his death. The *Aeneid*, though it began as a poem of *pietas*, ends by threatening to engender a world of *nefas*; the *Thebaid* begins as a poem of *nefas* but ends by denying the ethical system of revenge espoused by one reading of Aeneas' killing of Turnus.

The unspeakable ending

The final mythical event of the *Thebaid* is the mourning of the Argive women. At *Theb.* 12.791-793 the women are likened to Bacchantes whom one might think demand or have done more *nefas* (*quas poscere credas / aut fecisse nefas*). Some scholars have used this passage to point out that the mothers and women of the *Thebaid* are quite capable of engendering war and crime; many of these commentators then go on to caution against seeing the Argive women as a conciliatory device at the end of the poem. Weeping and mourning, they claim, are often just as dangerous as declarations of war.²⁴¹ This is an attractive interpretation for many reasons. First, it is quite literally true that Argia will give birth to a son who will take part in the next attack on Thebes.²⁴² Secondly, these are, we must remember, women who are under the guidance of Juno (see *Theb.* 12.291 ff.). The fierce goddess is whitewashed in Statius' epic but still contains, via the *Aeneid*, the intertextual force of *furor*. These women, under the sway of Juno's intertextual *furor*, provide the possibility for a new source of anger with which a poet could begin a new epic. Statius, however, explicitly denies the possibility at *Theb.* 12.808; even a *novus furor* would not be enough to tell of the mourning of the Argive women.

²⁴¹ The account of Augoustakis (2010) 85-91 offers the most recent account of this argument. See also Newlands (2006) 206-210, and Keith (2000) 65-100, esp. 99-100, "no occasion is immune from women's violent summons to war."

²⁴² Ganiban (2007) 139 points out that the *Thebaid* contains a reference to the *Epigoni* in the words of Jupiter at 7.220-221 (*veniet.../ ultoresque alii*). This is to my knowledge, however, the only reference to the *Epigoni* in the *Thebaid*.

That the women of the *Thebaid* have a frighteningly potent power of engendering new wars is not to be doubted. The end of the *Thebaid* makes a nod to this fact in the simile mentioned above. The voice of anxiety latent in the Bacchant simile is not the only or even the dominant voice. The end of the *Thebaid* looks back to the ending of the *Aeneid* and proposes an alternative ending. Statius ends his epic by pushing the narrative to a point where the genre of epic cannot go.²⁴³

At *Theb.* 12.805-807 we finally see something in the poem which can unite both sides of this horrendous war:

Arcada quo planctu genetrix Erymanthia clamet,
Arcada, consumpto servanem sanguine vultus,
Arcada, quem geminae pariter flevere cohortes.

With what sort of beating of her breast the Erymanthian [Atalanta] mother calls out the Arcadian [Parthenopaeus], the Arcadian who preserves his countenance though his blood has been spent, whom the twin cohorts equally wept.

Statius ends his mythological narrative with these lines. The “twin cohorts” (*geminae cohortes*) of women, the last words of the mythological narrative, counterbalance quite poignantly the first words (*fraternas acies*), *geminae* measuring up against *fraternas* and *cohortes* responding to *acies*. The closural force of the poem resides in the fact that this one boy is a source of grief for all sides equally.

Hardie has pointed out the importance of the repetition of the word *Arcada* in these lines. Not only, he claims, do the three iterations signal the closing of the epic; they also look back to the repetition of another name repeated at the end of an epic, the name of another Arcadian.²⁴⁴

²⁴³ I am here indebted to the observations of Barchiesi (2001) 131. Barchiesi focuses on the role of Fate in preserving the *Aeneid* from Book 4’s “intrusion of materials outside and not provided for in the epic code.” I argue below a corollary point to Barchiesi’s, that generic transgression can offer closural force. See also Pagan (2000) esp. 447-448.

²⁴⁴ Barchiesi (2001) 139-140 argues that the repetition of names is a marker signaling moments of intertextual significance.

Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas (Aen. 12.948).²⁴⁵ If the *Thebaid* comments on the ineffectiveness of the ethical system of the *Aeneid* at accomplishing an end to war, then it does so by threatening to pass outside of traditional epic discourse.

Statius forces the *Thebaid* to a halt with a variation of the countless mouths *topos* (*Theb.* 12.797-798) in which the poet expresses his inability to record an exhaustive catalogue of the mourning of the different Argive women. No number of epic voices is great enough to sing of so many feminine voices of lament.²⁴⁶ Statius' *novus furor* (*Theb.* 12.808), in other words a new epic, cannot really exist for it would be an unparalleled epic consisting only of feminine lament.²⁴⁷ In a very real sense, the women of the simile at *Theb.* 12.791-793 (see above) really do commit *nefas*, that which is literally "not to be spoken," as the epic ends.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ Michael Putnam has reminded me that the repetition of *Arcada* also stretches back to another similar instance in Vergil's poetry, namely the three times Hylas is named at *Ecl.* 6.43-44; Pollmann *ad Theb.* 12.805-807 also notes the repetition of Eurydice in *Georg.* 4.523-527. I find both of these repetitions to be extremely important to the passage in question, especially given that the end of the *Thebaid* threatens to move outside of the genre of epic. On the one hand, if Statius is looking back to Hylas, he is looking back to the bucolic tradition's representation of an epic figure: see Coleman (1977) *ad Ecl.* 6.43-44. As Hardie (1989) 10-11 also suggests, the competing generic worlds of bucolic and epic are equally important to our interpretation of Parthenopaeus and his Vergilian model Camilla. As for Eurydice, Conte (2001) 44-63 shows how the Aristaeus episode represents an internal struggle between the genres of elegy and didactic georgic similar to the generic tension described in Parthenopaeus, cf. also Thomas (1988) *ad Geor.* 4.525-527. At the end of the *Thebaid*, the repetition of *Arcada* takes place within a funerary/elegiac context. It is striking, and possibly significant, that these instances of repetition involve the mixing of genres. For more on this generic tension in Parthenopaeus, see Putnam (1995) 126-127.

²⁴⁶ That this generic breakdown is a function of the countless mouths *topos*, see Hinds (1998) 45-46. Indeed, as Hinds notes, there is an important precedent on an epic's inability, expressed through a play on the 100 mouths *topos*, to catalogue the expansiveness of female mourning (*Met.* 8.533-535): *non mihi si centum deus ora sonantia linguis / ingeniumque capax totumque Helicon dedisset, / tristia persequerem miserarum fata sororum.*

²⁴⁷ Also the suggestion of Hinds (1998) 46.

²⁴⁸ Fantham (2006) 157-159 shows another instance in the *Thebaid* where *nefas* is used in a similar way. She argues that when Amphiaraus says it would be *nefas* to warn Capaneus of his impending doom, "it is not so much *nefas* to warn him, as it is impossible." Michael Putnam has led me to another possible interpretation of *nefas*: as he reminds me, many find the end of the *Aeneid* discomfiting precisely because it does not contain a parallel to Homer's lamentation in *Iliad* 24 in *Aeneid* 12. In other words, the *Aeneid* leaves an account of lamentation over Turnus' corpse *nefas*, "unspoken." *Nefas* at the end of the *Thebaid*, then, may point to Vergil's failure to represent the burial of Turnus. This is, in essence, the argument of Putnam (1995) 88-89.

Sphragis

Thus the mythological narrative of the *Thebaid* ends. What remains is a 10-line *sphragis* which catapults the reader out of the mythological past into contemporary Rome (*Theb.* 12.812: *iam...praesens*).²⁴⁹ These ten lines are the object of intense, ongoing scrutiny.²⁵⁰ As Karla Pollmann has noted, it has been quite common for scholars to employ a politicized reading of the lines.²⁵¹ Statius' relationship with Domitian (*Theb.* 12.814: *Caesar*), however, goes beyond the scope of our argument.²⁵² Rather, I would like to pursue the metaliterary implications of Statius' closing remarks. We shall see that whereas Statius responds to Vergil in the closing of his mythological narrative, the *sphragis* makes a move at rewriting the conclusion to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, placing the *Thebaid* as the most recent member of the epic canon, following in the footsteps of Vergil's *Aeneid*.

As many have argued, Vergil's influence does not fade away from the last lines of the *Thebaid*. When, for example, Statius writes that the Italian youth (*Itala...iuventus*) learn (*discit*) and commit the *Thebaid* to memory (*memorat*), it is clearly a move to emulate the educational role which the *Aeneid* received so soon after its publication.²⁵³ In a certain sense, then, the *Thebaid* is the cultural successor to Vergil's poem.

Nonetheless, Vergil and the *Aeneid*, although the poem is explicitly named and alluded to in *Theb.* 12.816-817, are far less important to the *sphragis* than are Statius' other literary predecessors. Hardie has shown that even the clearly Vergilian allusion of *longe sequere et vestigia...adora* (*Theb.* 12.817) also calls to mind Lucretius' words on his predecessor Epicurus

²⁴⁹ See Pollmann ad loc.

²⁵⁰ See most recently Rosati (2008) with bibliography.

²⁵¹ See Pollmann ad *Theb.* 12.810-819. For such a reading, see Rosati (2008) and cf. Dominik (2003).

²⁵² For more on this, see bibliography cited in note 239 above.

²⁵³ On the popularity of the *Thebaid* and its reception in later works, see Parkes (2012) xxxiv, Dewar (1991) xxxvii, and Dominik (1994), all citing Juvenal *Sat.* 4.82-87.

(*DRN* 3.3-4: *te sequor...inque tuis nunc / ficta pedum pono pressis vestia signis*).²⁵⁴ While there is praise in calling the *Aeneid* divine (*Theb.* 12.816: *divinam*) and the command that the *Thebaid* worship (*Theb.* 12.817) the ground on which the *Aeneid* treads, Statius has already in the *Silvae* forced the *Aeneid* down on bended knee in adoration of Lucan (*Silv.* 2.7.79-80: *ipsa te Latinis / Aeneis venerabitur canentem*).²⁵⁵ Statius may not be as deferential as he appears.²⁵⁶

In the last four lines of the epic Statius gives commands for the personified *Thebaid* (*Theb.* 12.812: *Thebai*) to follow after its poet has perished (*Theb.* 12.819: *post me*).²⁵⁷ The first word of the poet's command is *vive* (*Theb.* 12.816). This recalls the final word of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, *vivam*.²⁵⁸ Despite the fact that both works express a hope of literary immortality, the distinction between the *post me* of *Theb.* 12.819 and the first person *vivam* of the *Metamorphoses* is important. Ovid assigns his literary immortality to the better part of himself (*Met.* 15.875: *parte...meliore mei*), emphasizing the first person nature of the conclusion. In the *Thebaid*, on the other hand, Statius does not grant himself, even his name, immortality (cf.

²⁵⁴ Hardie (1993) 110; cf. Pollmann ad loc.

²⁵⁵ See Newlands ad *Silv.* 2.7.79-80, cf. Pollmann ad *Theb.* 12.817. Dominik (2003) 106-107 notes another passage from *Silv.* 2.7 which has metaliterary implications similar to those of the *sphragis*. At *Silv.* 2.7.48-51 (*nocturnas alii Phrygum ruinas / et tardi reduces vias Ulixis / et puppem temerariam Minervae / trita vatibus orbita sequantur*), Statius makes a nod to the same image (whose Callimachean nature we will explore shortly) of following in marked tracks (*trita vatibus*). See Newlands ad loc. that these images call to mind mythological epics (*nocturnas...Phrygum ruinas: Aen.* 2; *tardi reduces vias Ulixis: Homer's Odyssey* and Naevius' translation; *puppem temerariam Minervae: the two versions of the Argonautica* by Apollonius Rhodius and Valerius Flaccus).

²⁵⁶ Rosati (2008) 176-177 is correct in claiming that "turning Virgil into a god, a classic to be contemplated 'from afar' [*Theb.* 12.817: *longe*] ...means getting rid of him, removing his unwelcome presence." Cf. Vessey (1986) 2976: "at the last, it is not the divinity but the vestigiality of the *Aeneid* which is enshrined and embedded in the textual universe of its adoring worshipper."

²⁵⁷ Hardie (1997) 157-158 notes that Statius arranges the *sphragis* in a strict chronological order.

²⁵⁸ As observed by many others: Hardie (1993) 110, Dominik (2003) 94. Cf. also Pollmann ad *Theb.* 12.816 that *vive* also recalls Lucan's *BC* 9.985-986, itself a statement of the power of poetry: *Pharsalia nostra / vivet, et a nullo tenebris damnabimur aevo*. I will return to Lucan in my conclusion.

Met. 15.876: *nomenque erit indelebile nostrum*).²⁵⁹ In the *Thebaid*, Statius looks outside himself and his own work for literary immortality (*Theb.* 12.819): *meriti post me referentur honores* (“deserved praise will be referred [upon you] after my death”). Praise, deserved (*meriti*) though it may be, cannot be granted by the poet; it can only be granted by others, by future *readers* (thus the voice and tense of *referentur*), a point to which we shall return.²⁶⁰

At every turn, the *sphragis* of the *Thebaid* shows itself to be not so much a statement of inferiority but a statement of continuation. As Hardie has argued, following in the footsteps of the *Aeneid* is not self-deprecation, it is the mark of a successor, a claim to be of the same literary family of which Vergil is a father figure.²⁶¹ But, some may argue, *longe*, “at a distance,” can be taken as a mark of just how far away the *Thebaid* is from the canonization of the *Aeneid* and its status as a “classic.”²⁶² Yet once again, we must consider the metaliterary implications of *longe*. It looks back to the first instance of the word, *longa retro series* (*Theb.* 1.7), which we argued at the outset of this chapter is a nod to all the other mythic stories of Thebes and the poets who wrote them. Pollmann argues that Statius alludes to the *Aeneid* so explicitly here as a way of telling the reader how to read the *Thebaid*: “this is a self-referential ‘reading guide,’ as the *Theb.* is a work to be read *after* the *Aeneid* which it is rewriting.”²⁶³ If this is the case, then *longe* must look back to the other poems (e.g. Euripides’ *Phoenissae*), and their intertextual significance, standing in between the *Thebaid* and its rereading of the *Aeneid*.

I argued above that the *sphragis* of the *Thebaid* externalizes fame, citing in the last line the passive voice of *referentur* and the utter absence of the poet (*post me*) when its deserved

²⁵⁹ Note, however, the point made by Vessey (1986) 2975-2976: “that the *ego scribens* also lives on is a fortunate by-product of the materiality of the written word.” It cannot, however, be contested that Ovid’s hope for immortality is much more personal in tone than Statius’.

²⁶⁰ So also Vessey (1986) 2975: “the life of a text is assumed to be in its readers.”

²⁶¹ Hardie (1993) 89.

²⁶² Rosati (2008) 176-177, who also sees in Statius’ allusion to Vergil ambition rather than deference.

²⁶³ Pollmann ad *Theb.* 12.817 and Dominik (1994) 174-175; cf. Vessey (1986) 2966.

honors are conferred upon it. This externalization was in contrast with Ovid's claims that it was the poet himself who was the source of fame. Just as Statius' allusion to the *Aeneid* serves as a type of reading guide, so, I would propose, does the Ovidian allusion.

It is beneficial to balance Statius' hopes for immortality, predicated as they are on Ovid's words in the *Metamorphoses*, against Ovid's use of his source in the conclusion of the *Metamorphoses*: Horace's *Odes*.²⁶⁴ The most important of Ovid's allusions to the present argument is in the final line of the *Metamorphoses* (*Met.* 15.879): *siquid habent veri vatum praesagia, vivam* ("if the prophecies of *vates* contain anything of the truth, I will live"). The *praesagia vatum* must be literature produced before Ovid, if we take *vatum* to mean poets. Indeed, the word *vates* meaning poet is quite striking in the context of a passage so informed by Horace, who often refers to himself as a *vates* in his *Odes*.²⁶⁵ Ovid places himself as the culminating point of all literary history; now, when one reads the works to which Ovid has alluded, one cannot help but think of him. Literature before Ovid therefore becomes Ovidian.

Statius makes a similar move when he alludes to the *Aeneid* and the *Metamorphoses*, but he does Ovid one better. Ovid had claimed that he would live on *ore populi* (*Met.* 15.878), but this statement is qualified by the fact that Ovid's hope of immortality rests on the *praesagia vatum*. Ovid's hope for future fame, therefore, rests mainly on the literary past and not the future. Statius, on the other hand, focuses on the future, on his literary descendants, when he writes *post me referentur honores* (*Theb.* 12.819). The fame of the *Thebaid* rests not only on the fact that it rewrites the literary past, but also in the fact that it will be alluded to (*referentur*) by future authors.

²⁶⁴ For a more thorough account of Ovid's allusions to Horace in the conclusion of the *Metamorphoses*, see Bömer (1986) 488-491.

²⁶⁵ Lovatt (2007) shows the importance of the Horatian development of the *vates* to Statius' *Silvae*. Lovatt (2007) 145 works against the important earlier study on *vates*, Newman (1967). See also Jocelyn (1995) on the terms *poeta* and *vates* and their usage.

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