

Notes on Statius' *Thebaid* Books I and II

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Had Fate been kind to students of the *Thebaid*, we might have had an edition of the poem by the great Aristarchus himself. It is well known that Bentley contributed a good deal to the conjectural emendation of the epic; what is not well known is that he had collated five manuscripts in their entirety, an enterprise which signals more than a passing interest in the restoration of the text.¹ In the event, however, no edition of the *Thebaid* ever came from Bentley's pen, any more than it had come from Heinsius', or would come from Housman's; the three greatest critics of the Latin poets thus missed, or declined, the editorial challenge presented by this epic.

For unless I am sorely mistaken, and despite the best endeavours of generations of critics,² there remains a vast amount still to be done for the amelioration of the *Thebaid*; and the reason why is not far to seek. Statius is not an easy writer even to take the measure of, let alone to emend: he is tortuous, devious, prone to exaggeration, prone to straining at the confines of Latinity, a bold experimenter in language.³ Or so he seems, from what the manuscripts tell us; but never distant is the question whether what they tell us is the product of scribal corruption or authorial audacity; and I have a

¹ I know of no explicit evidence that Bentley ever meditated an edition of the *Thebaid*, and I have looked in vain for any reference to the poem in *The Life of Richard Bentley* by J. H. Monk. Of the five manuscripts collated by Bentley, four were Cambridge ones, two in Peterhouse, one in Emmanuel College, and one in what was then the Public Library; the collations of these are to be found in a copy of Gevartius' edition of 1616 now in the British Library (shelfmark 687. c. 10). The fifth manuscript, written at Rochester (and r in the current sigla), he collated in the King's Library; this collation, transcribed for O. Müller by a Polish scholar (Klotz viii), who presumably could have looked at the actual manuscript, is to be found in a copy of Gevartius' edition of 1618 (shelfmark 687. c. 11). I fancy I am the first scholar since Bentley to have collated this manuscript in its entirety; and that reflects no credit on the British editors of the *Thebaid*.

² To which must now be added distinguished contributions by D. R. Shackleton Bailey, in *Museum Helveticum* 40 (1983) 51–60, and W. S. Watt, in *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 31 (1984) 158–62 and *Eranos* 85 (1987) 49–54.

³ See the remarks by Moritz Haupt in "Beiträge zur Berichtigung der Gedichte des Statius," *Opuscula* 3, 126–36, especially 128. Haupt faithfully records the unpublished conjectures of Bentley (to be found in the copy of Gevartius' edition of 1616 mentioned above, note 1) and of Schrader (to be found in MS. Berol. Diez. B. Sant. 47). Many of these conjectures are unaccountably omitted by Hill.

strong suspicion that it was because of this ubiquitous uncertainty that none of the three Grand Masters undertook a recension of the epic. Be that as it may, the generality of editors has been guided by a respectful timidity which has led them to leave unquestioned in the text a whole mass of unsatisfactory, or incredible, lections.

No one who attempts to emend Statius can fail to be aware that he is operating in a minefield, where any suspicious object which he handles may blow up in his face. I am very conscious of the risks attendant on this exercise, and have no great hopes of returning entirely unscathed from this initial "push" to the end of Book II. At every turn I proceed on the assumption that the *amica Thebais* was originally a poem which could be understood, at least superficially, on a first hearing; and that is more than can be said about much of the medieval *Thebaid* with which we now have to contend.⁴ That said, let me now go "over the top"!

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1. 33-40

	satis arma referre	
Aonia et geminis sceptrum exitiale tyrannis		
nec furiis post fata modum flammasque rebelles		35
seditione rogi tumulisque carentia regum		
funera et egestas alternis mortibus urbes,		
caerulea cum rubuit Lernaeo sanguine Dirce		
et Thetis arentes adsuetum stringere ripas		
horruit ingenti uenientem Ismenon aceruo.		40

As Lactantius Placidus correctly informs us in his note on line 37, the two cities emptied by death are Thebes and Argos, and in the sequel we naturally expect to find reference to both of them. Argos, indeed, is dealt with in 38 (*Lernaeo sanguine*), but Thebes is nowhere to be seen. The fault, I suggest, lies in the very tame *ingenti*, and what Statius wrote was perhaps *Ogygio*.

1. 41-45

quem prius heroum, Clio, dabis? inmodicum irae		
Tydea? laurigeri subitō an uatis hiatus?		
urguet et hostilem propellens caedibus amnem		
turbidus Hippomedon, plorandaque bella proterui		
Arcados atque alio Capaneus horrore canendus.		45

Lest anyone suppose that "authority" attaches to the remarks of an ancient scholiast, hear what Lactantius Placidus has to say about *alio* in 45: "bene

⁴ In this paper I take my lemmata from Hill's edition (1983). I have also consulted the following editions: Gevartius (1616 and 1618); Cruceus (1618); Veenhusen (1671); O. Müller (1870); Garrod (1906); Klotz (1908), revised by Klinnert (1973); Mozley (1928); Heuvel, Book I only (1932); and Mulder, Book II only (1954).

alio horrore, maiore impetu dictionis. ut ipse alibi de Capaneo 'grauioraque tela mereri' . . ." This is moonshine, and it comports ill with *ploranda . . . bella*, glossed by Lactantius as "miseratione digna,"—if indeed the intrinsic incredibility of *alio* is insufficient condemnation. I say all this by way of commending Frieseemann's *alto*, which had occurred also to me before I learned that he had proposed it.

1. 46–52

impia iam merita scrutatus lumina dextra
 merserat aeterna damnatum nocte pudorem
 Oedipodes longaque animam sub morte trahebat.
 illum indulgentem tenebris imaeque recessu
 sedis inaspectos caelo radiisque penates
 seruantem tamen adsiduis circumuolat alis
 saeua dies animi, scelerumque in pectore Dirae.

50

The story of the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae's* lost cat was immortalized by A. E. Housman, but that loss was occasioned by *ThLL's* looking at the text of Juvenal 15. 7 in the wrong edition; in the present case no blame whatever attaches to *ThLL*, since the lugubrious word I here wish to present has never before appeared in print. Consider, if you will, the phrase *indulgentem tenebris*, and ask yourself what it means; consider also Lactantius, who glosses *indulgentem* as "operam dantem," and ask yourself what he thought he meant. Mozley translates: "while he hugs his darkness"; and that, even as paraphrase, is miles from the Latin. The sheer idiocy of *indulgentem* may perhaps be made clearer if I concoct an analogous expression, and write of a blind man *qui indulget caecitati*.⁵ If one is blind, how can one "indulge" or "apply oneself" (so Lactantius) to one's "blindness"? But enough. The word unknown to all dictionaries of the Latin language which is required here is *inlugentem*.

1. 73–74

exaudi, si digna precor quaeque ipsa furenti
 subiceres.

Why not *subicias*?

1. 112–13

tum geminas quatit ira manus: haec igne rogali
 fulgurat, haec uiuo manus aera uerberat hydro.

Efforts to remove the unpleasing reduplication of *manus* drew Heinsius' and Gronovius' fire to line 112, where they proposed *minax* and *minas* respectively. Both conjectures are easy in themselves, but both, to my

⁵ Heuvel comments: "Non caecitate contentus etiam sponte novas tenebras sibi quaerit senex . . ."; but how on earth would the old man tell one kind of darkness from another?

mind regrettably, leave *geminas* temporarily unexplained. Barth, accordingly, had aimed at line 113, advancing the proposal *uacuum*, which is obviously a possibility, but no more than that, since *simul* or *motum* would be no less possible.

1. 137–38

haud secus indomitos praeceps discordia fratres
asperat.

There has preceded a simile describing two bulls tugging a yoke in opposite directions. With 137 f. we return to Eteocles and Polynices, and the adjective *praeceps*, which has occurred already at 123 and will occur again at 141 in the form *praecipiti*, is offered by the manuscripts to describe their discord. I will not say that there is no sense here in *praeceps*, but I will venture to say that there would be more sense in *anceps*.

1. 156–61

quid si peteretur crimine tanto
limes uterque poli, quem Sol emissus Eoo
cardine, quem porta uergens prospectat Hibera,
quasque procul terras obliquo sidere tangit
aius aut Borea gelidas madidiue tepentes
igne Noti? 160

The problem lies in 160, where the sun, which always travels along the ecliptic, is wrongly described as *aius*,⁶ and *Borea*, unlike *Noti*, is unqualified. I propose

aut niueo Borea gelidas madidiue tepentes
igne Noti.

The combination *aut . . . -ue* has Virgilian precedent (*Aen.* 10. 93); cf. Kühner-Stegmann, *Lat. Gramm.* II. 112.

1. 184–85

fratnasque acies fetae telluris hiatu
augurium seros dimisit ad usque nepotes.

I am surprised to find that no one, apparently, has yet proposed *demisit*.

1. 324–26

tunc sedet Inachias urbes Danaeciaque arua
et caligantes abrupto sole Mycenae
ferre iter impaudum, . . .

⁶ Wrongly, unless one can swallow Heuvel's comment: "Quasi Sol ipse, non radii Solis perveniant ad loca illa procul sita."

Various conjectures in the *Thebaid* by Gilbert Wakefield are to be found recorded in a copy of Cruceus' edition now in the British Library (shelfmark 654. b. 15); that these manuscript notes should not have been consulted even by British editors of Statius is matter for regret.⁷ In 325 Wakefield proposed *abrepto*, which I mention in the body of this paper simply because it had also occurred to me before I found my way to him.

1. 364-69

ille tamen, modo saxa iugis fugientia ruptis
miratus, modo nubigenas e montibus amnes
aure pauens passimque insano turbine raptas
pastorum pecorumque domos, non segnius amens
incertusque uiae per nigra silentia uastum
haurit iter; pulsat metus undique et undique frater. 365

At 326 (quoted above) we had *ferre iter impaudum*; and are we now to believe that Polynices is afraid (366, 369)? As the text stands, moreover, the exile does no more than "marvel" at falling boulders (which could prove dangerous or even fatal), while "fearing with his ear"⁸ the torrents which carry away cottages and farm buildings (and could prove equally dangerous or even fatal). In place of *pauens* I propose *cauens*: Polynices uses his ears to guard against falling into the rushing waters.

In 369 it is not possible, I believe, to extend the connotation of *metus* to mean "fear from which he is immune" (so as to save 326), since Polynices very evidently is "buffeted" by thoughts of his brother, and the complementary noun in 369 ought to be equally effective. Perhaps *Notus* in the general sense of "the wind"?

1. 370-75

ac uelut hiberno deprensus nauita ponto,
cui neque Temo piger neque amico sidere monstrat
Luna uias, medio caeli pelagique tumultu
stat rationis inops, iam iamque aut saxa malignis
expectat summersa uadis aut uertice acuto
spumantes scopulos erectae incurere prorae. 375

To sink the ship, the reefs (375) must obviously hole it on or below the water-line; hence (I suspect) Mozley's pictorial translation: "waits to see

⁷ Since these conjectures, unlike Bentley's (see above, note 3), have not been published, I will here list those in Books I and II (reserving the others for a future occasion): 1. 20 *templa Iouis*; 27 *ignigerum*; 52 *lues*; 55 *laeuaque*; 135 *neque ab aequis uel et iniquis*; 182 *corpora*; 198 *lectis*; 227 *immota uel indocta*; 231 *uice noctis abacta*; 232 *mentemque*; 264 *melior*; 283 *aspera mouit*; 360 *ueteres*; 382 *omnis*; 437 *terribilem flictu*; 477 *rapidam* ("et ita MS."); 490 *onus*; 594 *at atro*; 622 *scabrosque*; 2. 5 "an ut καταιξις"; 43 *plangentia*; 67 *nexa uel fixa*; 130 *bella furit*; 136 *uultumque*; 237 *Phoebo* ("et ita schol."); 332 *mente aluit*; 351 *num (?) conscius*; 378 *Nemeam*; 380 *illataque*; 541 *aspraque*; 599 *pulsata*.

⁸ The phrase *aure pauescens* occurs at *Theb.* 12. 222, where it is applied to Argia.

foaming jagged rocks fling themselves at his prow and *heave it high in the air*" (my italics). But *erectae* is most awkwardly placed to bear a predicative function.⁹ Perhaps *porrectae*, for which compare *OLD* s. v. *porrectus*.

1. 376–79

talis opaca legens nemorum Cadmeius heros
 accelerat, uasto metuenda umbone ferarum
 excutiens stabula, et prono uirgulta refringit
 pectore (dat stimulus animo uis maesta timoris).

Fear once again in 379 (376 is different, since *metuenda* means "fearful" in a generalized way). Lactantius informs us that "VIS MAESTA TIMORIS tristitia est," but this does not account for *timoris*; and fear indeed is the last emotion to beset a man who barges through the lairs of wild beasts in the dead of night. I suggest *tumoris*, and understand the phrase *uis maesta tumoris* to mean something like "the force of his sullen passion."

1. 390–91

rex ibi, tranquillae medio de limite uitae
 in senium uergens, populos Adrastus habebat.

Against *tranquillae* and in favour of *tranquille* Müller had commented: "*apparet sententiam populos Adrastus habebat ieiunam et frigidam esse propter nuditatem uerbi habebat*"; and his objection to *tranquillae* has force, in my opinion. But is not the Latinity of *rex populos tranquille habebat* somewhat peculiar? Might not *tranquille*, moreover, placed as it would be before *uergens*, be gathered into an association with the wrong verb? Altogether clearer, I suggest, would be *tranquillos*.

1. 408–12

hic uero ambobus rabiem fortuna cruentam
 attulit: haud passi sociis defendere noctem
 culminibus; paulum alternis in uerba minasque
 cunctantur, mox ut iactis sermonibus irae
 intumescere satis, tum uero . . .

On *alternis* Lactantius comments, correctly: "mutua uice uerborum"; and that surely steals the thunder of *uerba*, though thunder is hardly the right word for so tame a noun. I suggest that what Statius wrote was *in probra*.

1. 412–16

tum uero erectus uterque
 exertare umeros nudamque lacessere pugnam.

⁹ And this interpretation was rightly rejected by Heuvel. His own comment, however, I do not find helpful: "Prora navis, sublata undis, eo maiore vi scopulis illiditur." Where is the justification for "eo maiore vi"?

celsior ille gradu procera in membra simulque
integer annorum; sed non et uiribus infra
Tydea fert animus, . . . 415

"Taller the Theban, with long stride" is Mozley's version of *celsior ille gradu*, but where in the Latin is "long"? Lactantius is hilariously vacuous: "Polynices pedibus longior et membris decorus." At the heart of the problem is the incongruity of the conjunction of *celsior* with *gradu*;¹⁰ and, since *celsior* is unexceptionable, the odd-man-out must be *gradu*. I suggest *auctu*, comparing (though the comparison is not entirely apposite) *Ach.* 2. 90 *quas membra augere per artes*; the phrase *corporis auctu(m)* is attested for *Lucr.* 2. 482 and *Luc.* 9. 797 (*ThLL* 2. 1235, 21 ff.).

1. 451-59

inde orsus in ordine Tydeus
continuat: "maesti cupiens solacia casus
monstriferae Calydonis opes Acheloiaque arua
deserui; uestris haec me ecce in finibus ingens
nox operit. tecto caelum prohibere quis iste
arcuit? an quoniam prior haec ad limina forte
molitus gressus? pariter stabulare bimembres
Centaurus unaque ferunt Cyclopas in Aetna
compositos . . ." 455

Despite Virgil (*Georg.* 4. 497, where the *ingens nox* is that of Styx) and Lucan (7. 571 *nox ingens scelerum est*, and Mars is at work on the battle-field), I do not entirely believe in *ingens* at 454. It was a bad night, to be sure, with a great storm (though no storm is mentioned here), but, *qua* night, it did no more than bear down on Tydeus; and for that sense to be conveyed we require *urgens*.

Then, at 455, the manuscripts represent Tydeus as enquiring about the identity of the man who prevented him from taking shelter from the storm, and following that up with a suggestion that it was perhaps "because" he got there first that the man prevented him; after which, we are told that even Centaurs and Cyclopes share quarters with one another. Thereafter, the initially burning question of identity is forgotten, and Tydeus proceeds to threaten his opponent, *quisquis es*, with a fresh bout of fighting. Has he lost all interest now in the name of his opponent? No, because he never had any, his words in 455 f. being

tecto caelum prohibere quid iste
arcuit?

¹⁰ "Cum ambo stabant ('gradu'), Polynices magis elatus erat in proceritatem" is Heuvel's comment. But *gradu* refers to movement, not to stance.

I labour this conjecture (in which, as I discover, I have been preceded by Baehrens) since Hill does not see fit even to record it in his apparatus, and neither Klotz nor Garrod appreciated its point.

I. 655–57

sed quid fando tua tela manusque
demoror? expectant matres, supremaque fiunt
uota mihi. satis est: merui ne parcere uelles.

And does Coroebus, then, who offers himself as the scapegoat to save his comrades, have more than one mother? His last prayer, that his comrades should be spared, has been made, and what await him now are the *manes*.¹¹

I. 664–66

nostro mala nubila caelo
diffugiunt, at tu stupefacti a limine Phoebi
exoratus abis.

The point here, as I see it, is that Coroebus did not beg for his life; quite the contrary, in fact, as 659 in particular demonstrates (*insignem . . . animam leto demitte*). The right word in 666 is, I think, *exoneratus*.

I. 684–86

regnum et furias oculosque pudentes
nouit et Arctois si quis de solibus horret
quique bibit Gangen . . .

Line 685 Mozley renders as: “even he hath heard who shivers ‘neath an Arctic sun,” the sense of which is impeccable. Would not *sub solibus*, then, be more appropriate?¹²

2. 26–31

illos ut caeco recubans in limine sensit
Cerberus, atque omnes capitum subrexit hiatus;
saeuus et intranti populo, iam nigra tumebat
colla minax, iam sparsa solo turbauerat ossa,
ni deus horrentem Lethaeo uimine mulcens
ferrea tergemino domuisset lumina somno.

30

The manuscripts in 27 all have *atque*, which Hill understands as meaning “statim”; he then alleges, I know not why, that it is “wrong” to join *saeuus . . . populo* with *illos . . . hiatus*, and punctuates strongly after *hiatus*. I may of course be wrong, but it seems to me that the strong break comes

¹¹ From Heuvel I learn that this conjecture was proposed by Alton (in *CQ* 17 [1923] 175), and that it is “useless.”

¹² For *de* here Heuvel compares *Theb.* 4. 72 f. *nam trunca uident de uulnere multo / cornua*, but I do not see that the two cases are at all comparable.

after *populo*, not after *hiatus*: Mercury and Laius may surely count for the nonce as part of the *intrans populus*. That *atque* may here have the force of "statim" I cannot disprove, but, like Lachmann (*alte*) and Unger (*aeque*), and recently Watt (who proposes *et* for *ut* in 26),¹³ I find it troublesome, largely because of its ambivalence. Perhaps Statius wrote *una*?

2. 37-40

illic exhausti posuere cubilia uenti,
fulminibusque iter est; medium caua nubila montis
insumpsere latus, summos nec praepetis alae
plausus adit colles, nec rauca tonitrua pulsant.

Unlike Hill, I do not regard these lines as spurious (and I have accordingly dropped his square brackets round them); but I am not here concerned with the general question of authenticity, only with one particular matter of reading. In 38 all the manuscripts have *iter est*, which is flatly at variance with 37; hence Postgate's *quies*. I suggest *mora est*.

2. 134-39

et iam Mygdoniis elata cubilibus alto
impulerat caelo gelidas Aurora tenebras, 135
rorantes excussa comas multumque sequenti
sole rubens; illi roseus per nubila seras
aduertit flammam alienumque aethera tardo
Lucifer exit equo . . .

Aurora has risen from her couch and driven away the darkness. Behind her follows the sun. As the morning star makes its exit from the sky, which now belongs to another, does it turn its flames towards Aurora (*aduertit*)? Surely not. What it does is to turn them away from her; and that is *auertit*.

2. 148-51

postquam mediis in sedibus aulae
congressi inque uicem dextras iunxere locumque,
quo serere arcanas aptum atque euoluere curas, 150
insidunt, prior his dubios compellat Adrastus.

locum insidunt quo aptum (*sc. erat*) *serere curas* is to my mind thoroughly pedestrian. *conserere*, with *aptum* serving as an exponent of *locum*, would be altogether neater.

2. 188-89

sic interfatus, et alter
subicit.

¹³ In *Eranos* 85 (1987) 49.

For *interfatus* Hill refers his reader to 174–76, where Polynices and Tydeus are said to give the impression that they would each be happy for the other to speak first; and then the impulsive Tydeus begins. His speech proceeds without interruption to a natural conclusion in 188, and then Polynices follows. There is, I submit, no suggestion of any interruption, which is the normal sense of *interfor*.¹⁴ Perhaps, therefore, *sic alter fatus, et alter subicit*?

I note that Gruber (in *ThLL* 7. 1. 2196. 40 ff.) was evidently bothered by this passage, to which he subjoins another Statian passage (*Th.* 7. 290), which bothers me also. That line reads:

dixerat (sc. Phorbas), et paulum uirgo interfata loquenti.

But how is *paulum* here to be reconciled with *interfata*, and how does *loquenti* suit Phorbas now that he has (temporarily) finished speaking? The manuscripts at this point offer *docenti* as well as *loquenti*, and there is attestation also for the termination *-em*. Let me therefore hazard, at least as a stimulus to further thought about this line, that we might contemplate reading:

dixerat, et paulum uirgo remorata docentem.

2. 240–43

tunc, si fas oculis, non umquam longa tuendo
expedias, cui maior honos, cui gratior, aut plus
de loue; mutatosque uelint transumere cultus,
et Pallas deceat pharetras et Delia cristas.

When *honos* has been qualified by *maior*, is there any gain in adding the further qualification *gratior*? The word that lurks here, I suggest, is *gratia*, and if that suggestion is right, the line might be restored as follows:

expedias, cui maior honos aut gratia, cui plus . . .

2. 303

quos optat gemitus, quantas cupit impia clades!

Eriphyle's desire is for the fatal necklace, and, in so desiring, she in fact desires *gemitus* and *clades*; for her husband will be slain in the war to come. No doubt she is *impia*, but in this line what is needed is *inscia*.

2. 309–310

quippe animum subit illa dies, qua, sorte benigna
fratris, Echionia steterat priuatus in aula.

¹⁴ Mulder has a long note on *sic interfatus*, but I cannot accept his suggestion that the words are to be understood to mean "sic pro sua parte fatus est."

Laur. 38. 6 (= M) gives *ille* in 309, and a reduction in the number of feminine words in this line would aid clarity. Perhaps *ille . . . quo*, therefore?

2. 368–70

iam potior cunctis sedit sententia, fratris
 pertemptare fidem tutosque in regna precando
 explorare aditus.

The council decides to negotiate with Eteocles, and by entreaty seek a “safe” return to Thebes for Polynices. *tutos* seems strangely without point here. It is not so much that Polynices wishes to return without being attacked as that he wishes to return as king in terms of the original agreement, of which *fides* was the guarantee. *pactos* therefore?

2. 389–91

constitit in mediis (ramus manifestat oliuae
 legatum) causasque uiae nomenque rogatus
 edidit;

For *ramus* some manuscripts offer *ramo*, and the parenthesis, to my mind, is uncomfortably abrupt. Perhaps *ramo manifestus oliuae / legatus*?

2. 430–38

te penes Inachiae dotalis regia dono
 coniugis, et Danaae (quid enim maioribus actis
 inuideam?) cumulentur opes. felicibus Argos
 auspiciis Lemamque regas: nos horrida Dirces
 pascua et Euboicis artatas fluctibus oras,
 non indignati miserum dixisse parentem
 Oedipoden: tibi larga (Pelops et Tantalus auctor!)
 nobilitas, propiorque fluat de sanguine iuncto
 Iuppiter. 435

What is the relevance of *actis* (431), when the surrounding context is concerned with wealth? Madvig had an inkling that something was amiss, but his *aulis* is wide of the mark. What is required here is *arcis*, money-chests.

In 432–38 Hill runs together what I conceive to be two distinct pairs of contrasts: between Argos and Lerna in their felicity, and the rough pastures and cramped shores of the Theban realm; and between the Theban lineage, which includes Oedipus, an unwelcome parent (cf. 442), and the Argive, which ascends by a shorter route to Jupiter via Pelops and Tantalus. To demarcate this second contrast a full-stop is needed after *oras*; and to reinforce the emphasis laid on *tibi larga . . . nobilitas*, the factually (in this context) incorrect *non indignati* should become *nos indignati*.

2. 438–40

anne feret luxu consueta paterno
hunc regina larem? nostrae cui iure sorores
anxia pensa trahant, . . .

Why *iure*? What difference would it make whether Antigone and Ismene spun because they were obliged to, or because they chose to? The contrast here, surely, is between a new queen who is accustomed to luxury, and royal sisters who are accustomed to the menial task of spinning; and that contrast would be better served by *more*.

2. 446–47

respice quantus
horror et attoniti nostro in discrimine ciues.

Koestlin did not like *et* (for which he proposed *ut*), and neither do I. It may be that all that is necessary is to replace it with *quam*,¹⁵ which would better maintain the impetus of *quantus*, or alternatively, *quantus / horror et* might be changed to *quanto / horrore*.

2. 451–53

non ultra passus et orsa
iniecit mediis sermonibus obuia: "reddes,"
ingeminat "reddes; . . ."

Tydeus can stand no more of Eteocles' sanctimonious concern for the people of Thebes, and rudely interrupts. The adjective *obuia*, as a predicative, is utterly feeble here, and something stronger is needed. *improba* would suit well.

2. 460–61

o quanta Cithaeron
funera sanguineusque uadis, Ismene, rotabis!

When Mozley translates "What carnage shalt thou see, Cithaeron, and thou, Ismenus, roll down upon thy blood-stained waters!", he is plainly cheating, since "shalt thou see" is nowhere to be seen in the Latin.¹⁶ The verb *rotabis* is entirely apt of a river, but entirely inept of a mountain. What we need here is a second river name in place of *Cithaeron*. Perhaps *Lycormas*, mentioned at 4. 845 (837)?

¹⁵ Klotz comments: "*sed ex quantus ἀπὸ κοινοῦ quam ad attoniti pertinet.*" I do not find this credible.

¹⁶ For *rotabis* Müller proposed *notabis*, but I cannot imagine how he then understood *uadis*. Klotz, followed by Mulder, postulated a zeugma, and Mulder fancied that *feres* might be understood. I find this excessively difficult.

2. 479–80

attonitae tectorum e limine summo
aspectant matres.

I can make no meaningful connexion between *limine* and *summo*,¹⁷ and conclude that the one or the other is wrong. If *summo* is right, we should accept the variant reading *culmine*; if *limine*, the right adjective is *primo*.

2. 505–09

hic fera quondam
pallentes erecta genas suffusaque tabo
lumina, concretis infando sanguine plumis
reliquias amplexa uirum semesaque nudis
pectoribus stetit ossa premens uisuque trementi
conlustrat campos . . .

A gruesome picture of the Sphinx standing, but not at full height (cf. 515), over the mangled remains of its victims. Despite Lactantius' "erectas genas habens," *erecta* jars, and *infecta* might perhaps be considered. Then there is *nudis* / *pectoribus*, which Mozley absurdly takes as referring to the Sphinx (when are Sphinxes ever portrayed as wearing clothes?). More to the point would be *crudis* / *uisceribus*.

2. 541–43

per tamen Olenii tegimen suis atraque saetis
terga super laeuos umeros uicina cruori
effugit et uiduo iugulum ferit inrita ligno.

I find it hard to believe that a spear can pass over the left shoulder without drawing blood, and at the same time strike the neck. Surely the spear *iugulum terit*? It merely brushes the neck in its passage.

2. 559–61

saxum ingens, quod uix plena ceruice gementes
uertere humo et muris ualeant inferre iuenci,
rupibus auellit.

et muris ualeant is Hill's proposal for the manuscripts' *murisque ualent*, but Kooten's *ualeant murisque* is more economical. The point of *muris*, however, escapes me entirely: does it really matter what the boulder might be used for? Perhaps *ualeant armisque* (or *umerisque*) *aufferre*?

¹⁷ But Mulder could, understanding *summum limen* to mean "summum tabulatum," comparing *Theb.* 4. 89 where Argia watches Polynices from the top of a tower. If the mothers here were on their rooftops, the right noun is *culmine*.

2. 564–66

stupet obuia leto
turba superstantem atque emissi turbine montis
obruitur.

ac demissi?

2. 580–83

mox in plana libens, nudo ne pectore tela
inciderent, saltu praiceps defertur et orbem,
quem procul oppresso uidit Therone uolutum,
corripuit, . . .

libens Mozley translates as “of his own will,” which is just plain silly, while Lactantius’ “ne uideretur ab hostibus loco, in quo steterat, pulsus” introduces a touch of delicacy which would hardly occur to a man fighting for his life. I should prefer something like *cauens*.

2. 590–93

impediunt numero seque ipsa uicissim
arma premunt, nec uis conatibus ulla, sed ipsae
in socios errare manus et corpora turba
inuolui prolapsa sua.

ipsos, not *ipsae*, is required for the proper emphasis.

2. 618–19

tunc audax iaculis et capti pelle leonis
pineae nodosae quassabat robora clauae . . .

If Chromis is wearing a lion's skin, like a regular Hercules, the poor beast has evidently been more than “captured.” Surely *caesi*?

2. 707–09

quercus erat tenerae iam longum oblita iuuentae
aggere camporum medio, quam plurimus ambit
frondibus incuruis et crudo robore cortex.

crudus suggests immaturity, but the tree is an old one.¹⁸ *nec crudo* therefore?

2. 715–721

diua ferox, magni decus ingeniumque parentis,
bellipotens, cui torua genis horrore decoro
cassis, et asperso crudescit sanguine Gorgon,

¹⁸ I do not see that Mulder's adduction of Virg. *Aen.* 6. 304 *iam senior sed cruda deo uiridisque senectus* is at all relevant.

nec magis ardentis Mauoris hastataque pugnae
impulerit Bellona tubas, huic adnue sacro,
seu Pandionio nostras inuisere caedes
monte uenis, siue Aonia deuertis Itone . . .

720

Tydeus is finally victorious, and this is his prayer to Pallas, in whose honour he has constructed a *tropaion*. If she has come to witness his *caedes*, she has come rather too late, as Postgate saw, but his proposal *noctes* is rightly faulted by Hill. Tydeus' praiseworthy action in thus honouring the goddess, however, would be good grounds for a divine visitation, and he himself as victor is eminently deserving of praise also. *laudes*, therefore, would seem to suit the case.

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