Notes on Statius' *Thebaid* Books 5 and 6

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This is the third in a projected series of six papers presenting conjectures in the text of Statius' *Thebaid*. The first two of these papers appeared in *ICS* 14 (1989) 227–41 and 17 (1992) 57–77; the rest will follow at intervals. As before, I take my lemmata from D. E. Hill's edition (Leiden 1983), and have regularly consulted the editions by Gevartius (1616 and 1618), Cruceus (1618), Veenhusen (1671), O. Müller (1870), Garrod (1906), Klotz (1908; revised by Klinnert, 1973) and Mozley (1928).

5. 13–16

*illae clangore fugaci,*
*umbra fretis aruisque, volant, sonat auius aether.*
*iarn Borean imbruesque pati, iam nare solutis*
*arnibus et nudo iuwait aestiuare sub Haemo.*

The cranes are flying, and flying northwards from Egypt to their summer quarters in Thrace, their precise destination being Mt Haemus. "Soon it will be their delight ... to spend the summer days on naked Haemus," says Mozley, but I must confess that I am at a loss to see how "naked" Haemus could be an attraction to the birds, or indeed what the relevance of its being "naked" might be here. Lactantius' comment at this point only increases my incomprehension: "sine honore siluarum. Haemus autem mons Thraciae. et bene nudo.uestiuntur enim arboribus . . ."; to which mystifying, not to say contradictory, sequence of observations he adds a reference to Sall. *Iug.* 48. 3, where a tree-clad eminence is described. And surely, in our present context, *nudo* is exactly the opposite of what is required. As apt as any word here would be *uiridi*, emphasising the attraction to the migrating cranes of Haemus' tree-clad slopes.

5. 17–24

*hic rursus simili procerum uallante corona*
dux Talaionides, antiqua ut forte sub orno
stabant et admoti nixus Polynicis in hastam:
"at tamen, o quaecumque es" ait "cui gloria tanta,
uenimus innumerae fatum debere cohortes,
Saved from death by dehydration, the Argive army takes time off from its march to hear the story of Hypsipyle, their saviour. The request that she should tell her tale comes from Adrastus (dux Talaionides), here depicted as standing under an ash tree, leaning on Polynices' spear. Not his own spear? Why not his own spear? Is this normal military practice, for one man to lean on another's weapon? Is not his own strong enough? Surely to goodness, if anyone is at ease and leaning on a spear, it must be the man who owns it? If so, should we not expect:

\[ \text{stabat, et admotam Polynices nixus in hastam?} \]

Adrastus, then, is standing under the ash, while Polynices rests on his spear hard by.

Lines 20 and 21 harbour two corruptions, I believe, of which the first, \( at \) for \( tu \), was corrected by Markland, while the second, not yet corrected, lies concealed in the words \( fatum debere \). That \( fatum debere \) might mean the same as \( uitam debere \), as Lactantius opined, is about as credible—or incredible—as the equation of "to owe one's fate" with "to owe one's life"; and Barthius at all events had the common sense to suggest altering \( fatum \) to \( uitam \) here. But more is needed than that, for, as Mozley notes, "uenimus debere' is doubtful Latin," and, on any analysis, it is hardly true to say that the army's purpose in coming was to owe its life to Hypsipyle. One variant reading, however, \( facto for fatum \), though worse in isolation even than \( fatum \), as Mozley's solecistic conformation of text makes clear, does nevertheless point the way to a credible solution, and a very easy one, namely:

\[ \text{"tu tamen, o quaecumque es" ait "cui gloria tanta } \]
\[ \text{uenimus innumerae fato debente cohortes, . . ."} \]

Now all is in order: the coming of the army was owed by fate, and it brought great glory to Hypsipyle.

One final difficulty is presented by line 21, where the question \( animam quibus hauseris astra \) seems to invite Hypsipyle to state her geniture, the disposition of the celestial bodies at the time of her birth—as if it could make the slightest difference to her questioner whether she was born on 1 April or the day in which the sun first entered Leo or whatever day it actually was in the Lemnian calendar. But no: Adrastus did not want to know her birthday, but rather

\[ \text{animam quibus hauseris oris,} \]

the second half of 21 being no more than a variation on the first.
5. 61-64

illa Paphon ueterem centumque altaria linquens,
nec uultu nec crine prior, soluisse iugalem
ceston et Idalias procul ablegasse uolucre
fertur.

This note is no more than a cry for help. The words *nec uultu nec crine prior* are rendered "with altered looks and tresses" by Mozley, and something like that must be the sense intended by Statius, but *prior* seems to me totally inadequate to represent that sense; nor am I in the slightest degree impressed by the gloss "id est non apparens in uultu neque in cultu qualis prius" which Hill cites from "Schol. Dres. a." For *prior* I can do no better at the moment than *eadem* or *ut erat* (and heaven alone knows how the corruption could have come about), but something better still must occur to someone.

5. 64-67

erant certe media quae noctis in umbra
diam alios ignes maioraque tela gerentem
Tartareas inter thalamis uolitasse sorores
uulgarent, . . .

"... the goddess, armed with other torches and deadlier weapons, ..." is what Mozley has to offer us for line 65, but since when did *maiora* mean "deadlier"? The presence in this line of *alios* might perhaps suggest the idea of replacing *maioraque* with *atque altera*, but more economical, and not inferior, would be either *grauioraque* (cf. 585) or, perhaps more to the point, *peioraque* (cf. e contra 138 *melioraque*).

5. 70-72

protinus a Lemno teneri fugistis Amores:
mutus Hymen uersaeque faces et frigida iusti
cura tori.

*Cura* is less than adequate here: it was not that their "care" for their lawful spouses had grown cold, it had vanished altogether. So what was now *frigida*? Surely their *flamma*? The word *cura* is an intruder from 75.

5. 102-06

stricto mox ense silentia iussit
hortatrix scelerum et medio sic ausa profari:
"rem summam instinctu superum meritique doloris,
o uiduae (firmate animos et pellite sexum!)
Lemniades, sancire paro; . . ."
The aged Polyxo works on the emotions of the Lemnian women, urging them to murder. Such a “desperate deed” (*rem sumnum*, so translated by Mozley) is, she claims, prompted by the gods above and by the *meritus dolor* which they themselves feel. Now *dolor* is by no means a precise word, and here could mean either “pain” or “anger”; the fact that it could mean just “pain” is enough in itself to disqualify *meritus* as an appropriate adjective for Polyxo to use here. What she must appeal to is the *inmeritus dolor* of the women.

5. 120-22

quodsi propioribus actis
    est opus, ecce animos doceat Rhodopeia coniunx,
    ulta manu thalamos pariterque epulata marito.

The dreadful story of Procne is set before the Lemnian women as an example, but 122 as it stands in our manuscripts does not tell us anything about the nature of the feast she set before Tereus. I feel quite certain that *pariterque* conceals an original *partumque*, which would make all the difference in the world to Polyxo’s counsel.

5. 152-55

    tunc uiridi luco (lucus iuga celsa Mineruae
    propter opacat humum niger ipse, sed insuper ingens
    mons premit et gemina perunt caligine soles),
    hic sanxere fidem, tu Martia testis Enyo . . .

*Hic* in 155 is unsatisfactory, since *uiridi luco* has preceded. Perhaps *hanc*?

5. 278-79

    accelerate fugam, tuque, o mea digna propago,
    hac rege, uirgo, patrem, . . .

Surely *o me digna propago*?

5. 281-83

    stat funesta Venus ferroque accincta furentes
    adiuuat (unde manus, unde haec Mauortia diuae
    pectora?).

“Whence hath the goddess this violence, this heart of Mars?” is how Mozley translates the end of this utterance, but where is “this violence” (surely the sentiment required here) to be found in the Latin of the manuscripts? Perhaps replace *manus* with *haec uis*?
Hypsipyle is now going away from the shore, so how is prospectem to the point? Is not respectem what is needed (as conversely, let me suggest, prospekit for respexit at 5. 421)? Then there is the phrase surgentia caelo flamina, which can hardly serve as the object of any verb of seeing. It may be that lumina for flamina is all that is required here, but ponto for caelo might additionally be worth a moment’s consideration.

Since the direct speech which follows in 491–92 is in turn followed by the words talibus exanimis dictis, it is evident that occultae gives exactly the opposite sense to that which is needed here. Quin nec iam occultae ...

The semi-personification imported by miserae strikes me as out of place here. A more significant, and appropriate, epithet would be sacrae.

Capaneus’ fatal spear enters the gaping maw of the great serpent and “cleaves the rough fastenings of the triple tongue” (so Mozley), but “rough” is not a normal meaning of ferus, which indeed strikes me as fearfully weak at this juncture. Tria or sua would be better than fera, I fancy.
Exsibilat for adsibilat?

5. 617–18

sic equidem luctus solabar et ubera paruo
iam materna dabam...

"Eurydice, wife of Lycurgus, was the mother of the babe Opheltes, whom Hypsipyle had been nursing," observes Mozley in a note on line 632, and his observation highlights the factual error of *iam materna*. Perhaps the easiest solution is *non materna*, but *ceu materna* might be worth a moment's consideration.

5. 633–35

hocne ferens onus inlaetabile matris
transfundam gremio? quae—me prius ima sub umbras
mergat humus?

Such is Hill's punctuation, following Brinkgreve, who first postulated an aposiopesis after *quae*. Needless to say, no previous editor had suggested so improbable a change of linguistic direction. Nevertheless, *quae* is a problem, though no previous editor had suggested as much. The problem would disappear, and rhetoric be better served, if we read

\[ \text{quin me prius ima sub umbras} \]

mergat humus!

5. 667–69

quos inter Adrastus

mitius et sociae ueritus commercia uittae

Amphiaraus ait, "ne, quaesol absistite ferro,..."

Lycurgus, seeing the corpse of his son, makes to strike Hypsipyle, but is intercepted by Tydeus and other leaders of the Argive host. They in turn are threatened by Lycurgus' men, and a general conflict seems imminent. Adrastus and Amphiaraus accordingly interpose themselves in the interests of peace. In line 668 *mitior* would be appreciably better than *mitius*, and for *commercia*, which is senseless in this context, we could do much worse than write *conuicia*. It is pertinent that Mozley translates, "Amphiaraus, fearing the strife of kindred fillets"; pertinent also that Markland had jibbed, not at *commercia*, but at *ueritus*, for which he proposed *meritus*, perceiving indeed that there was a target here for the emendator, but missing it by one word.

5. 719–22

sed Lemnos ad aures
ut primum dictusque Thoas, per tela manusque
inruerant, matremque auidis complexibus ambo
diripiant flentes alternaque pectora mutant.

Three small corrections may improve the expression here: *latusque* for *dictusque*; *inruerunt* for *inruerant*; and *diripiant* for *diripiant*.

6. 10-13

mox circum tristes seruata Palaemonis aras
nigra superstition, quotiens animosa resumit
Leucothea gemitus et amica ad litora festa
tempestate uenit.

Because no one in modern times has bothered to collate the Rochester manuscript (Royal 15 C X) in its entirety (see my note in ICS 14 [1989] 227 n. 1), its variant *igra* for *nigra* has passed unnoticed; likewise its accompanying gloss *nocens*. Not indeed that there is anything particularly objectionable in *nigra*, but then neither would there be anything particularly objectionable in *aegra*, to which the Rochester manuscript seems to be pointing us.

6. 74-83

namque illi et pharetras breuiorque tela dicarat
festinus uoti pater insontesque sagittas;
iam tunc et nota stabuli de gente probatos
in nomen pascebat equos cinctusque sonantes
armaque maiores expectatura lacertos.
[spes auidi quas, non in nomen credula, uestes
urguebat studio cultusque insignia regni
purpureos sceptrumque minus, cuncta ignibus atris
damnam atrox suaque ipse parens gestamina ferri,
si damnis rabidum queat exaturare dolorem.] 75

The passage is notoriously difficult, and I am not sure that what I have to say about it satisfies even my own qualms; but since diagnosis may aid to a cure, I will say it all the same. Lines 79 to 83 are omitted by the Puteaneus and other manuscripts; and because P omits them, they were bound sooner or later to fall under suspicion. Accordingly, they were condemned by Müller, and are bracketed as spurious by Hill. Wrongly, in my view, since their expression is (barring corruption) entirely Statian, and one can see how they might have come to be omitted if one contemplates the jump from *exatura* in 78 to *exatura- in 83*. As far as 78 there is, so far as I can see, no problem; but 79, here printed by Hill in Gronovius’ version, is a mess; and it is in that line, and that line alone, I suspect, that the key to the whole of this passage will be found. Quite how Gronovius arrived at *audit(e)*, for which the manuscripts universally offer *auid(a)e*, I do not know; nor do I know
how his version is to be construed or interpreted. The words *credula uestes urguebat studio* must, however, refer to the contribution of Archemorus’

mother Eurydice, made to complement that of his father, and a specific reference to Eurydice, at present lacking in 79, would help greatly to clarify what is going on in 79–81. One might add, moreover, that *studio* would benefit from an adjective, while *in nomen* in 79 looks suspiciously like a scribal iteration from 77. All of which brings me to the proposal I wish to advance for the restoration of line 79, and that is:

Eurydice quas non materno credula uestes
urgebat studio . . .

Should this proposal fail to satisfy discerning critics, my hope is that it may urge one of them on to the definitive solution.

6. 109–10

non grassante Noto citius nocturna peregit
flamma nemus.

At Amphiaraus’ bidding the army falls vast swathes of forest to make a funeral pyre for Archemorus; and they do the job in double quick time, as quickly indeed as a forest fire sweeps through a grove, fanned by the south wind. Very well, but why should the flame be a “nocturnal” one? Why not rather, or as easily, a “diurnal” one? I suspect that *nocitura* lurks here.

6. 175–76

occumbam pariter, dum uulnere iusto
exaturata oculos unumque impellar
in ignem.

What wondrous syntax! *Occumbam . . . exaturata . . . impellamur*—the sequence of first person singular verb, nominative singular participle, and first person plural verb, all supposedly referring to one and the same person, constitutes an egregious solecism. Write:

exaturata oculos unumque impellar in ignem.

6. 217–19

ter curuos egere sinus, inlisaque telis
tela sonant, quater horrendum pepulere fragorem
arma, quater mollem famularum bracchia planctum.

The Greek kings ride around the funeral pyre, clashing their arms as they go, and the handmaids respond by beating their breasts. The very strange arithmetic (*ter . . . quater . . . quater*) appears not to have bothered anyone except Mozley, who comments: “It is not clear why, if they clashed arms thrice, the noise was heard four times.” Quite so; and surely the number
ought to be the same on all three occasions. In 217 ter is guaranteed by metre, so let us make necessary changes in 218 and 219, as follows:

tela sonant, terque horrendum pepulere fragorem
arma, ter et mollem famularum bracchia planctum.

Once terque had become quater (via que-ter), it was inevitable that ter et would follow suit.

6. 223–24

dextri gyro et uibrantibus hastis
hac redeunt, ...

If Gronovius had wanted to spend his time profitably on these lines, he should have spared himself the trouble of defending dextri (which does not need defence) and concentrated rather on the jarring inelegance of gyro et . . . armis and the inscrutability of hac (translated by Mozley as though it were sic). I suggest that what Statius left behind him was:

dextri gyrant uibrantibus hastis
ac redeunt, ...

6. 358–59

nam saepe Iouem Phlegramque suique
anguis opus fratumque pius cantarat honores.

Often had Phoebus sung of Jove’s victory at Phlegra and “his own victory o’er the serpent” (so Mozley translates), and that sentiment seems to me to call for suumque.

6. 563–66

nota parens cursu; quis Maenaliae Atalantes
nesciat egregium decus et uestigia cunctis
indeprensa procis? onerat celeberrima natum
mater, ...

If Parthenopaeus fell short of his mother Atalanta as a runner, it would be perfectly appropriate to say that her glory was a burden to him (onerat), but he himself is procul fama iam notus, and her fame, accordingly, can be no burden to him. What it can be is an adornment, and Statius here, I fancy, wrote ornat.

6. 661–63

uix unus Phlegyas acerque Menestheus
(hos etiam pudor et magni tenuere parentes)
promisere manum.
Hippomedon’s strength in handling the discus is so great that all the competitors bar Phlegyas and Menestheus opt out of the competition, and it is only a sense of shame and a consciousness of great ancestry that prevent them from following suit. *Etiam* here seems to suggest that these two considerations were additional to other constraints, when in fact they were the only ones. *Etenim* therefore?

6. 695–96

excidit ante pedes elapsum pondus et ictus
destituit frustraque manum demisit inanem.

Phlegyas is in mid-throw when the discus slips from his grasp. For the action of throwing a discus I should have said that the right word was not *ictus* but *actus*, and for the effect of losing the discus I should have said that the variant reading *dimisit* was preferable to *demisit*: relieved of the weight indeed, the hand is, if anything, more likely to fly up than down.

6. 751–52

tuto procul ora recessu
armorum in speculis, aditusque ad uulnera clausi.

We move on now to the boxing match between Capaneus and Alcidamas. Both stand on tiptoe, with their guard up, their eyes on their opponent. “Safe withdrawn are their faces on their shoulders, ever watching, and closed is the approach to wounds,” says Mosley, by some sort of double vision, it should seem, perceiving *scapulis* alongside *speculis! Tuto . . . recessu armorum*, “safe within the recess of their weapons”—since the boxers’ gloves are reinforced with lumps of lead (732), *armorum* is perhaps just tolerable, but the expression is strained, I should say, even for Statius, and I am much drawn to the idea of replacing *armorum* with *ulnarum*, a word very well suited to represent the cradling effect of the fighters’ uplifted and extended arms.

6. 765–66

doctor hic differt animum metuensque futuri
cunctatus uires dispensat.

Capaneus, being more experienced, husbands his strength at the outset of the fight. Most manuscripts give *cunctatus*, but the Putaneus offers *cunctatur*, from which Bachrens elicited *cunctator*, thus generalising about Capaneus’ style of fighting. If, however, a particular tactic was here in Statius’ mind, he might well have chosen to write *cunctanter*.
6. 779–81

"Leuat sc. manus (uel rigida arma . . .)" is Hill's comment on 779, but the ellipse is exceedingly harsh, and the picture of what is happening is consequently difficult to visualise. I feel pretty certain that leuat conceals an original l(a)eu(a) (sc. manu), and that Statius left behind him the following form of words:

leuat ecce duque minatur
in latus inque oculos; illum rigida arma cauentem
auocat ac manibus necopinum interserit ictum . . .

No one who has ever watched a boxing match can fail to recognise this picture: the fighter first jabs with his left so as to distract his opponent's attention, and then comes in suddenly with his right in the hope of a knock-out.

6. 802–05

Alcidamas, the subject of the first section, eludes Capaneus' charge by dropping down (ruens: not rushing, as Mozley imagines) with his head tucked into his shoulders; Capaneus goes right over the top of him, falling head first, and as he gets up, is felled alio . . . ictu. Not at all surprisingly, Mozley was troubled by alio ictu, which he tried vainly to defend ("The word 'alio,' l. 804, seems to imply Capaneus' fall as being the first blow") when he would have done much better to resort to one of the easiest of all emendations, alto for alio. Finally, perhaps expalluit for impalluit?

6. 813–15

The ignominy of his fall infuriates Capaneus, and Adrastus can see that he will not stop now until he has murdered the young Laconian. Tydeus and Hippomedon, accordingly, jump forward to restrain Capaneus. In line 814 tunc strikes me as an idle stopgap, and I suspect that it has taken the place of an original tamen, which followed ambo, thus:
Hippomedon; uix ambo tamen conatibus ambas restringunt cohibentque manus ac plurima suadent.

6. 819–22

uociferans: "liceat! non has ego puluere crasso atque cruoere genas, meruit quibus iste fauorem semiuiri, foedem, mittamque informe sepulcro corpus et Oebalio donem lugere magistro?"

Capaneus’ vociferation, as regularly now printed, changes tack with an abruptness difficult to register on the inner ear, shifting with one word from entreaty to blustering threat. I find myself wondering whether Statius did not settle for an easier run of words and couch the whole of Capaneus’ outburst in the form of an entreaty:

"liceat nunc has ego puluere crasso . . .
corpus et Oebalio donem lugere magistro!"

6. 840–43

sed non ille rigor patriumque in corpore robur:
luxuriant artus, effusaque sanguine laxo membra natant; unde haec audax fiducia tantum Oenidae superare parem.

Agylleus has vast bulk, but he is flabby and sluggish, and his poor condition encourages Tydeus (Oenides) to hope for victory. That, surely, is the general sense intended, but particular problems of text prevent that sense from being intelligibly conveyed. Quite what the meaning of sanguine laxo may be, I am at a loss to tell; nor do I see what the force is of effusa sanguine. For effusa some manuscripts give effeta, and this may possibly be right, unless it in fact is an early conjecture. I myself incline to suffusa, with lasso in place of laxo. Finally, in 842, I fancy that Statius wrote, not haec, but hunc.

6. 864–69

non sic ductores gemini gregis horrida tauri bella mouent; medio coniunx stat candida prato victorem expectans, rumpunt obnixa furentes pectora, subdit amor stimulos et uulnera sanat: fulmineo sic dente sues, sic hispida turpes proelia uillosis ineunt complexibus ursi.

Two matters need attention here, of which the first is the more important. That the concentration of each and every reader of a text is fitful is well known; but I can only say that I am amazed that no reader of this text has
spotted the idiocy of *non sic* in line 864: how could anybody assert that two bulls make war "less fiercely" than Tydeus and Agylleus? What, after all, would such an assertion mean? And how precisely did the bulls fight, if not with all the ferocity at their disposal? The idiocy, moreover, is made still more blatant by the absence of *non* from line 868, which must imply, as the text of this passage stands at present, that boars and bears have more ferocity than bulls when it comes to a fight. The word that offends here is *non*, and for *non sic* I would suggest the easy expedient *sic sibi*. The second matter concerns the noun *pectora* in line 867, where the participle *obnixa* tells rather for *cornua*, or for *tempora*, the beast's head, not its chest, serving it as a battering ram with which to attack its opponent.

6. 872–74

contra non integer ille
flatibus alternis aegroque effetus hiatu
exuit ingestas fluio sudoris harenas . . .

The out-of-condition Agylleus is now in a bad way, breathing heavily and sweating profusely. His sweat indeed is now so profuse that it washes off the caked sand—and for that sense to be obtained, what we need is *eluit*, not *exuit*.

6. 906–10

"quid si non sanguinis huius
partem haud exiguam (scitis) Dircaeus haberet
campus, ubi hae nuper Thebarum foedera plagae?"
haec simul ostentans quaesitaque praemia laudum
dat sociis, sequitur neglectus Agyllea thorax. 910

The phrasing of line 909 would be appreciably improved, I think, if we read *has simul ostentat* . . .

6. 921–23

tum generum, ne laudis egens, iubet ardua necti
tempora Thebarumque ingenti voce citari
uictorem: dirae retinebant omina Parcae.

The syntax of *ne laudis egens*, where a finite verb form is to seek, is rather strange. Did Statius perhaps write *ne laude egeat*?

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