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Leadership and the Outbreak of War in Statius, *Thebaid* 2–4

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Abstract

Even a cursory reading of Statius' *Thebaid* indicates that Statius is deeply concerned with the social and political backdrop to the war between Argos and Thebes. Within his narrative, Statius offers a variety of models of kingship—often flawed—who fail to fulfil a role as leader to their people. This study opens a new angle on power in the *Thebaid* by recognising the distinction between kingship and leadership, which I argue is a central concern of Statius' epic.

My first chapter briefly addresses Statius' use of the terms *dux* and *ductor* and offers a brief comparison of the use of these with *rex*, which is Statius' most common term denoting regal power. I then briefly address Statius' use of the term *tyrannus*. I argue that even at this most basic lexical level, Statius creates a distinction between the poem's conception of Argive and Theban socio-political structures.

My second chapter argues that through Statius' narrative of the ambush of Tydeus and the use of shepherd similes to reflect on this event, Statius foregrounds important aspects of leadership that will be applicable to his epic at large. In this sequence, I argue, Statius reflects negatively on kings' fulfilment of their obligations to their communities in the *Thebaid*, and inverts the epic ideal of the individual's protective responsibility to his group by offering instead groups that are successful in this role.

My third chapter makes a close reading of decision-making scenes at Argos in *Thebaid* 3, with especial reference to the allegorical nature of the gods and their significance to a reading of internal structures at Argos. I argue that decision-making in this sequence is not unilateral, as one may expect in an autocracy, but in fact determined by a variety of participants, and that this fragmentation is reflected in Statius' narrative.

My fourth chapter looks at the Argive catalogue of book 4. I argue that this catalogue innovates heavily on the epic tradition, so much so that the catalogue's functions are undermined—or even reversed. The disorder that this catalogue encapsulates becomes evident at the end of the same book, when the army prematurely disintegrates as the thirsty men leap into the Langia, which looks forward to the outbreak of war proper.

matri carissimae, *sine qua non*

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Texts and Abbreviations

I follow the text of Klotz (1973), unless otherwise discussed. For the text of Homer, I use the edition of West (1998–2000). For the text of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, I use the edition of Mynors (1969). For all other authors quoted more briefly, I use the most recent Loeb edition.

Abbreviations for ancient authors follow the practice of the *OLD* and *LSJ*, with the exception of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, which is abbreviated as ‘Verg. *Aen.*’ I use the following abbreviations for reference works, and editions and translations of the *Thebaid*:

Reference Works

- ANRW (1972–) *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*. Berlin
- EV (1984–1991) *Enciclopedia Virgiliana*. 5 vols. Roma
- IEG (1989, 1992) M. L. West, *Iambi et Elegi Graeci*. 2 vols. Oxford
- LP (1997) R. D. Sweeney, ed., *Lactantii Placidi in Statii Thebaida commentum*. Stuttgart & Leipzig
- LIMC (1981–1999) *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*. 16 vols. Zürich
- LTUR (1993–2000) E. M. Steinby, ed., *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*. 6 vols. Roma
- Neue Pauly (1998–) H. Cancik and J. Schneider, edd. *Der neue Pauly*. Stuttgart
- OED² (1989) E. S. C. Weiner and J. A. Simpson, edd. *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd Edition. 20 vols. Oxford; New York
- OLD (1968–1982) P. G. W. Glare, ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford
- TLL (1900–) *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*. Leipzig

***Thebaid* Editions and Translations**

- Klotz (1973) A. Klotz, ed. *P. Papinius Statius Thebais. Editionem correctiorem curavit Th.C. Klinnert.* Leipzig
- Hill (1983) D. E. Hill, ed. *P. Papini Stati Thebaidos Libri XII. Recensuit et cum apparatu critico et exegetico instruxit.* Leiden
- SB (2003) D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Statius, Thebaid and Silvae. Edited and Translated.* 3 vols. Cambridge, MA
- Hall *et al.* (2007) J. B. Hall, A. L. Ritchie and M. J. Edwards, *P. Papinius Statius Thebaid and Achilleid.* 3 vols. Newcastle

Introduction

Leadership is a subject with which Statius is profoundly concerned in his *Thebaid*. The poem's narrative *telos* is the fratricidal duel between the brothers Polynices and Eteocles over the kingship of Thebes, but before their long-delayed meeting, the poem treats numerous other cases where the relationship between leader and group is characterised. These examples allow for reflection more broadly on the poem's ideological and moral concerns, particularly the individual's role and responsibility to his or her community.¹ This thesis is made up of close readings of three sequences from *Thebaid* 2–4 in which Statius explores how the war demanded by the plot and *fatum* comes about. In each of these books, Statius describes memorable scenes of leaders and groups, and for each he employs a common epic trope that deepens a reading of leadership: the ambush of Tydeus in book 2, and the shepherd-flock simile;² the decision-making process at Argos in book 3, and divine machinery; and the march of the Argive army in book 4, given in the form of an epic catalogue. Through this reading I offer a new angle on the topic of Statius' presentation of 'kingship', 'power', and 'tyranny', diverging from treatments which have tended to homogenise leadership in the *Thebaid*.³ Statius certainly offers a critical perspective on autocracy, but he does more than this: through his emphasis on the interaction between leaders and their respective groups, he presents a complex and nuanced portrait of leadership within the framework of autocratic rule.

At this point a clarification of terms is called for.⁴ My study is of leadership, as broadly defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary*:

The dignity, office, or position of leader, esp. of a political party; ability to lead; the position of a group of people leading or influencing others within a given

¹ So (Vessey 1982, 572): 'The story of Oedipus and his sons was used to illustrate the broadest moral and philosophical dilemmas'.

² The term 'simileme' is Scott's (2009, 14–41). Scott defines it thus (2009, 25): 'I have chosen the term 'simileme' to represent the basic objects and actions that comprise each traditional simile family'. While Scott adopts this term for Homer's use of simile, it may be applied to the work of epic more broadly, as the inheritors of Homer's epic models.

³ Especially Dominik (1994a), McGuire (1997) and Ganiban (2007).

⁴ I give a fuller discussion of Latin terms used in Chapter 1.

context; the group itself; the action or influence necessary for the direction or organization of effort in a group undertaking.⁵

The terms ‘leader’ and *dux* have a similar semantic range, and I therefore use these terms interchangeably:⁶ from physical ‘guide’;⁷ to one who guides a group in action, opinion, policy or similar;⁸ and more specifically, a military leader, a ‘commander’ or ‘general’, to which the meaning of the related term *ductor* is largely restricted.⁹

On this definition, leadership entails the relationship of an individual—or sometimes individuals—to a group. As will be seen, the groups with which Statius’ leaders stand in a relationship varies hugely, ranging from abstract groupings such as the *plebs* and *uulgus*, to crowds (which are often but not always designated *turba*), to groups implied through the use of plural nouns, adjectives, participles and verbs. Leadership may be undertaken within a limited sphere: within Statius’ poem, there are leaders of religious ritual, civil leaders, military leaders, and even leaders which are deified abstractions.¹⁰ Any character has the potential to become a leader *de facto*; that is, from the very fact that he, she or it directs or organises collective action or plays a guiding role to a group—even if this is not absolute, but limited to a particular context. When we view leadership as performed rather than fixed, a variety of patterns are possible: it may be divided between two (or more) people, transferred, usurped, decentralised, or simply lacking altogether. An approach through the lens of leadership is thus particularly suited to Statius’ narrative of political instability and civil war, in which social and political disorder is a recurring motif.

Authors in antiquity engaged persistently with the question of the leader’s role in relation to his or her group, especially through the lens of kingship.¹¹ Modern approaches to

⁵ *OED*² ‘leadership’.

⁶ I note where there the use of *dux* or *ductor* is anomalous.

⁷ *OED*² ‘leader’ §I.1.a; *OLD dux* §1.

⁸ *OED*² ‘leader’ §I.3.a; *OLD dux* §3.

⁹ *OED*² ‘leader’ §I.2; *OLD dux* §4; *OLD ductor* §1. In Latin the term *dux* has more resonance as a military term than English ‘leader’, which is applied frequently to political—and other—leadership.

¹⁰ E.g. Argia is compared with the frenzied ‘leader’ of a band of Cybele’s followers, 12.225; Adrastus speaks on behalf of the Argives during the funeral of Opheltes, 7.104; Atalanta hears that her son is going to war as a ‘leader’, 4.310; Theseus says ‘Nature’ is his ‘leader’, 12.645. This will be dealt with exhaustively in Chapter 1.

¹¹ The ancients were directly concerned with kingship and leadership in a variety of genres, from Homer onwards: E.g. Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*, Plato’s *Republic*, Philodemus’ *On the Good King According to Homer*, Cicero’s speeches and *De Officiis*, Seneca’s drama and philosophical works,

ancient epic mirror this approach: for instance, scholarship has interpreted the *Aeneid*, an important model for the *Thebaid*, with reference to kingship treatises such as those of Philodemus, Diotogenes and Sthenidas.¹² All epic narrates group action, and how leadership is performed to ensure this action takes place is fundamental to the interpretation of each poem, including evaluation of the poem's conception of heroism. *Iliad* 2 is exemplary, in which Homer explores leadership structures—especially problems—important to the plot of Homer's epic. Even in antiquity, critics were interested in the question of Homer's presentation of leadership.¹³

Epic subsequent to Homer is concerned with the question of how individuals function in relation to groups, and develops this inheritance from Homer in a sophisticated way.¹⁴ For example, Apollonius Rhodius innovates within the strictures of Homeric set-pieces, and demonstrates his engagement with the relationship of leadership to heroism when the Argonauts stage the leader election.¹⁵ This process of innovation continues with Roman epic poets, and there are some broad and obvious differences from Greek exemplars. In the *Aeneid*, Aeneas not only 'stands for the totality of his people present and future', the 'synecdochic hero',¹⁶ but also performs a role more immediately for his group: 'most of the time, he is the responsible leader of his companions';¹⁷ on the other hand, in his exploration of the causes of war in *Aeneid* 7, Virgil demonstrates the complex political factors at play in Latium. After Virgil, Lucan's programmatic first book gives a dual explanation of the causes of civil war, involving both leaders, *hae ducibus causae* (1.98–157) and the moral malaise of the Roman people, *publica semina belli* (1.158–182).¹⁸ In this way he builds up a 'nexus of causes' in which both leaders and society at large

such as *Thyestes* and *De Clementia*; Tacitus' historiography. This list could be supplemented with numerous other works.

¹² Cairns 1989; Cowan (2015) responds to Cairns' approach.

¹³ In Xenophon's *Memorabilia* 3.2.1, Socrates poses the question of why Homer called Agamemnon 'shepherd of the people'; discussed in Haubold 2000, 21–22.

¹⁴ In turn, modern leadership theorists have turned to ancient epic for exemplars, e.g. Sarachek (1968) and Nelson (2008). For modern leadership theory that engages with other aspects of the ancient world, see Riad (2011), Markham (2012) and Bauman (2013).

¹⁵ Ap. Rhod. 1.332ff., on which see Beye (1969, esp. 40) and Clauss (1993, esp. 62–66).

¹⁶ Hardie 1993a, 4–5; quote from 4.

¹⁷ Pollmann 2001, 15.

¹⁸ On which see Gibson (2010, 42–43).

have a role to play.¹⁹ By Statius' time, the ideological basis of epic has changed: 'The norms of Roman epic...give weight to the absolute value of the State and the choice of political over personal ends as a fundamental element of its ideology'.²⁰ Statius is working within a genre that in many different ways is concerned with the relationship of leader(s) to collective, and the question becomes how Statius manipulates this inheritance to convey his own conception of leadership in the *Thebaid*.

The Theban myth is from its representation in Greek drama fundamentally concerned with political life. Zeitlin views Thebes as a *topos* of Greek drama, through which questions concerning man's place in the world could be explored through its "otherness" from Athens, 'particularly with respect to the nature of rule over others and of rule over self, as well as those pertaining to the conduct of the body politic'.²¹ The Theban myth is subsequently utilised as a means of reflection on Rome itself, and the similarity of these cities' foundation myths encouraged this. Hardie reads Ovid's Thebes as a response to Virgil's ktistic epic, through which Thebes becomes an 'anti-Rome'.²² Braund draws on the continuous engagement with the myth of Thebes at Rome, arguing that this served as a tool of 'self-fashioning' for Rome, like the Trojan myth, a 'viable vehicle for reconsidering Rome's origins and character'.²³ Similarly, Henderson and Newlands comment that while the civil strife of 69CE makes the Theban myth 'suggestive' for Rome, the Theban myth is applicable to Rome in a more general sense.²⁴

¹⁹ Lintott 1971, 495–496. Cf. Tipping (2010, 4): 'Lucan's epic is of military, political, and social chaos'.

²⁰ Segal, in the foreword to Conte's monograph (1986, 13). See also Quint (1993, 90–96) on Aeneas' role in Virgil's epic.

²¹ Zeitlin 1986; quote from 131. Zeitlin (1986, 149) notes that the 'typical Theban scenario' is of a king who governs at first in the interests of his city, 'but the pressure of events reveals him as one who has confused the relationship between ruler and city, identifying the state, in fact with himself', and that Thebes in the Athenian theatre in this way becomes the 'paradigmatic home of tyrants'.

²² Hardie (1990), who utilises the approach of Zeitlin (1986).

²³ Braund 2006, esp. 260–269, 271.

²⁴ Henderson 1991 and 1993, *passim*; Rosati 2008, esp. 181–183; Newlands 2009a, 355–356. Lovatt (2005, 169) also comments that the *Thebaid* has been treated for a long time as a 'mythological irrelevance' unrelated to 'Romanness', again bringing the discussion back to the question of identity. See also Ash (2015, 218–220) for possible references to 69CE.

The genre of epic itself may be considered a ‘vehicle for civic thought’,²⁵ and the political stance of the *Thebaid* may thus be read as a manipulation of the genre, especially as represented by the *Aeneid*.²⁶ When viewed this way, leadership is not so much a theme as a part of epic’s ideological fabric, underpinning its moral framework. Here I take a similar approach, and do not look to give a rigidly historicist reading of the *Thebaid*, but view Statius’ epic as a means of reflecting more generally on the leader’s role.

Prior scholarship

To date, critics have viewed the *Thebaid* as an epic that engages heavily with the question of kingship, especially the poem’s emphasis on how people suffer for their rulers’ actions.²⁷ Ahl, for instance, memorably states that ‘the ordinary people who suffer most from war, hover like ghosts on the fringes of a world of kings’.²⁸

In the evaluation of kingship within the epic, several tendencies have been evident in Statian criticism. Firstly, there is a willingness to homogenise kingship. Ahl focuses on tyranny in the *Thebaid*, and makes the generalisation that ‘it is evident to... every reader of the epic, that kings and the powerful are treated with remarkable hostility in the epic’.²⁹ Dominik’s monograph *The Mythic Voice of Statius* provides another important contribution to this question, which takes an abstract approach to kingship in the *Thebaid*, viewing it in terms of ‘power’.³⁰ In Dominik’s treatment, various kings are similarly

²⁵ Henderson (1991, *passim*); quote from 47.

²⁶ Newlands 2009a, 356–362, esp. 57. Newlands (2009a, 373) restates this idea with reference to Jauss’ ‘horizon of expectations’ (1982, 88–89). See Henderson (1991, 47–52) for a discussion. On the exemplary and therefore educational role of epic at Rome, see e.g. Tipping (2010) and Most (1990). Rosati (2008) discusses the educational role of the *Thebaid* specifically.

²⁷ E.g. Burgess 1972; Gossage 1972, 194–195, 198, 205; Ahl 1986, *passim*; Dominik 1994a, *passim*. Braund (2006, 269) observes that Statius appears hostile to Eteocles, especially through the expression of the opinions of the Theban populace. Hill (2008b, 64–65) says Adrastus’ story in book 1 ‘reinforces our sense that this epic does not celebrate good government either in heaven or on earth’; ‘...if we find the *Aeneid* bleak, we shall be even more horrified by the pessimism of the *Thebaid*.’ Newlands (2009a, 355) notes the ‘suffering and slaughter of civil war itself, but also the dangers and anxieties involved in autocratic rule’. Statius displays a sensitivity to this idea in his *Achilleid* when he asks rhetorically, *quid maneat populos, ubi tanta iniuria primos/ degrassata duces? coeunt gens omnis et aetas* (‘What is in store for the people, when such a great outrage has descended upon their leaders? An entire race and age gathers together’, 1.405–406).

²⁸ Ahl 1986, 2878.

²⁹ Ahl 1986, 2811; cf. also 2899.

³⁰ ‘What is the *Thebaid* about? In a word, power’: Dominik 1994a, xii.

pressed into the mould of ‘tyrant’.³¹ McGuire’s later study of suicide in Flavian epic is similar in its approach to kingship, viewing it consistently as ‘tyranny’.³² Dominik and McGuire also view monarchy as inherently tyrannical, which becomes evident in their willingness to criticise kingship outright even where there is evidence of a positive view of this on offer in the *Thebaid*.³³

Another tendency in these authors is to focus on relationships between individuals, rather than the relationship between leader and group.³⁴ In restricting focus to this, interactions between individuals and groups are not explored, including the potential for more complex patterns of interaction between the two, such as a reciprocal relationship, or even one that is bottom-up. Lastly, Ahl, Dominik and McGuire do not engage substantively with Statius’ poetic language or models, especially those specific to epic, with which Statius is working in his *Thebaid*.

Theseus’ appearance in the *Thebaid* is a case study in how moral evaluations of individual leaders by modern critics may vary wildly. Theseus is sometimes considered culpable for his engagement in war with Thebes, not only because of the violence this entails, but because of the association with tyrants that the term *clementia* evokes, further contributing to Statius’ apparent condemnation of autocracy.³⁵ Other critics view his

³¹ Ahl (1986 2885) views the brothers as essentially the same, ‘two abusers of power, one actual, one potential’. Dominik (1994a, 79) claims that Polynices is a ‘potential despot’, an idea Dominik restates in a later article (2002, 190). Coffee (2006), on the other hand, sees the brothers’ approach to ‘power’ as distinct, through an analysis of the use of the language of commerce. Dominik (1994a, 76–77, 92–3, 122, 190) does not explore Adrastus’ role at any length, but claims that he is capable of ‘lust for bloodshed’. Dominik (2002, 190) later again mentions Adrastus’ ‘insatiable lust for slaughter and bloodshed’, but without reference to Statius’ text.

³² McGuire 1997, *passim*. Pollmann (2001, 15–16) also gives an overview of Theban impiety and then concludes that ‘the main heroes of the *Thebaid* thus embody the perversion of Roman piety’.

³³ E.g. Dominik 1994a, 84: the ‘inherent tyranny of monarchy’. Dominik also demonstrates a bias against war: nothing is achieved by ‘senseless destruction and waste of human life’, 104. McGuire (1997, 154) admits that ‘we do encounter some non-tyrannical figures... Adrastus and Theseus in the *Thebaid*...’

³⁴ E.g. McGuire’s (1997, 168–169) assertion that the Flavian poets ‘focus primarily on individual confrontations with tyranny’.

³⁵ Ahl (1986, 2894–2898) views Theseus’ comparison with a bull negatively, along with the evocation of his poor treatment of Ariadne, and avers that ‘there is tension between the ideal of clemency and the ruler of Athens...’ Dominik (1994a, 93–98) notes that Theseus is ‘concerned with natural justice’, but that this is complicated by his comparison with a bull and treatment of women—following Ahl—and thus condemns his ‘destructive venture against Thebes’. Ganiban (2007, 228–230) reads Theseus in a similar way: Theseus ‘exhibits what seems to be the natural tendency of kings to transgress boundaries in the exercise of their will’. Coffee (2009a) suggests

appearance and killing of Creon more positively, his response to the Argive women's plea based on 'justified, moral anger'.³⁶ Such various readings of Theseus of course result in varying inferences about Statius' 'message' about contemporary Rome.

The poetic features of the *Thebaid* are taken into greater account in more recent studies that evaluate the social and political underpinnings of Statius' epic. Ganiban's monograph on the *Aeneid* and the *Thebaid* utilises Cairns' approach to kingship in the *Aeneid*, and through a sustained intertextual reading, argues that Statius is concerned to show kingship stripped of its benevolence, responding to Virgil's portrait in order to subvert it.³⁷

However, along with Dominik and McGuire, Ganiban has a tendency to homogenise kingship in the *Thebaid*: 'Statius gives us powerful rulers without *pietas*—kingship without the moderating influences of religion and the good of the state'; 'in the *Thebaid*, kingly power means tyranny in its most abusive and abhorrent form'.³⁸

Other recent criticism touches on the question of Statius' political outlook without this being a focus of analysis. Newlands argues that landscape in the *Thebaid* is a metaphor for social disorder, working closely with Keith's monograph on gender in epic.³⁹ Keith, meanwhile, reads Statius' architectural ephrasis through the lens of contemporary Roman building programmes, demonstrating that Ovid presents both Olympus and the Underworld in (anachronistically) Roman terms, and that this is in turn adapted by Statius.⁴⁰

that Statius 'strongly contrast[s] Theseus with *Clementia* and assimilate[es] him to Mars', and 'expresses significant reservations about the use of kingly power even in the service of a virtuous cause' (227).

³⁶ The quote is from Braund (1996, 12), who reads Theseus as a model of the good Roman emperor (9–14). Pollmann (2001, 13) and Braund (1996, 1) view Theseus as a kind of *deus ex machina*. Lewis (1936, 55) states that 'the climax of the whole poem is the coming of Theseus, and the consequent cutting away of all the tangled foulness of Thebes'. Burgess (1972) says Statius 'has changed the applicability of the concept of *clementia* from arbitrary tyranny... to benevolent dictatorship...'; Vessey (1973, 312–316) avers that Theseus has 'impartial devotion to justice and to law' and is 'an earthly reflection of the supreme god', and restates similar ideas in his later work (1982, 575, 577). Von Albrecht (1997, 953) comments that 'Theseus embodies an ideal'.

³⁷ Ganiban 2007; Cairns 1989.

³⁸ Ganiban 2007, 21–22.

³⁹ Newlands 2004; Keith 2000.

⁴⁰ Keith 2007, esp. 23.

The methodology of Lovatt's *Staius and Epic Games* is closest to my own: Lovatt conducts an intertextual reading of Staius' games, the most important section of which for my purposes is the treatment of Adrastus as *editor*, taking into account his metanarrative role in this capacity.⁴¹ Lovatt shows that Adrastus vacillates between being an effective leader and weak old man: 'it was Polynices who really initiated the war and is really driving the chariot to its destruction'.⁴² Lovatt suggests that although Staius constructs a contrast between the models of kingship offered at Thebes and Argos, through Adrastus 'he succeeds only in showing that weakness can be as tyrannous and arbitrary as strength, only less effective'.⁴³

This study of leadership in books 2–4 of the *Thebaid* takes a new approach to the question of social and political structures in the *Thebaid* by basing analysis on leadership rather than kingship. Through this distinction, it opens up a new angle on power in the *Thebaid* that includes a broad range of characters and models of interaction with groups. The characters we may assign to the categories of 'king' and 'leader' may overlap in the *Thebaid*, but Staius' *Thebaid* frequently lays bare the distinction between the two; in other words, not all kings are leaders, and not all leaders are kings.

In addition, this study examines *Thebaid* 2–4, books which deal with Theban as well as Argive leadership. The latter has been largely neglected—or treated perfunctorily—by modern scholarship,⁴⁴ a neglect that has been recognised by some critics.⁴⁵ This focus on Theban kingship has facilitated—or perhaps been demanded by—a tendency to homogenise models of autocracy in the epic. There are a handful of exceptions to this.

⁴¹ Lovatt 2005, 277, 285–305. Lovatt notes that Adrastus' performance during the games 'is symptomatic of the way he generally recedes into the background' (292). Lovatt concludes that 'the *Thebaid* is a study of power out of control' (295), but does not elaborate on this idea outside of the games.

⁴² Lovatt 2005, 292.

⁴³ Lovatt 2005, 291–295; quote from 292. Cf. Ahl 1986, 2869.

⁴⁴ E.g. von Albrecht (1997, 953) says Eteocles and Creon are 'typical tyrants', and 'Adrastus is a gracious king', while 'Theseus embodies an ideal'. Cf. Ahl's (1986, 2857–2858) assessment of Adrastus' 'innocence'. Ahl (1986, 2864, 2876) states that Adrastus and Amphiaraus are "'good' men in the epic", and Adrastus 'gentle and kind', which does not tally with his generalisation about hostility to kings in the *Thebaid* (2811).

⁴⁵ Newlands (2009a, 355, 371–373) mentions this neglect, remarking that 'Thebes does serve as an admonitory model of a monarchical system gone awry. But we need to pay more attention to the Argive side in the *Thebaid*' (371).

Feeney, for example, makes an insightful comment on the fragmentation and disorder among the Argives:

Fragmentation of authority is... one of the poem's main preoccupations. The organizational powers of the [Argive] princes are barely sufficient to keep the expedition, and its poem, on the road; and the war itself is without order or customary norms.⁴⁶

In turn, the basic contrast between Thebes and Argos in this respect has been a source of critical comment, but often without detailed analysis.⁴⁷

Finally, this study synthesizes analysis of Statius' poetic (epic) structures and Statius' social and political concerns in the poem, rather than treating them as separate spheres of interpretation.⁴⁸ As outlined above, epic as a genre is a 'vehicle for civic thought', and the Theban cycle of myth specifically was a means by which Romans were able to consider their collective history and social structures.⁴⁹ Here I view Statius' political preoccupations through a reading of the *Thebaid* as a poem which conveys meaning through its adaptation of features specific to the genre of epic.

There is no doubt that power is an important theme of the *Thebaid*; nor that Statius' view of autocracy is informed by his experience of contemporary Rome, and is therefore different from, for example, Virgil's.⁵⁰ In addition, Statius' conception of social and political structures is framed by the language he uses, which is the language of Roman politics, and references to specifically Roman institutions and events are to be found in the epic.⁵¹ However, I am wary of pinpointing any historical period or episode as an

⁴⁶ Feeney (1991, 340), who cites the lack of order as war breaks out as an example: *nullo uenit ordine bellum,/ confusique duces uulgo, et neglecta regentum/ imperia*, 7.616–18. Feeney does not explicitly expand upon this in what follows. Lovatt (2005, 285–305) treats Argive leadership in the games of book 6, as just discussed.

⁴⁷ E.g. Vessey 1970a, 319–322: '...the Argives live under a benevolent monarchy, the Thebans under a despotism...' See also Vessey (1982, 576–577), McGuire (1997, 154), von Albrecht (1997, 950, 953, quoted above), and Lovatt (2005, 292, 309).

⁴⁸ See Rosati (2008) on Statius' navigation of literary and political power and succession, with reference to Domitian and Virgil.

⁴⁹ Henderson (1991, 47); quoted above.

⁵⁰ So e.g. Gossage 1972, 194–195: the poem 'undoubtedly reflects the poet's own feelings... in the insecurity of the political situation after the fall of the Julio-Claudian line'. Cf. Ahl's (1986, 2808–2812) discussion of the question of contemporary relevance, especially with reference to the treatment of Domitian in Statius' poem (2819–2822, 2832–2834).

⁵¹ Terms such as *dux*, *plebs* and *dominus* all have strong resonance in a Roman context. Other examples of specifically Roman cultural institutions, events and locations are in evidence: the

analogue for Statius' treatment of the Theban tale, in the absence of specific signs in the text to encourage this.⁵² Rather, I view the sequences I treat in terms of the genre within which Statius is working, laying some of the groundwork for future interpretation of the poem's relationship to contemporary Rome.⁵³

Structure

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to cover the subject of leadership in the *Thebaid* in its entirety. I therefore take as case studies three sequences in the movement to war in books 2 to 4, which deal with the causation of the war.⁵⁴ At these points in the poet's treatment, there are various possibilities: in 'crucial moments of plot decision, crises of judgment, when gods, poet, and reader are observing the alternative future paths of the plot and deciding which one they want to follow', the reader becomes aware of the narrative choices available.⁵⁵ In these books, we observe how the dispute between Polynices and Eteocles develops into a war involving huge armies: in other words, how leaders bring about the involvement of massed armies in battle. The choices of leading characters are

palace at Thebes is not large enough to receive *clientes*, 1.146: Keith 2007, 10–11; Eteocles is *princeps*, 1.169: Ahl 1986, 2832–2833; Jupiter calls a council on the 'Palatine of the sky', *magni... Palatia caeli*, 1.176: Keith 2007, esp. 3, 15; the threat to the temple of Jupiter in 5.696–697 recalls the destruction of Rome's temple of Jupiter Optimus in 69CE: McGuire 1997, 60–61; the depiction of Theseus' return to Athens is similar to a Roman triumph, 12.540ff.: Ahl 1986, 2983; Lovatt 2005, 309.

⁵² Cf. Dominik's assertion that the Flavian dynasty is a referent of Statius' epic: 1994a, 130–180. Henderson (1991, 34) rules this out: 'I must be clear now, Statius did *not* write about the Flavian fix'. The methodology involved in this sort of reading is also problematic: see e.g. Ahl (1984) and McGuire's use of the Soviet writer Vladimir Mayakovskiy as a model (1997, 1ff. and *passim*).

⁵³ A study of relevance to Statius' Rome would take a very different approach, including, for instance, consideration of historiographical source material. Ash (2015) provides an example of such an approach.

⁵⁴ On causation in epic after Virgil, see Gibson (2010, 43).

⁵⁵ Feeney (1999, 185), who also comments on the 'metanarrative' function of such scenes.

in this way ‘bound up’ with these narrative choices,⁵⁶ and in turn with the demand of both plot/*fatum*, and the genre itself, for full-scale war.⁵⁷

Chapter 1 gives a brief appraisal of Statius’ leadership diction, focusing on the terms *dux* and *ductor*. An outline of Statius’ use of these terms in both the singular and plural is given to demonstrate the difference in application to the Theban and Argive forces. A comparison is then made between *dux/ductor* and Statius’ most common term to denote authority, *rex*. While this study is not restricted to instances where Statius denotes leadership through *dux* or *ductor*, this section forms a lexical basis for further investigation of the theme at hand.

Chapter 2 begins with a treatment of the ambush of Tydeus in *Thebaid* 2. I read this sequence as a microcosm of full-scale war, which prefigures major themes for the full-scale war to come. In his narrative of the Theban ambush of Tydeus, Statius foregrounds the problem of unified action through his emphasis on (dis)unity and (dis)order, and introduces a numerical aspect to his narration of group action. Within this sequence, which occurs in the wilderness outside Thebes, Statius employs the shepherd-flock simile to reflect on the action of this ambush. This paradigm occurs in the Homeric formula ποιμὴν λαῶν, which conveys the underlying obligation of Homer’s leaders to protect and preserve the lives of their people, as demonstrated by Johannes Haubold.⁵⁸ While Haubold’s study is based on the study of Homeric formulae, I draw on its observations about the symbiotic relationship of leader and people that this paradigm encodes, whereby we cannot see the mass as simply the object of top-down power, but as a group with a reciprocal relationship to its leader. Roman epic draws on this pastoral image from Homer, as well as the genre of pastoral poetry, which was developed in the intervening period. Virgil’s *Aeneid* has five similes that include shepherd figures, three of which refer to Aeneas and have been analysed variously in terms of Aeneas’ character

⁵⁶ Parkes (2008, 381–382, 400–401), who discusses Achilles’ choices in Statius’ *Achilleid* in relation to the progression of its plot. Similarly, Lovatt (2005, 285–305) reads Adrastus, the *editor* of the games for Opheltes, as a ‘model of kingship and narrative control’, a sort of double for the author himself.

⁵⁷ Feeney 1999, 186; Parkes 2008, 381–382. See also Hinds (1998, 135–144), Heslin (2005) and Parkes (2008) for Statius’ sensitivity to expectations of the epic genre, as demonstrated through his *Achilleid*.

⁵⁸ Haubold 2000. The shepherd image also occurs in Homer in the ecphrasis of the shield of Achilles and in pastoral similes.

development.⁵⁹ Statius' use of similes is overall statistically higher than Virgil's, and he includes twelve in which there is a shepherd. My reading of these demonstrates that Statius draws on his epic and bucolic predecessors, including Homer and Virgil, and innovates through variation of detail and emphasis, and also the transposition of this simile type to novel—often jarring—contexts. Starting with the ambush and its immediate aftermath, Statius creates a nexus of pastoral imagery in the epic that upsets the epic ideal of the *pastor*'s duty to preserve citizens' lives.

Chapter 3 gives a close reading of scenes at Argos in book 3, the longest sequence of decision-making in the *Thebaid*, which explores how the Argives come to be involved in full-scale war with Thebes (3.324–721). Statius describes leaders engaging with each other, bringing to the fore a series of opposed individual Argive perspectives (those of Tydeus, Polynices, Adrastus, Capaneus, Amphiaraus and Argia). Through memorable crowd scenes, the Theban mass also has a role to play in this important decision. The description on the human plane alternates with vignettes of divine action, and this chapter demonstrates that Statius encourages a reading of these modes as a mutually reinforcing portrait of the complex causes of war through the use of shared language and imagery, and also the description of the gods' exploitation of mass psychology.⁶⁰ Curiously, despite critics' recognition of the allegorical quality of Statius' gods,⁶¹ this approach has not been taken to this crucial juncture in Statius' story. This reading provides a new angle on Argive leadership, a topic that has received relatively little attention in Statian scholarship.

This interpretation of book 3 upsets a simple conception of Argive leadership as centralised in the single figure of the Argive king, Adrastus. Rather than being unilateral, decision-making at Argos takes into account the perspective of a variety of parties. The Argive mass may be viewed as active participants in the decision-making process at Argos, rather than the passive victims of their leader's or leaders' decisions. In turn, we may also read Adrastus' role critically, since he does not attempt to guide or control his people's inclinations, but is a passive figure himself. A brief comparison with other

⁵⁹ Anderson, 1968; Hornsby 1968; Chew 2002.

⁶⁰ Fama and Pauor, for example, are especially prominent in Statius' description of the gods' promotion of war in *Thebaid* 3.

⁶¹ E.g. Lewis (1936, 49–56), Vessey (1982, 574, 578) and Feeney (1991, esp. 364–371, 376–380).

examples of decision-making at important plot points in the *Thebaid* provides a context in which to view this sequence, from which I argue that in book 3, Statius provides an alternative model of power from the ‘tyranny’ exemplified at Thebes, even if these operate within the same basic framework of monarchy.

In my fourth and final chapter, I examine Statius’ presentation of Argive leadership structures through his Argive catalogue (4.32–344). Through this epic commonplace, the poet adumbrates the structure of the army and thus also how the group will operate as a corporate entity, which relates directly to the question of leadership.⁶² Statius’ catalogue displays several unusual features. In the Argive catalogue, Statius’ leaders are not depicted ordering or leading their troops, and the form of the catalogue itself is chaotic, meaning that the catalogue fails to serve as a means of conveying an orderly military structure before the outbreak of war. Additionally, Statius includes the now-deified Hercules as a leader in the catalogue, who spurs his men on to battle despite his absence, a novel form of epic leadership. Statius also plays on the commemorative function of the catalogue: by restricting his leaders to seven (plus Hercules), he deprives the catalogue of its metapoetic function of problematising the poet’s task of choosing and ordering his material.⁶³ As a consequence, the Argive catalogue does not perform its usual epic function, and we are entitled to wonder if this is in fact an epic catalogue at all.

These three case studies demonstrate that Statius was deeply interested in leadership, and that he innovated heavily on the structures of epic inherited from his predecessors to create a striking and novel conception of individuals’ relationship to groups.

Methods and assumptions

I make a close reading of each of the sequences outlined above, with especial consideration given to how these may be read in terms of the tradition of epic. Hardie, in his study of crowds and leaders in programmatic episodes of epic and historiography, provides many of the categories of analysis for leadership, of which I take three as case

⁶² Cf. Lovatt (2014), who uses the catalogue as a source for how the Argonauts operate as a collective entity.

⁶³ Sammons (2010) and Reitz (2013) provide the methodology for this approach.

studies.⁶⁴ In each case, I also make comparisons with analogous instances in the *Thebaid* itself, and with parallels found in the work of Statius' epic predecessors and contemporaries. This approach thus draws on the theory of intertextuality, which has become a predominant means of interpretation in the field of ancient literary study. Here I outline briefly approaches to Statius' intertextuality thus far and theoretical works on ancient intertextuality, which inform the methodology for my study.

Modern scholarly readings of the *Thebaid* have demonstrated the intertextuality of Statius' *Thebaid* with a wide range of ancient literature, both in Greek and Latin,⁶⁵ to such an extent that we may regard intertextuality as essential to a critical reading of the poem.⁶⁶ Virgil's *Aeneid* is the most important intertextual model for the *Thebaid*, and Statius refers clearly to Virgil's epic twice in his own (10.447–448; 12.816–817). As such, Virgil is the only predecessor 'highlighted in such a direct way',⁶⁷ which has been interpreted variously as familiarity with, indebtedness to—and sometimes even reverence for—the Augustan poet and his work.⁶⁸ Statius' explicit references are only suggestive of the importance of the *Aeneid* to the *Thebaid*, but this importance has been demonstrated in critical readings of Statius' epic, from small-scale verbal references, to a reading of the poem as a whole as a response to key themes of Virgil's poem.⁶⁹ Much scholarship has

⁶⁴ Hardie (2010) demonstrates the complex poetic features through which leader-group interaction is conceived of and conveyed in epic: the conception of the individual as coterminous with the state; the power of rumour and fiction; the way in which Fama (with Pauor) reflects on group psychology, and how portents may perform the same role; standard imagery used for crowds; leaders' use of the 'royal metaphor'; and similes that reflect on group behaviour.

⁶⁵ This is suggested by the range of subjects Statius says his father taught (*Siluae* 5.3). On Statius' background, including the range of his father's teaching, see Hardie (1983, 5–14), McNelis (2002), Gibson (2004, 149–156) and Lovatt (2005, 166–169).

⁶⁶ As Keith (2004–2005, 183) notes.

⁶⁷ As noted by Gibson 2004, 150. Nugent (1996, 70) asserts that 'this is perhaps the most explicit intertextual reference in Latin epic'. Dominik (2003) reads this as Statius' way of clarifying the relationship of his *Thebaid* to other texts.

⁶⁸ *Theb.* 10. 445–448; 12.816–819. Cf. also *Silu.* 4.7.25–28. There have been various interpretations of Statius' attitude to Virgil: Mozley (1963, 17) says Statius had a 'genuine and reverential feeling for the great master', and felt his own inferiority; Williams (1986) avers that 'Statius' most severe anxiety... arose from poetic oppression', and that he 'challenges' Virgil and others; Pollmann (2001, 11) notes Statius' 'humility and pride' in relation to Virgil. Rosati (2008, esp. 175–178) views the direct reference to Virgil in *Thebaid* 12 very differently: 'behind this hyperbolic homage lies a shrewd form of self-promotion' (177); but Rosati also notes that 'writing after epic means competing with the *Aeneid*' (183). See Keith (2002, 381 and 2004–2005, 181) on the predominance of Virgil in intertextual studies of Statius.

⁶⁹ This argument is circular: focus on the *Aeneid* has proved the importance of the *Aeneid* as intertext. Ganiban (2007) demonstrates the *Thebaid*'s sustained engagement with the *Aeneid*.

focused on the *Aeneid* alone as a model.⁷⁰ Where multiple literary sources appear to be in play, critics often assert the primacy of Virgil as a source.⁷¹ While this study aims neither to confirm nor contest this view, it will become clear in what follows that *Thebaid* 2–4 bears out the importance of Virgil as a model for Statius, with the proviso that at any given point in the poem, other texts may take centre stage intertextually.

The *Iliad* is another frequently adduced exemplar, and especially important as the ‘archetype’ for the genre of epic.⁷² The *Aeneid* and *Iliad* are often paired as sources for the *Thebaid*.⁷³ Lucan’s epic is also an important predecessor, partly because its subject-matter of civil war has special resonance for the *Thebaid*.⁷⁴ Ovid is another important source, whose *Metamorphoses* is recalled implicitly in the proem of the *Thebaid*,⁷⁵ and with whom Statius shares ‘the development of personifications as participants in the human action, a fascination with the corrupting effects of power’ and emphasis on ‘female experience and... psychological effects’.⁷⁶ The relationship of the *Thebaid* to the epics of Silius Italicus and Valerius Flaccus is harder to assess; efforts to establish their

⁷⁰ E.g. Pollmann (2001, 14). Cf. Kytzler 1969.

⁷¹ Braund (1996, 8) notes Statius’ ‘intense engagement with the *Aeneid*’, but that at certain points of the poem other authors come to the fore. Williams (1986) is an extreme example, claiming that Statius ‘used the others [=other intertextual models] to mediate the oppressively blinding genius of Vergil to his own gaze’ (214). Fowler (1997, 16) warns against a tendency to view source texts in terms of hierarchy.

⁷² Hinds 1998, 43. Conte (1986, 31) views Homer as both ‘exemplary’ and ‘code’ model for epic, and notes the canonical status of Homer’s epics: ‘they were... essential to [Virgil’s] poem, because Homer was part of the concept of epic poetry in Latin culture’ (64). See also Juhnke (1972, esp. 24–184).

⁷³ E.g. von Albrecht 1997, 947; Masterson 2005, esp. 296, 298; Lovatt 2010b, 159–160. Statius refers to these poems as a pair when he expresses the hope that his father would not deem him inferior to them, *Silu.* 5.3.61–3; discussed by Gibson (2004, 150). Lovatt (2005, esp. 15) sees Statius’ use of Virgilian and Homeric intertexts as part of a ‘negotiation’ between Greekness and Romanness in his games.

⁷⁴ On intertextuality with Lucan: Vessey 1970d; Ahl 1986, 2813–2814; Lovatt 1999; Micozzi 1999; Williams 1986, 210–212, 214; Roche 2015. Statius explicitly acknowledges his respect for Lucan by suggesting that ‘the *Aeneid* itself will venerate you [Lucan]’, *Silu.* 2.7.80, demonstrating that Statius’ treatment of his predecessors was ‘flexible’: Gibson 2004, 151. Malamud (1995) gives a less positive evaluation of this poem’s treatment of Lucan. Williams (1986, 221) wishes to retain Virgil’s primacy here, calling this ‘typical rhetorical treatment of a theme without regard to its truth’. Cf. Hinds 1998, 93–94.

⁷⁵ Hardie 1990, 226 with n13; Feeney 1991, 344 n106; Keith 2002, 382–383; Lovatt 2005, 195–197. Newlands (2009a, 356–357) notes that even as Statius refers to the *Aeneid* explicitly in 12.816–817, he is drawing on the *Metamorphoses*.

⁷⁶ Newlands 2004, 135–136, who also notes important differences. On Ovid as a source for Statius: Mozley 1963, 18; Keith 2002, 2004–2005 and 2007. Parkes (2009) and Newlands (2009a) demonstrate a combination of allusions to Virgil and Ovid.

relative dating have been inconclusive.⁷⁷ I therefore treat any potential allusions to Silius Italicus or Valerius Flaccus as parallels, without reference to temporal priority.⁷⁸ In addition to these epic models, scholarship has interpreted the *Thebaid* intertextually with reference to sources from a variety of other genres.⁷⁹

The most salient feature of Statius' intertextual method is its multiplicity.⁸⁰ This not only of source, as just outlined; but also of scope, ranging from broad structural relationships to subtle verbal reminiscence; and even of 'mode', as Lovatt's monograph on the games shows in the multiple ways in which Statius adapts and combines his sources.⁸¹ In numerous cases critics note the combination of sources within a given example.⁸² Statius even creates confusion through the shifting predominance of intertextual parallels.⁸³ Statius' epic thus demands a flexibility of approach that takes into account a large variety of possible patterns of intertextuality and connections to thematic concerns.

The intertextual approach of this study is informed by these observations and by those from theoretical work on ancient intertextuality. Each chapter includes the study of a sequence of direct description and a commonplace that occurs in almost all ancient epic:

⁷⁷ On the dating of Valerius, see Stover (2008). On Statius and Valerius, see Stover (2009). On Statius and Silius, see Lovatt (2005, 3–4, 247–248). Cf. Lovatt (2010b, esp. 155–156) and Marks (2013 and 2014b) on the possibility of two-way 'interaction' between the two epics. Ripoll (2015) reviews the question, but is not conclusive. Smolenaars (1994, xvii–xviii) discusses the dating of both other Flavian epic poets.

⁷⁸ Lovatt (2010b, 158) suggests that 'we should look for readings which offer the most interesting story'.

⁷⁹ Seneca: Vessey 1971a; Keith 2002, 384 n10; Sacerdoti 2008; Parkes 2010. Greek tragedy: Vessey 1971a; Gibson 2004, 156, referencing Smolenaars (1994, 119–123); Heslin 2008; Marinis 2015. Historiography: Lovatt 2010a; Ash 2015. Callimachus: Vessey 1970a, 316; Brown 1994; McNelis 2007. Antimachus of Colophon's *Thebaid* was perhaps a model as well, but unfortunately is now largely lost: Matthews 1996. Venini (1972) argues that Statius knew Antimachus, against Vessey (1970b). This is of course not an exhaustive list of intertextual models.

⁸⁰ Williams (1986, 209–212 and 214) sees this combination as characteristic of poets' intertextual method more generally in Statius' period.

⁸¹ Lovatt 2005: e.g. Lovatt identifies multiplication, reversal, erasure and subtraction as modes of Statius' intertextual engagement (16).

⁸² Thomas (1986, e.g. 175, 193) calls this 'conflation'. For good examples of the extent of Statius' combination of sources: von Albrecht 1997, 947; Gibson 2004; Lovatt 2005; Parkes 2009.

⁸³ E.g. Gervais (2015), who argues that through a 'confused intertextual nexus' in the monomachy of book 2, Tydeus is portrayed paradoxically as both hero and monster, reflecting a major thematic concern of the poem, of failed *uirtus*; quote from 64.

epic simile, gods and catalogues.⁸⁴ Hence Conte's distinction between 'exemplary' and 'code' model, the latter being the 'objective narrative structure, conventions, expectations defined by epic as a literary genre', is particularly useful.⁸⁵ These commonplaces thus draw on a number of intertextual parallels, and therefore must be analysed as part of a sequence of instances, as Hinds explains: 'the *topos* invokes its intertextual tradition as a collectivity, to which the individual contexts and connotations of individual prior instances are firmly subordinate'.⁸⁶ This study therefore views each instance in terms of its adherence to or deviation from the pre-existing but ever-evolving typology of each *topos*.⁸⁷ There is a substantial overlap between the multiple authors Statius mentions directly in his poetry, as discussed above, and the works that provide the multiple models that make up the 'code model' of epic poetry collectively. Lovatt's study of Statius' games, a commonplace in epic from Homer on, provides a model: Lovatt takes into account a number of epic predecessors to answer the primary question of 'What are the fundamental dynamics of intertextuality in Statius' games?'.⁸⁸ In my case, intertextuality is not the focus but a tool for the elucidation of Statius' conception of leadership.

My study in this way privileges epic intertexts, which include conventional epic *topoi*; but alongside these, this study recognises lexical parallels that deepen an understanding of Statius' portrait of leadership.⁸⁹ My approach to identifying these is along traditional lines, in which consideration is made not only of verbal parallelism, sound patterning and positioning of words, but also similarity of context, rarity of language, and other features that build up a case for claiming a parallel is significant, along with the question of

⁸⁴ Lucan omits the gods; but it is this very departure from precedent which gives this omission point.

⁸⁵ Conte 1986, esp. 31; quote from Segal's introduction to this work (13).

⁸⁶ Hinds (1998, 34), follows Conte's distinction (41–42). For Hinds' full approach: 34–47. Hinds' example of a *topos* is on a smaller scale than, for example, epic catalogue, but the principles still apply; he also warns about a rigid distinction between this and the study of lexical parallels (34, 39). Cf. Martindale (1986, 4–10) on Milton's adaptation of epic *topoi*, where he 'evokes a whole tradition as much as any particular passage or author'; 'the reader thus needs to be sensitive to accumulated resonances'; quotes from 5, 6.

⁸⁷ So Hinds (1998, 39–46) on the *topos* as 'not an inert category in the discourse, but an active one' (40).

⁸⁸ Lovatt (2005, 14–16), who extrapolates a competitive element from this intertextual engagement, whereby Statius is in 'incessant competition with the tradition'. On this conception of the author's *aemulatio*, see Conte (1986, 26–28).

⁸⁹ See Coffee *et al.* (2012), for intertextual study confined to lexical correspondence.

whether the parallel is ‘susceptible to interpretation or meaningful’—or not—⁹⁰ following Thomas (1986).⁹¹ This approach is admittedly problematic, an imprecise formulation that ‘depend[s] on the subjectivity of the reader’;⁹² and in this sense, it becomes a more sophisticated form of reader-centred intertextual interpretation.

The question of the ‘subjectivity of the reader’ touches on the question of intentionality, which is still a contested element in the field of intertextual theory.⁹³ My own approach falls between the two extremes of Thomas’ ‘polemical reference’ on the one hand, and the rejection of the importance of the point of composition altogether.⁹⁴ Conte’s assertion that we should view allusion as a rhetorical figure, another ‘cog in the general mechanism of textual composition’, ‘whose full potential is released when the two texts are brought together’ is attractive;⁹⁵ but my approach is overall closer to that of Hinds, who rejects ‘intertextualist fundamentalism’ in favour of an ‘enlargement’ of ‘allusion’ that includes an ‘intention-bearing author’.⁹⁶

I take Statius’ professed familiarity with a huge range of ancient literature as part of his literary posturing, through which he constructs his ‘belatedness’ and ‘secondariness’

⁹⁰ Conte (1986, 43–47) discusses features of poetic language that make lines memorable. Fowler (1997, 20–24) gives a discussion with examples. Cf. Hinds (1998, 17–34), especially on ‘lexicographical certainty’ versus ‘collective security’ (28). Farrell (2005, 100–101) employs a statistical basis for the identification of intertextual parallels: ‘intertext’ occurs when ‘the exactitude of [a] similarity, and the unlikelihood that such a similarity would occur by chance... are both so great as to make the line itself an unmistakable intertextual marker’. Coffee *et al.* (2012, esp. 392–398) also provides a model.

⁹¹ This one of Thomas’ two criteria for ‘reference’, the other being that the poet is ‘demonstrably familiar’ with the source text: 1986, 174. Cf. Fowler (1997, 19–20): ‘markedness and sense’ are key criteria. We may also regard an intertextual parallel as being unsuccessful: Lewis 2016.

⁹² Coffee *et al.* 2012, 395. Hinds (1998, 18–20) also sounds this warning.

⁹³ The ‘cold war’ over intentionality continues: Kennedy (1995, 86), as quoted in Hinds (1998, 17). See Lewis (2016) for a recent contribution. The problematic nature of intentionality goes back at least to Wimsatt and Beardsley’s 1946 article, ‘The Intentional Fallacy’.

⁹⁴ Thomas 1982. Conte (1986) responds to the intentionality of Pasquali (1951), as well as the psychologising of Bloom (1973). For a range of text- and reader-centred views: Conte 1986; Fowler 1997; Edmunds 2001; Lewis 2016. Farrell (2005, 99 n5) gives a review of the scholarship to this date.

⁹⁵ Conte (1986, 23–39) outlines this approach; the quotes are from Conte (1986, 28, 33). Fowler (1997, 18–19) notes that the focus in intertextuality in recent years has been ‘the way in which intertextuality creates meaning in texts through a dialectic between resemblance and difference’ and is therefore distinct from the simple noting of ‘echoes’ from prior texts.

⁹⁶ Hinds 1998, esp. 47–51.

within the epic tradition,⁹⁷ and make a broad assumption that Statius through the easily recognisable commonplaces of epic commented on his position in this long and rich poetic tradition.⁹⁸ What must be stressed from the outset is Statius' ability and tendency to adapt those models he found in epic in unique ways, despite his construction of his own work as 'secondary'. For Statius, 'generic traditions are a source of inspiration, not a chain'; and although Statius may stress the traditional nature of his epic, 'it is innovative indeed'.⁹⁹

Two programmatic sequences

Two brief sequences in *Thebaid* 1 give prominence to the question of a leader's relationship to his people, and I read these as thematically programmatic, informing a reading of the action of the *Thebaid* to come. Since *Thebaid* 1 falls outside the scope of this study, I give a brief outline of these here.

a) The anonymous Theban, 1.173–196

The first of these is a speech given by an unnamed Theban, which is given prominence by its placement. In *Thebaid* 1, the first direct speech by a human character is that of Oedipus, whose speech appears to set into motion the series of events that will lead to the brothers' conflict (1.56–87). The second is by an unnamed Theban, who bemoans the Theban people's position in relation to their king (1.173–196). Critics have treated the anonymous man's unusually prominent speech in some detail already;¹⁰⁰ here I comment

⁹⁷ Feeney 2004, 86–88: the poet 'must negotiate his own way through these crowded seas' (88). Cf. Hinds 1998, 91–98, 123–127.

⁹⁸ Farrell (2005, 103–108) argues that 'particularly obvious allusions' may be read 'as guides to the author's intentions', but that the author does not have total 'control' of the intertextual potential of his own work; I consider the adaptation of epic commonplaces such as simile and catalogue 'obvious'. Cf. Conte (1986, 37): the relationship of the text to the tradition, 'conditions the later poet's work and helps him to formulate its distinctive qualities'. Batinski (1992, 19) writing on Lucan, asserts that transformation or neglect of epic convention is an 'avenue for understanding the poem'. Cf. Lovatt (2005), who asserts that the games in Statius' epic are important for a reading of the poem as a whole (17).

⁹⁹ Von Albrecht 1997, 948, 952.

¹⁰⁰ Vessey 1973, 78–80; Ahl 1986, 2828–2830; Feeney 1991, 348; Dominik 1994a, 16, 80, 83–84. Hill (2008b, 59) views this section of Statius' text in contrast with Virgil: 'The contrast with the corresponding Virgilian section could hardly be greater. From Virgil we learn that a robust constitution has ways of dealing with breakdown; from Statius we learn that a weak constitution is powerless against the forces of evil.'

briefly on how this man's speech prefigures the importance of leadership in the epic, giving consideration to the man's anonymity, his prominence in the poem but inconsequentiality in terms of plot, and the way it foregrounds the effects of poor leadership on the Theban people collectively.¹⁰¹ The anonymous man establishes a mood of social and political discontent, which sets the tone for the poem to come.

Statius introduces this speech with a commentary on the political state of affairs at Thebes:

quis tunc tibi, saeue,
quis fuit ille dies, uacua cum solus in aula
respiceres ius omne tuum cunctosque minores,
et nusquam par stare caput! iam murmura serpunt
plebis Echioniae, tacitumque a principe uulgus
dissidet, et, qui mos populis, uenturus amatur. (1.165–170)

What, savage one—what a day that was for you then, when alone in an empty palace you saw all power yours and all men inferior to you, and nowhere a head standing equal. Already the murmuring of the Echionian plebeians creeps on, and the people silently dissents from its leader; and, as is the way of peoples, they love the man to come.

This section preceding the speech of the *aliquis* is in two parts: the first is in the form of an apostrophe to Eteocles, who Statius addresses *saeue* (165–168a); the second is a brief but pointed description of the disjuncture between people and leader (168b–170).

Statius uses a concatenation of political language here: he uses three terms to denote the Theban populace, *plebis*, *uulgus*, *populis* (169–170); *ius* as a term for the authority of the king (167); and *princeps*, a loaded Roman political term for the Theban king.¹⁰² The use of *par* has resonance as a civil war term used in Lucan's epic.¹⁰³ The single figure of Eteocles is very squarely pitted against his populace, with the combination of *solus* with *omne* and *cunctos* underscoring this (166–167), and *minores* and *nusquam par stare caput* again outlining their relative positions of power (167–168). Ending this section is a pointed generalised statement about the political behaviour of the masses: it is customary

¹⁰¹ Dominik (2002, 183) notes that Statius' 'non-causative speeches emphasise and explore issues already presented in the narrative'.

¹⁰² *OLD princeps* §6. Augustus uses this term of himself, e.g. *RG* 7, 13. Cf. Hor. *Carm.* 1.2.50, also of Augustus: *pater atque princeps*.

¹⁰³ On parity in conflict as civil war idea, including the key term *par*, see Masters (1992, esp. 43–44, 49–50, 109–110).

that they should love the man to come, with the implication that they prefer him to the one who is current (170).

Within the speech itself, the man complains of Thebes' constantly changing leadership, with specific reference to the way in which the people of Thebes suffer because of this: the *fata populorum* are directed by the brothers (1.176), echoed near the end of his speech in the 'harsh lot' of the people, *toleranda nullis/ aspera sors populis!* (1.195–196). This man characterises the relationship of Theban leaders to people as one of servitude: he uses the imagery of cattle under a yoke for their kingship (1.174–175),¹⁰⁴ and asks rhetorically if he is to be given to each brother in turn to 'serve', *seruire* (177–178). Finally, he says that 'we' are a 'cheap band', prepared for any master, *nos uilis in omnes/ prompta manus casus, domino cuicumque parati...* (1.191–192). The anonymous man appears to view the core problem of rulership as the alternating system of the brothers.¹⁰⁵ Through this speech, Statius gives prominence to the moral question of how people suffer for the actions of their leaders, foregrounding the the epic's concern with the relationship of leader to mass from a non-leader perspective.

Statius' introduction of the anonymous man raises questions about how we are to read his speech in its context. Statius introduces him by characterising him as one who was ever ready to harm those in power with 'humble venom' and could not bear the leaders, *duces*, imposed upon him (1.171–173). Through this introduction, Statius associates him with Homer's Thersites and Virgil's Drances, the two men who publicly confront Agamemnon and Turnus in the *Iliad* and *Aeneid* respectively (*Il.* 2.220–242; *Aen.* 11.336–375). The speech itself recalls that of Drances in the *Aeneid*, who similarly characterises the people as 'cheap' for those in power.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Vessey 1973, 79. This recalls Statius' introduction to the anonymous man, as one who could not bear 'with a willing neck' the *duces* imposed on him, 1.173.

¹⁰⁵ The phrase *mutare timendos*, 1.174, echoes the narrator's description of the arrangements at Thebes, *mutare ducem*, 1.139; *uicissim*, 1.177.

¹⁰⁶ On the recollection of Thersites: Heuvel 1932, *ad* 171; Juhnke 1972, 53–54. Vessey (1973, 79) also discusses this, citing Legras (1905, 33 n4). Ahl (1986, 2829) says there is 'only a suggestion' of Thersites here. Dominik (1994b, 156) notes that the 'tone and sentiment... is reminiscent of Thersites' hostile eloquence'. On Drances, see Caiani (1989, 237) esp. *nos uilis.../ ...manus*, 1.191–192, *nos, animae uiles*, *Aen.* 11.372, a parallel Heuvel (1932 *ad* 191) notes. Caiani (1989) notes that the *aliquis*, Tydeus in book 2, and Aletes all recall Drances in some way.

There are, however, key differences from Thersites and Drances: the Theban's speech appears to occur in a vacuum, rather than being addressed to the ruler: his speech is addressed to no one, and no reaction to it is given.¹⁰⁷ Statius' speaker, despite being given a brief character sketch, is nameless, thereby sharing with the Theban masses his anonymity.¹⁰⁸ His introduction also comes just after Statius' outline of the mood at Thebes, where the people 'murmur', which is why this speech has been read not as an isolated example of dissent, but representative of the views of the Theban people.¹⁰⁹ Ahl also notes that the speech reproduces to a large extent what the narrator has already said about the political state of affairs at Thebes (1.123–164), seeing the speech as 'almost a repetition of what Statius himself has said *qua* narrator', with the difference that 'the critic's [comments] are concerned with what the effects will be on the ordinary people'.¹¹⁰

This anonymous man appears to be representative of a broader point of view, then, and he has valid concerns about Theban leadership, and represents a discordance between people and leader that is widespread but only later expressed outwardly.¹¹¹ So while his speech may be inconsequential, it introduces a key thematic strand for the poem, of the people of a city as disjoined from those who rule them, for whom sympathy is created by viewing them as victims of the machinations of their leaders. The speech thus gives prominence to the leader-people relationship, informing a reading of action to come.

¹⁰⁷ There is certainly no reaction to this speech in Statius' narrative; instead, Statius moves straight on to the gods, as Feeney (1991, 348) notes.

¹⁰⁸ As an all-seeing narrator. Statius could have provided a name, but chooses not to. Ahl (1986, 2829) notes he is 'utterly anonymous'. Cf. the anonymous shade in 2.16–25, similarly introduced, who also gives a speech: ...*atque aliquis, cui mens humili laesisse ueneno/ summa*, 1.171–2; *unus ibi ante alios, cui laeua uoluntas/ semper et ad superos* ..., 2.16–17. Heuvel (1932 ad 171), Ahl (1986, 2841–2844) and Vessey (1973, 231) note this parallel.

¹⁰⁹ Caiani 1989, 235–236.

¹¹⁰ Ahl 1986, 2829–2830, 2833. Cf. Feeney (1991, 348), who comments briefly that 'The brothers' differences are here [by the narrator] explained in terms of the accepted clichés of political behaviour with, a soliloquy from an unnamed ordinary citizen to help marshal the observations'.

¹¹¹ This effect of discordance between ruler and people is enhanced through juxtaposition with the divine council just after the man's speech, 1.198–302. Here, the hierarchy of the gods and domination of Jupiter are emphasised, despite the objections of Juno; but in Thebes, the dynamic between leader and led is more complicated, as the speech of the anonymous Theban shows.

b) Crotopus and Coroebus, 1.557–668

A second example in book 1 serves to establish the relationship of king to subjects, and the question of how leadership is performed, as a primary concern of Statius' epic: Adrastus' brief narrative of the story of Crotopus and Coroebus to Polynices and Tydeus (1.557–668).¹¹² Like the anonymous man's speech, the story serves no purpose in the plot.¹¹³ However, critics have noted numerous points of connection between this story and Statius' subsequent narrative,¹¹⁴ so that the story may be regarded as programmatic.¹¹⁵ I too interpret Adrastus' tale in this way, but with a focus on leadership.¹¹⁶

The story is loosely connected to the immediately surrounding narrative by the fact that the Argives happen to be undertaking rites connected to it when the two exiles arrive. Adrastus' short story covers a lot of ground: Apollo's expiation after the death of Python; his seduction of Crotopus' daughter; the son she bears, Linus, who is entrusted to the care of shepherds and mauled to death by dogs; Crotopus' ordering of his daughter's death; and Apollo's revenge, in the form of a monster, part girl, part serpent, that creeps into Argos and snatches away their children. At this point, we may remark on the role of King Crotopus in the story: his daughter's fear of him indirectly causes the death of his grandson, and later he orders her death as well. Statius condemns his actions with a parenthetical *infandum*, marking his own moral evaluation of the king's actions (1.595).

In the rest of Adrastus' narrative, just as importantly, Adrastus' story thematises the difference between autocratic power and leadership; in this case, specifically leadership that prioritises the preservation of the community over the individual. When he introduces Coroebus into the story, he uses the terms of epic commemoration:¹¹⁷

¹¹² On which see Ahl (1986, 2852–2854).

¹¹³ Vessey (1970a, 317 n12) and Keith (2013, 304 n5) summarise criticism of this story on these grounds.

¹¹⁴ Especially Menoeceus' suicide, see Vessey (1970a, esp. 323–331) and Feeney (1991, esp. 357–358). Cf. Keith 2013, 314, 316.

¹¹⁵ Newlands 2009a; Ganiban 2007, 13–23.

¹¹⁶ This analysis of Adrastus' tale is thus distinct from that of Ganiban (2007, 13–22) which focuses on kingship in an interpretation based on intertextuality with the *Aeneid*, especially structural parallelism with the Cacus story in *Aeneid* 8. Crotopus is excluded from Ganiban's analysis, in favour of viewing Apollo as *princeps*: on which see esp. 18 with n87.

¹¹⁷ Note too the introduction of Adrastus' story: *pandam*, 1.561. Cf. the later narratorial exclamation, when the men have killed the monster, 1.638–640. Vessey (1970a, 325–326) notes the parallelism of Coroebus and the Seven, and their innate differences.

haud tulit armorum praestans animique Coroebus
seque ultro lectis iuuenum, qui robore primi
famam posthabita faciles extendere uita,
obtulit. (1.605–608)

Coroebus, outstanding in arms and spirit, did not bear this, but of his own accord offered himself to a select group of young men, who were pre-eminent in strength and ready to subordinate their lives to extend their fame.

The phrase *lectis iuuenum* suggests a catalogue of men, without giving it explicitly.¹¹⁸ The trade-off of life for fame is an epic *topos*, and Statius will recall the language used here in his poetic appeal preceding the Argive catalogue (4.33). Coroebus is thus portrayed here as an epic commander, despite the fact he is devoid of either social or political status in Adrastus' tale. When he attacks Apollo's monster, he stands out from this band of men, *latus omne uirum stipante corona...* (1.612).

When the figures of king and Coroebus finally come into contact, Crotopus is again causing the death of his subjects. Apollo sends a plague on the Argives, and Crotopus asks what its cause is. Statius ironically calls him *dux* in this context (1.634);¹¹⁹ If anyone is a *dux* at this point in the narrative, especially in the military sense, it is Coroebus. In response, Crotopus orders that the young men who attacked the monster—including Coroebus—be sacrificed. Again, the language is telling, *iubet* underscoring the king's authority (1.636). Coroebus goes to face the god, and gives a speech asking that he himself be punished, rather than the city at large (1. 643–661, esp. 650–661).¹²⁰

Throughout the story, the Argive people collectively are a point of reference. Adrastus opens his narrative with reference to the Argive people's experience of 'great disasters': *magnis exercita cladibus olim/ plebs Argiva litat*, 1.560–561.¹²¹ When the monster is dead, the Argive populace comes to view it, even attacking its body (1.616–623).¹²² With his monster killed, Apollo 'rises up more savagely' against the 'poor people', *in miseros* (1.627), and again the people collectively feel the effect, as he sends a plague on them

¹¹⁸ See Harrison (1991 *ad* 213–4) on the *topos* of the 'select group' in Greek and Latin literature.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Ahl (1986, 2853) who says that this denotes 'Crotopus—or whoever is meant by *duci* in line 634...'

¹²⁰ Note especially Coroebus' use of *uilis* to describe the deaths of men, an adjective that will have resonance in key passages to come, 1.649.

¹²¹ Vessey (1970a, 322–323) notes the irony of this, considering the disaster into which the Argives are again about to be thrust.

¹²² Note especially *stupet Inachia pubes*, 1.619.

(1.629–633). Lastly, Coroebus’ appeal to Apollo pits his own life against Argos at large, underscoring his self-sacrifice on behalf of the community(1.643–661). Critics have recognised this, including the way in which this story looks forward to the suicide of Menoeceus in book 10, among other instances.¹²³ Here I assert that this establishes a broader principle related to leadership that is evident throughout the *Thebaid*: epic glory and leadership qualities may be displaced onto non-authority figures, pointing up the distinction between kingship and leadership and in turn reflecting on the nature of Statius’ poem.¹²⁴ As with the anonymous man’s speech, Adrastus’ story introduces the individual’s responsibility—especially as figure of authority—to the wider community.¹²⁵

Translation and Text of Statius’ *Thebaid*

I provide a translation of all extended Latin quotes from Statius’ *Thebaid* except for those closely paraphrased or summarised in my discussion. All translations are my own. I use Klotz and Klinnert’s 1973 edition of the *Thebaid*, and discuss any instances where I depart from this edition. Citations and quotations of the ancient scholiast on Statius, often called ‘Lactantius Placidus’, are from Sweeney’s 1997 edition.

¹²³ E.g. Vessey 1970a, 321–322, 326–331; Feeney 1991, 357–8.

¹²⁴ I therefore disagree with Ganiban (2007, 22), who concludes on this story that ‘*pietas* and... *uirtus* ultimately do not matter in Statius’ new epic world’, since Statius lays great emphasis on the effectiveness of these very qualities here. Ganiban seems later to backtrack, when he says the story ‘reveal[s] the problematic nature of *pietas* and kingship’ (23).

¹²⁵ See Ahl (1986, 2854) on ‘Coroebus’ sense of duty and responsibility to his community’.

Chapter 1

Statius' Leadership Diction

Diction provides some of the foundational material for this study of leadership. While not all scenes and tropes relevant to the study of leadership include terms such as *dux* or *ductor*, a review of Statius' use of these terms lays the groundwork for what follows.

dux and ductor

The terms *dux* and *ductor* denote a relationship between an individual or individuals and a group. The terms 'leader' and *dux* have a similar semantic range, and I therefore use these terms interchangeably, and note if this is not the case. Although related to *dux*, *ductor* has a more restricted meaning, denoting either a 'military commander', or 'the rider (of a horse)'.¹ Servius notes that '*ductores* is more sonorous than *duces*, which the poetry of heroes demands'.² In a poem dealing with war, Statius thus frequently has a choice between these words of similar meaning. Statius appears to prefer *dux*, using it almost six times as frequently as *ductor* (116 instances to nineteen respectively).³

Varro connects the meaning of both of these nouns to *duco*: 'from the fact that one knows how to lead, one is a *dux* or *ductor*',⁴ and Varro also connects *doceo* and *disco* to *duco*.⁵ The verb *duco* has a larger range of meaning than *dux*. In Statius' *Thebaid*, aside from the

¹ OLD *ductor* §1, 2.

² '*ductores* sonantius est quam *duces*': *quod heroum exigit carmen*, Servius *ad Aen.* 2.14. Leumann (1959, 147 n1) notes the term *ductor* probably was used by Ennius, and that Livy uses it in his first decade. Leumann rightly notes here that *ductor* is not simply a heightened form of *dux*, since *dux* is used in the sense of *imperator*, while *ductor* is not. Austin (1964 *ad* 14) notes that 'Virgil likes the word *ductor*', and that 'except for a possible occurrence in Accius (fr. 522), it was used in poetry before him by Lucretius only (i. 86 '*ductores Danaum delecti, prima virorum*')...'

³ Other epic poets appear to favour *ductor*: Silius Italicus, for example, uses *ductor* almost twice as many times as *dux* (198 instances to 109 respectively).

⁴ Varro, *Ling.* 6.62: *ab eo quod scit ducere qui est dux aut ductor*.

⁵ Varro, *Ling.* 6.62. The link is probably false.

sense of ‘cause to go along with one, lead’,⁶ Statius uses the verb *duco* in the sense of ‘make’, ‘fashion’, for example, *ductas... arces* (4.151).⁷ Statius also uses the verb to denote a motivating factor, for example *uagus... ducit/ sanguis* (8.480–481).⁸

Both noun and verb when used to denote leadership in the non-physical sense are basic metaphors, and Statius sometimes plays on the difference between physical and non-physical leadership in the *Thebaid*. For example, as Hypsipyle *dux* takes the Argive army to the Langia for water, paradoxically, some of the men go in front of her, *praecelerant* (4.806). Similarly, Hippomedon crosses the Asopos river ‘leaving the leaders behind’, *ducibusque relictis*, in another play on this idea (7.431).

Statius applies the term *dux* to a limited number of human characters.⁹ Of individuals, the term is used most of Eteocles (fifteen times), followed by Adrastus (nine times). Aside from these, the term is used four times for Parthenopaeus (4.310; 9.845; 10.361; 10.434). It is also used four times of Polynices (1.321; 2.210; 2.448; 6.425), three times of Hippomedon (5.562; 9.504; 9.562) and Theseus (12.523; 12.614; 12.640), and twice of Tydeus (10.402; 11.87). Other characters are called *dux* only once in the work: Laius is addressed as *dux inclute Thebes* by Tiresias (4.610);¹⁰ Lycurgus calls himself *dux* once in direct speech (5.562);¹¹ and Dryas is called *Aonii ducis* at the point when he hurls the spear at Parthenopaeus that eventually kills him (9.867).¹² The term *dux* in the singular is used most frequently of Eteocles of all individuals, and aside from Dryas, all of the other referents are Argive warriors.

Statius uses *ductor* nineteen times in the *Thebaid*, and here the pattern of usage is slightly different from that of *dux*. The term is used for Eteocles five times (2.133; 3.31; 7.376; 11.205; 11.325), and Adrastus twice (3.349, 10.235). For other characters, the term is used once: Lycurgus (5.733, addressed as such by Adrastus); Menalcas (*ductor cunei*,

⁶ *OLD dux* §1; cf. also §2, 8, 9, and esp. §6 ‘lead one’s troops’.

⁷ *OLD duco* §23. See Parkes (2012 *ad* 151) on the ‘notion of vertical extension’ here.

⁸ *OLD duco*, esp. §16. On this instance see Augoustakis (2016 *ad* 480–1): ‘the emphatic *ducit* is an appropriate verb to express the driving force behind *sanguis*’.

⁹ Here and in what follows I do not include instances within similes, which are treated separately.

¹⁰ See Parkes (2012 *ad* 610) on the ‘solemn, grand note’ intended to ‘flatter’ Laius here.

¹¹ This instance is discussed in Chapter 4.

¹² Jason is also possibly called *dux* in Hypsipyle’s narration, 5.480. The manuscripts read *dux*, and this is retained by Klotz, Hill and Hall *et al.*, but the term appears redundant after the naming of Theseus in the previous line, as noted by SB *ad loc.*

8.431); Hippomedon (9.286);¹³ Polynices (by Argia, *ductorem profectum ad debita regna*, 12.323). The term is also used for Inachus, in an address by the narrator (4.118).¹⁴ Again, there is a difference in application between Thebans and Argives, and Eteocles receives the highest number of instances, but apart from him, of Theban characters the term *ductor* is only applied to Creon, and only after Eteocles' death (12.715). As with *dux*, the use of *ductor* shows a pattern whereby on the Theban side, Eteocles is conceived of almost exclusively as the 'leader'.

Stattius uses both *dux* and *ductor* frequently within similes, especially of bulls. Polynices is compared with a *dux taurus* driven from his meadow (2.323). Adrastus in the Argive catalogue is an old bull but the leader nevertheless, *dux tamen* (4.71). The Lemnian women are compared with heifers who see both *ductorem* and *maritum* broken by a lion (5.330). During the games, Tydeus and Agylleus wrestling are compared with *gemini tauri*, the 'leaders of the herd', *ductores gregis* (6.864). When Hippomedon leads the Argive army across the river Asopos, he is compared with a *ductor taurus* (7.438–439). Related to this imagery, but not in a simile, a Theban Bacchant declares she has envisaged two bulls rushing together, but 'the other leader has the meadow', *saltum dux alter habet* (4.397, 404). Here *dux* or *ductor* is applied to bulls metaphorically, and in this context Stattius favours *ductor* over *dux*.¹⁵

The term *dux* is used most often of Eteocles in the work, ten times absolutely, and five times with qualification. Eteocles is frequently called *dux* in connection with the ambush of Tydeus, and this context is revisited in the *aristeia* of Tydeus in book 8, where he is called *dux* three additional times.¹⁶ Tydeus labels Eteocles *dux* ironically twice in book 2, first to Menoetes, then to Maeon (2.657, 699). After the ambush, Tydeus considers going

¹³ Here it may carry its specific meaning of 'rider (of a horse)': *OLD ductor* §2; Dewar 1991 *ad* 286.

¹⁴ This use for Inachus perhaps reflects his status as the first king of Argos. In 7.374 *ductor* is given as a variant in ω ; but Klotz, Hill, Hall and Smolenaars (1994) all read *rector* here.

¹⁵ In other similes bulls are not the referent of *dux*. When the Argives cut down trees for Opheltes' pyre, a simile compares this with when a *dux* gives a captured town over to the victors for plunder, 6.84–5. In book 7, in a simile that will be the subject of extended discussion in Chapter 2, Eteocles is compared with a shepherd who lets his flock out in the morning, and the leaders, *duces*, go first, 7.395. Argia making her way to Thebes is compared with the 'frenzied leader of a band' of Cybele's followers, *dux uesana chori*, 12.225. Cf. the use of ἡγεμῶν for the 'leader of the chorus', LSJ ἡγεμῶν §II.b.

¹⁶ This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

back to Thebes, and *populus* is paired with *dux* to denote the audience he envisages there, *attonitis sese populoque ducique/ ostentasset ouans* (2.683–684). Again, Eteocles is called *dux* when the narrator says that Maeon had warned Eteocles of events to come (2.694). When Maeon commits suicide and Eteocles refuses burial to him, the narrator refers to the ‘raging anger of the unspeakable leader’, *ducis infandi rabidae... irae* (3.96). Later still Jupiter refers to the ambush as *ducis scelus* (3.237). The *aristeia* of Tydeus in book 8 sees him finally meet Eteocles on the battlefield, and again here there is a cluster of uses of *dux* for Eteocles: first by Tydeus, again ironically, *egregius dux* (8.672); then twice by the narrator (8.681, 691).¹⁷

The term *dux* is often coupled in Eteocles’ case with an adjective or noun that gives a moral assessment, whether in direct speech or focalised through a character, or in the narrator’s voice.¹⁸ Polynices remembers who was obsequious to his brother as he left Thebes, *iniqui/ ...ducis* (2.316–317). After Polynices wounds Eteocles during the duel, the narrator calls Eteocles *dux nefandus*, drawing an implicit distinction between Eteocles and Polynices: *restabat lassa nefando/ uita duci summusque cruor* (11.552–553). In other examples, the use of *dux* for Eteocles demonstrates its negative or ironic associations. When he hears via *fama* that his brother is marrying Argia—and also the rumour of war—he is terrified, *Labdaciumque ducem.../ territat* (2.210–211). The term is later used of Eteocles with *plebes* to suggest the disjuncture between himself and his people: *at parte ex alia Cadmi Mauortia plebes,/ maesta ducis furiis...* (4.345–346).¹⁹ Later still Tiresias refers to Eteocles as *dux* when he tells the Thebans that he warned Eteocles about war (10.590ff.).²⁰ Finally, Creon damns Eteocles in both his private and public roles as the ‘worst of brothers and leaders’, *fratrumque ducumque/ pessime* (11.269).

¹⁷ In 8.681, Eteocles responds to Tydeus’ taunts by throwing a spear, *referens mandata ducis*; in 8.691 Eteocles is subsequently called *dux* as he is defended by Thebans; neither context is flattering for Eteocles *qua* leader.

¹⁸ Cf. Ahl’s (1986, 2873) comment on Eteocles, that ‘every mention of the ruling brother elicits an unpleasant epithet such as *saevus, crudelis, durus, nefandus, impius*’.

¹⁹ Cf. 2.651–652, where *rex* and *uulgus* are used by Menoetes, and 2.683, [*Tydeus*] *isset et attonitis sese populoque ducique*. These instances are discussed further in Chapter 3.

²⁰ This is comparable to Maeon’s attempt to warn Eteocles, *duci*, about the ambush, 2.694, given above. Cf. the instance of *dux* in 4.416 just prior to the necromancy, and in the ‘warning’ Tiresias mentions in book 10.

For Eteocles, then, *dux* is a term frequently used in contexts where his character and specifically his performance in this role is deficient, and qualification through negative terms frequently makes this explicit.²¹ The designation is thus ironic, giving from the narrator's, gods' and other characters' points of view a moral judgment of Eteocles as leader. Eteocles is never called *dux* by a Theban character, nor in a place where focalisation through a Theban character or characters is a possible reading.

The term *ductor* is used for Eteocles five times. After Laius (as Tiresias) has appeared to Eteocles and poured gore all over him, Eteocles is compared with a tigress that hears hunters, and Statius concludes the comparison by saying that this was how the *ductor* fought against his absent brother (2.133). Here the leader is 'roused in anger', *excitus ira*, again creating negative moral associations with Eteocles' leadership (2.132). In a similar instance concluding a simile, and referring to the ambush of Tydeus, after Eteocles is compared with the skipper of a boat in book 3, *ductor* is again used, *talis Agenoreus ductor* (3.31).²² In book 11, *Tyrius... ductor* is used as Eteocles offers sacrifices to Jupiter in thanks for his defence of Thebes, and Statius points out that this is 'in vain', *nequiquam* (1.205–206). The last use of this term for Eteocles is later in this book, as Eteocles prepares to leave for the duel against Polynices (11.325).

The use of *ductor* for Eteocles in book 7 is important due to its context. After the teichoscopy in which the Theban allies are listed, to whom Eteocles gives a speech which opens, 'Great-hearted kings, whom I as your leader would not refuse to obey and myself as a soldier defend the walls of Thebes...', *magnanimi reges, quibus haud parere recusem, / ductor et ipse, meas miles defendere Thebas...* (7.375–376). Here Eteocles employs the rhetorical conceit of the 'leader who follows', but its context, which is discussed at length in Chapter 2, makes this use of *ductor* and *reges* particularly ironic. There is no clear distinction between Statius' use of *dux* and *ductor* for Eteocles, except that Statius appears to prefer the latter in the context of similes. Both are used in contexts where the use of these terms is ironic.

²¹ In 10.387, the phrase *monitu ducis* is used of Amphiion's leading his men out 'on the order of his leader'. As will be seen in the use of this phrase in 5.555 for Adrastus, this brief mention does not elaborate substantially on Eteocles' role.

²² As noted above, Statius appears to prefer *ductor* in a simile context, over *dux*.

The use of the singular *dux* without qualification to denote a limited sphere of leadership is largely reserved for Eteocles on the Theban side. An exception occurs during the necromancy, when Tiresias addresses Laius as *dux inclute Thebes* (4.610). Aside from Eteocles, this term is only used for Thebans who are still alive for Dryas, when he splits the string of Parthenopaeus' bow, *Aonii ducis* (9.867). In other cases, *dux* designates a limited sphere of authority. During the ambush, the narrator says of Cthonius, *...quo duce freta cohors*, 'on this leader was the *cohors* relying', limiting his leadership to the men undertaking the ambush (2.539). In the narration of the war, the Theban Prothous is called *dux turmae* (8.536), the leader of the Theban night watch is also called *dux Martis operi* (10.18), and later in the same book, Amphion is called *dux Dircaeae alae*, again limiting his capacity as *dux* (10.466).²³ In these cases, each man's sphere of leadership is limited to a role as leader of a group in the context of warfare.

The term *dux* is also used generically, without reference to a specific character. This occurs twice with reference to the political situation at Thebes. The narrator comments negatively on the arrangement of alternating leaders at Thebes, *alterni placuit sub legibus anni/ exsilio mutare ducem* (1.138–139). Just after this instance, the narrator introduces the anonymous Theban as one who could not bear 'with a willing neck' the *duces* imposed on him (1.172–173). A related use is in the vision of the bacchant in book 4, where she issues a sort of *praeteritio* in which she says she will not tell of the *monstra ducum*, a reference generally to the problems of the Theban royal family. (4.395).

Adrastus is labelled *dux* nine times to Eteocles' fifteen. He is labelled *dux* without qualification five times, and four times with qualification.²⁴ Adrastus is first called *dux* in direct speech containing the content of a rumour about his daughters' marriages (2.201–202). He is also called *dux* when Atalanta 'commends' her son Parthenopaeus to him at the end of the catalogue, recalling the simile in Adrastus' catalogue entry comparing him with a bull that is *dux* (4.344; 4.69–74).²⁵ The last time Adrastus is called *dux* is in the Argive council in book 10: Thiodamas is departing for the night-raid, and leaves with

²³ Cf. the Argive Menalcas, *erepto cunei ductore*, 8.431, mentioned above.

²⁴ *Talaonides*, *Iasides*, *longaeui*, and in apposition with *Adrasto*.

²⁵ These instances are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

Adrastus the laurel leaves he wears as priest, *longaeuque ducis gremio commendat honorem/frontis* (10.255–256).²⁶

The term *dux* for Adrastus is used several times during the Nemean episode. After reaching the Langia with Hypsipyle, Adrastus asks who she is on behalf of the Argives, and here he is called *dux Talaionides* (5.18).²⁷ The second occurrence of *dux* used absolutely for Adrastus is when Parthenopaeus is sent to determine the cause of Hypsipyle's screams at his behest, *monitu ducis* (5.555).²⁸ This brief phrase does not elaborate on the way Adrastus conducts his leadership, but concisely links the leader's command to the action, one of the few occasions we see this on the Argive side. Later the term occurs in parenthesis, to explain how men have been chosen to carry the bier of Opheltes: *numero dux legerat omni*, where *numero... omni* emphasises Adrastus' action in relation to his group (6.129). When Parthenopaeus wins his race a second time during the games of book 6, he receives his prize from the *dux*: *clamore recurrit/ ante ducem prensaque fovet suspiria palma* (6.641–642).²⁹ Adrastus later forbids the swordfight between Polynices and Agreus, *dux Iasides uetat* (6.914).³⁰ The last example of *dux* for Adrastus without qualification occurs as he addresses Opheltes, promising him—ironically—an altar if they should return from the war (7.93–104). Again, the context frames his individual role in relation to those around him: he speaks on behalf of his men, while each of them prays for himself, *dux ea pro cunctis, eadem sibi quisque vovebat* (7.104).

It is striking that Adrastus is called *dux* most of all the Argive leaders, but with the exception of 10.255, all of these instances occur outside of the war itself, and refer to

²⁶ Note the repetition of *commendo* here from 4.344.

²⁷ Note that here he is surrounded by warriors, *procerum uallante corona*, 5.17.

²⁸ This presumably refers to Adrastus. Soerink (2014 *ad* 555) believes this refers to Adrastus, and notes that Ganiban (2013: 262 n. 53) overlooks this instance. Ganiban's omission is perhaps because the identity of the *dux* here is unclear; however, where the context is of the Argives as a group, as here, *dux* without qualification usually refers to Adrastus. Soerink (2014) also notes that this phrase is repeated in 10.387 of Eteocles' instructions to Amphion.

²⁹ Adrastus is the games' *editor*, again a role in relation to the mass: Lovatt 2005, 285–305.

³⁰ Lovatt (2005, 245–246) notes that here Statius uses a military term for Adrastus, along with *copia*, a term for military resources.

Adrastus' role in relation to the Argives in the context of peace.³¹ Statius' use of the term thus suggests that Adrastus plays a political role as 'leader', rather than a military one as 'commander' or 'general'.³²

Adrastus is called *ductor* only twice. The first instance of this occurs in book 3, when Tydeus bursts into Adrastus' council after the ambush demanding war: he first addresses the council as a whole as *uiri*, then Adrastus as *optime Lernaee/ ductor* (3.348–349). The second instance occurs after the council in book 10 in which Thiodamas has proposed the night-raid. Here Adrastus is compared with a *nutritor* of horses, after which the narrator says, *talis erat longaeuus ductor Achiuae turmae* (10.235). Here, Adrastus bears a relationship explicitly to the army, and it is one of only two instances during the war where he is called *dux* or *ductor*, as mentioned above. It is significant that both of these instances occur during the night-raid episode, which serves as a microcosmic example of successful leadership, as will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Polynices is called *dux* less frequently in the *Thebaid* than either Eteocles or Adrastus. In the first book Polynices is depicted wandering from Thebes to Argos, and his thoughts fluctuate: he complains of exile, but then he 'raises the vainglory of the leader' and imagines his brother cast down, *attolit flatus ducis* (1.321). Later Eteocles suggests speculatively to Tydeus that with Polynices as leader, *te duce*, some Thebans would be punished (2.448). In both of these instances, *dux* is used in the context of looking forward to Polynices' term as *rex* at Thebes. Between these instances, Polynices is associated with leadership when he is compared with a bull, *dux taurus*, which longs for its 'beloved valley' (2.323–330, esp. 323). In all of these cases, *dux* for Polynices is associated with his potential to challenge for power at Thebes, rather than denoting his current position.³³ Where the term *Labdacio duci* is used in 3.418, the broader context in which this occurs (of events at Argos) and the immediate context (listed as it is between Adrastus and Tydeus) indicates that this refers to Polynices; but this combination of terms is also used of Eteocles (2.210). Through this circumlocution, Statius is able to suggest the parallelism

³¹ The instance at 5.555 may be considered another exception, where the Argives attack the serpent in Nemea; here Adrastus' actions are registered in a two-word phrase that does not elaborate on his role.

³² *OLD dux* §4a.

³³ Argia also uses *ductor* of Polynices in 12.323.

of the two brothers as contenders for power. A last instance, during the games, resonates with the main storyline of alternating leadership at Thebes: during the games, Adrastus' horse Arion senses that 'another leader' is riding him, *alium ducem*, and Arion, is therefore from the outset disturbed and angry, *discors/ iratusque* (6.426–427).³⁴

Parthenopaeus is designated *dux* four times. The first instance occurs in his catalogue entry, where Atalanta is disturbed that he is going to war as a *dux*.³⁵ The next occurrence calls on the catalogue's exploration of Parthenopaeus' inexperience and inappropriateness for war: Dryas routs his Arcadians, 'disarming' their leader, *hic turbatos arripit ense/ Arcadas exarmatque ducem* (9.844–845).³⁶ When Euryalus broaches to Dymas the idea of recovering the bodies of Tydeus and Parthenopaeus, Dymas responds by swearing on his leader's shade, *per ducis... umbras* (10.361). When they are caught, Amphion attempts to blackmail them with an offer of burial for his *dux* in exchange for information about the Argives' strategy (10.434). Parthenopaeus in this way is labelled *dux* as his mother hears about her son's role in the war, and only later as he dies and his subordinates attempt to recover his body; again, the contexts in which the term is found suggest deficiency. The case of the night-raid is especially poignant, given that Dymas endangers himself in order to recover his 'leader's' body.

Tydeus too is labelled *dux*, but only after his death. The first instance comes during the night-raid, and is perhaps focalised through Hopleus: when he is hit by a spear, he falls, but still thinks of his 'outstanding leader', *egregii nondum ducis immemor* (10.402). As with Parthenopaeus, the sequence of the night-raid suggests a close relationship between the leader and his subordinate. The second and last instance for Tydeus is in book 11, where Tisiphone boasts to Megaera about what she has achieved thus far, including the 'leader's' mouth, dripping with black gore (11.87–88). The context could not be more

³⁴ This is a specific use of *dux*: see *OLD dux* §2: 'the driver of a chariot'. Cf. *et saltum dux alter habet*, during the Theban Bacchant's prophecy, 4.404.

³⁵ Note also the play on the military sense of *dux* in Parthenopaeus' catalogue entry, in which he carries off 'leaders of groves', *duces nemorum*, 4.254, which suggests his inappropriateness for war. In 4.293 the *Parrhasii duces* are listed as part of his contingent, further detracting from his solo leadership. These and the instance of *duces* in 4.341 are discussed in Chapter 4.

³⁶ As noted above, Dryas in this context is the only living Theban other than Eteocles designated *dux* in the *Thebaid*.

negative, and Tydeus' offence is listed alongside Capaneus' attack on the gods (11.88–91).

A similar pattern is seen in the use of *dux* for Hippomedon, the first during the attack on the serpent in Nemea, when he hurls a rock unsuccessfully, *cassa ducis uirtus* (5.562). As with Parthenopaeus, he is only called this again in the context of his death: first as he is swamped by the river, *iamque umeros, iam colla ducis sinuosa uorago/ circumit* (9.504–505); then Capaneus addresses Hippomedon as *magne dux* as he offers him the spoils of dead Hypseus, who had been displaying Hippomedon's severed head (9.562).

Aside from these warriors, Theseus in his very brief appearance in the last book of the epic is called *dux* three times. In the first instance, Theseus is called *dux* as he returns in triumph to Athens to the loud welcome of the people, bringing with him the spoils of war (12.523). When Evadne has made her plea for assistance, the enthusiasm in response is uniform, and the Athenians voluntarily 'follow the standards of their leader', *ducis uexilla sequuntur* (12.614). Finally, Theseus recognises the enthusiastic response, and gives a rousing speech, before which he is again called *dux* (12.640). These three instances are the last in the entire epic referring to individual leaders in the epic's action.

In the *Thebaid*, two women are also dubbed *dux*: Hypsipyle (4.786, 4.806, 5.672)³⁷ and Antigone (11.598, 11.622, 11.707).³⁸ In both cases the women play this role in a physical way, as 'guides' to a man or men.³⁹ These two instances of women 'guides' share some common features: both are from dysfunctional families and cities and serve as *duces* during times of crisis when others depend on them.⁴⁰ A related example comes in the last book, where Ornytus tells Argia to be careful as she journeys to Thebes, since she is 'without a leader', *nullo duce* (12.282). Here, the meaning of *dux* may be taken simply as

³⁷ Hypsipyle in her capacity as *dux* is the subject of an extended discussion in Chapter 4.

³⁸ Qualified by *miseranda*, 598 and *immeritam*, 11.622. *dux* is also used in a simile for Argia in 12.225, discussed above.

³⁹ *OLD dux* §1: 'one who leads or shows the way; a guide'.

⁴⁰ Argia is also compared with the 'leader' of Cybele's troop, 12.224–227, as noted above. These women may recall Virgil's Dido, who founds a city after the murder of her husband, *dux femina facti*, *Verg. Aen.* 1.364; with the difference that in Dido's case the term covers the political range of *dux*. Brown (1994, 100) compares first sight of Hypsipyle by Adrastus with Aeneas' on seeing Dido: note esp. the use of *stupefactus*, *Aen.* 1.495, *Theb.* 4.752. In this connection Brown (1994, 100) points to Dido's 'anomalous status as a female leader among men'. Hypsipyle's status as *dux* in relation to the Argive army will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

‘guide’, but this also makes us think of Argia’s dead husband, Polynices. Unlike *dux*, the term *ductor* is never used of a woman or women in the *Thebaid*.

At other points in the *Thebaid*, it is unclear to which character the term *dux* refers. During the Theban Bacchant’s prophecy in book 4, she says she has a vision, in which two bulls rush together, but ‘another leader holds the meadow’, *bellastis sanguine tanto/ et saltem dux alter habet* (4.403–404). If Eteocles and Polynices are analogues for the *tauri*, the *alter dux* could be either Creon or Theseus; but the point may be simply that it is neither brother. This use draws a connection with the feud of Eteocles and Polynices, with its theme of constantly changing leadership at Thebes. Menoeceus’ mother in her speech complains of the fact that Jocasta, despite procreating with her own son, sees her children as *duces* and *regnantes* (10.798): are the *duces* Eteocles and Polynices; or Oedipus and Eteocles? The very fact that this is unclear, and that these *duces* may be the ‘son’ Menoeceus’ mother refers to, or the sons begot by the mother from this son, connects to the themes of changing kingship and incest in the Theban tale.

duces is used of the Argives frequently. It is used for members of Adrastus’ council (3.346, 10.188). In the latter case, Thiodamas addresses the council as *duces*, but the same men have been designated *proceres subiti* (10.179). This instance demonstrates that *duces* as a plural may refer to a social status separate from that of the individual *dux*, whose status is supreme and individual. This indicates an important distinction between *dux* in the singular and *duces* in the plural in the *Thebaid*. Hypsipyle repeatedly uses *duces* to address the Argive army (5.35, 5.454, 6.629).⁴¹ Hypsipyle’s use of *duces* suggests that she is addressing a small group of leaders, rather than the army as a whole. Later she twice uses *duces* by itself for her audience of Argives, which presumably includes Adrastus (5.454, 5.629). In both book 3 and book 10, a separate term is used for Adrastus along with *duces* to single him out from this group: the narrator uses *pater* in the first instance (3.346); and Hypsipyle uses *rector* in her first address to the army (5.29; cf.

⁴¹ Soerink (2014 *ad* 629) notes this repeated use of *duces* in Hypsipyle’s speech. Hypsipyle also calls Jason *dux* during her narration, 5.480.

duces, 5.35). Eurydice, like Hypsipyle, refers to the Argives in direct speech twice as *duces*.⁴²

In other contexts, the plural *duces* refers to the prominent men of the Argive expedition, and this group at the very least overlaps substantially with those who take part in Adrastus' councils. For example, they crowd around Atalanta when she objects to her son Parthenopaeus being part of the expedition (4.341); they are called *duces* with reference to and during the games (4.728; 6.927; 6.942);⁴³ when Mars produces a cloud of dust above them, the *duces* of the army marvel at it (7.119);⁴⁴ and a messenger announces to Eteocles that *Graios duces* are advancing (7.229);⁴⁵ as they cross the Asopos river, Hippomedon 'leaves the leaders behind', *ducibus relictis* (7.431); Jocasta when she comes to plead against war sees *Achiuos duces* and lets out a loud cry (7.488); Eteocles prefaces his list of Argive dead with the comment that the *ducum cristae* can no longer be seen (10.30); the narrator also says that Iris is charged with 'refreshing' the bodies of the dead Argive leaders, *ducum* (12.137). As the two instances in book 10 indicate, *duces* certainly refers to the Seven that are listed in the Argive catalogue. That *duces* refers to this limited group, rather than metonymically for the army as a whole, is confirmed in the description of chaos as war breaks out, *confusi duces uulgo* (7.617).

This last instance gives a bipartite conception of the army at this point. Even earlier in the epic, *dux* in the plural has been combined with a collective noun to give a similar conception. For example, in 3.574 Amphiaraus declines to tell *populumque ducesque* the outcome of the augury he has undertaken. In this same episode, as Capaneus stands in front of Amphiaraus' doors, the crowd is again bipartite, *turba ducum uulgique frementis* (3.606).⁴⁶

⁴² 6.168; 6.171. The second instance is in the vocative. See also the *Parrhasii duces* in Parthenopaeus' contingent, 4.293, which again upsets the solo leadership status of Parthenopaeus.

⁴³ In 6.927 this refers to the request for Adrastus to join in the games, *ne uictoria desit una ducum*; so *duces* here refers to the Seven specifically, including Adrastus.

⁴⁴ This comes directly after Adrastus is called *dux* in the singular, 7.104, which demonstrates the difference in singular and plural usage.

⁴⁵ Here, the *duces* effectively denote metonymically the whole army.

⁴⁶ The debate between Capaneus and Amphiaraus is also labelled *alterna ducum* in 3.677. This sequence in book 3 is treated at length in Chapter 3.

On the Theban side, the portrait of leadership through diction is very different. Both *dux* and *ductor* in the singular are used most frequently for Eteocles in the *Thebaid*; conversely, the plural *duces* is used far less frequently for the Thebans in the *Thebaid* than it is for the Argives. Of these, many instances refer to the Fifty who attack Tydeus on his way back to Argos in an ambush (3.55; 3.403, 4.599). Even when Eteocles is compared with a *pastor* in book 7 who releases his *duces* first from their pens, this may also recall the Fifty, all of whom are already dead (7.395). This suggests that many of the Theban ‘leaders’ are eliminated in the ambush, before war proper even starts. Another instance is again with reference to the dead: Creon asks Eteocles, ‘Where are the arms of sonorous Phocis and the leaders of Euboea?’ (*Euboicique duces*, 11.281–282). As in the case of the Argives, a two-tiered conception of the Thebans is expressed in book 10, *Sidonios... duces.../ ... populumque trucis... Cadmi* (10.126). Later Creon suggests to Menoeceus that the prophecy that a descendant of the Spartoi must die is a trick of their ‘king’, *rex*, who fears Menoeceus’ *uirtus*, which is ‘above our leaders’, *ante duces* (10.701). Here, again, there is a Theban collective *duces*, but Eteocles stands apart from this as *rex*. At other points the Theban social structure as expressed through a combination of terms is given with a single king or leader and the mass, for example, *populoque ducique* (2.683).⁴⁷ The effect of this is to place emphasis on Eteocles’ position as sole ruler, which is very different from the social and military structure among the Argives.

Stattius uses *ductor* only twice in the plural (6.684, 12.726). The first of these instances occurs in a simile comparing Tydeus and Agylleus to bulls, so refers to only two men. The second refers to the Athenians, *Cecropiis ductoribus* (12.726). Twice *ductor* is used in the singular to denote the Argive leaders in a general sense: after the chaos at the Langia, the Argives are marshalled back into formation, and ‘each has their former place and leader’, *...ut cuique ante locus ductorque* (5.8); as the Argive army departs from Thebes after the duel, ‘none has its own standards and leader’, *nulli sua signa suosque/ ductor* (11.758–759). The chaos at the Langia in book 4 is remedied swiftly; but the destruction caused by war cannot be remedied.

⁴⁷ A similar instance occurs in 2.651–652: *uulgique per ora pauentis/ contempto te rege canam*.

The language of human social order is applied also to non-human abstractions and characters in the *Thebaid*. In 12.24, the two abstractions *dolor* and *luctus* are *duces* for the Thebans as they leave the city to see the dead. Theseus also calls Nature a ‘leader’, *Naturamque ducem* (12.645). In the description of the making of Harmonia’s necklace, Vulcan weaves into it ‘a leader snatched from Tisiphone’s black hair, *raptumque... atro/Tisiphones de crine ducem* (2.282–283). Before the brothers’ duel takes place, Tisiphone calls up Megaera to assist her, and she raises a horned snake that is the ‘leader’ of her hair: *crinalem attollit longo stridore cerasten:/ caeruleae dux ille comae* (11.65–66).⁴⁸ This use of imagery is particularly apt for the myth of Thebes, in which snakes are prominent, especially in the treatment of internecine fighting.⁴⁹

In book 3, Mars is compared with Neptune, who is called *dux* (3.433). Here, Neptune is depicted as a charioteer, a specific meaning of *dux*.⁵⁰ In another instance, Tiresias calls Tisiphone *dux*, as he appeals to her to ‘open the day’, *dux pande diem* (4.486). In book 8, when Amphiaraus has descended unexpectedly to the Underworld, Pluto is called *dux Erebi*, and here has a role in relation to his ‘people’.⁵¹ The term is thus not restricted to human characters, but also used for divine figures.

dux and *rex*⁵²

In the *Thebaid*, those people designated *rex* and *dux* largely overlap, and a *rex* is of course more likely to have a role as *dux*.⁵³ However, not all *duces* are *reges*, and these terms

⁴⁸ These are two in a series of instances in which the snakes of a Fury are referred to in terms of human social or military structures. So for example, Statius refers to the ‘lesser crowd’ of snakes on Tisiphone’s head, *centum illi stantes umbrabant ora cerastae/ turba minor*, 1.103–104. When Hippomedon has been tricked into leaving the battlefield to assist Adrastus, *innumeri cerastae* burst from the goddess’ helmet as Tisiphone reveals herself, 9.174. Cf. Athena’s shield, on which the ‘whole army’ of Medusa’s snakes ‘rear up’, *toto agmine*, 12.608.

⁴⁹ On which see esp. Keith (2002, 388–9, 395–6, 399–400, and 2004–2005, esp. 194–196) in a discussion of Harmonia’s necklace.

⁵⁰ *OLD dux* §2.

⁵¹ On which see Augoustakis (2016 *ad* 21–2, 24).

⁵² This section includes consideration of the related terms *ductor* and *regina*.

⁵³ E.g. *reges* and *duces* appear to be synonyms in 3.520. In 10.361, Hopleus and Dymas use both *rex* and *dux* of their commanders. See too 10.434 in this episode when the designations are mixed.

should be distinguished, especially given the Roman historical aversion to monarchy.⁵⁴ Where *dux* is used outside of a military context, the two terms do not mean the same thing.⁵⁵ Examples from other epic authors distinguish between the office of king and role of leader. In Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*, Aeson says he sees Jason the leader of many kings, *uideo nostro tot in aequore reges/ teque ducem*' (1.342–343).⁵⁶ In Valerius Flaccus' description of the doors to the Underworld after the death of Aeson, a distinction is observed between 'peoples and kings' and 'leaders': one gate is reserved for *populos regesque*; the other only rarely opens, for a *ductor* bearing wounds on his chest (Val. Fl. 1.834ff.). We must therefore distinguish carefully between kings and leaders in Latin epic.

Statius uses a variety of means to convey status and authority. Abstract terms such as *ius*, *imperium* and *regnum* all denote power.⁵⁷ Objects such as sceptres, diadems and thrones may be used metonymically to denote authority. For example, Oedipus in his prayer to Tisiphone asks her to put on his 'bloody diadem', a disturbing suggestion that this Fury will take over kingship of Thebes (*indue quod madidum tabo diadema cruentis/ unguibus abripui*, 1.82–83).⁵⁸ It is not possible to review comprehensively the relationship between authority and leadership through Statius' use of terminology; instead, this section takes a brief look at the use of the terms *rex* and *regina* as test cases, comparing their usage in the *Thebaid* to that of *dux*.

The noun *rex* is used a total of 116 times in the *Thebaid*, the same number as *dux*. As with *dux*, in the singular it is most commonly used of Eteocles, but even more predominantly: Eteocles is called *rex* twenty-eight times. As with *dux*, *rex* is frequently coupled with a

⁵⁴ Note, for example, SB's translation of *dux* as 'king': Atalanta 'commends him [Parthenopaeus] to king Adrastus', 4.344; 'Life yet remained, though weary, in the wicked king [Eteocles]', 11.553. SB also translates *dux* in 1.634 as 'lord'.

⁵⁵ *pace* Mulder (1954 *ad* 133): 'Hoc quidem loco ductor ponitur pro 'rex', 'princeps' sicut III 31 Agenoreus ductor (=Eteocles); alibi ductor notione militari adhibetur, e.g. X235; XII 323...'; and also *ad* 202: 'Dux appellatur Adrastus etiam IV 344; V 18, ubi tamen intellegi potest dux exercitus; hic idem est quod rex, princeps sicut Eteocles quoque dux vocatur infra vs .210; 317; 657; III96; 237...'

⁵⁶ Cf. *Silu.* 3.3.50–52, where Statius combines *rex* and *dux* to indicate a distinction.

⁵⁷ E.g. *iura ferus populo trans legem ac tempora regni*, of Eteocles in 2.386. *regnum*: in 12.505

⁵⁸ On the meaning of *diadema*, see Dewar (1991 *ad* 163). The noun *arcus* is also used to denote the diadem of Domitian in 1.28; on the suggestiveness of which see Ahl (1986, 2820). The term *decus*, 'ornament' is also used of a crown in 11.161.

modifier that indicates a moral judgment of Eteocles: *inuisi*, focalised through Maeon (3.58); *ferus*, used by the narrator (3.78); *iniqui*, used by Aletes (3.206); *iniqui*, focalised through the Boeotian allies (4.361; cf. 3.206).

As with *dux*, Tydeus calls Adrastus *rex* ironically several times: *rex bone* (2.460); *foedera Echionii regis*, which recalls the first use of *rex* for Eteocles in 2.90 (3.342); *regi pacem egregiam* (7.540); *egregius dux ille mihi?* (8.671).

It was noted above that *dux* is not used by Theban characters to denote Eteocles, and in this respect there is a contrast with *rex*, which is used this way several times. The noun *rex* is used in 2.481 of the matrons who ‘curse’ Eteocles silently. Later it is used by Chromis (2.623), and Menoetes (2.652) to denote Eteocles during the ambush. In the aftermath of the ambush, there are two instances of *rex* for Eteocles: the first is focalised through Maeon, and qualified by a pejorative adjective, *inuisi regis* (3.58); the second is used by Aletes in direct speech, again with a negative qualifier, *iniqui regis* (3.206). Similarly, *rex* is used when the narrator expresses the shame the Theban people feel for their king, *pudore regis* (4.348). Just after this instance, Eteocles is called *iniqui regis*, focalised through the Boeotian allies and recalling Aletes’ use of this phrase (4.361; cf. 3.206). The difference between the use of *dux* and *rex* for Eteocles is striking: Eteocles is never conceived of as a ‘leader’ by Thebans, but frequently as a *rex*. This difference in usage suggests that distinction between authority and leadership at Thebes, which will be explored in the chapters to come.

The term *rex* for Adrastus clusters in the first two books, where it is used ten times of sixteen in total for him. Nine of these ten instances occur in the description of action at Argos, including Adrastus’ quelling of Polynices’ and Tydeus’ fight.⁵⁹ While there is no clear distinction in the use of *rex* and *dux* for Adrastus as there is for Eteocles, it is notable that Adrastus is called ‘king’ most often in the context of his civil rather than military role.

⁵⁹ 1.390; 1.431; 1.448; 1.478; 1.529; 1.558; 2.145; 2.225; 2.262. The final instance, at 2.426, occurs in Eteocles’ direct speech, referring to Adrastus.

Again a distinction between *dux* and *rex* is seen in the use of these terms for Theseus. As mentioned above, Theseus is called *dux* three times in the short space of his appearance in the *Thebaid* (12.523; 12.614; 12.640), but he is never called *rex*.

In the plural the use of *rex* follows a similar pattern to *dux*: on the Theban side, *rex* is used twice of groups of Thebans (7.375, 11.391). The first of these occurs in Eteocles' direct speech addressing the assembled army after the catalogue of Theban allies. The second of these again is spoken by king Eteocles when he goes out to the duel with his brother, as he addresses the earth. Here the use of *rex* is generic, *o regum incertissima tellus* (11.391). Nowhere in the *Thebaid* does the narrator refer to Thebans collectively as *reges*.

On the other hand, *reges* is used seventeen times of the Argives as a group, both by the narrator (e.g. 1.36, 4.821, 5.499, 6.215, 10.181) and characters (e.g. Thiodamas calls for the 'funerals of kings', *funera regum*, 10.195; Polynices speaks of his regret at putting forward the 'venerable souls of kings', *regum uerendas... animas*, 11.459). Again, the use of the status term *rex* points up a difference in the conception of the Theban and Argive forces, one of which is thought of as a group with a single *rex*, the other of which is conceived of repeatedly as a series of *reges*.

There is also a distinction made between *dux* and *rex* in the use of these terms in the context of commemoration. Leaders are singled out as the subject of *fama* in the *Thebaid* more often than kings. Argia says to Polynices that *fama* is 'always skilled at exposing leaders', *sollers deprendere semper/ Fama duces* (2.345–346); the subject of this *fama* is of course Eteocles.⁶⁰ The plural noun *duces* is used twice in the context of catalogues in the *Thebaid*, to denote those men who are commemorated in this epic set-piece; in this sense, *duces* are again the subject of *fama*, but this time in its sense of 'renown', the external fame that the poem itself promotes (4.33; 7.369).⁶¹ Perhaps related to this is the use of *duces* for dead ancestors.⁶² At the very end of the poem, again in the context of

⁶⁰ Just prior to this example, the betrothals of Argia and Deipyle, with Adrastus denoted by *duci*, have been the subject of rumour, denoted by both *rumor* and *fama*, 2.201–213; on which see Hardie (2012, 201–204).

⁶¹ Prior to Phorbas' teichoscopy, Antigone has asked him to tell of the *extera regum/ agmina*, an exception to this pattern, 7.249–250.

⁶² Argives: 2.223; Thebans: 11.719. Cf. the use of *ductor* for Inachus in 4.118.

commemoration, the poet states his inability to equal ‘so many pyres of common people and leaders’, *tot busta simul uulgiue ducumque* (12.798). On the other hand, Statius hopes for his narrative of the duel between Eteocles and Polynices to be remembered only by kings, *soli memorent haec proelia reges* (11.579).

Statius uses *regina* fourteen times in the *Thebaid*, five times of divine figures (1.85, 4.34, 4.832, 9.384, 10.68). The term is also used of Theban queens: Dirce in Aletes’ story of how she is turned into a lake (3.205); and Jocasta, who is pointedly called *regina* before she commits suicide (11.635).⁶³ The single figure designated *regina* most often is Argia. Early on in the epic, Polynices speaks to Argia to address her concerns, suggesting that one day she will be *regina* in two cities (2.362). During the embassy of Tydeus, Eteocles asks if a *regina* accustomed to luxury (i.e. Argia) will be happy to live in humble Thebes (2.439); almost as if this is a response to the last instance. After the war, Argia among the other Argive women is *nigrae regina cateruae*, marking her status among them (12.111). A final instance recalls the possibility of her becoming queen at Thebes as in the instances of book 2: she is called *regina* as she approaches Thebes (12.280), but here her status is contrasted with the status envisaged in book 2 as she approaches the city *nullo duce* (12.282).⁶⁴ In the case of women in the *Thebaid*, none of the characters designated *regina* are also called *dux*.⁶⁵

tyrannus

The term *tyrannus* is used seven times in the *Thebaid*, of Eteocles, Adrastus and Lycurgus once each (3.82; 3.570; 5.716). In the *Thebaid*, it is often used in the context of the abuse of autocratic power.⁶⁶ In the proem, the plural is used to denote Eteocles and Polynices, when Statius announces as his subject ‘the sceptre deadly to twin tyrants’, *geminis sceptrum exitiale tyrannis* (1.34). On four other occasions it is used for kingship at Thebes, and—unsurprisingly—these also have associations of ‘tyranny’ in the modern

⁶³ Cf. the *regina chori* at Thebes, the head of the bacchants, who issues the prophecy about two bulls at Thebes, 4.379.

⁶⁴ The final instance of *regina* is used of the cypress tree, the ‘queen’ of the Alpine summit, 6.854.

⁶⁵ Hypsipyle, for example, is never called *regina*.

⁶⁶ *OLD tyrannus* §2–3.

sense (2.445; 3.82; 3.110; 11.654). Eteocles uses the first of these when he responds to Tydeus during the embassy, suggesting that the Thebans would not wish to obey a ‘doubtful lord’ (2.445).⁶⁷ The next two instances occur when Maeon returns to Thebes after the ambush, and issues a condemnatory speech against the king; in this context, the narrator calls Eteocles *tyrannus*, and again qualifies the term with an adjective denoting his own moral appraisal: *trucis ora tyranni* (3.82).⁶⁸ Soon after this, the narrator addresses Maeon, instructing him to go to Elysium, where ‘the unjust orders of a criminal king do not have power’, *nec sontis iniqua tyranni / iussa valent* (3.110–111).⁶⁹ While the point is expressed in general terms, the statement here clearly refers to Eteocles; and here we have not one but two damning adjectives that give a moral evaluation of the king.

The final instance of *tyrannus* creates a neat link with the first in 1.34: when Creon accedes to the kingship of Thebes, the narrator comments:

scandit fatale tyrannis
 flebilis Aoniae solium: pro blanda potestas
 et sceptri malesuadus amor! (11.654–655)

He ascends the throne of Aonia, fatal to tyrants. Ah! alluring power, and seductive love of the sceptre!

Here *exitiale* parallels *fatale*, and *sceptrum* is delayed to the exclamation that follows. The recollection suggests that the cycle of alternating kingship continues at Thebes.

Unlike its modern relative ‘tyrant’, this term is not always pejorative in Latin, as two further examples in the *Thebaid* demonstrate. In book 3, *tyrannus* is also used of Adrastus, when the narrator lists the people to whom Amphiaraus avoids reporting the outcome of the augury, *uulgi, tyranni, procerum* (3.570, 570, 571). Unlike the application of this term to Eteocles in book 3, the context suggests *tyrannus* here does not have a negative connotation.⁷⁰ The term is also used for Lycurgus by the narrator: Lycurgus has just welcomed into his home the sons of Hypsipyle, when a messenger comes bearing

⁶⁷ Gervais (2013 *ad* 444f.) notes the recollection of the anonymous Theban here, 1.174–175.

⁶⁸ Cf. *rex ferus*, also of Eteocles in the narrator’s voice, in 3.78.

⁶⁹ Cf. Statius’ use of *tyrannus* in the *Silvae*, where he only uses the term for Roman emperors: first Nero, 2.7.100; then Caligula, 3.3.72. In both of these cases the term has negative associations.

⁷⁰ Gervais (2013 *ad* 444f.) notes that this term is ‘not always pejorative’, ‘but usually, the word describes the doomed tyrants of Thebes’.

news 'to the tyrant' of his own son's death (*tyranno*, 5.716). While Lycurgus' treatment of Hypsipyle is in some ways 'tyrannical' in the modern sense, as with the instance for Adrastus, the term in this context need mean no more than 'a monarch, a sovereign'.⁷¹

⁷¹ *OLD tyrannus* §1.

Chapter 2

Book 2: The Ambush of Tydeus and *pastor* Similes

Critics frequently view the ambush of Tydeus in book 2 in terms of the ‘one and the many’, treating Tydeus alongside figures such as Scaeva in Lucan’s epic.¹ This chapter begins by treating the fighting of the ambush itself, with a focus on how Statius draws attention to the problem of the fifty Thebans’ operation as a group, which has not been a source of detailed discussion.² In Statius’ narrative of the ambush, there is not only a numerical opposition between the two sides, but also a contrast between the disorder of the Theban Fifty and the effectiveness of Tydeus as a single figure, and this is conveyed through Statius’ use of language and tropes, especially simile. Statius also signals that the ineffectiveness of the Fifty as a team is due to problems of leadership. Throughout this episode, which employs the full panoply of epic war motifs,³ Statius foregrounds important principles regarding leadership and the operation of groups for the epic to come, confirming a reading of the episode as a microcosm of full-scale war.⁴

During the ambush, Tydeus is compared with the centaur Pholus (2.563–566) and with Briareus the hundred-hander (2.595–601). As he tires, there is a final simile comparing him with a lion that has ravaged a flock when its shepherd has been driven off (2.675–681). This lion simile is the first of several in the *Thebaid* that include the figure of the *pastor*, and these provide a nexus of images that reflect on leadership. In this chapter four key examples of Statius’ use of this imagery are treated: the first comparing Tydeus to a lion (2.675–681); the second comparing the lone Theban survivor of the ambush, Maeon,

¹ Williams 1978, 199–200; Williams 1986, 209–212; Hardie 1993, 3–10; Lovatt 2005, 227; McNelis 2007, 131; Gervais 2013 *ad* 549–64, 553f., 580–94, 581, 588f., 594f., 644–60.

² An exception is Gervais’ 2013 dissertation, which is cited frequently in what follows.

³ The embassy that precedes it; the gathering of Theban men for the mission; the battle itself; the ritual conclusion to the battle, performed by Tydeus; the aftermath of Theban mourning; and finally, the creation of *fama* through the spread of information about the battle, which will be treated more fully in the following chapter.

⁴ E.g. Fantham (1999, 227), who calls the ambush ‘the first miniature of future warfare’. Hulls (2006, 136) similarly calls it an ‘epic-in-miniature’.

to a *pastor* who has lost his bulls (3.45–52); the third comparing Eteocles with a wolf (4.363–368); and the last of these comparing Eteocles to a *pastor*, directly after the catalogue of Theban allies (7.393–397). Finally, a brief appraisal of the remaining instances of shepherd imagery in the *Thebaid* again demonstrates the difference between Statius’ conception of Theban and Argive leadership. Statius significantly alters the models found in his epic predecessors to convey flawed leadership in his epic, either through the displacement of leadership qualities onto figures without authority, the perversion of these qualities where they are applied to figures of authority, or finally, the marked absence of the qualities that the shepherd paradigm encodes.

The ambush of Tydeus and the problem of numbers

In book 2, Tydeus arrives at Thebes to find Eteocles high on his throne and surrounded by henchmen (2.384–385).⁵ The narrator opens Tydeus’ brief speech to Eteocles with a hint that it will be ineffective: *iustis miscens... aspera coepit* (‘mixing harsh words with just, he began’, 2.392). The speech itself focuses on the plight of Polynices, and on the need to fulfil the agreement of alternating kingship (2.393–409). Eteocles responds with an attack on Tydeus and a message for Polynices, but it is the ending of this speech that is of particular note. Here, Eteocles makes several claims regarding the Theban people’s feelings about their rulers, including psychological observations on the problems they face when kings are changed:

iam pectora uulgi
 adsueuere iugo: pudet heu! plebisque patrumque,
 ne totiens incerta ferant mutentque gementes
 imperia et dubio pigeat parere tyranno.
 non parcit populis regnum breue; respice, quantus
 horror et attoniti nostro in discrimine ciues!
 hosne ego, quis certa est sub te duce poena, relinquam?
 iratus, germane, uenis. fac uelle: nec ipsi,
 si modo notus amor meritique est gratia, patres
 reddere regna sinent. (2.442–451)

Now the hearts of the populace have become used to the yoke: alas, it is shameful for both the common people and the patricians that they should so often bear this

⁵ See Keith (2007, 11–12) on how this description is reminiscent of contemporary Rome. This portrait also recalls the narrator’s exclamation in 1.166–168, esp. *uacua... solus in aula*, 166.

uncertainty and, groaning, change those in power, and be displeased at obeying an uncertain ruler. A brief kingship does not spare peoples; regard how much horror and shock the citizens feel at our struggle! Am I to leave behind these people, for whom there will certainly be punishment with you as leader? You have come, brother, in anger. Pretend that I were willing: neither the patricians themselves, if I know their desire and there is gratitude for what is deserved, will allow me to return regal power.

Eteocles' speech is focused on the internal politics of Thebes, and he claims to Tydeus that his own rulership is supported by his people (2.442–448). Like the anonymous Theban's speech in book 1, it is loaded with political terminology,⁶ and it has obvious points of contact with the prior speech; in fact, it reads like a response.⁷ Eteocles claims that the Thebans are 'accustomed to the yoke', *iam pectora uulgi/adsueuere iugo* (442–443), which ironically recalls the anonymous Theban (1.172–3, 175). Like the anonymous Theban, Eteocles makes the point that with a change of ruler, the people suffer (2.444–448).⁸ Eteocles' argument for retention of power is thus based on the interests of his people.⁹ More than this, his claim that even if he were willing, the *patres* would not let him step down, suggests that power at Thebes is located in these men, rather than himself (450–451).

Tydeus' response assumes that war will take place, and again he draws a distinction between Eteocles and the Theban people:

ast horum miseret, quos sanguine uiles
 coniugibus natisque infanda ad proelia raptos
 proicis excidio, bone rex. o quanta Cithaeron
 funera sanguineusque uadis, Ismene, rotabis! (2.458–461)

But I pity these people, whose blood is cheap, and whom you snatch away from their wives and children and thrust into an unspeakable war, good king. How many bodies will Cithaeron, and you, Ismenus, roll in your bloody waves!

⁶ *plebs, uulgi, populi*: 1.169, 2.443; 1.169, 2.442; 1.170, 2.446. In both speeches, *populus* is employed in the plural in a gnomic utterance: 1.170; 2.446.

⁷ Ahl 1986, 2874–2875; *ad* 442f., 444f.

⁸ Note the use of Roman political terms here: *plebisque patrumque*, 443; *patres*, 450: Ahl 1986, 2874–2875; Gervais 2013 *ad* 444f.

⁹ Ahl 1986, 2874–2875.

Tydeus not only assumes that full-scale war will take place, but his speech may also be taken as ironically foreshadowing his killing of the Fifty.¹⁰ In his pity for the Thebans, he recalls Virgil's Drances (*Aen.* 11, esp. 336–409),¹¹ but it is his own killing of the Fifty (minus one) that will result in mass Theban mourning in book 3. What is especially noteworthy is Tydeus' use of *uilis* here, which recalls not only Drances, but also the anonymous Theban, who linked this notion to the concept of servility to a 'master': *nos uilis in omnes/ prompta manus casus, domino cuicumque parati* (1.191–192).¹²

This exchange between Eteocles and Tydeus takes place in front of an audience of Thebans, and Eteocles' references to them may therefore be regarded as rhetorical, but their reactions are not stated.¹³ As Tydeus leaves, however, the narrator notes the reactions of mothers who see him from their doorsteps:

attonitae tectorum e limine summo
aspectant matres, saeuoque infanda precantur
Oenidae tacitoque simul sub pectore regi. (2.479–481)

The astonished mothers see him from the outer thresholds of their dwellings, and utter curses on the savage son of Oeneus, and at the same time in their silent hearts against their king.

This double curse brings in the perspective of the city's women, who will be a prominent part of the scenes of mourning after the ambush, in book 3. While this group is gendered, and therefore not necessarily representative of the Theban populace, this brief comment in passing furthers the sense of disjuncture between the Theban people and their king.

Eteocles' final act as leader in book 2 is to arrange the ambush of Tydeus, and again this is revealing for his performance as king. Statius calls him *rector* in the opening of this brief segment (2.482), and he mobilises a 'very select' group of young men, *lectissima.../ corpora* through both bribery and encouragement: *lectissima.../ corpora, nunc pretio,*

¹⁰ See Coffee (2006, 433) on the implications of *uiles* here, which denotes 'low social status', but 'also means that Eteocles considers the actual blood of his subjects worth so little that he does not hesitate to expend it'.

¹¹ Gervais (2013 *ad* 458) notes the recollection of Drances, who declares *nos animae uiles*, Verg. *Aen.* 11.372.

¹² On which see 'Introduction: Two Programmatic Sequences: A'. Caiani (1989, 235–236) argues that through this speech Tydeus becomes part of Thebes' opposition to Eteocles' regime, a novel role for an ambassador (240). Gervais (2013 *ad* 458) and Coffee (2006, 433) note the recollection of the anonymous man here.

¹³ So Gervais (2013 *ad* 458) on *horum*.

nunc... hortantibus (2.483–484).¹⁴ The narrator’s moral evaluation of Eteocles’ move here is clear in the way he introduces Eteocles’ decision: *scelerum, fraudis nefandae, saeuus* (2.482, 485). Statius also states explicitly that he is violating the sanctity of the office of ambassador, annotating this with reference to ‘peoples’, *populis* (2.486–487). In a parenthetical comment on this violation, Statius gives us yet another comment on the king’s disregard for his citizens’ lives: *quid regnis non uile?* (2.488). The use of the term *uilis* has thus undergone a development, occurring first in the Theban’s complaint, then in Tydeus’ speech to Eteocles, and finally here, where Statius shows the king sending out his men for the ambush in which they will die. In the immediate context, this last instance looks like a comment on the violation of the sanctity of the ambassador Tydeus, but the term also looks to the broader context, in which Eteocles’ contempt for his own people’s lives is thematic.

Within the narrative of the ambush itself, language denoting number clusters to designate the Fifty, emphasising the collective nature of the Thebans as opposed to Tydeus’ individualism. At the beginning of the sequence, when Tydeus realises he is being attacked, the men are simply *uiri*: he catches sight of the ‘shields of men’ (*scuta uirum*, 2.530), and addresses them as *uiri* in an attempt to find out who they are (2.535). The use of the neutral term *uiri* gives the perspective of Tydeus, who does not yet identify the men as attackers who perform as a military unit. The narrator has already identified the men as such for the external audience: they are a *cohors* (2.524); they surround the wood in a dense formation, *densaque nemus statione coronant* (2.526);¹⁵ and Cthonius is identified as the *dux* of the *cohors* (2.539). In the action that follows, the collective nature of the Theban group becomes a focus, especially their inefficiency as a group as they attack the single man.

When the Thebans finally show themselves to Tydeus, their number is greater than he had expected, and they are compared with animals lured into a hunting net:

...quos ubi plures,
quam ratus, innumeris uidet excursare latebris,

¹⁴ This is a hyperbolic version of a common topos: *lecta manus iuuenum*, Ov. *Met.* 8.300; *lecti iuuenes*, Catull. 64.4. Tydeus uses *delecti insidiis* in his speech to the council on his return to Argos, 3.557. See Harrison (1991 *ad* 213–4) on this topos in both Greek and Latin literature.

¹⁵ On *corona* and *statione* as terms for a siege, see Gervais (2013 *ad* 526).

hos deire iugis, illos e uallibus imis
crescere, nec paucos campo, totumque sub armis
collucere iter, ut clausas indagine profert
in medium uox prima feras... (2.549–553)

He sees them running out from innumerable hiding places in greater numbers than he thought, some coming down from the slopes and others increasing in numbers from the depths of the valley, and many from the plain, and the whole way shining with their arms, as the first shout draws wild beasts out into the open, hemmed in with a hunting net...

This hunting simile recalls Tydeus' comparison with a boar as he left Thebes after his embassy, the significance of which extends beyond its immediate context: the boar was the 'avenger of Oenean Diana' (2.469), reminding us of Tydeus' role as avenger of Polynices,¹⁶ but also foreshadowing the action of the ambush to come, with the boar facing the 'Pelopean phalanx' and laying several men low (2.469–475).¹⁷ Tydeus is associated with the boar from his first appearance in the epic,¹⁸ and there are numerous instances during the ambush where boar imagery is evoked for him.¹⁹ Here, the application of the image is reversed, with the *ferae* that are the objects of the hunt an analogue for the Thebans (2.553). Again, the simile's analogy extends beyond its immediate context, suggesting that the Thebans are numerous, but in a poor position strategically, 'hemmed in with a hunting net'.

This suggestion via simile is worked up at length in the description of action that follows. Tydeus is able to gain an advantage by ascending to the place of the Sphinx, from where he throws a huge rock at the men, scattering them (*agmen/ excutitur*, 2.569–570).²⁰ After a mini-catalogue of the men killed, Tydeus 'sees that their ranks are terrified by their

¹⁶ Keith 2002, 390.

¹⁷ Foreshadowing is exemplified by the injury to his shoulder (2.474–5, cf. 2.541–3) and the list of men that the boar fights (2.473–4): Gervais 2015, 74–76. Keith (2002, 391) notes that this 'anticipate[s] his singular heroism at the end of *Thebaid* 2'. Cf. Ahl 1986, 2876: 'The Calydonian must be hunted down to prevent further damage'.

¹⁸ Bonds 1985, 232; Henderson 1991, 57; Keith 2002, 389–392. On boar imagery evoked during the ambush, including recollection of the Calydonian boar hunt in *Metamorphoses* 8, see Gervais (2013 *ad* 503, 538–43, 553f.). See esp. 1.453, *monstriferae Calydonis*; the description of Tydeus' garb in 1.488–90; and Adrastus' realisation that Polynices and Tydeus are his future sons-in-law, prophesied with reference to the lion and boar, 1.494–497. On the fight between Tydeus and Polynices and its relevance to later action in the *Thebaid*, see Bonds (1985).

¹⁹ On which see Gervais (2013 *ad* 563f. and 2015, 75).

²⁰ In this context Statius also compares Tydeus with Pholus hurling a wine-bowl against the Lapiths, 2.563–564; on which see Gervais (2013 *ad* 563f.).

sudden fate, and that the troops are thrown into disarray’, *quorum... subitis exterrita fatis/ agmina turbatam vidit laxare cateruam...* (2.576–577). Tydeus takes advantage of this by hurling two spears and leaping down onto the plain, and acquiring the shield of the dead man Theron to protect himself (2.578–585).

After this brief descent into chaos, the Theban men regroup into a dense formation, as they had prior to the ambush (2.526); but again, faced with Tydeus, they struggle to work in a coordinated way:

inde iterum densi glomerantur in unum
 Ogygidae firmantque gradum; trahit ocius ensem
 Bistonium Tydeus, Mauortia munera magni
 Oeneos, et partes pariter diuisus in omnes
 hos obit atque illos ferroque micantia tela
 decutit; impeditant numero seque ipsa uicissim
 arma premunt, nec uis conatibus ulla, sed ipsae
 in socios errare manus et corpora turba
 inuolui prolapsa sua; manet ille ruentes
 angustus telis et inexpugnabilis obstat. (2.585–594)

Then again the Ogygians, packed tightly, mass together into one and strengthen their stance; Tydeus quickly draws his Bistonian sword, the martial gift of great Oeneus, and dividing himself equally to face all parts, he comes face to face with these men and those, and shakes off the missiles flashing with iron. They block themselves with their number and their arms themselves crowd each other, and though they strive they lack force, but their hands go astray against their own comrades and their bodies giving way from their very multitude are tangled up. He waits for them as they attack, a narrow target for their weapons, and stands firm against, them, impregnable.

Here terms for density and ‘massing together’ show how the group amalgamates to form a single entity (2.585–586). This group is ineffective *qua* group, and clogs itself with its numbers,²¹ so much so that the men even accidentally attack each other, *ipsae/ in socios errare manus* (2.592–593). Here the military operation the Fifty undertake demands coordinated action, and they fail to do this effectively.

As he narrates the ambush, Statius also plays on the implications of *turba* and related terms in this sequence. When Tydeus sees the men pour out onto the plain, he is mentally

²¹ Gervais (2015, 67) notes the difference from Lucan’s Scaeva in this respect: ‘Both heroes’ enemies close in, but Scaeva’s surround him, while Tydeus’ bunch together, allowing him to rush against them; and where Scaeva is pressed on all sides and hit by well-aimed blows, Tydeus’ enemies hit one another with poorly aimed attacks.’

agitated (*turbata ratione*, 2.555). The family of words related to *turba* is also prominent in the description of his ascendancy to the place of the Sphinx, from where he kills several men: the rock he throws is designated *turbine montis* (2.565), and stupefies his crowd of opponents, *turba* (2.565); after a mini-catalogue of dead, Tydeus sees their military formation disturbed, *turbatam uidit laxare cateruam* (2.577).²² This use of terms implies an inherent disorderliness to the multiplicity, *turba*, of the Thebans, drawing out the association of group behaviour with chaos that requires guidance.

As the group struggles to operate as a single entity, the single man acts as many. The Thebans struggle to form a single unit (2.585–586), and Tydeus ‘divides himself’, facing the men in various directions, *partes pariter diuisus in omnes/ hos obit atque illos* (2.588–589). Not only does Statius emphasise the singleness of Tydeus in this extreme *aristeia* of the one-against-fifty,²³ but he plays on numbers in the idea that Tydeus is capable of acting as a multiplicity himself. The motif recalls Virgil’s Mezentius, who like Tydeus faces many men during his *aristeia*, and is compared with a boar, the animal with which Tydeus is frequently associated.²⁴ In Mezentius’ simile, the boar too ‘is fearless and delays in all directions’, *ille autem impaudidus partis cunctatur in omnis/ dentibus infrendens et tergo decutit hastas* (Verg. *Aen.* 10.717–718).²⁵

Immediately after this, Tydeus is compared with Briareus:

non aliter Getica—si fas est credere—Phlegra²⁶
armatum inmensus Briareus stetit aethera contra,
hinc Phoebi pharetras, hinc toruae Pallados angues,

²² Cf. also *turba/ ...sua*, 2.592–593. Gervais (2013 *ad* 564f., 576f.) connects the instances in 2.565, 2.555 and 2.577.

²³ E.g. Tydeus’ direct speech after Cthonius’ spear-throw, *solus/ solus in arma voco*, 2.548–549. As if responding to Tydeus’ *solus*, Chromis attempts to spur on his warriors by asking them rhetorically if ‘one man’ will triumph, contrasting *unus* (twice) with *tot*, 2.620–621. This recalls Mnestheus’ speech in *Aen.* 9.783–785, as noted by Gervais (2013 *ad* 620–3). Cf. also *quattuor... mole sub una* at line beginning and end, 2.568, noted by Gervais (2013 *ad* 568).

²⁴ The *unus-omnes* motif is also used for Mezentius’ *aristeia*, *Aen.* 10.691–692.

²⁵ As noted by Gervais (2013 *ad* 588f. and 2015, 67–68). However, in *Aeneid* 10, this idea occurs in a simile, and the verb *cunctor* is used, rather than *diuido*. The other parallel Gervais adduces is *Aen.* 4.285f., where the idea of ‘division’ is applied to Aeneas’ thoughts, rather than action. There is an additional parallel Valerius Flaccus’ epic, when Jason is compared with a lion that ‘rages against all alike’, 6.615–616; but here *furit* is used, rather than Statius’ striking mathematical idea of the single man ‘dividing’.

²⁶ I read *si fas est credere* as a parenthesis, and *Phlegra* for *Phlegrae*, with Hill: on which see Gervais (2013 *ad* 595).

inde Pelethroniam praefixa cuspidē pinum
 Martis, at hinc lasso mutata Pyracmoni²⁷ temnens
 fulmina, cum toto nequiquam obsessus Olympo
 tot queritur cessare manus: non segnior ardet
 huc illuc clipeum obiectans, seque ipse recedens
 circumit; interdum trepidis occurrit et instat
 spicula deuellens, clipeo quae plurima toto
 fixa tremunt armantque uirum; saepe aspera passus
 uulnera, sed nullum uitae in secreta receptum
 nec mortem sperare ualet. (2.595–607)

Not otherwise in Getic Phlegra—if it is right to believe it—did huge Briareus stand against the armed heavens, and on one side is the quiver of Phoebus, on another side the snakes of grim Pallas, and on the other the Pelethronian pine, tipped with a point. And here, scorning the thunderbolts forged by weary Pyracmon, when he is set upon to no avail by all Olympus, he complains that so many hands do nothing: no less sluggishly does Tydeus rage, thrusting his shield here and there, and moving himself backwards he circles. Meanwhile, he rushes on the timid men, pressing on them, and plucks out their darts, which are numerous, bristling on his whole shield and arming the man; often he suffers harsh wounds, but none penetrates life’s recesses, nor can it hope for death.

Tydeus is compared with a hundred-hander who has the same number of hands as his fifty opponents, making Tydeus figuratively the numerical equal to his opponents. The recollection of Virgil’s comparison of Aeneas to Aegaeon in *Aeneid* 10 clarifies the equivalence:²⁸ Virgil is explicit that Aegaeon has a hundred arms and hands, and also fifty mouths and chests, *dicunt/ ... quinquaginta oribus ignem/ pectoribus arsisse...* (*Aen.* 10.565–567). Statius goes beyond Virgil’s comparison by adding the detail that Briareus in Tydeus’ simile ‘complains that so many of his hands do nothing’ (2.601); in other words, he is capable of more than ‘equalling’ the Fifty. Statius again draws attention to this numerical aspect as the Thebans ‘anxiously look for and count themselves, and there is no longer the same desire for slaughter, but they feel grief that such a great crowd has thinned out’, *iam trepidi sese quaerunt numerantque, nec idem/ caedis amor, tantamque dolent rarescere turbam* (2.611–612). Here, the vast outnumbering by his opponents that

²⁷ Here I read *Pyracmoni* with Gervais (2013 *ad* 599f.), as the ‘unfamiliar Greek dat. (of agent) in –ĩ’.

²⁸ Gervais (2013 *ad* 595, 596 and 2015, 68) notes this recollection of Virgil. Putnam (1990, 9–10) notes how Virgil’s simile causes the reader to question the ‘quality of piety’ of Aeneas. Cf. also Luc. 4.593, where *Briareus ferox* is compared with Antaeus.

Staius initially focused on undergoes a reversal, and Staius conveys Tydeus' dominance through play on the number of men involved.

This simile for Briareus is part of a string of references to hands, *manus*, in the ambush sequence, through which its progress can be traced. From the very start of the ambush, *manus* is a reference point for the action: when the Sphinx's activity is described, her *liuentes manus* are mentioned (2.514), as they are when Tydeus ascends to her place, *uncas manus* (2.557).²⁹ When Tydeus then hurls the rock at the men, their *ora*, *arma*, *manus* and *pectora* are crushed (2.566–567). Again, when Tydeus attacks, he uses javelins which he had carried and leaned against the mountain 'with his hand', *manu* (2.578). As the fighting develops, the Thebans accidentally attack each other, *in socios errare manus* (2.592). Tydeus is then compared with Briareus (2.601). Again, when Chromis gives a speech to spur the men on, he asks, *heu socii, nullae manus, nulla arma ualebunt?* (2.622). At the end of the ambush, the last Theban Tydeus kills is Menoetes, who pleads with Tydeus, stretching out his hands (2.647), and Tydeus as he wearies finds that his hand gives only ineffective blows (2.670).

The Thebans develop during the ambush from an ordered band into a panicked and ill-disciplined *turba*, and leadership is noticeably lacking on the Theban side. Cthonius, who is explicitly 'leader of the troop' responds to Tydeus' first words with a spear cast that is ineffective, only angering Tydeus (2.538–546). Later, Chromis attempts to rally the Thebans, but again there is a reversal, with Tydeus responding with his own spear cast that strikes as Chromis still speaks, *dum clamat* (2.618–628). Chromis stays standing briefly, after which he collapses in silence, *obmutuit* (2.627–628). The ambush traces the fighting from its initial opposition of fifty against one until the numerical levels of both sides are evened, with Tydeus and Maeon the only men left. After the battle is over, Tydeus mocks the Thebans, including the comment that they are 'frightened and few', *ite sub umbras,/ o timidi paucique!* (2.667–668). By leaving Maeon alive and appropriating him as a messenger to Eteocles, Tydeus enacts a complete reversal of power, effectively

²⁹ Gervais (e.g. 2013 *ad* 514, 554f., and 591f.) comments on the repeated use of *manus* in this episode, which is sometimes unusual.

assuming the role of Maeon's commander.³⁰ Tydeus tells Maeon to issue Eteocles with commands that again engage with the question of leadership:

cinge aggere portas,
tela noua, fragiles aeuo circum inspice muros,
praecipue stipare uiros densasque memento
multiplicare acies... (2.699–702)

Encircle your gates with ramparts, renew your weapons, inspect around your walls, which are weak with age, and above all, remember to pack your men tightly, and to multiply the dense battle-lines.

Tydeus' advice to Eteocles lays especial emphasis on the arrangement and numbers of troops in the last part of this excerpt (2.701–702, esp. *praecipue*), both of which are key factors in the narrative of the ambush.

The language used of the ambushers' attempt to work as a unified whole recalls *Aeneid* 9, where Turnus breaks into the Trojan camp and, like Tydeus, is a single man that fights against a group.³¹ This model from the *Aeneid* operates differently from the sequence in the *Thebaid*: Turnus has some success, but this is halted through the direction of the *ductor* Mnesethus, who marshals the scattered Trojans (*Aen.* 9.778–787). The broader context of this sequence of the *Aeneid* is also relevant. Aeneas appoints Mnestheus and Serestus as leaders, *rectores iuuenum* (9.171–173), but it is Pandarus and Bitias who open the gates (9.672ff.).³² Subsequently it is Mnestheus and Serestus, Aeneas' appointees, who respond to Turnus' threat (9.778–787). Statius thus not only problematises the Thebans' ability to work as a group, but recalls a key leadership sequence of the *Aeneid* in which the breakdown of leadership structures results in Turnus' rampage within the Trojan camp. Conversely, Virgil comments that it is Turnus' folly in not letting the other Latins in that means the Trojans are not completely destroyed, again reflecting on leadership, since Turnus fails to promote collective action strategically (9.757–759). In *Aeneid* 9 and *Thebaid* 2, the coordination of military action through leadership is strongly thematised, but the outcomes are ultimately different; in Statius' epic, the chaotic performance of the Fifty—and the ineffectiveness of leadership to ensure this—results in

³⁰ Note *mandat*, 2.696, and later *iubeo* in Tydeus' speech, 2.699.

³¹ Gervais (2015, 67–8) notes that *firmentur*, *Aen.* 9.788, *glomerare manum*, 9.792 and *manus e castris propere coit omnis in unum*, 9.801 are all echoed in Statius' passage.

³² Virgil pointedly recalls the fact that they have been appointed to this gate by their 'leader', *portam, quae ducis imperio commissa*, 9.675.

Tydeus' success. The ambush sequence in this way becomes an extended comment on the management of groups in warfare, facilitating their effectiveness as a unified entity. This is precisely the role of the *dux*, and implicitly why the Fifty fail.

The aftermath at Thebes, when news of the Fifty's deaths is reported, is calibrated according to the earlier troping of the Fifty as a full-scale army, as the whole city comes out to mourn the men who have died.³³ After depicting the Thebans moving out *en masse* to the place where the men lie, Statius homes in on Ide, the mother of the Thespiad brothers Tydeus has killed.³⁴ Ide makes a speech, including a comment on the commemoration of her sons' deeds:

sed nec bellorum in luce patenti
conspicui fatis aeternaque gentibus ausi
quaesistis miserae uulnus memorabile matri,
sed mortem obscuram numerandaque³⁵ funera passi,
heu quantus furto cruor et sine laude iacetis! (3.160–164)

But not in the open light of war, illustrious in your fate, and daring deeds eternal for peoples, did you seek a wound memorable to a wretched mother; rather, you endured an obscure exit, and deaths to be numbered. Alas, so much blood, and you lie secretly, without praise!

Ide picks up on the numerical preoccupations of the ambush narrative by making the unusual claim that her sons have endured 'deaths to be numbered' (3.163).³⁶ The obscurity in death which she equates with 'numbering' is contrasted with *laus*, the glory with which epic itself is concerned. Ide's complaint is paradoxical given that it appears in Statius' poem, but especially so since during the ambush her sons' deaths were highlighted by Statius' comment on the *fama* of the Thespiads: *uos quoque, Thespiadae, cur infitatus honora/ arcuerim fama?* (2.629–630).³⁷ This fear that the fifty ambushers

³³ The movement of the Thebans out of the city foreshadows that in the final book of the epic, after the war proper. This again implies the microcosmic status of the ambush. Gossage (1972, 202) notes that these scenes anticipate the actual war around Thebes.

³⁴ On this episode, see Hulls (2006, esp. 141–142). See Newlands (2006, 209–210) on Ide as a symbol of the 'collapse of civic order' here.

³⁵ This is the reading of ω; P reads *numerosaque*. Snijder (1968 *ad* 163) notes that these readings give 'virtually... the same sense'.

³⁶ Hardie (1993b, 63) says that 'Ide's words seem to play the poet's own numbers game for him... by *numeranda* she seems to mean 'that died as part of an anonymous crowd'. Hulls (2006, esp. 141–142) reads this comment in relation to the repetition of men's names in the *Thebaid*, which has the effect of 'depersonalization'.

³⁷ Statius' treatment of the Thespiads in 2.630–643 is lengthy compared with many others in the ambush, and recalls through contrast the *Thebaid's* theme of fraternal enmity. On the irony of

will be remembered merely as a number is realised in the *Thebaid* itself, in which they are denoted by both narrator and characters as *quinquaginta*, sometimes coupled with *animae* or *umbrae*.³⁸ By the inclusion of Theban mourning and Ide as a specific example of this, the ambush becomes a vehicle for exploring how warfare affects the Theban populace at large.

This exploration of community impact is furthered in the response of Aletes, an old man who also views the ambush in terms of *fama*, but in a different way, as part of the history of Thebes (3.176–217).³⁹ Aletes recounts a series of Theban calamities suffered by the Theban *gens* (3.179–206), especially the story of Niobe’s boasting and her children’s deaths, which also has a strong numerical aspect, with two victims for each of Thebes’ seven gates (3.191–201, esp. 198).⁴⁰ But Aletes draws a distinction between the stories of Niobe and Actaeon by attributing these events to the influence of the gods.⁴¹ By contrast, he condemns Eteocles for the current disaster:

nunc regis iniqui
ob noxam immeritos patriae tot culmina ciues
exuimus, nec adhuc calcati foederis Argos
fama subit, et iam bellorum extrema dolemus. (3.206–209)

Now because of the wrongdoing of an unjust king, we have lost so many citizens, prominent men of the city, who have not deserved this; nor yet does rumour of the trampled agreement make its way to Argos, and already we are mourning the last stages of war.

Ide’s comment see Hardie (1993b, 63). Gervais (2013 *ad* 629f.) comments on the ‘very strong statement of the power of poetry to memorialize heroes’ here.

³⁸ *quinquaginta* is used in 2.494, and later combined with *animae*, 3.76; *umbris*, 3.363; and *animas*, 8.667. When Teiresias calls up the dead, and recognises the Fifty, he names some of them: *an hi sunt/ quinquaginta illi? cernis Cthoniumque Chrominque/ Phegeaque et nostra praesignem Maeona lauro...*, 4.596–598. Ide’s sons are called *Thespiadae* during the ambush, 2.629, but only Periphas is named, 2.631. Cf. Gervais (2013 *ad* 494).

³⁹ In this he is comparable to the anonymous old man of Lucan’s epic, who weeps as he recalls Roman history, Luc. 2.67–233, esp. 233. The speech of Lucan’s old man is much longer, taking up a large part of book 2; but in essence the two men have a similar narrative function, of placing current events in a broader historical view. On Aletes and Theban history, see Davis (1994, 465–466).

⁴⁰ Note the hyperbolic use of *innumeris... ruinis* for the Niobids, who in this version number fourteen, 3.193. The adjective *innumeris* is also used of the Fifty’s hiding places, *innumeris... latebris*, 2.550. Gervais (2013 *ad* 550) notes that there are ‘in fact, no more than fifty’.

⁴¹ 3.201, 205–206. On this aspect, see Newlands (2004, 138).

Aletes views the Thebans collectively as victims who have suffered for the actions of individuals over time. His critique of Eteocles is famously followed by the narrator's comment on freedom of speech, *libertas*, which he attributes to Aletes' old age (3.216–217); unlike Maeon's speech, however, Aletes' is addressed to the mourners after the ambush, rather than to the king himself.⁴²

In this way both Ide and Aletes contribute to the thematic concern with the leader's responsibility of care to his people, and both demonstrate—either implicitly or not—Eteocles' failings. The community impact of Eteocles' decisions brings us back full circle to the embassy of Tydeus, where he stated that he 'pitied' the Thebans, 'whose blood is cheap' (2.458). Ironically, the bloodshed he predicted there has already come to pass, in his own fight against the Fifty.

Throughout this episode, the fighting between Tydeus and the Fifty is compared with full-scale war between cities, again suggesting a reading of the ambush as a miniature of the war to come. This motif is alluded to in the meeting between Eteocles and Tydeus: responding to Tydeus' first speech, Eteocles notes his belligerent tone, which is as if the walls of Thebes were already being attacked and trumpets calling troops, *ceu saepta nouus iam moenia laxet/ fossor et hostiles inimicent classica turmas...* (2.418–419). As the Fifty depart from Thebes, their attack is compared to that on a city, *exit in unum/ plebs ferro iurata caput: ceu castra subire apparet aut celsum crebri arietis ictibus urbis/ inclinare latus* (2.490–493).⁴³ And when Maeon returns with news of the disaster, the mothers of Thebes yell as if their city is being infiltrated in war, or when a ship goes down (3.56–57). Aletes refers to the Theban dead as *patriae tot culmina ciues* (3.207);⁴⁴ and he states that the Thebans are already suffering the extremes of war, *iam bellorum extrema dolemus* (3.209). The comparison of individual instances of fighting to full-scale war, and especially the association or identification of warriors with city structures, appears elsewhere in the *Thebaid*, but here the motif is particularly prevalent.⁴⁵ This

⁴² The narrator's introduction to his speech indicates that Aletes does have an audience, *concilium infaustum dictis mulcebat Aletes*, 3.178.

⁴³ Note also *inexpugnabilis* in 2.594 of Tydeus, a term used of 'a fortress or city': Gervais 2013 ad 594. This may be recalled in 3.15, where Eteocles' thoughts about the ambush are given: ironically, Eteocles thinks Tydeus is 'not impenetrable to my arms', *nec... impenetrabilis*, 3.15.

⁴⁴ *OLD culmen* §1: 'the summit of a building, a roof'.

⁴⁵ Cf. e.g. 9.144–147, 9.554–556.

continues during the aftermath of the ambush. Minerva tells Tydeus not to return to ‘absent Thebes’, over which she has given him victory, *absentes Thebas* (2.686–690). Tydeus employs this comparison even after arriving back at Argos, when he addresses Adrastus’ council, calling the ambush *bellum* twice (3.355), and comparing himself with ‘a strong tower or a city well fastened by its structure’, *ceu turrem ualidam aut artam compagibus urbem* (3.356).⁴⁶ Tydeus even claims hyperbolically that Thebes is ‘empty’, *urbem uacuam* (3.360).

The shepherd in epic

Before moving on to an appraisal of Statius’ use of the paradigm of the shepherd with his flock, some preliminary comments are in order concerning epic’s use of this paradigm as a model of leadership from Homer on,⁴⁷ and the post-Homeric genre of pastoral, which also informs Statius’ use of the shepherd as an analogue for leadership.⁴⁸

In Homer, the shepherd-flock paradigm occurs in the metaphorical formula ποιμὴν λαῶν, ‘shepherd of the people’, and is a point of reference in both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* for leadership and social structure.⁴⁹ Through this image, Homer presents the role of the leader as one caught between two drives: on the one hand, the obligation to protect and save the *laos*; on the other, winning individual renown: ‘The *Iliad* dramatises [a] fundamental tenet of the genre in terms of a struggle between communal obligation and individual ambition’;⁵⁰ and in Homer’s poems, the predominant model is of failure.⁵¹ Through the use of this paradigm, the author calls up ‘the entire pastoral context’, including the shepherd’s employer, predators, and dangerous places from which animals must be protected.⁵²

⁴⁶ Cf. Vessey (1986, 2985) who comments that ‘Tydeus’ fight against the 50 was hardly *bellum*’.

⁴⁷ The image is earlier than Homer: Murray 1990, 2–5; Collins 1996, 21; West 1997, 226–227.

⁴⁸ From here on in this chapter, ‘pastoral’ is used to refer to the genre of pastoral poetry.

⁴⁹ Haubold 2000, 1–46: Homer uses this formula sixty-two times, fifty-six of which are in the *Iliad*. Cf. Lyne (1989, 84–85), who reads the goatherd simile of *Il.* 4.274–281 as conveying Hector’s ‘anxiety and precautions, or desire to take precautions, in respect of his men’ [my emphasis].

⁵⁰ Haubold 2000, esp. 98; this is true of the *Odyssey* as well (127–128).

⁵¹ Haubold 2000, 19–20.

⁵² Collins 1996, 25; here ‘pastoral’ is not used in the sense of the post-Homeric genre.

Homer's shepherding similes in the *Iliad* offer a paradigm of leaders as figures of protection,⁵³ and in doing so, set the action of the war against a larger world view, which contributes to the pathos of the poem.⁵⁴ In the context of warfare, warriors are compared with shepherds who fight against predators, especially lions.⁵⁵ In other cases, the herdsman is peripheral to the action, but his absence or lack of fighting ability provides the conditions under which his animals become vulnerable to attack.⁵⁶ The shepherd analogy is not only employed for combative action; the shepherd may play a strategic role by marshalling his animals. Aside from the introduction of the leaders prior to the Greek catalogue comparing them with goatherds arranging their flocks (*Il.* 2.474–476), shepherds are also depicted relocating their flocks to avoid inclement weather.⁵⁷ An example in *Iliad* 10 demonstrates this non-combative role: as he faces Idomeneus and his troops, Aeneas calls to three other Trojan leaders, whose troops then follow, 'like sheep follow the ram to water... and the shepherd rejoices' (*Il.* 10.491–495). Aeneas-as-shepherd in this way directs the army, rather than physically protecting it. In the context of battle, then, the shepherd is analogous to a warrior; but in other contexts the shepherd plays a protective role by responding to the circumstances under which fighting takes place. This second type of simile depicts the leader in a supervising capacity, ordering and arranging the men. Implicit in the shepherd simile, then, is the obligation to ensure the people's safety, inherent also in the formula ποιμὴν λαῶν.

⁵³ I include in this discussion all types of herdsmen, including the νομεύς, ποιμὴν and βοτήρ/βώτωρ, along with αἴπολος, 'goatherd' and βουκόλος, 'cowherd'.

⁵⁴ A similar effect is achieved through the depiction of rural scenes on the shield of Achilles, on which see Taplin (1980), Haubold (2000, 70, 81) and Scott (2009, 6).

⁵⁵ E.g. *Il.* 5.134–143, 12.298–308, 17.656–666. Cf. 13.570–573, when Meriones wounds Adamas, who as he writhes is compared with a bull that herdsmen have bound and are dragging. In *Ap. Rhod. Argon.* 4.1485–1489, which is not within a simile, Canthus attempts to steal pasturing sheep, and is killed by the shepherd who protects them.

⁵⁶ E.g. *Il.* 15.323–327, where there is a herdsman to protect the flock; 15.630–636, esp. 632–633, where the herdsman is still unskilled at fighting; 10.181–188, where a wild animal approaches a sheepfold, and both men and dogs cause a commotion, implicitly driving the animal off. Cf. *Ap. Rhod. Argon.* 1.1243–1249, where Polyphemus is compared with a wild animal that hears sheep from afar, but the shepherds have shut them in their pens, and he roars until he is tired.

⁵⁷ E.g. *Il.* 4.275–282, where a cloud that portends a storm causes a goatherd to drive his herd into a cave; 4.452–456, where Trojans and Greeks clashing are compared with winter torrents that a shepherd hears from the mountains, at which he shudders; 16.351–357, where wolves decimate goats/sheep that have scattered in the mountains due to a shepherd's 'thoughtlessness'; and similarly, 3.10–14, where the armies and Greek armies advance against each other, and are compared with cloud that rises, 'not loved by shepherds'.

For Roman poets, the shepherd-flock paradigm is mediated by the poetic genre of pastoral, which constructs a world apart from epic.⁵⁸ In pastoral, shepherds live out an idealised rural life of singing and wooing the objects of their affection.⁵⁹ While pastoral poetry hints at the realities of rural life in the threats of disease and predatory animals, these are never realised, and may be referred to lightly: so Amaryllis' anger at Damoetas is playfully compared with the threat of wolves to animals in their pens: *triste lupus stabulis, maturis frugibus imbres,/ arboribus venti, nobis Amaryllidos irae*. (Verg. *Ecl.* 3.80–81).⁶⁰ Virgil's pastoral poetry is novel, however, in that from its very first poem it 'bursts the limits of a simple and timeless bucolicism to encompass the historical and social realities of the city of Rome', but exactly how these two worlds relate is more difficult to say, just as it is with Virgil's epic.⁶¹ In pastoral poetry, the shepherds' activity is predicated on peace, occurring outside the city and distinct from the 'real' world; through contrast, then, the shepherds of pastoral provide a lens through which to view the social and political life of the city.

The shepherds of pastoral poetry and epic have their remoteness from city life in common,⁶² but in epic, shepherds are figures who must deal with the dangers of the wilderness that face their men and themselves.⁶³ Shepherds in epic are thus frequently the

⁵⁸ Van Sickle (1975, 1976). Van Sickle (1975, 56) observes that bucolic poetry is written in the form of *epos*, and Theocritus 'defines implicitly the character and limits of his own work in relation to traditional epic'. On the contrast of city to country: Anderson 1968, 6; Putnam 1970, 3, 6–7; Chew 2002, 617. Cf. Virgil's famous distinction between the shepherd's *deductum carmen* and *reges et proelia*, *Ecl.* 6.1–5.

⁵⁹ Hornsby 1968, 145–146; Putnam 1970, 3–4, 8–9. Shepherds' claims of rusticity, denoted by terms such as *rusticus*, *rudis*, and *uilis*, are paradoxical, since their poetry is sophisticated and Alexandrian: on which see van Sickle (1975, 49–50) and Murray (1990, 12). Cf. Hardie 1998, esp. 13–17: 'it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the business of these countryfolk is song' (16).

⁶⁰ In Verg. *Ecl.* 2.63–65, predators' pursuit of prey is compared with erotic pursuits. In *Calp. Ecl.* 1.33–41 Faunus says that the herd may stray and the shepherd does not have to worry, and that the shepherd does not even have to lock the pens at night. Putnam (1970, 109–110) notes that the lion's ferocity, for example, is 'unimaginable' in pastoral.

⁶¹ On which see Hardie (1998, esp. 5, 18–22) and Putnam (1970, 4–5, 17–18). Anderson (1980, 13) notes that 'it is Virgil who first allowed the 'irruption into their bucolic timeless leisure of grim Roman history and even tragedy'.

⁶² The poetic associations of shepherds also turn up in epic: so when Tydeus travels to Argos, the shepherds don't yet dare to 'sing' about Hercules' lion, 2.375–381.

⁶³ Haubold 2000, 18–19; Chew 2002, 623–624. Chew (2002, 618) notes that the *miles* and *pastor* have in common that they do battle; in the shepherd's case, against nature.

perpetrators of violence.⁶⁴ In Virgil's epic, for example, the *pastor* image is used predominantly of Aeneas, and this strand of imagery gives the effect of character development from ignorant shepherd to full-blown militaristic leader: 'as Aeneas learns that shepherding is similar to soldiering, we become increasingly aware of a pastoral world within the epic which becomes a *locus* for violence'.⁶⁵ Another good example of this use of imagery is in Silius' *Punica*, where Fabius is troped as a shepherd who preserves his flock at all costs.⁶⁶

The focus in what follows is how Statius responds to this epic tradition—and its pastoral counterpart—to convey a conception of leadership in the *Thebaid*.⁶⁷ Statius introduces the shepherd paradigm early in his epic, in Adrastus' programmatic story of Crotopus and Coroebus, in which the shepherd fails to protect his young charge, Linus, against dogs (1.578–586).⁶⁸ Statius later uses twelve similes in the *Thebaid* that include shepherds, and those that occur in the books that narrate the build-up to the war are the subject of this section.⁶⁹ These similes create a web of imagery to demonstrate the absence,

⁶⁴ Anderson 1980, 13–14; Chew 2002, 619.

⁶⁵ Chew 2002; quote from 626. Only two *pastor* similes in the *Aeneid* do not refer to Aeneas: Pallas is referred to at 10.405–411, and Camilla at 11.809–815. On Virgil's use of the *pastor* image: Anderson 1968, esp. 11; Hornsby 1968; Thornton 1996; Chew 2002. Hornsby (1968) views Virgil's use of this paradigm in terms of the 'metaphorical meaning of shepherd-of-his-people' (149); 'not until the very end of Book 2 does Aeneas even begin to act like the shepherd whose chief duty is to protect his flock' (147). Anderson (1968, 6, 11), responding to Hornsby, notes that Virgil's similes for Aeneas lack flocks, and therefore reads this string of imagery very differently: Virgil shows that 'Aeneas' unconscious innocence and pastoral uninvolvement become compromised by his political responsibilities'; 'he declines from the guiltless spectator of nature-caused destruction, to the unwitting cause of a poor deer's agony, and finally to the conscious and deliberate contriver of discord in the bee-city' (13, 11). Anderson's divorce of the shepherd paradigm from its function as a reflection on epic leadership is difficult in light of its pervasive use in Homer and its repeated application to the eponymous leader in Virgil's epic. We may also ask the question: what are his 'political responsibilities' if not as a leader? Chew (2002) more fully reconciles the use of the *pastor* image in the context of the violence of war: 'Aeneas' final act engages the complexities of the soldierly and shepherdly aspects of his personality—with his feat of violence he ensures both the safety of his men and the victory of his team' (625–626). Notably, Statius restores the flocks to this simile type.

⁶⁶ E.g. Sil. *Pun.* 7.126–130, which is discussed below.

⁶⁷ Newlands (2012) demonstrates Statius' manipulation of the genre of epic in his *Silvae*.

⁶⁸ See 'Introduction: Two Programmatic Episodes'. Cf. also the storm in which Polynices is caught, which sweeps away the homes of shepherds and animals, 1.365–367.

⁶⁹ While *pastor* is the most common word in the *Thebaid* for 'shepherd', *custos*, 2.675, 8.575, and *custos pectoris*, 1.581, are also used to denote a 'herdsman': *OLD custos* §1, esp. 1c. Cf. the sense of its cognate *custodio*: 'to keep unharmed, preserve, protect': *OLD custodio* §3a. The term *magister* can also mean 'shepherd'; and also 'leader of shepherds': *OLD magister* §6, 6b. Statius

decentralisation or perversion of the moral values that the shepherd-flock paradigm encodes, and creates a contrast between Theban and Argive leadership.

Correspondence and dissimilarity provide the basic points of interpretation for epic simile,⁷⁰ but ‘the main function of a simile is not to illustrate something already mentioned in the narrative, but to *add* things which are not mentioned, in a different medium: imagery.’⁷¹ Through ‘narrative trespass’, by which language is applied to the vehicle that is more appropriate to the tenor (or vice-versa), the poet stresses similarities (and thus differences) between the two; but a simile may be suggestive beyond comparison and contrast with its narrative surrounds. It may be impressionistic or atmospheric, proleptic or analeptic, or may reflect on psychology where action is described directly (or vice-versa).⁷² Similes are a means by which the poet provides a new perspective on events.⁷³ In Statius’ case, critics have observed a variety of models of interaction between tenor and vehicle.⁷⁴ Statius also has a tendency to vary his imagery within simileme sets.⁷⁵ He also has a tendency to use novel combinations and applications, which create discordance and incongruity—and sometimes absolute contrast—between tenor and vehicle.⁷⁶ Statius also tends to complicate a reading by shifting the perspective of events.⁷⁷ In other instances, he may replace direct description

uses neither *opilio/upilio* nor *bubulcus* in any of his poetry. For a summary of terms for shepherds, see Bianco (1987).

⁷⁰ Lyne 1989, 67: similes ‘do usually have a clear point of contact with the narrative’. Feeney (1992, 38–39) notes that a simile has ‘dissimilitude at its core’.

⁷¹ Lyne 1989, 68. Cf. Scott (2007, 7) on similes filling in detail required to understand the surrounding narrative.

⁷² Feeney (1992, 38–39) also identifies cases where a single vehicle is applied to more than one tenor.

⁷³ E.g. Lyne (1989, 85) and Feeney (1992, 39).

⁷⁴ ‘Tenor’ and ‘vehicle’ are Richards’ terms (1936, esp. 96–101).

⁷⁵ Kytzler (1962) treats the similes in groups to demonstrate this, but not shepherd similes. ‘Simileme’ is Scott’s term (2009, 14–41), on which see ‘Introduction: Methods and Assumptions’.

⁷⁶ Ahl (1986, 2862 n48) comments that ‘Statius’ similes usually contain some apparent incongruity, and merit much closer attention’. This effect is more pointed when viewed in terms of the ‘horizon of expectations’ (Jauss, 1982) that the epic tradition offers.

⁷⁷ Feeney (1992, 39) discusses Homer’s use of double similes to give the perspectives of different participants in the action.

of action or psychology completely with details in a simile; in other words, there is no tenor to the vehicle.⁷⁸

In the analysis that follows, similes will be viewed not only as vehicles of meaning in their immediate context, but for important themes in the work more broadly, an approach already taken by critics in scholarship on ancient epic.⁷⁹ Through shared imagery, similes in epic create a nexus of ideas, suggesting associations to the reader concerning characterisation, plot and theme.

Shepherding imagery and the outbreak of war

Tydeus leo, *Thebaid* 2

After the fighting of the ambush is over, Statius compares Tydeus to a lion, a traditional simile type for the warrior in epic,⁸⁰ and one especially suited to Tydeus as an allusion to his literary and familial genealogy.⁸¹ Here, rather than the action of the fight itself, the focus of the simile is Tydeus' exhaustion after the event:⁸²

ut leo, qui campis longe custode fugato
Massylas depastus oues, ubi sanguine multo
luxuriata fames ceruixque et tabe grauatae
consedere iubae, mediis in caedibus adstat

⁷⁸ Corti (1987) notes this feature in the discussion of the simile for Eteocles in 4.363–368. Corti's article exemplifies well the varied simile practice of Statius.

⁷⁹ Anderson (1968, 4) notes that 'Vergil's similes share and promote the fundamental themes of the *Aeneid*'. Scott (2009, 8) reads similes as 'clues' to the poet's broader conception of his work, noting the 'interdependencies' between similes and the larger narrative. Most recently, Dominik (2015) has read Statius' similes with reference to core themes of the *Thebaid*.

⁸⁰ Scott 2009, 29–31. E.g. Hom. *Od.* 22.402–405, discussed by Scott (2009, 115–116). Memorable examples are found in Verg. *Aen.* 9.339–341, 9.792–796, 10.454–456, 10.723–728; Luc. 1.205–212; Sil. *Pun.* 2.683–691; Val. Fl. 3.587–591, 6.613–617.

⁸¹ Homer compares Diomedes to a lion twice: *Il.* 5.134–143; 10.485–486. In each of these contexts he is identified as the son of Tydeus: Τυδείδης, 5.134, 10.489; Τυδέος υἱός, 10.487. Cf. Lovatt (2005, 194): 'Tydeus... shows Statius playing with the two time-lines in the *Thebaid*, the narrative of the myths,... and the narrative of intertextual competition'. Cf. Gervais (2015, 61) on Tydeus' surpassing of his son's deeds, 'underscored' by the patronymic.

⁸² As such it recalls Virgil's simile for Turnus in *Aen.* 9.806–14, with the distinction—as Gervais (2015, 69) notes—that Tydeus is successful and therefore more like Mezentius, who is also given a lion simile, in *Aen.* 10.723–728. The simile looks forward to Tydeus' exhaustion during his *aristeia* in the war, which leads to his death, 8.700–712. Hershkowitz (1998, 251) notes that the *Thebaid* 'is very interested in things tiring out and losing energy'. Lovatt (2005, 229–233) gives the fullest treatment of this motif of the exhausted warrior, viewing these as cumulatively 'problematizing the limits of heroism and masculinity'.

aeger, hians, uictusque cibus; nec iam amplius irae
crudescunt: tantum uacuis ferit aera malis
molliaque eiecta delambit uellera lingua. (2.675–681)

As a lion which, when the shepherd has been chased far away from the plain, has devoured Massylian sheep, and when his hunger has indulged in much blood, and his neck and mane droop, heavy with gore, stands in the middle of his slaughter, sick, gaping, and conquered with food; no longer does his anger increase in savagery: he only strikes the air with his empty jaws and with his tongue thrust out licks the soft wool.

Tydeus is like a *leo* (2.675); the plain of the simile is the scene of the ambush (2.503, 547; cf. 2.675); his victims are compared with sheep, *oues*, *uellera* (2.676, 681); and these are slaughtered until the predator is worn out (2.676–677).

The simile denotes the extent of the lion's killing, and correspondingly, the lion's bloodthirsty nature. The lion sits in the middle of its victims, *mediis in caedibus*, suggesting the huge number of dead (2.678). He has killed so many sheep that his hunger is not just sated, but 'indulged', *luxuriata* (2.677). In fact, the lion has gorged itself on so much blood that it is paradoxically 'conquered' (2.679). As with the direct description of the ambush, Statius lays emphasis on the imbalance of the fighting between the single figure (Tydeus-*leo*) and the Fifty (Thebans-*oues*).

The simile is also suggestive of Tydeus' animal-like nature, which will culminate in his biting of Melanippus' head during the war (8.757–762).⁸³ Here, the lion's crest is weighed down with gore, and Statius plays on the meaning of *iubae*, which is used of both the lion's mane and the crest of a warrior's helmet,⁸⁴ we have been told explicitly that Tydeus is not dressed to fight, so the lion's *iubae* must correspond with Tydeus' own hair. Prior to the simile, Statius notes that Tydeus' hair and face are dripping with blood (2.673–674). Here the simile's play on the double meaning of *iubae* is misleading: rather than corresponding to a warrior's helmet, the simile points up the inherent likeness of the lion and Tydeus, both ferocious without the implements of war.⁸⁵ On the other hand, the simile suggests the Thebans are helpless: they are compared with sheep whose wool is

⁸³ Gervais (2015, 76 with n73) notes that the lion's wool-licking looks forward to his cannibalism, as the only detail of the simile that lacks an analogue in the tenor.

⁸⁴ *OLD iuba* §1 and §2 respectively.

⁸⁵ In 2.580–585 Statius notes Tydeus' use of Theron's shield to cover his unarmed chest, *nudo... pectore*. Cf. Tydeus' comparison to a boar, 2.469–475, discussed above, and the use of *ferus* for him during the ambush, 2.545.

soft, *mollis* (681), a term which implies weakness, and also a term associated with the world of pastoral poetry.⁸⁶

Aeneid 9 yet again provides an especially significant parallel, where the lion simile elaborates on the fight between group of Trojans who must coordinate in order to act effectively against a single figure, Turnus:⁸⁷

talibus accensi firmantur et agmine denso
consistunt. Turnus paulatim excedere pugna
et fluuium petere ac partem quae cingitur unda.
acrius hoc Teucri clamore incumbere magno
et glomerare manum, ceu saeuum turba leonem
cum telis premit infensis; at territus ille,
asper, acerba tuens, retro redit et neque terga
ira dare aut uirtus patitur, nec tendere contra
ille quidem hoc cupiens potis est per tela uirosque. (*Aen.* 9.788–796)

Fired by such words [of Mnestheus], their [the Trojans'] spirits are strengthened, and in a close-packed formation they stand firm. Turnus gradually withdraws from the fighting, and seeks the river and the area surrounded by water. More fiercely the Trojans press on him with a great shout, and collect their band into a dense mass; as when a crowd presses on a savage lion with their spears threatening, but the lion, terrified, but savage, looking around in a hostile manner, goes backwards, and neither anger nor courage allows it to turn its back, nor is it capable, though desirous, of advancing against them, through the spears and men.

In this brief segment of Virgil's epic, several motifs of Statius' narration of the ambush come together. As noted in the discussion of the ambush above, the Trojans' move to consolidate their formation here is recalled in Statius' language.⁸⁸ In addition, Turnus, the single man attacking the Trojan camp, is compared with a lion; but here the lion is not

⁸⁶ See Putnam (1970, 105, 126–127) on *mollis* as a term of pastoral. Putnam (1970, 3) notes of Horace's judgment of Virgil's poetry as *molle atque facetum* that 'we presume the judgment applies to content as well as to the rhetoric of expression'.

⁸⁷ The focus here is not the lion itself, and I therefore do not discuss literary models for this in detail. These are provided by Gervais (2013 *ad* 668–74, 675–81 and 2015, esp. 72–76). See also Marks (2013, 307–309 and 2014b, 133) for the relationship of this simile to that used for the Carthaginians in Sil. *Pun.* 2.683–691. There are also parallels with Valerius Flaccus' comparison of Jason with a lion during his *aristeia*, 6.613–617: the lion 'rages against all equally', *pariter*, Val. Fl. 6.615–616, just as Tydeus is 'divided' equally, *pariter*, *Theb.* 2.588, as mentioned above. Cf. also *luxurians, spargit famem*, Val. Fl. 6.614, 615, and *luxuriata famem*, *Theb.* 2.677. In both cases too the force that opposes the lions 'thins out': *rarescunt*, Val. Fl. 6.617; *rarescere*, *Theb.* 2.612. Gervais's commentary (2013, *passim*) notes numerous recollections of *Aeneid* 9 in the ambush of Tydeus.

⁸⁸ Gervais (2013 *ad* 585f. and 2015, 67) notes also that *Aen.* 9.801, *sed manus e castris propere coit omnis in unum*, is also recalled in *Thebaid* 2.585.

successful against the *turba* that faces it (9.792).⁸⁹ While the details of the simile—including the outcome of the fighting—may be different, the situations in the *Thebaid* and the *Aeneid* are similar in several respects: not only does the simile encapsulate the one-many nature of the fighting, but in both cases, they occur in sequences where leadership on the side of the many is problematised.

While the focus of this simile is Tydeus' slaughter of the Fifty and his subsequent exhaustion, the simile opens with reference to a shepherd, which alludes to the absent Eteocles. Statius postpones his description of the lion with a relative clause, within which an ablative absolute appears that includes a shepherd, *campis longe custode fugato*, which recalls the location of the ambush 'far from the city', *procul urbe* (2.675; 2.498). The shepherd is sidelined from the action, but nevertheless strangely prominent in the simile, suggesting that his absence is a necessary condition of the sheep's slaughter. By including a shepherd who has been driven from the scene, Statius perhaps hints at Eteocles' timidity and distance as a leader, but also his rashness in sending his men to attack Tydeus. We have already seen how disorder is a prominent aspect of the Fifty's ambush, and lack of leadership was implicitly at fault; here, the simile provides a different reflection on leadership through the absent figure of the shepherd, whose duty is to safeguard the flock by obviating foreseeable threats.⁹⁰ Here, Eteocles has not just failed to prevent a situation in which his flock' was threatened, but in fact brought this about himself.

Maeon pastor, *Thebaid* 3

Statius provides a different view of the ambush when he compares Maeon, the sole Theban survivor, to a shepherd whose bulls have been slaughtered by wolves, the first simile of two in the *Thebaid* where the main vehicle is a shepherd:

gelido remeabat Eoo
 iratus fatis et tristis morte negata
 Haemonides; necdum ora patent, dubiusque notari
 signa dabat magnae longe manifesta ruinae
 planctuque et gemitu; lacrimas nam protinus omnis
 fuderat. haud aliter saltu deuertitur orbis
 pastor ab agrestum nocturna strage luporum,

⁸⁹ Gervais (2015, 69) suggest that while this simile recalls Turnus' in *Aen.* 9.792–796, it also diverges from it, and is close to that for Mezentius in 10.723–728; in this way he 'shows us Tydeus as a hypothetical victorious Mezentius'.

⁹⁰ Cf. the examples from the *Iliad* given above, e.g. 4.275–282, 16.351–357.

cuius erile pecus siluis inopinus abegit
 imber et hibernae uentosa cacumina lunae:
 luce patent caedes; domino perferre recentes
 ipse timet casus, haustaque informis harena
 questibus implet agros, stabulique silentia magni
 odit et amissos longo ciet ordine tauros. (3.40–52)

The son of Haemon was returning in the chilly dawn, angry at the Fates and sad that his death had been denied. Not yet is his face visible, but although he was difficult to make out, from a long way off he was giving obvious signs of the great calamity by wailing and groaning; indeed, he had shed all his tears immediately. Not otherwise does a shepherd return from the woodland, bereaved by the nocturnal slaughter of savage wolves, whose master's flock was driven into the woods by a sudden downpour and the windy horns of the winter moon: in the morning, the corpses are in plain sight; he himself fears to report to his master the recent disaster, and ugly with the sand he has torn up, he fills the fields with his lament. He hates the silence of the great stall and calls up the lost bulls in a long line.

The focus of this simile is the role and psychology of Maeon as he returns to Thebes and reports the Theban ambushers' loss, especially his grief at this.⁹¹ Not only is he grieving, but within the simile, the *pastor* is afraid to tell his master of the loss, *perferre... timet* (3.49–50). The tenor and vehicle for the location of the ambush are remarkably close, the first being the fields around Thebes, and the second the woods, *siluis*, into which the victims scatter.⁹² The simile looks back to the night ambush of book 2, and mention of night-time links tenor with vehicle more closely (*noctis*, 3.33; *nocturna*, 3.46; cf. *luce patent caedes*, 3.49).

Within the simile, a straightforward reading of correspondences is possible: the perpetrator is a group of wolves (analogue: Tydeus), while the victim is a group of bulls (analogue: Theban Fifty). The combination is striking and unusual.⁹³ Bulls are characterised by their desire for individual domination, and are therefore almost always depicted alone, rather than in groups, and this drive to rule alone is reflected in the

⁹¹ See Vessey (1973, 111) on Maeon's role as reporter.

⁹² See 2.496ff, esp. *siluae*, 2.497; *siluis*, 2.500; *silua*, 2.519; and *siluis*, 2.529; cf. *siluis*, 3.57, in the simile.

⁹³ Ahl (1986, 2862 n48) comments: 'Statius' similes usually contain some apparent incongruity, and merit much closer attention. Maeon, for instance, is compared to a *pastor* in 3.45–52. But not until the very last word of the simile does Statius show us that he is a *pastor* of bulls, rather than of sheep. The notion of a herd of bulls is odd in itself; that such a herd should be torn apart by marauding wolves is even odder.' Snijder (1968 *ad* 52) is too tentative in his identification of the *tauri*: 'perhaps evoking the fifty 'duces' of Eteocles' [my emphasis].

frequency with which it is paired with the terms *dux* and *ductor*.⁹⁴ In addition, wolves are not usually depicted successfully attacking cattle, but when they do, the victim is usually alone, and not a bull.⁹⁵ In this, epic convention is supported by agricultural literature.⁹⁶ Finally, the *pastor* is one of the Fifty, Maeon, a man who has not been singled out during the ambush itself as pre-eminent, but is the focus here by virtue of simply being alive.⁹⁷ These unusual elements draw attention to several aspects of the ambush itself, including the question of leadership among the Thebans.

A similar simile in Homer's *Iliad* shows up how unusual Statius' is, especially in its combination of predator and prey: lions, not wolves, attack cattle in similes.⁹⁸ As the Myrmidons attack the Trojans outside their own ships, Homer compares them with wolves attacking lambs or goats:

οὔτοι ἄρ' ἡγεμόνες Δαναῶν ἔλον ἄνδρα ἕκαστος,
ὥς δὲ λύκοι ἄρνεσσιν ἐπέχραον ἢ ἐρίφοισιν
σίνται ὑπεκ μῆλων αἰρεόμενοι, αἶ τ' ἐν ὄρεσσιν
ποιμένος ἀφραδίησι διέτμαγεν, οἳ δὲ ἰδόντες
αἴψα διαρπάζουσιν ἀνάκλιδα θυμὸν ἐχούσας,
ὥς Δαναοὶ Τρώεσσιν ἐπέχραον. οἳ δὲ φόβοιο
δυσκελάδου μνήσαντο, λάθοντο δὲ θούριδος ἀλκῆς. (*Il.* 16.351–357)⁹⁹

⁹⁴ These instances are treated in Chapter 1. Kytzler (1962, 144) lists examples of this: with *dux*, 2.323; 4.69; *ductores* 6.864; *ductor* 7.439; participle *regnans*, 8.596; *regnator* 11.251. Tydeus' bull in 3.330 is *bellator*. He then says succinctly (1962, 144): 'Nicht das gewöhnliche Tier also, nicht der Stier schlechthin ist hier gesehen, sondern der königlich über seine Herde herrschende Gebieter, der mächtige, kraftvolle Führer, der keinen Rivalen neben sich duldet, sondern allein und unumschränkt herrschen will'.

⁹⁵ E.g. Virgil's Arruns, compared with a wolf which kills either a shepherd or a (single) great steer, *Aen.* 11.809–815. Tydeus attacking Eteocles is compared with a wolf attacking a steer, *Theb.* 8.691–696, discussed below. Notably, these similes occur directly prior to each of these men's deaths. Fighting between bull and wolf may have had civil war resonance in a Roman context: bulls were associated with Italy, while the wolf was a symbol of Rome, and 'rebel coinage' of the Social Wars depicted a bull goring a wolf: Pobjoy 2000, 201–205.

⁹⁶ In Varro, Atticus says dogs are useful for guarding sheep and goats, but cattle are able to defend themselves, ...*et tauros solere diversos adsistere clunibus continuatos et cornibus facile propulsare lupos*, *De Agr.* 2.9.1–2. The ancient scholiast's assertion *ad* 3.52, *quia solent tauros lupi uincere*, is unsupported.

⁹⁷ Vessey (1973, 111) comments that 'he is not their leader but more a helpless bystander who could do nothing to prevent the nocturnal massacre'.

⁹⁸ Cf. e.g. Hom. *Il.* 5.134–143, 5.161–164, 5.554–60, 11.172–8, 15.617–38, 16.482–491, 17.53–69, 17.656–66. Cf. also Verg. *Aen.* 10.455; Sil. *Pun.* 5.311; Val. Fl. 2.458; Stat. *Theb.* 8.596.

⁹⁹ Scott (2009, 160) notes the 'murderous and ravening' nature of these wolves. Cf. Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 2.123–129: the Argonauts attack the Bebrycians like wolves that elude shepherds and hounds and attack sheep on a winter's day, which may implicitly refer to bad weather.

So each of the leaders of the Danaans killed a man, as wolves make an assault among lambs, or are destructive among goats, snatching them from the flocks, when they have scattered in the mountains through the thoughtlessness of the shepherd: and when they see them, they at once snatch them away, since they have a strengthless spirit. So the Danaans made an assault against the Trojans; and the Trojans remembered their ill-sounding fear, and forgot their martial valour.

Statius closes Homer's imbalance between predator and prey by having bulls, rather than lambs or kids, as the victim of wolves.¹⁰⁰ The closest parallel for Statius' predator-prey combination is in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where a wolf, a *belua uasta*, ravages an entire herd of cattle; but this animal is divine and therefore purposefully overblown and larger-than-life, killing not out of hunger but rage.¹⁰¹

As in this model from *Iliad* 16, Homer only ever depicts wolves in packs, rather than individually, and, as here, where the pack of wolves is analogous to the Myrmidon force, this vehicle is used only for groups.¹⁰² Roman poetry follows Homer and usually depicts wolves attacking sheep—especially lambs—and occasionally deer.¹⁰³ In pastoral poetry, the threat of wolves to farm animals is assumed, but neither imagined nor real attacks occur.¹⁰⁴ While the wolf is a serious threat, it is distinguishable from the predator *par excellence*, the lion.¹⁰⁵ In the *Thebaid* too there is an assumed hierarchy of predators in

¹⁰⁰ Homer includes wolf similes only in the *Iliad*, and there is a variety of victims: hinds, 13.101–104 (spoken by Poseidon); a stag, 16.156–163; lambs and kids, 16.352–355. As with the shepherd-king, the wolf-predator motif is inherited from Western Asia; West 1997, 247, 395. Cf. Achilles' memorable speech to Hector, saying that there can be no concord between them, as there is none between lions and men, wolves and lambs, *Il.* 22.262–264.

¹⁰¹ *Met.* 11.346–378, 392–404.

¹⁰² *Il.* 11.62–73, 13.99–106, 16.156–66. On the recognition in antiquity that wolves cooperated with each other, see Buxton (1987, esp. 62–64).

¹⁰³ Sheep: Verg. *Aen.* 9.59; *Ecl.* 5.60, 7.52; *G.* 3.407, 3.537, 4.435; *Ov. Fast.* 4.766; *Ov. Tr.* 1.6.10, 4.1.80; *Ov. Pont.* 1.2.18; *Ov. Ib.* 1.44; *Ov. Am.* 1.8.56; *Sil. Pun.* 7.129. *Stat. Theb.* 4.363. Lambs: Verg. *Aen.* 9.59; *G.* 4.435; *Ov. Fast.* 2.85–6, 2.800 (the simile for Lucretia); *Sil. Pun.* 7.718. Lambs are used as bait for wolves: Verg. *Aen.* 9.566; *Sil. Pun.* 6.331. And deer: *Ov. Fast.* 3.646 (the simile for Anna); *Sil. Pun.* 13.130; *Stat. Theb.* 5.166.

¹⁰⁴ Verg. *Ecl.* 3.80, 5.60, 7.52, 8.52; *G.* 1.130, 3.407, 3.537, and 4.435, which is part of a simile. The permanence of this threat is denoted by its inclusion in lists of *adynata*: *Ecl.* 5.60, 8.52–3. Cf. Verg. *G.* 3.537, where wolves are so ravaged by disease that they no longer try their luck around the sheepfold. The absence of this threat is one element of the pre-Jupiter golden age, Verg. *G.* 1.130; cf. also Calp. *Ecl.* 1.33–41.

¹⁰⁵ As Horsfall (2003 *ad* 809–13) notes. E.g. Verg. *Ecl.* 2.63–65. In Ovid's *Tristia*, the *leo* is *magnanimus*, while the other group of *lupus* and *turpes... ursi* harry the dead, as do other animals, *...quaecumque minor nobilitate fera*, 3.5.33–36. For wolves as scavengers of the dead: Hom. *Il.* 4.471–472; Luc. 6.552; 6.627; 7.826. In *Theb.* 1.626 the carcass of Apollo's serpent is so repulsive that even wolves will not scavenge on it.

which wolves are low, picking up the scraps of other, fiercer, predators: *rauci tunc comminus ursi/ tunc avidi venere lupi, rabieque remissa/ lambunt degeneres alienae vulnera praedae* (11.29–31).¹⁰⁶ While lacking the martial stature of the lion, the numerical disparity between the vehicle of group of wolves and the tenor of the lone warrior Tydeus pays homage to Tydeus’ feat against the Fifty, and the perception of him as a one-man army. Statius outdoes his epic predecessors, altering their standard simile combinations and thereby showing the uniqueness of Tydeus’ feat.¹⁰⁷

The wolf’s presence in this simile is minimised, however, in favour of a focus on the grief of the shepherd, introducing a new perspective that brings to the fore the emotional relationship of Maeon to the Fifty. In Homer and his successors, the bull has high martial status, as a common analogue for warriors. In the *Thebaid*, the Lemnian women are compared after their slaughter to heifers lamenting the *ductorem... stabulique maritum*, since in him are contained the *gloria* and *honor* of the herd (5.330–334).¹⁰⁸ As there is a hierarchy of predators, so there is a hierarchy of prey: a lion may pass by calves and heifers wishing to sink his teeth into a pre-eminent bull, *cervice regnantis tauri* (8.593–596). From the Tydeus-lion simile in 2.675–681, the balance between predator and prey has shifted dramatically, with the stature of Tydeus’ analogue decreasing (lion to wolves), and that of the Fifty increasing (sheep to bulls). When viewed through the lens of Maeon’s grief, these alterations serve to suggest Maeon’s perspective on the slaughter, as both a Theban and a comrade of those who have died. There is slippage between tenor and vehicle as the shepherd calls up his lost bulls, *amissos longo ciet ordine tauros* (3.52), which suggests he is naming the bulls one by one.¹⁰⁹ The term *orbis* suggests that his affection for the cattle is like that between humans.¹¹⁰ This personalises the dead Fifty, who in the lion simile of book 2 were reduced simply to *Massylas... oues*, identifiable by

¹⁰⁶ At 12.739–740, Statius again uses *degeneres* to describe wolves in relation to lions.

¹⁰⁷ As with Homer’s Diomedes, discussed above, there is again a play on literary and mythological genealogy.

¹⁰⁸ In this simile again we see Statius innovating with his reference to a ‘Massylian foe’, 332: the women of Lemnos have become the enemy. In pastoral poetry too the bull is the *decus* of the herd: e.g. Verg. *Ecl.* 5.32–34.

¹⁰⁹ *OLD ordo* §2–3. Statius’ use of *longo... ordine* also recalls the Trojans’ loss of their ships in *Aeneid* 1: *amissos longo socios sermone requirunt*, 1.217. The two events are analogous, as the first loss in each of these epics.

¹¹⁰ Snijder (1968 *ad* 50) also notes the shepherd’s ‘soiling’ of his face shows ‘affection’ for his flock.

blood, gore and wool (2.675–681). In this way the simile demonstrates Maeon’s emotional attachment to the Fifty: rather than a straightforward reflection on the battle, it may be read as a focalised portrait of the value Maeon places on the lost men, and the shock of their defeat.

The use of the bull analogue serves to suggest another characteristic of the Fifty that has already been seen in direct description. The grouping of dominant bulls is anomalous, occurring neither in nature nor the Greco-Roman poetic tradition. An exception occurs in Lucan, who compares Pompey and his supporters with bulls within a single simile (Luc. 2.601–609). Lucan’s simile has implications for his depiction of leadership, since a bull ought to direct a herd, rather than direct other bulls: ‘The incongruity of bulls acting as a unit foreshadows the problems of internal discord that will plague the Pompeian side... a potentially chaotic situation that will be a major factor in the defeat at Pharsalus’.¹¹¹ Statius’ analogy of the Fifty with bulls suggests that they are characterised by individuality, and that they lack a command structure, as we saw in the disorder emphasised in Statius’ narrative of the ambush.

The Fifty’s performance as a group relates to the question of leadership, which is confused both in direct description, simile and intertextually. Strictly speaking, Maeon’s analogue ought to be a bull, since he is nowhere else described as a leader nor depicted acting as a leader to the ambushers. Cthonius is called *dux* of the Fifty, and so the *pastor* analogue might reasonably have been applied to him, despite the fact that his initial fruitless spear-cast is the extent to which his role as *dux* manifests itself (2.539). Meanwhile, in Agamemnon’s version of the ambush in the *Iliad*, the two leaders of the ambush were Maeon and Polyphontes, further complicating our understanding of leadership during the ambush (*Il.* 4.391–398).¹¹² After the brief—but pointed—reference to the shepherd’s flight in the lion simile of book 2, Statius again draws attention to the question of the Fifty’s problematic leadership, this time the question of how they operate as a group, which contributes implicitly to their defeat by one man.

¹¹¹ Thomas (2009, 158–159) rightly points out that this is not meant to be a “real-world” comparison’. In 11.27, the Argive leaders are compared with *armenti reges*, and are leaders of their respective contingents, rather than constituting a military group.

¹¹² As Gervais (2013 *ad* 538) notes.

There is a final important element in the simile that contributes to the outcome of the fight: the ‘unforeseen downpour’ that scatters the animals into the woods, *inopinus imber* (3.47). In *Iliad* 16, quoted above, animals are slaughtered after scattering into the woods, and blame for this is clearly placed on the shepherd’s ‘thoughtlessness’, ἀφραδία.¹¹³ In the *Iliad*, this is clearly analogous to Hector’s withdrawal from the fighting: after initially holding his position, Hector leaves his people, λαὸν, trapped in the ditch surrounding the Greek ships, and Patroclus free to attack a disordered and panicking Trojan force (16.358–374).¹¹⁴ This parallel with *Iliad* 16 again brings up the question of leadership, since Homer makes clear the responsibility of the leader to his men, and the disastrous consequences of Hector’s departure.

The question thus becomes how the *inopinus imber* of Statius’ simile relates to its context, if this provides the circumstances under which the defeat of the Fifty is possible. The answer is suggested in the psychological portrait of Eteocles that precedes this simile, specifically the simile comparing Eteocles to a ship’s skipper (*arbiter*) who is caught in a storm and wishes to turn back but cannot (3.22–32; 3.28). This simile parallels the use of storm imagery to reflect his brother Polynices’ fearfulness as he makes his way to Argos in book 1.¹¹⁵ Although these two comparisons show similarities,¹¹⁶ the second effects a neat reversal of the first, as Polynices’ fears in exile have become the—self-inflicted—fears of king Eteocles.¹¹⁷ Details in Eteocles’ simile also echo Maeon’s simile, with which it is juxtaposed in the text: winter storms are to blame, *hiberni* (3.26), *hibernae* (3.48), especially the wind, *Notus* (3.29), *uentosa cacumina* (3.48). In addition, the storm in Eteocles’ simile is associated with Tydeus, since it is the ‘Olenian’ star (*Olenii*, 3.25)

¹¹³ LSJ ἀφραδία §A.

¹¹⁴ Language shows the correspondence between simile and narrative context: τμάγεν, διέτμαγεν, 16.374, 354; ἐπέχραον, 16.356, 352.

¹¹⁵ 1.364–375. On the similarity of the imagery for Eteocles and Polynices, see Vessey (1973, 109–110). Polynices is compared with a seaman, *nauita*, 1.370–375. This comes directly after the striking sentence that shows the storm connects imagistically with his fears related to his brother, *pulsat metus undique et undique frater*, 1.369; on which see Moreland (1975, 25–27).

¹¹⁶ The seamen of both similes rely erroneously on the stars for guidance: 1.371–2; 3.24–5. Both are characterised by uncertainty in their current situation: *incertus*, 1.367; *stat rationis inops*, 1.373; *caecus sequitur iam nescius undas*, 3.30.

¹¹⁷ On this, see Hardie (1993).

that misleads the sailor into putting out to sea, an adjective used frequently of Tydeus.¹¹⁸ Meanwhile, the Ionian waves (*fluctibus Ioniis*, 3.23) on which the sailor sets out may be seen from the temple envisaged and promised by Tydeus for Pallas, *Ionias qua despectare procellas/ dulce sit* (2.726–730).¹¹⁹ Within the Argive catalogue, both Olenos and the Ionian sea are part of a list of places from where Tydeus’ men come (4.105). Through a string of images that interacts with the main narrative, Statius implies that it is Eteocles who has exposed his men to the ‘storm’ of war, creating the circumstances under which they become vulnerable to Tydeus’ attack. The suggestion of the lion simile of book 2 of Eteocles’ deficiency as a leader is thus furthered through connected imagery.

Book 3 opens with Eteocles agitated and fearful, *inuigilant, timor... clamat* (3.4, 6). Eteocles’ conscience exerts its own punishment, *supplicium exercent curae* (3.5), a perversion of a leader’s *curae*, since it is his own action, designated *scelus* twice, that causes his anxiety (3.4, 3.10).¹²⁰ In his portrait of Eteocles, Statius has a strong numerical focus: the narrator comments that Eteocles thought the Fifty’s job would be easy, since he did not ‘weigh courage and spirit against number’, *nam prona ratus facilemque tot armis/ Tydea, nec numero uirtutem animumque rependit* (3.7–8).¹²¹ Eteocles wonders if he has sent out too few men, *paucos* (3.11), and blames their sluggishness if they are not successful against ‘one man’, *in uno* (3.17–18). He also wonders if Tydeus has received reinforcements from Argos, or if *fama* has spread through neighbouring cities, with the result that the enemy group has boosted its numbers (3.10–11). The narrator says that Eteocles ‘blames himself for everything’, *sese culpat super omnia* (3.19), and the reader may initially expect that this is out of guilt for attacking Tydeus—or even wasting his men’s lives—but is actually because he regrets not killing Tydeus when he came as envoy (3.18–21). This heavily ironic portrait of Eteocles shows him treating his men as

¹¹⁸ E.g. *Olenius Tydeus*, 1.402; *Olenii tegimen suis*, 2.541. On this see Ahl (1986, 2877–2878). This perhaps indicates that Eteocles is enticed by the fact that the lone man Tydeus is a deceptively easy target: Snijder 1968 *ad* 22.

¹¹⁹ This sea is known for its roughness, *trucis Ionii rabies*, 6.52.

¹²⁰ Cf. Adrastus, who is depicted sleepless out of concern for his subjects, e.g. 3.721. Cf. 8.259–270, esp. 8.263, 266, *invigilare malis, pervigil*, including the comparison with sailing a ship. Snijder (1968 *ad* 4) suggests Statius may have been thinking of Virgil’s *ultrices curae* here, *Aen.* 6.274.

¹²¹ Ash (2015, 209) says this ‘activates’ the ‘familiar historiographical motif of one Roman being worth many barbarians in battle’.

numbers, which is precisely the fear Ide expresses later in her lament for her sons (3.163, discussed above).¹²²

Stattius describes Eteocles's analogue, the seaman, as *nescius* as he waits for news of the Fifty, and 'pursues blind waves', *caecas sequitur iam nescius undas* (3.30). In Maeon's simile, the adjective *inopinus* is also applied to the downpour that sees the animals scatter in the woods before their deaths (3.47). Beyond the disarray of the Thebans during the ambush, this also implies the leader's lack of foresight—and therefore lack of evasive action.¹²³ By contrast, Maeon knows all that has occurred; in fact, he had known what would occur even before the ambush, and had tried to warn his 'leader': *nec ueritus prohibere ducem, sed fata monentem/ priuauere fide* (2.695).¹²⁴ Maeon appears at first sight to be compared with a shepherd by default, as the lone Theban survivor of the ambush; but he had also attempted to avert the disastrous loss of the Fifty by warning Eteocles, which is precisely what the shepherd of epic is meant to do.

The detachment of Eteocles from his men is also suggested in the relationship between *dominus* and *pastor* in the simile for Maeon (3.49), a distinction found occasionally in Homer's similes¹²⁵ and also in pastoral poetry, especially Virgil's third *Eclogue*.¹²⁶ Stattius uses *dominus* in the *Thebaid* for relationships between people—as opposed to animals, for instance—in which there is an extreme imbalance of power.¹²⁷ The servile status of Maeon's shepherd analogue is also indicated through the phrase *cuius erile*

¹²² See Coffee (2006, esp. 421) on Eteocles' 'mercantile attitude toward the use of human blood', 416.

¹²³ Cf. the examples from the *Iliad* given above, esp. 4.275–282, 4.452–456 and 16.351–357.

¹²⁴ In this sense he is a parallel with the Argive Amphiaraus, who foresees what is to come and attempts to dissuade the Argive people—rather than king Adrastus—not to undertake war.

¹²⁵ Haubold (2000, 18 n20) notes that the *ἄναξ* and shepherd are sometimes distinguished in Homer, citing Collins (1996, 22).

¹²⁶ See Putnam (1970, 83, 96, 100), Mayer (1983) and Van Sickle (1987) on the status of shepherds and the ownership of the flock in Virgil's *Eclogues*. Van Sickle (1987, 129), arguing against Mayer (1983) references explicitly 'the ruler imagined as "shepherd of the people"', a paradox which works 'because of a hierarchy in society, real differences experienced and existing between high and low'. Clausen (1994, 96) notes that in Verg. *Ecl.* 3.16 *dominus* is used for the slave Damon, who 'though a slave, is nevertheless the owner'. On interplay between 'high' and 'low' poetry in *Eclogue* 3, see Segal (1967).

¹²⁷ E.g. the anonymous man calls the Thebans a *uillis manus, domino cuiicumque parati*, which heightens his criticism of Eteocles by the suggestion of slavery, 1.192. Similarly, Oedipus asks Creon if he is waiting for Oedipus to grovel at the feet of his *immitis domini*, 11.689. Vessey (1973, 111) notes that *dominus* 'can mean both master of slaves and tyrant'.

pecus (3.47). This phrase recalls the opening of Virgil's third *Eclogue*, where Menalcas asks Damoetas, *dic mihi, Damoeta, cuium pecus?* (3.1).¹²⁸ More broadly speaking, the depiction of Eteocles and Maeon here may draw on the political preoccupations of Roman pastoral poetry, in which an external figure is constructed as a presiding figure who guarantees the stability that allows for the shepherds' lifestyle.¹²⁹ The peace of the shepherd's world is the responsibility of an outside, presiding figure; but in the *Thebaid*, Eteocles causes war, rather than ensuring peace.

The simile establishes a paradigm of pronounced hierarchy, but forms a contrast with the narrative to come, in which Maeon issues a vituperative speech to Eteocles (3.59–77, esp. 71–2).¹³⁰ Maeon even says explicitly that by suicide he is denying his king's *ius*, (3.83–85). To top off this incongruity, Statius celebrates Maeon's open condemnation of Eteocles in a eulogy, in which he praises his *libertas* and speaks of Maeon's *uirtus* in terms of the poet's bestowal of *fama*: *quo carmine dignam, / quo satis ore tuis famam uirtutibus addam, / augur amate deis?* ('With what song, with what voice would add renown worthy of your courage, prophet beloved of the gods?', 3.102–104).¹³¹ Here, *fama* is dislocated onto a non-authority figure; indeed, one who stands in opposition to the king. Rather than conflating the king and the image of the lowly but protective shepherd through simile,¹³² then, Statius juxtaposes two separate figures, the shepherd-like Maeon and king Eteocles, to demonstrate how the shepherd ideal of leadership is perverted at Thebes. Through their closeness in the text, Statius creates a stark contrast

¹²⁸ Servius *ad loc.* notes that the line was distinctive for its archaic use of *cuium*, by which Virgil avoided homoeoteleuton. In Virgil's fifth *Eclogue*, the phrase refers back to *Eclogue* 3: *...haec eadem docuit "cuium pecus? An Meliboei?"* 5.87. In *Eclogue* 3 Menalcas laments the fate of a flock that is not looked after by its owner, and therefore exploited by its temporary, alien *custos*, who milks the animals twice an hour instead of twice a day, 3.3–6.

¹²⁹ See Murray (1990, 7–9): 'In Classical Antiquity it is the *Eclogues* of Virgil which bring together most successfully the world of herdsmen with that of kings; though it is important to remember that Augustus does not himself appear as a shepherd in Arcadia, but is rather conceived of as some external tutelary deity or guarantor of the pastoral peace—like an absentee landlord' (7). Cf. Putnam 1970, 83: 'It is hard enough to have to admit that *domini* exist who control the shepherd and his doings, to whom the pastoral world, ideally free, is actually subjected'. See also van Sickel (1975, 69) on Tityrus in Virgil's first *Eclogue*. Collins (1996, 22) notes: 'A shepherd is himself a worker in the employ of a master'.

¹³⁰ Cf. also Maeon's forewarning to Eteocles of the outcome in 2.695, mentioned above.

¹³¹ On this eulogy, see Ahl (1986, 2830–2831).

¹³² Murray 1990, 14: 'King and shepherd stand at opposite poles of the social system: they present the contrast between absolute power, and a life in the wilderness...'.

between Eteocles the king and Maeon the subject. Eteocles puts the Theban men in danger unjustifiably, since both success and failure would invite war from the Argives. Meanwhile, Maeon is characterised as the nourishing, protective ideal represented by the epic shepherd simile, and is grief-stricken at their loss, which foreshadows the Theban reaction to the ambush as a community later in book 3.

Hypsipyle *pastor*, *Thebaid* 6

In book 6, yet another simile includes a *pastor*, reflecting on the individual's protective role: Eurydice is compared with a cow wailing for her calf, *iuuencus*, which has been taken off by a *fera* (analogue: the lethal serpent) or a *pastor* (analogue: Hypsipyle) to the altar:

non secus ac primo fraudatum lacte iuuencum,
 cui trepidae uires et solus ab ubere sanguis,
 seu fera seu duras auexit pastor ad aras;
 nunc uallem spoliata parens, nunc flumina questu,
 nunc armenta mouet uacuosque interrogat agros;
 tunc piget ire domum, maestoque nouissima campo
 exit et oppositas impasta auertitur herbas. (6.186–192)

He is not unlike a young bull, cheated of its first milk, whose strength is frail and whose vigour comes only from the teat, when either a wild animal or a shepherd tears it away to the harsh altars; now his parent ransacks the valley, and now she disturbs rivers and herd with her wailing, and interrogates the empty fields; then she is displeased to return home, and is the last to leave the sad plain, and unfed, she turns away from the grass placed in front of her.

Statius provides two agents in the death of the calf, giving us two perspectives on the death of Opheltus.¹³³ Here the tenors and vehicles for the alternative perpetrators of the calf's death are very close indeed.¹³⁴ The verb taken by *fera* must be supplied from the rest of the sentence, *auexit* (6.188). The word order here confuses the shepherd's action with that of the wild beast and cleverly points up the intertwined—or at least unclear—responsibility of Hypsipyle and the snake for the boy's death.¹³⁵ The idea of sacrifice also

¹³³ See Feeney (1992, 39) on the use of double similes to provide various perspectives.

¹³⁴ The setting is also close: cf. 6.189–90 and 4.707, 4.802; the lack of water at the end of book 4 is also the cause of the serpent's anger, 5.523.

¹³⁵ The word order here means that the two are not completely discrete, but the idea that the snake carries the boy off to the altar is not so strange when we consider that that snake retires to its *dominis... aris* after being attacked 5.575–578: it is, after all, the *nemoris sacer horror Achaei*, 5.505. Fortgens (1934 *ad* 188) notes the odd word order here, without further discussion: 'ad secundam tantum partem pertinet'.

points to the sanctioning of the boy's death by the gods, complicating the question of cause and blame further.¹³⁶ The simile in this way opens up different views of responsibility for the death of Opheltes, offering two explanations—with the gods in the background—of who is to blame for the boy's death.

The simile here is unusual in that the shepherd of the simile does not protect his/her charge, but takes it to the altar—to be sacrificed, as we infer. The altars are *duras* (6.188), an antonym for the softness of the pastoral world that is depicted in 6.189–192.¹³⁷ In accordance with the predominant model in ancient epic, Hypsipyle's shepherd, like Maeon's, fails in his duty of care.¹³⁸ A further parallel is found in the *Thebaid* in the figure of Linus, who is linked to Opheltes through associative details, forming an intratextual link: both of these boys are the victims of wild animals after being entrusted to the care of 'shepherds'.¹³⁹ Here Hypsipyle's comparison to a *pastor* is complicated by her relationship to the Argive army: she places Opheltes on the grass lest she be too slow a *dux* for the Argives as she leads them to water, and her care for the army supersedes her care for the little boy.¹⁴⁰ In this way the simile implies a role for Hypsipyle related to the more usual use of the epic shepherd-flock paradigm, which is of leadership of a large group, specifically of troops. As with the Maeon simile, shepherding imagery has a complicated and suggestive interaction with the main narrative, providing a new perspective on the course of the epic's action.

Maeon and Hypsipyle are also similar in that their comparison to shepherds derives from their personal connection with their charges, rather than social status. Hypsipyle is as grief-stricken as Eurydice, the mother of the dead boy.¹⁴¹ Both Maeon and Hypsipyle are also characterised by their servile status in relation to figures of authority. Despite her

¹³⁶ The narrator indicates at various points the role of the gods here, e.g. *sic Parcae uoluer*, 4.787; on which see Ganiban (2013).

¹³⁷ On *mollis* as a term of pastoral, see Putnam (1970, 105, 126–127).

¹³⁸ Haubold (2000, 20) notes that the failure of the shepherd is the rule. Eurydice describes her entrusting of her son to Hypsipyle using the verbs *credo* and *mando*: *...dum deside cura/ credo sinus fidus altricis et ubera mando...* 6.147–148.

¹³⁹ Cf. the description of the shepherd's role for Linus: *pecoris custodi mandat alendum*, 1.581. On the parallels between the two boys: Vessey 1970a; Brown 1994, 161–187.

¹⁴⁰ Hypsipyle's guidance of the Argive army is treated in more detail in Chapter 4.

¹⁴¹ Hypsipyle's grief for Opheltes is extreme: *incendit clamore nemus*, 5.552–555, esp. 5.553; cf. *intexitque comis*, 5.606. At the funeral, Eurydice resents that she shares her grief, e.g. 6.177–179.

dishevelled appearance, Hypsipyle appears regal to the Argive army,¹⁴² but she is the slave of Lycurgus (5.496–497). Hypsipyle says her care for Opheltes was a consolation for her lost homeland and slavery, *patriae solamen ademptae/ servitiique decus* (5.609–610). Hypsipyle’s servitude is denoted three times using *dominus* (5.631; 5.687; 6.154). Like Maeon, Hypsipyle too is threatened with death by the city’s figure of authority, with Lycurgus claiming that he has a right as *dominus* and *dux* to punish his *uilis famula* (5.686–687), again recalling the string of comments on social status in the epic from the anonymous man’s speech onwards.

While Maeon obviates this threat through suicide, Hypsipyle is protected by the Argives, who feel indebted to her for her guidance through the forest to water.¹⁴³ Maeon and Hypsipyle share their emotional connection to the warriors and Opheltes respectively, but also inferior social status, implied through simile in Maeon’s case, and real in Hypsipyle’s case. But this pair of similes presents two different models of interaction between *pastor*, ruler, and grieving parent(s); Hypsipyle survives because she is protected by the army she has assisted; Maeon commits suicide in front of his king. In both of these cases the humble shepherd is juxtaposed with the king—indeed, clashes with the king—rather than being reconciled through simile in the image of the shepherd-king. Reading these similes according to the ‘horizon of expectations’ that the tradition of epic supplies, both present the reader with a new type of shepherd, a slave figure whose grief and subsequent confrontation with the figure of authority are salient to this comparison.¹⁴⁴

Eteocles *lupus*, *Thebaid* 4

Two further pastoral similes prior to the outbreak of war are significant to the portrayal of Eteocles’ leadership at Thebes, the first comparing him to a wolf (4.363–368). Directly after the Argive catalogue (4.38–344) Statius turns to Thebes, where in contrast with the Argives, the Thebans appear despondent at the prospect of war;¹⁴⁵ nevertheless, Boeotian cities send aid:

...tamen et Boeotis urbibus ultrix
adspirat ferri rabies, nec regis iniqui

¹⁴² See esp. 4.750–752, 776–778, 780 and 5.27–28.

¹⁴³ This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Horizon of expectations’ is Jauss’ term (1982).

¹⁴⁵ The people of Thebes are *maesti*, 4.345–346; cf. *maesti... regis*, 3.592, and *rex tristis et aeger*, 4.38, used of the Argive king Adrastus on the other side.

subsidio, quantum socia pro gente mouentur.
 ille uelut pecoris lupus expugnator opimi,
 pectora tabenti sanie grauis hirtaque saetis
 ora cruentata deformis hiantia lana,
 decedit stabulis huc illuc turbida uersans
 lumina, si duri comperta clade sequantur
 pastores, magnique fugit non inscius ausi. (4.360–368)

Even so, avenging frenzy for battle inspires Boeotian cities, and they are moved not so much to help the unjust king, as on behalf of an allied people. He is like a wolf who has plundered a rich flock, his chest heavy with rotting gore and his mouth, rough with hair, unsightly with bloody wool. He leaves the stables, his wild eyes darting here and there, in case the hardy shepherds should discover the disaster and follow, and he flees, conscious of a great outrage.

Statius opens his simile with *ille* (363) an abrupt transition through a single-word tenor referring to Eteocles, the *rex* of 4.361.¹⁴⁶ The subject of this simile in this way stands in isolation from its narrative surrounds, connected loosely through the pronoun *ille* and the simile marker *uelut*. Not only is the form of this simile striking, but it compares Eteocles to a wolf leaving stables after slaughtering sheep, a pattern of action which has no obvious analogue in the main narrative.

Wolves, as seen in the discussion of the simile for Maeon in book 3 above, are *degeneres*, lesser beasts than lions, and this plays into Eteocles' characterisation as destructive but also cowardly.¹⁴⁷ A specific parallel from Virgil's *Aeneid* helps to shed further light on Eteocles' characterisation here.¹⁴⁸ Virgil's Arruns tracks Camilla silently (11.763–767: *tacitus*, 11.763; *furtim* 11.765), after which he hits her with a spear (11.799–804). Virgil then describes Arruns' reaction by comparing him to a *lupus*:

ac uelut ille, prius quam tela inimica sequantur,
 continuo in montis sese auisus abdidit altos
 occiso pastore lupus magnouae iuueno,
 conscius audacis facti, caudamque remulcens
 subiecit pauitantem utero siluasque petiuit:
 haud secus ex oculis se turbidus abstulit Arruns
 contentusque fuga mediis se immiscuit armis. (*Aen.* 11.809–815)

¹⁴⁶ This has led some critics to suggest that Statius' simile has either been interpolated or lines around it lost: Parkes 2012 *ad* 363–8. Snijder (1968 *ad* 22) notes its abruptness. The manuscript readings are consistent, however, suggesting that we should read the text as it stands.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. e.g. 4.494–499, where Eteocles in his fear at the necromancy is compared to a hunter waiting outside the den of a lion.

¹⁴⁸ Parkes (2012 *ad* 363–8) notes this parallel.

Just as a wolf, before enemy missiles should follow, immediately goes off track and conceals itself in the high mountains, having killed a shepherd or a great steer, aware of his daring deed, and laying back its shaking tail has held it under its belly and sought the woods: no differently does Arruns, troubled, steal himself away, and content with fleeing, intermingles with the armed men.

This simile in turn recalls Homer's comparison in the *Iliad* of Antilochus to a 'wild animal', θήρ, (15.586) that has killed a hound or a herdsman, and flees before a group of men is gathered together (15.585–592). Virgil has modified his Homeric model: instead of a wild animal—probably a lion—Arruns is compared with a lesser animal.¹⁴⁹ Virgil also places emphasis on Arruns' psychology: he flees terrified, 'mingling joy with fear' (11.806–807);¹⁵⁰ the wolf also flees, *contentusque fuga* (11.815), making its way straight into the mountains, *continuo* (11.810; cf. *siluas* 11.813). Statius' wolf is also afraid, and flees: *turbida... lumina; fugit* (4.366–367, 368; cf. *turbidus, fuga, Aen.* 11.814, 815). Whereas in Virgil and Homer the wolf flees from a threat that is present and clearly analogous to the threat posed by enemy warriors in war, Statius' wolf flees from an imagined threat; in other words, the action of the wolf stems from psychology, rather than immediate physical factors.¹⁵¹ Statius combines the hugeness of the prey in Virgil, the *iuuencus magnus* whose size 'explains' the feat,¹⁵² with Virgil's statement of the wolf's consciousness of his daring deed, *consciis audacis facti* (*Aen.* 11.812):¹⁵³ *magnique fugit non inscius ausi* (*Theb.* 4.368).

The victim of Virgil's wolf here is either a shepherd or great steer (11.811), a pair of alternatives that is probably inspired by Homer's simile,¹⁵⁴ but Statius' graphic

¹⁴⁹ Horsfall (2003 *ad* 809–13) says the wolf is a 'beast more appropriate to his Arruns'.

¹⁵⁰ Note the nice touch of the wolf's shaking tail, 11.812–813.

¹⁵¹ Note the repetition of *sequantur* at line end in *Theb.* 4.367 from *Aen.* 11.809, with *duri... pastores* and *tela inimica* respectively as subjects. Homer's Antilochus gets close enough to the body of his victim to try to strip it, and it is only on Hector's counterattack that he flees, 15.583–584. The phrasing here is recalled in Virgil's simile: πρὶν περ ὄμιλον ἀολλισθήμεναι ἀνδρῶν, *Il.* 15.588; *prius quam tela inimica sequantur, Aen.* 11.809.

¹⁵² Horsfall 2003 *ad* 811.

¹⁵³ The idea of the wolf's consciousness of his deed is also perhaps inspired by Homer's κακὸν, 15.586. Janko (1992 *ad* 586–8) notes that Leaf read κακὸν as simply 'harm' rather than 'as if it knew it had done "evil"', as Eustathius reads this. Janko makes no comment on this himself, except to say that occasionally 'subjective narrative' enters into similes to show the viewpoint of animals. Horsfall (2003 *ad* 812) rejects the idea that in Virgil the wolf feels something like 'conscience'; rather, it indicates that the wolf has 'knowledge of the *audacia* of its *factum*', adding that in the Homeric model, κακὸν is not equivalent to *consciis*: 'a sage wolf will know when it has gone too far in its choice of prey'.

¹⁵⁴ ὅς τε κῦνα κτείνας ἢ βουκόλον ἀμφὶ βόεσσι, *Il.* 15.587.

description of the wolf's mouth marred by bloody wool indicates that the victims were sheep (4.364–365). Not only does this suggest the helplessness of its victims, but it evokes the lion with which Tydeus was compared just after the slaughter of the Fifty. Not only this, but the description of the wolf's post-slaughter appearance echoes that of Tydeus' lion: the lion's mane droops with gore (*tabe grauatae/ consedere iubae*, 2.677–678), and the wolf's chest is likewise 'heavy', *pectora tabenti sanie grauus* (4.364); Tydeus' lion is *hians... molliaque eiecta delambit uellera lingua* (2.679, 681), while the wolf has *...ora cruentata deformis hiantia lana* (4.365).¹⁵⁵ A further link is found in an intertextual relationship with Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*, when Jason is compared with a lion during his *aristeia* (6.613–617). Not only does this simile have verbal parallels with the Tydeus-lion simile in *Thebaid* 2, as shown above, but also with the Eteocles-wolf simile in book 4:¹⁵⁶ both predators have infiltrated the rich stables, where a bloodbath has taken place. Regardless of whether Valerius or Statius wrote his lines first, the combination of material from this single simile in the *Argonautica* within Statius' two similes is highly suggestive of an association between Tydeus' lion and Eteocles' wolf.

A further association with the ambush is made through the use of a wolf as vehicle here, recalling the simile for Maeon (3.40–52). Tydeus' lion and Eteocles' wolf differ, however, in their attitude after the slaughter: the lion licks the air, gluttoned and unconcerned; the wolf slinks away, timid and fearful. Compare also the shepherd figures in each: in Tydeus' simile, the shepherd has been driven off, *custode fugato* (2.675); but the wolf flees out of fear of 'hardy shepherds', *duri... pastores* (4.367–368). While the Eteocles-wolf simile appears to lack correspondences in the narrative, then, intratextual links create associations between this portrait and the ambush, which, after all, is the only bloodshed that has occurred in the epic so far. By comparing Eteocles with a wolf whose prey is not enemy soldiers and whose context is not of the action of war itself, Statius gives an unusual simile that is suggestive for a reading of Eteocles' relationship with his own men.

¹⁵⁵ Homer's wolf simile at *Iliad* 15.156–163 may also have suggested the wolf's bloody appearance, as Parkes (2012 *ad* 363–8) notes.

¹⁵⁶ See Parkes (2012 *ad* 363) for these. E.g. *stabulis... opimis*, Val. Fl. 6.613, and *pecoris... opimi*, *Theb.* 4.363, *stabulis*, *Theb.* 4.366; *turbidus*, Val. Fl. 6.616 and *turbida.../ lumina*, *Theb.* 4.366–367.

The unclear relationship between tenor and vehicle and bewildering array of intertexts has resulted—perhaps unsurprisingly—in various interpretations by critics. Vessey reads this simile in relation to the Maeon-*pastor* simile of book 3, arguing that there has been an ‘inversion’ of the pastoral imagery from book 3 to 4: ‘Eteocles is no longer the *dominus* whose herd has been massacred, but the wolf itself, fierce and bloody...’¹⁵⁷ Parkes asserts from the verbal similarities noted above that ‘the slaughter of the sheep corresponds to the ambush Eteocles had commanded against Tydeus in book 2’.¹⁵⁸ Corti offers a different reading again, arguing the simile does not rely on correspondence for meaning, but assumes a narrative function of describing Eteocles’ state of mind as he leads Thebes to war.¹⁵⁹

Another model is provided by Virgil’s comparison of Turnus to a wolf as he attempts to infiltrate the Trojan camp before his *aristeia*.¹⁶⁰ The walls of the Trojan camp are the barrier which prevents Turnus’ entry, and he is compared with a wolf trying to make its way into stables:

ac ueluti pleno lupus insidiatus ouili
 cum fremit ad caulas uentos perpressus et imbris
 nocte super media; tuti sub matribus agni
 balatum exercent, ille asper et improbus ira
 saeuit in absentis; collecta fatigat edendi
 ex longo rabies et siccae sanguine fauces:
 haud aliter Rutulo muros et castra tuenti
 ignescunt irae, duris dolor ossibus ardet.
 qua temptet ratione aditus, et quae uia clausos
 excutiat Teucros uallo atque effundat in aequum? (*Aen.* 9.59–68)

And as when a wolf, lying in ambush at a full sheepfold, growls at the barriers and endures the winds and downpours in the middle of the night, the lambs, safe under their mothers, practise their bleating, and he, ferocious and relentless in anger, rages against them although they are absent; the fury to eat, which has built up over a long period, wearies him, and his throat is dry of blood. Not otherwise does the Rutulian’s anger ignite, as he scans the walls of the camp, and resentment burns in his hard bones. How should he attempt an entry, and through what

¹⁵⁷ Vessey 1973, 236.

¹⁵⁸ Parkes (2012 *ad* 363–8) notes that this entails a discrepancy: ‘the ambush had resulted in a bloodbath of the Thebans, not their prey. Tydeus better fits the role of wolf destroying its enemy.’

¹⁵⁹ Corti 1987, 19–21: ‘...dopo aver condotto Tebe alla guerra’. Corti adds in support of this idea that there is no simile marker after the simile to show how we are to read any correspondences.

¹⁶⁰ By recalling this simile, Statius has combined allusion to all lone-wolf similes in the *Aeneid*, including the later one in *Aeneid* 9 with which this forms a pair, as discussed below.

channel should he shake out the Teucrians who are hemmed in by their rampart,
and pour them out over the plain?

Stattius' simile for Eteocles recalls the first line of Virgil's simile:¹⁶¹

ac ueluti pleno lupus insidiatus ovili... (Aen. 9.59)

ille uelut pecoris lupus expugnator opimi... (Theb. 4.363)

As in the *Aeneid*, the wolf's targets are sheep (9.61), and Statius replaces Virgil's *plenus*, corresponding to the Trojans 'filling' the walls, (*complant*, 9.59 cf. 9.39), with *opimus* (Theb. 4.383).¹⁶² In both there is also chiasmus, with the wolf enclosed textually, mimicking the wolf's infiltration of the stables.¹⁶³ Turnus is only attempting to infiltrate the stables, unlike the wolf, who is leaving after success: hence *insidiatus* rather than *expugnator*, both of which terms trespass from the world of the warrior to that of the wolf. Turnus' attempt to enter the Trojan camp is designated *aditus* both in the tenor and vehicle (9.58, 67). A second simile in the *Aeneid* again demonstrates the wolf's association with breaking barriers: the aptly named Trojan Lycus falls outside the walls when a tower crashes down, and when Turnus grabs him as he hangs on the walls, Virgil compares the situation to when Jupiter's eagle snatches up a hare or swan (9.556–564) or when the *Martius... lupus* has snatched a lamb from its bleating mother: *quaesitum aut matri multis balatibus agnum/ Martius a stabulis rapuit lupus*. (9.565–566).¹⁶⁴ Echoes of the earlier simile show we are to read these as a pair: *tuti sub matribus agni/ balatum exercent* (9.61–62).¹⁶⁵ The context of *Aeneid* 9 was also recalled in the lion simile of

¹⁶¹ Cf. also the abrupt switch of subject to *ille*: Aen. 9.62; Theb. 4.363.

¹⁶² The adjective *opimus* is used in Val. Fl. 6.613, as noted above.

¹⁶³ Cf. the line patterning of Tydeus' comparison with a snake, *laetisque minax interuiret herbis*, 4.98, with Parkes' note on this (2012 *ad* 98).

¹⁶⁴ Statius employs a similar wordplay on the name Lycus, who is one of a pair of warriors who are the leaders of the Theban watch sent out to secure the Argive camp in 10.18–19. Their watch is described in a simile again associating wolves with walls: they are like a pack that presses on the sheepfolds, driven by hunger, 10.42–48. There is verbal repetition here from Virgil's Turnus-wolf simile: *collecta fatigat edendi/ ex longo rabies et siccae sanguine fauces*, Aen. 9.63–64; *rabidi... lupi, quos omnibus agris nil non ausa fames longo tenuavit hiatu./ iam stabula ipsa premunt, torquet spes irrita fauces*, Theb. 10.43–45. Again, the wolves are creatures who attempt to cross a liminal zone, *quod superest, duris adfrangunt postibus ungues/ pectoraque, et siccos minuunt in limine dentes*, 10.47–48. See Buxton (1987, esp. 62–64) on the wolf's association in antiquity with 'outside'.

¹⁶⁵ The pathetic bleating of lambs is often noted: e.g. Verg. *G.* 4.435, Sil. *Pun.* 6.331, 7.718.

Thebaid 2, discussed above, and so we have a repeated allusion to Virgil's epic in these similes that reflect on the action of Statius' ambush.

Silius Italicus in *Punica* 7 provides two similes structurally parallel to those in *Aeneid* 9, and the context is significant for a reading of Eteocles in *Thebaid* 4. Fabius has instructed Minucius not to leave the city and engage the enemy, and is compared with a shepherd who sleeps easy knowing that his flock is shut away safe, *ceu nocte sub atra/ munitis pastor stabulis per ouilia clausum/ impavidus somni seruat pecus* (7.126–128). When the enemy is engaged, however, Minucius is wounded, and Fabius encourages his son to attack the Carthaginians. The situation is then compared with when a *pastor* has his back turned and a wolf snatches a lamb, but on hearing the lamb's bleating, *auditis... balatibus* (7.720), approaches the wolf, which drops his prey out of fear and flees (7.721–722).

These models thus espouse an ideal of leadership that privileges ensuring safety over glorious military feats: in the *Aeneid*, Serestus and Mnestheus, appointed as *rectores iuuenum et rerum... magistros* by Aeneas, ably oversee a closed and closely watched camp in his absence, until Pandarus and Bitias open one of its gates (9.171–175, 672–676); Serestus and Mnestheus subsequently kindle their men to force Turnus' withdrawal from inside the camp (9.778–787). As with Fabius, inaction is the strategy undertaken in order to preserve the lives of their men;¹⁶⁶ that is, they are *pastores*, not predators.¹⁶⁷ In the light of these epic examples, Eteocles' simile in *Thebaid* 4 is even more sinister: his wolf does not need to infiltrate the stables, and is only depicted leaving, an internal rather than external threat. The recollection of the protective drive of Aeneas' men and Fabius is particularly damning for Eteocles as leader, who is cast as the wolf to his own city.

While looking back to the ambush, and even perhaps forward to the war itself, the simile also serves as the climax of Statius' portrait of Thebes at this time, in which he elaborates

¹⁶⁶ Coffee (2006, 425) sees a contrast between the Homeric ideal and a 'new' ideal in the *Aeneid* and *Punica*: 'Vergil's Aeneas acts out his *pietas* by striving to fulfil his obligations to gods and mortals and foregoing the quest for personal honor (*timē*) sought so ardently by heroes of the *Iliad*'. Haubold (2000), however, discerns a latent tension between heroic glory and the role of 'shepherd of the people' already in Homer's epics.

¹⁶⁷ Aeneas is not explicitly compared with a shepherd in book 9, but is the character most associated with this paradigm in the *Aeneid*, and his role is clearly taken up by Fabius, who is compared with a *pastor*, Sil. *Pun.* 7.127, 218.

on Eteocles' disconnection from both the Thebans and their allies.¹⁶⁸ Directly after the Argive catalogue, Statius turns to Thebes, and describes the Thebans' despondency at the prospect of war (4.345–353, esp. 349–353). The introduction to this section on Thebes is particularly striking, where Statius says explicitly that the populace is at odds with its 'leader': ...*at parte ex alia Cadmi Mauortia plebes,/ maesta ducis furiis nec molli territa fama...* ('...but in another area, the Martian people of Cadmus, sad at the frenzy of their leader and alarmed by a terrible rumour...' 4.345–346). In what follows, this disjuncture between Eteocles and the Theban people is pressed further, in Statius' explanation of why allies arrive to assist Thebes: they are loyal to the Theban people, not the Theban king (4.360–362). Here, we may recall that the simile type used by Statius here is in his models used for combat during war, rather than in a non-martial context as here, and that the direct context is concerned with the king's relationship to groups. Again, Virgil's and Homer's models provide a contrast, in that both of the animals in these similes flee back to the safety of their own ranks;¹⁶⁹ by contrast, in the *Thebaid*, the wolf leaves the stables and flees, but neither tenor nor vehicle indicates a group that receives him, and the wolf appears to make his way into the wilderness alone (4.366, 368). Statius' transposition of this simile into a political context is suggestive in a different way, as a reflection on Eteocles' isolation.¹⁷⁰ This had been suggested in the Maeon simile, but here becomes more pronounced. Rather than retreating to his own group, the wolf in this simile fears that shepherds will chase him, disturbing the shepherd-king analogy of epic and offering us a king who is isolated, violent and contrasted with 'shepherds'.

Non-epic examples also suggest a political reading of this lone wolf at this important juncture in the outbreak of war. Cicero describes Catiline, a figure synonymous with treason and exile, in a similar fashion as he leaves Rome:

¹⁶⁸ Corti 1987, 21.

¹⁶⁹ Virgil's Arruns flees after his attack, *fuga mediis se immiscuit armis*, *Aen.* 11.815. In the simile itself, the wolf flees into the woods, *in montis... altos, siluas*, 11.810, 813. In Homer, Antilochus also flees back to his own group, ἔθνος ἑταίρων, *Il.* 15.591.

¹⁷⁰ A similar comment on the isolation of Eteocles is made through contrast in 2.128–132, where Eteocles is compared with a tiger, on which Coffee (2006, 429–430) comments that this conveys Eteocles' isolation through incongruity: 'Eteocles has no social bonds to speak of apart from his regal relation to his subjects, being apparently without wife or friends and distant at best from the members of his family. His violence will thus emphatically not serve the needs of others but only his own desire'.

iacet ille nunc prostratus, Quirites, et se perculsum atque abiectum esse sentit et retorquet oculos profecto saepe ad hanc urbem, quam e suis faucibus ereptam esse luget; quae quidem mihi laetari videtur, quod tantam pestem euomuerit forasque proiecerit
(Cic. *Cat.* 2.2).

That man now lies overthrown, Romans, and he feels that he is beaten down and cast aside, and he often turns his eyes back towards this city, which he mourns has been snatched from his jaws: the city seems to me to rejoice that it has vomited forth such a great pestilence, and thrown it out of doors.

The description of Catiline's 'jaws' suggests Cicero had some kind of *fera* in mind here. Like Statius' wolf, Catiline also glances back as he leaves (4.366–367). These two details suggest Cicero had a wolf in mind: the gaping jaws¹⁷¹ and luminous stare of the wolf were infamous in antiquity.¹⁷² Solon provides a further precedent for the lone wolf as a political outcast: in the final lines of poem 36, he compares himself to a wolf turning about among dogs: ...ὡς ἐν κυσὶν πολλῆσιν ἐστράφην λύκος (Sol. 36.27). Solon draws on the association in Homer of the wolf with 'violence, savagery, the absence of civilized relations',¹⁷³ and the poem may even have been delivered as a speech before his ten-year exile.¹⁷⁴ Buxton puts it succinctly: the wolf is a 'powerful image for the man apart from other men'.¹⁷⁵ Statius' simile for Eteocles, through its unusual use of a wolf simile in a political rather than combat context, evokes this use of the wolf as an analogue for the individual's relationship to the community.

A final detail suggests this political reading of the simile. Eteocles contrasts with his wolf analogue in that the latter leaves the stables, *decedit* (4.366). Reading the stables as an analogue for the space of Thebes, this is precisely what Eteocles should be doing and has not done; instead, he remains in Thebes and holds onto power beyond his appointed year. Statius uses *decedo* twice to describe human action, both times with reference to the constitutional arrangement between Polynices and Eteocles: as Polynices makes his way

¹⁷¹ Cf. e.g. Verg. *Aen.* 2.355, 9.64.

¹⁷² Pliny says that the wolf's eyes are so bright one cannot look at them: *splendent lucemque iaculantur*, *NH* 11.55.151. Cf. Ovid's Lycaon, whose eyes still flash as a wolf, *idem oculi lucent*, *Ov. Met.* 1.239; and the divine wolf of *Metamorphoses* 11: *rubra suffusus lumina flamma*, 11.369. Cf. also *Theoc.* 14.22, *Ecl.* 9.54.

¹⁷³ Anhalt (1993, esp. 128–131), who supports this analysis with evidence from Alcaeus, Herodotus, Xenophon and Plato, concluding that 'there appears to have existed a mythic tradition anterior to Homer and more explicit, understanding the wolf as a figure for the outlaw and exile, a demon to be pursued and expelled'.

¹⁷⁴ Anhalt 1993, 138.

¹⁷⁵ Buxton 1987; quote from 63.

to Argos, he wonders if his brother will leave the kingdom, *decedere regno* (1.317); and Argia later asks Polynices if he would leave Thebes if he went back and Eteocles refused to give up the throne, *poterisque tuis decedere Thebis, / si neget?* (2.344–345). In this way Eteocles' simile recalls mentions of Polynices' exile, especially the storm he experiences as he makes his way to Argos, where he marvels at the streams sweeping away the homes of shepherds and animals, *pastorum pecorumque domos* (1.361–369, esp. 164–167).

Polynices is also subject to the threat of wild animals as an exile, *uasto metuenda umbone ferarum / excutiens stabula* (1.377–378). Strikingly, the simile in book 4 suggests that king Eteocles, the pinnacle of Thebes' social hierarchy, stands outside of it; and by recalling Polynices as a sort of double for him, this muddies the distinction between internal and external, wilderness and city, one of the distinctions with which the myth of Thebes is persistently preoccupied.¹⁷⁶ Eteocles is still king at Thebes, but troped as an outcast, a figurative exile to Polynices' actual one. Eteocles does not go into exile from Thebes, as he should according to the brothers' agreement, but he is socially and politically isolated nonetheless. The abruptness and dissonance of the placement of this simile in its immediate narrative context contributes to this sense of Eteocles' isolation.

It is not clear for whom we are to regard the *pastores* as analogues. In the immediate context, the narrator says that the Boeotians support the Theban *gens* rather than their king, and the simile may thus supply a view of Eteocles focalised through Boeotians; in other words, their antipathy towards Eteocles stems from their view of him as a predator to his flock. If the *ultrix...rabies* that inspires their action refers to the death of the Fifty, we may perhaps the Boeotians as the shepherds of the simile (4.360–361). Parkes identifies the *pastores* as analogues for the Argives who are about to retaliate: 'just as the wolf fears a backlash from the *duri... / pastores* (367–8), so the Theban dreads the retaliatory invasion which is rumoured to be approaching...'¹⁷⁷ On Parkes' reading, the simile is extremely disturbing, given that this would associate an external force readying itself to attack Thebes with shepherds who oppose Eteocles the predator.¹⁷⁸ Another

¹⁷⁶ See Hardie (1990, esp. 224–225) and Keith (2004–2005, *passim*) on city versus country in Ovid's Theban narrative.

¹⁷⁷ Parkes 2012 *ad* 363–8.

¹⁷⁸ This reading is appealing in that it confounds yet again the distinction between friend and foe in this war, a constant theme of the *Thebaid*.

possibility is that a strict correspondence of this detail with the surrounding narrative is not needed, but this is another means of emphasising the isolation of Eteocles, by setting his actions against a collective that steps in to protect his prey. Regardless of how we read this simile, however, Eteocles is compared with a predator opposed to a group of shepherds, upsetting the shepherd-king paradigm yet again.

Statius includes in his Eteocles-wolf simile of *Thebaid* 4 the detail that the wolf is ‘conscious of a great outrage’, *magnique fugit non inscius ausi* (4.368). At the start of book 3, in a portrait contrasting that of the *pastor*-figure Maeon, Eteocles had been compared with an ignorant skipper: *caecas sequitur iam nescius undas* (3.30). Eteocles’ analogues have undergone a development in the imagery from *nescius* to *non inscius*. This development recalls Virgil’s use of *inscius* and *nescius* for Aeneas in shepherd similes: first in book 2, when he is compared with a *pastor* witnessing a massive torrent washing away crops and pasture, *stupet inscius* (2.307); then in book 4, where Dido is compared with a deer that has been wounded by a shepherd, *nescius* (4.72). In a final simile comparing Aeneas to a shepherd in book 12, any assertion of his ignorance is absent, when he is compared with a shepherd smoking bees from their hive (12.587–592). Aeneas develops from his comparison of himself to a naïve shepherd in book 2 witnessing the invasion of the Greeks into Troy, to a figure who inflicts violence on the Latins.¹⁷⁹ In Aeneas’ case, we may see this as a reflection on his human limitations;¹⁸⁰ but the fact that Eteocles is troped as a predator here suggests a different view of him, especially given the recollection of the slaughter in *Thebaid* 2. As the Argive army marches, and allies offer the Theban people aid, Eteocles becomes aware that full-scale war is inevitable; but Statius’ use of imagery suggests we may link this outbreak directly to the ambush, and specifically to Eteocles’ role in it. Eteocles—and his people—suffer

¹⁷⁹ On Aeneas *nescius/inscius* in Virgil’s shepherd similes, see Anderson (1968, *passim*), Hornsby (1968, esp. 147–148), Thornton (1996, 391). Chew (2002, 620–623) views the use of *nescius* and *inscius* in these similes as two of many instances, not just in similes, suggesting ignorance is a ‘trait’ of Aeneas.

¹⁸⁰ So Anderson (1968, 8): ‘The poet emphasizes the fact that his hero acts within human limits, unaware of his own potential significance, certainly unable to grasp the meaning of events in their full complexity’.

the consequences of something he himself has set in motion. It is not simply that Eteocles fails to defend the state, but he himself is troped as its attacker.¹⁸¹

Eteocles pastor, *Thebaid* 7

A further shepherd simile is found in *Thebaid* 7, and while no part of the simile is necessarily analogous to the ambush itself, the contributes to the string of imagery we have looked at thus far. In book 7, Eteocles breaks off Phorbas' catalogue of the Theban allies by ordering silence, after which he gives a speech (7.375–390) and is compared with a *pastor*:

sic fatus, et omnia rite
 disponit, qui bella gerant, qui moenia seruent,
 quas in fronte manus, medio quas robore sistat.
 perspicuas sic luce fores et uirgea pastor
 claustra leuat, dum terra recens; iubet ordine primo
 ire duces, media stipantur plebe maritae;
 ipse leuat grauidas et humum tectura parentum
 ubera, succiduasque apportat matribus agnas. (7.390–397)

So he spoke, and duly arranges everything: who should wage war, who should protect the walls; which bands he places in the front, and which in the central stronghold. So a shepherd raises the doors, transparent in the light, and the wattle barrier, when the land is fresh; he orders the leaders to go in the first line, and their wives are packed in the middle group; he himself lifts those that are pregnant and the udders of the parents that would touch the ground, and he brings the faltering lambs to their mothers.

This simile, associated as it is with the organisation of the army in the catalogue-march, recalls Homer's comparison of the Greek commanders to goatherds: the Greek commanders 'arrange' the troops, διεκόσμεον (*Il.* 2.474–477), just as Eteocles does, *omnia rite/ disponit* (7.390–391). There are clear correspondences: the *pastor* is Eteocles; the animals are his people, lined up before Eteocles; the groups Eteocles orders to undertake various tasks correspond with the different groups of animals (7.391–392, 394–397).¹⁸² There are more specific parallels in these groups: the *duces* whom he orders to go out *ordine... primo* correspond to *quas in fronte manus* (7.394–395, 7.392);¹⁸³ *medio...*

¹⁸¹ Cf. Ahl (1986, 2879): 'His status as helmsman and defender of the state is, for the moment, gone'.

¹⁸² Smolenaars 1994 *ad* 391f.

¹⁸³ Smolenaars 1994 *ad* 394f.

robore is recalled by *media... plebe* (7.392, 7.394). In a technique now familiar, Statius uses human and military language for the flock in his simile to assimilate tenor and vehicle more closely: *ordine primo, duces, plebe, maritae* (7.394; 7.395; 7.395; 7.395). The verb *iubet* is also suitable for a commander (7.394; cf. 7.372).

The simile presents a charming pastoral scene: the *pastor* cares for his flock as he lets them out to pasture in the morning, raising the barriers and ordering the leaders to go first, and then the ewes. He himself raises the pregnant animals and brings lambs to their dams (7.396–397).¹⁸⁴ The simile expands on its tenor by adding detail that gives the *pastor* here a particularly caring aspect: he personally assists animals that cannot walk themselves (7.396–397). Not only are they sheep, and therefore defenceless animals as in book 4, but they are also pregnant or very young.¹⁸⁵ Eteocles' vehicle has gone from outlaw wolf who fears *pastores*, to *pastor* himself. This *prima facie* signals a shift in characterisation, and some critics have read this simile as implying a change in the leader-people relationship at Thebes, precipitated by the fact they are under attack from an external force.¹⁸⁶

However, Statius' expansion of the tenor describing the shepherd's delicacy in handling his sheep sits uneasily with the context of the simile, in which Eteocles is preparing his people for war. The division of the *pastor*'s flock is a reminder that war has an impact on the entire community, including non-combatant citizens.¹⁸⁷ Again, Statius uses contrast to give his simile a jarring and unsettling effect: 'The idyllic pastoral scene and the shepherd's concern for his flock contrast vividly with the situation compared; the implicit representation of Eteocles as a general jealous of his men's lives, though leading them forth to destruction in an unjust cause, is particularly disturbing.'¹⁸⁸ The juxtaposition of careful shepherd and ruler at the inception of war exploits a contrast between information

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Calp. *Ecl.* 5.39–42, where Micon says that if a ewe is weak from lambing, the shepherd must take it on his shoulders.

¹⁸⁵ Note esp. *succiduus*, indicating their unstable movement; this is used for the effects of Sleep, for example, 10.117.

¹⁸⁶ See Ahl (1986, 2880–2881): 'Eteocles is not just protecting the sheep, but tending them with exquisite, individual care. What precipitates this change? The answer is quite clear. The people's cause is now identical with his. An Argive, foreign army stands at the gates, espousing Polynices' cause'.

¹⁸⁷ For the community impact of war, cf. 4.353–355, 7.240–242, 7.519–521.

¹⁸⁸ Smolenaars (1994 *ad* 393–397) also says the Eteocles simile of book 4 is 'less terrifying', and notes the connection with the 'good shepherd' metaphor in Homer, including its perversion in *Odyssey* 9.307ff., where 'murderous Polyphemus' cares for his sheep while devouring his guests.

on different narrative levels that creates a vivid and cynical portrait of Eteocles: the simile draws on the Homeric, epic conception of shepherd-kings as protectors, but goes even further than this in creating an intricate portrait of a man personally involved in his charges' wellbeing. So while Eteocles *prima facie* adheres to the simile's ideals, the simile again creates associations that pervert these.

This use of simile gives an ironic view of Eteocles as leader in the text. A similar tension is created between Eteocles' rhetoric and the narrator's statement of the intention of Eteocles' speech. The narrator tells us that Eteocles wishes to encourage the army, *hinc socios dictis stimulare suasque/ metiri decernit opes* (7.233–4); but his speech to the army claims the exact reverse, *non ego uos stimulare parem...* (7.377), alerting the reader to the difference between appearance and reality. The use of the verb *metior* in this context is again suggestive given the description of Eteocles in book 3, where he also treated his fifty ambushers as measurable, suggesting they are a commodity.¹⁸⁹

This simile has a structural relationship with that for Eteocles in book 4, before which where we are told explicitly that the Boeotians assist the Theban *gens* (4.361–362). Directly before the Eteocles-*pastor* simile of book 7, Eteocles uses a similar phrase in his speech to the army, replacing *gens* with *urbs*: *urbem socia de gente subistis/ tutari* (7.381–382). The alteration of *gens* to *urbs* is significant: Eteocles' conceives of his city, rather than his people, as the object of the allies' protection.¹⁹⁰ Eteocles ironically recalls the context of the savage-wolf simile in book 4, while taking up his role as a leader to whom the allies feel no loyalty. He also claims that these allies have come 'willingly', *...uenere uolentes/ Aoniae populi...* (7.387–388), which also ironically recalls and partially repeats the phrase used for the Thebans who come over to Polynices in his catalogue entry, *huic et patria de sede uolentes/ aduenere uiri...* (4.76–77).¹⁹¹ Here *patria de sede* recalls *socia de gente*, and is recalled by *socia pro gente* (4.362, 7.381). The narrator states that Polynices' followers are *uolentes*, while Eteocles' undue emphasis on his audience's willingness to support the Thebans (*ultro* 7.378, *liber* 7.377) jars with their real motivation—pity for the Theban people—as stated in book 4. Other disparities are

¹⁸⁹ OLD *metior*, esp. §1.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Haubold 2000, 86–87 on the distinction between Troy and its people.

¹⁹¹ A parallel noted by Smolenaars (1994 *ad* 387f.). Polynices' catalogue entry is treated in detail in Chapter 4.

evident in his speech: his self-styling as a *ductor* who would personally defend *meas... Thebas* (7.376) is at odds with the unmilitary and fearful man Statius has shown him to be.¹⁹² His claims that the crowd has joined a just cause, *meritas ultro iurastis in iras* (7.378), is again at odds with the narrator's evaluation of Eteocles' cause.¹⁹³ Meanwhile, his use of *nefandus* and *saeue* to describe his brother as he addresses him is again at odds with the account of the narrator, who applies these terms most frequently to Eteocles.¹⁹⁴

Intertextual interplay with other pastoral imagery heightens this sense of incongruity. This is only the second simile in the *Thebaid* where the *pastor* is the main vehicle, and therefore recalls the simile for Maeon in book 3. The phrase *ordine primo* (7.394), a humanising touch, recalls the Theban *duces* compared with *tauri* in book 3, *amissos longo ciet ordine tauros* (3.52), sent out by Eteocles and slaughtered needlessly. As in the case of these *tauri*, we are told in the last word of the last line what the animals are in the simile (cf. *tauri* 3.52, *agnas*, 7.397). Sheep not only mark their tenor as vulnerable and weak, but also recalls Tydeus in 2 and Eteocles in 4, who were compared with predators whose prey was also sheep. Not only its unusual detail in relation to its immediate narrative context, but also its recollection of pastoral imagery used to describe the ambush through simile, demonstrate that Statius' analogy between Eteocles and the *pastor* is not just ill-fitting but highly ironic.

Remembering that the crowd that receives Eteocles' speech has not been privy to Statius' description of events thus far, such as the prominent speech of the anonymous Theban in book 1 and pastoral imagery used to describe the ambush, Statius' presentation of Eteocles gives an extremely cynical portrait of leadership here, whereby despite Eteocles' poor relationship with both Thebans and allies he outwardly plays the role of leader. Importantly, Statius chooses to have Eteocles deliver this speech of encouragement to the army, while on the Argive side, this sort of leader-collective interaction is noticeably lacking. Eteocles in this way maintains his sole pre-eminence among the Thebans as

¹⁹² This is a common *topos* in this type of speech, as Smolenaars (1994 *ad* 375f.) notes.

¹⁹³ Smolenaars (1994 *ad* 378) gives examples, both from the narrator's and Antigone's points of view.

¹⁹⁴ Ahl (1986, 2873) observes that these are two of the damning terms used for Eteocles before his introduction in book 2. Cf. also Eteocles' words *reddere regna uetant*, 7.390, which recalls his claim to Tydeus in book 2 that the *patres* would not allow him to step down, *nisi modo notus amor meritique est gratia, patres/ reddere regna sinent*, 2.450–451.

against the people of Thebes collectively, while the Argive force is conceived of as a series of prominent figures.¹⁹⁵

This simile for Eteocles may specifically recall two intertexts already present in his comparison to a wolf in book 4. Aeneas and Fabius, in *Aeneid* 9 and *Punica* 7 respectively, play an emphatically protective rather than aggressive role, by ordering that their men be kept inside their camp or city. In the *Aeneid* it is explicit that Turnus is trying to either burst in or spill the Trojans out onto the open plain, a position of vulnerability: *...qua temptet ratione aditus, et quae via clausos/ excutiat Teucros vallo atque effundat in aequum?* (9.67–68). In the *Punica*, *clausum* and *claustra*, both at line-end, also emphasise the shepherd’s protection of the sheep by enclosure:¹⁹⁶

...ceu nocte sub atra
munitis pastor stabulis per ouilia clausum
impavidus somni seruat pecus: effera saeuit
atque impasta truces ululatus turba luporum
exercet morsuque quatit restantia claustra (Sil. *Pun.* 7.126–130)

...just as in the dark night a shepherd protects his flock, closed in the sheepfolds with reinforced stables, and sleeps fearlessly: a wild and unfed crowd of wolves rages, and issues fierce howls, and shakes the firm bars with their teeth.

The tension between striving for heroic glory and this more conservative practice is made explicit in Fabius’ speech to Minucius, in which Fabius says there is safety, *salus*, in inaction, and that his own glory derives from saving his men, *...Fabio sit uos seruasse triumphus*. (7.386–407; esp. 395–398).¹⁹⁷ Rather than keeping his citizens safe inside the walls, Eteocles is sending them off to war; the contrast with Aeneas and Fabius is underlined by the detail in Eteocles’ simile, in which the shepherd ‘raises the barriers’, *claustra leuat* (7.394; cf. *clausos*, *Aen.* 9.67; *clausum*, *claustra*, *Sil. Pun.* 127, 130). Rather than keeping them within their city’s walls, Eteocles is exposing his people to danger. The similes for Eteocles of books 4 and 7 when combined create a nexus of ideas

¹⁹⁵ This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

¹⁹⁶ See also the narrator’s negative evaluation of Virrius’ decision to open the gates, exposing men to the Roman attack, *Sil. Pun.* 13.213–218: NB *turbidus ausi*, 13.214; *incauto feruore... amens*, 13.215; and the pity expressed for his men, *miseram.../ ...pubem*, 13.216–217.

¹⁹⁷ This in turn recalls the introduction of Fabius in 6.620–626, where the narrator says he ‘rejoiced’ (*gaudebat*, 6.621) when he brought back from war as many men as he took out. Here Fabius’ feeling for his soldiers is compared to a man’s about his own son; yet another contrast with the intrafamilial war in the *Thebaid*.

reaching back to the *Aeneid* that indicates his Eteocles is a perversion of the ideal represented by the epic shepherd simile.¹⁹⁸

The similes for Eteocles in books 4 and 7 both include a movement from inside the stables to outside it. In the first simile, the wolf is depicted leaving the stables, *decedit stabulis* (4.366), an instance, as noted above, that recalled through contrast the exile of Eteocles' brother. In book 7, on the other hand, Eteocles is compared with a *pastor* who raises the doors to allow his flock out (7.393–394). In the *Aeneid* and *Punica*, these stables are analogous to the walls of a city or camp, which protect the men within. These similes thus have extra resonance for Thebes, whose walls were famous in treatments of the Theban myth,¹⁹⁹ and marked a physical boundary to mirror a social one: '...Thebes represents the paradigm of the closed system that vigorously protects its psychological, social, and political boundaries, even as its towering walls and circular ramparts close off and protect its physical space.'²⁰⁰ The physical structures of Thebes are prominent in Statius' treatment of the ambush, especially Thebes' walls.²⁰¹ The prominence of the walls continues later in the *Thebaid*: when Amphiaraus undertakes the augury that foretells the outcome of the war, the walls of Thebes are mentioned specifically: the birds that represent the people of Thebes stay motionless as if they are within the walls, *ceu muris ualloque tenent* (3.530).²⁰² Capaneus' act in book 10, the final *aristeia* of the Seven before the duel, is of course an attack on the walls of Thebes, before which Capaneus refers to the *fabula* of Amphion's creation of them through song (10.873–882). Statius' two similes thus not only respond to those in other epic, but are also integrated into an important thematic strand of the *Thebaid*; of Thebes' insularity as symbolised by its

¹⁹⁸ The relationship with Silius' *Punica* is harder to assess: see 'Introduction: Methods and Assumptions' on the relative dating of the *Punica* and *Thebaid*.

¹⁹⁹ E.g. Aeschylus' *Septem*, which is recalled, albeit briefly, in Statius' Theban catalogue of 8.353–357, on which see Augoustakis (2016, 353–7). Cf. 10.552–555, where the gates are referred to again.

²⁰⁰ Zeitlin 1986, 148.

²⁰¹ In Statius' treatment of the ambush, the city's structures were prominent as analogues for the men themselves, as discussed above. Tydeus mentions the state of Thebes' walls twice: 2.452–457, 2.699–700. See also Gervais (2013 *ad* 560) on Tydeus' use of a stone to crush his opponents.

²⁰² Cf. 4.356–360, where the decayed state of Thebes' walls is again mentioned. Here Thebes' towers are 'Amphion's': *magnaeque Amphionis arces*, 4.357. This perhaps inspires Statius' remark that the Theban Amphion, who presumably takes his name from this esteemed Theban predecessor, means to 'go through swords and to shelter his beloved walls with his own breast', 7.280–281.

walls, but also the breakdown of the distinction between internal and external, friend and enemy, city and country.²⁰³

Shepherd imagery after the outbreak of war

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine all of Statius' twelve similes involving shepherds, but here I briefly make some general observations on the use of this imagery after the outbreak of war, including the difference of application to Argives and Thebans.

During the war, Statius continues this strand of imagery with three more similes reflecting on Theban leadership, all of which are given in the context of Tydeus' *aristeia*, which recalls in many details the ambush of book 2.²⁰⁴ When Tydeus attacks Eteocles on the battlefield, the situation is compared with when a 'dense crowd of shepherds', *densa.../pastorum turba*, protects an ox from a wolf (8.688–696; quote from 691–692).²⁰⁵ Tydeus' death is then compared with that of a lion that has ravaged the countryside, to the celebration of the community (9.189–195).²⁰⁶ In both cases, it is significant that a group of *pastores*, analogous to an anonymous Theban collective, ensures the protection of their charges. These similes form a pair,²⁰⁷ the first indicating how Tydeus is defeated, largely

²⁰³ In addition to Zeitlin, see Hardie (1990, esp. 224–225), Keith (2004–2005, *passim*), Lovatt (2005, esp. 155, 270–275) and Marks (2013, 300–301 and 2014b, 131). Cf. also Ahl (1986, 2881) on the identity of Polynices, where he addresses the confusion over whether he is Theban or Argive.

²⁰⁴ E.g. Atys' lion simile in 8.572–576, which creates a contrast with Tydeus' lion in 2.675–681: see esp. *custode remoto*, 8.575; *custode fugato*, 2.675, each at line-ends. In book 8, the shepherd is simply absent, not 'driven off'. Tydeus himself taunts the Thebans, including Eteocles, with direct reference to the ambush: 8.664–672, 677–679. On the recollection of the ambush in *Thebaid* 8, and Atys' connection with Tydeus, see Vessey (1973, 225, 290–291).

²⁰⁵ This recalls the shepherd imagery of books 3 and 4: in book 3, Tydeus was compared with a group of wolves in Maeon's simile, 3.40–52; and then Eteocles was compared with an outlaw wolf, 4.363–368. The series of similes thus gives a variety of perspectives on events.

²⁰⁶ This is perhaps suggestive of the identification of Thebans as analogues for the *pastores* in the wolf simile for Eteocles, 4.368.

²⁰⁷ As Dewar (1991 *ad* 189ff.) notes.

by the Thebans in quantity;²⁰⁸ the second how the community rejoices at his death, including the way they commemorate this.²⁰⁹

In these examples, groups of shepherds are analogous with anonymous Thebans, and disconcertingly, these shepherds protect the king and their community, reversing the paradigm of sole ruler who has an obligation to protect his people. Far from braving battle against Tydeus that would ensure for him epic fame, Eteocles is ushered away from direct conflict, his own role dislocated onto the nameless collective of Thebans. And these are the only shepherds in the work who are successful in defending their charges. We may thus read the shepherd similes applied to the Thebans as an extended reflection on Eteocles as a leader; or more accurately, to the flawed nature of his leadership, which contravenes the ideology of protection contained in the epic shepherd paradigm.

A final simile involving a shepherd provides further reflection on the leadership of Eteocles. In book 11, Creon gives a vituperative speech to Eteocles, to which Eteocles replies equally strongly. Eteocles' reaction here is compared with a snake which rises up when it has been struck by a shepherd:

ictus ut incerto pastoris uulnere serpens
erigitur gyro longumque e corpore toto
uirus in ora legit; paulum si deuius hostis
torsit iter, cecidere minae tumefactaque frustra
colla sedent, irasque sui bibit ipse ueneni. (11.310–314)

As a snake struck by the uncertain blow of a shepherd coils upwards and into its mouth gathers a quantity of poison from its whole body; if the enemy moves, shifting his path a little, its threats fall back, and the neck, swollen in vain, settles, and the snake itself drinks the anger of its own venom.

In this final shepherd simile reflecting on Eteocles, just prior to his departure for the duel against his brother, he yet again is compared with a dangerous animal.²¹⁰ Even more tellingly, he engages with a man who is the analogue for a shepherd. Creon's analogy

²⁰⁸ Melanippus deals the ultimate death-blow, but it is the collective onslaught of the Thebans that gives him the opportunity to do so.

²⁰⁹ Note the use of three plurals in this simile to denote groups who deal with the lion: *magistri*, *pastores*, *coloni*, 190–192. The people of the simile commemorate the lion's deeds, *damna commemorant*, 194. They also display his body, either fixing it to a roof or placing it in a grove, 194–195. In this context Statius uses the term *gloria*, which is especially resonant in epic, as the deeds of the lion make their way into collective memory, perhaps reflecting on Statius' poem as well.

²¹⁰ See Ahl (1986, 2873) on this 'poisonous and vicious serpent'.

with a shepherd perhaps looks forward (somewhat ironically) to his future position of king of Thebes, but in the immediate context, this analogy resonates with the speech he has just made to Eteocles, blaming him for Theban deaths, and criticising him for being reluctant still to meet Eteocles in battle himself (11.269–296).²¹¹ Yet again, the image of the predator is used to reflect on Eteocles’ political activity, rather than military action; and the absence of the latter is the very thing for which Creon criticises Eteocles. This final example draws on the suggestions of the similes that go before, and recalls the embassy prior to the ambush, in which Eteocles was also compared with a snake as he reacted to Tydeus (2.411–414).²¹² We have come full circle, then, from the direct causes of the ambush that was presented as a war-in-miniature, to the consequences of the war that is a direct consequence of that same embassy.

On the Argive side, the shepherd paradigm is used more sparingly, and is not associated with any particular character or characters. The first example occurs in *Thebaid* 7, when the Argives reach the river Asopos, but are reluctant to cross since it is in spate. Hippomedon crashes into the river, making a ford and facilitating the crossing. Hippomedon is then compared with a ‘leader bull’, even though there is also a *pastor* who ‘drives’ the herd, *agit* (7.436–440). In other words, through the ineffectiveness of the *pastor*, the bull becomes a *de facto* leader, which parallels Hippomedon, who ‘leads’ without being absolutely pre-eminent in authority among the group. The simile thus explores leadership psychology, through which a character effects group action.²¹³

This is the second time the Argives have been delayed by a river on their march to Thebes: in the first instance, because of a lack of water; in the second, because of too much.²¹⁴ A concern with boundaries and delay is thematised in an intertextual model for

²¹¹ See Coffee (2006, 438) on the use of the ‘language of use and expenditure’ in this speech.

²¹² See Keith (2002, 388–389) on the use of this imagery in book 2.

²¹³ Cf. Valerius Flaccus’ *Argonautica*, in which Pollux addresses the Argonauts to raise their spirits as they feel fear at meeting the ‘monster’ Amycus, compared with when the ‘first bull’ enters the river, which allays the fear of the herd, so much so that they even pass the bull, Val. Fl. 4.195–198; this parallel is noted by Smolenaars (1994 *ad* 424–440). Statius too plays on the spatial metaphor of ‘leading’ in the paradox that ‘the leaders are left behind’ *ducibus relictis* (7.431), and that the other men are ‘ashamed to have followed’, *puduitque secutos* (7.435)

²¹⁴ Note the possibility that Hippomedon is also the *aliquis regum* in 4.832–850 who makes a speech in the Langia.

this scene from Lucan, in which Caesar at a critical juncture ‘resolves delay’ (*moras soluit belli*, 1.204) by crossing the Rubicon (1.212–217).²¹⁵ In the *Thebaid*, after the long delay of the Hypsipyle-Opheltes episode of books 4 to 6, the crossing of the Asopos indicates that the Argive army is ‘getting back on track’, and the recollection of Lucan’s first book demonstrates that the Argives are ‘back to square one’.²¹⁶ As with Lucan’s Rubicon, the Asopos is ‘swollen’, either by clouds, or by the god of the river himself (7.427–429).²¹⁷ The river here is a metaphor for epic poetry, and therefore a marker of generic boundaries as well, as the Argives finally set their course for Thebes—and war itself.²¹⁸ At this critical point in the lead-up to war, as the Argives finally reach the Asopos, two figures in the Argive army bear a relationship to the herd, rather than one: the *taurus ductor* and *pastor* (7.436–437).²¹⁹ Here, since the *pastor* is ineffective—perhaps to be identified as Adrastus—leadership is displaced onto Hippomedon, a *ductor* of the Argives through action rather than status. Statius thus adapts a memorable and momentous scene from Lucan, and includes the psychology of leader-group action from Valerius Flaccus.

Statius uses a connected simile in *Thebaid* 10, where Adrastus is compared with a ‘breeder of swift horses’:²²⁰

gaudet in aduersis animoque adsurgit Adrastus.
uertice sic Pholoes uolucrum nutritor equorum,
cum fetura gregem pecoroso uere nouauit,
laetatur cernens hos montis in ardua niti,
hos innare uadis, certare parentibus illos;

²¹⁵ Smolenaars (1994 *ad* 424–440) notes this parallel. See Roche (2009 *ad* 190–2) on Caesar’s ‘transgression of boundaries’. This crossing is described in terms of Caesar as an individual: E.g. *superauerat, ceperat*, 1.183, 185; *moras soluit belli*, 1.204; *signa tulit propere*, 1.205.

²¹⁶ Jupiter has demanded this, employing Mercury as messenger to Mars in order to (re-)set the war in motion. The Asopos is treated as a boundary earlier in the *Thebaid*, 3.337. Cf. also Hom. *Il.* 4.383 and *Il.* 10.284–91 for the Asopos as a boundary between Argos and Thebes.

²¹⁷ See Luc. 1.213–214; cf. 1.185; 1.217–219; Masters 1992, 1–3; Roche 2009 *ad* 204.

²¹⁸ For Statius’ use of rivers as ‘poetic symbols’, see Brown (1994, esp. 19–21). This Callimachean imagery will be the subject of further discussion in Chapter 4.

²¹⁹ Another simile from Lucan may shed light on this combination of bull and shepherd: Pompey is compared with a bull who is exiled from the herd and hones his strength to attack again, ‘though the shepherd is unwilling’, *inuito pastore*, 2.601–609. On this simile see Thomas (2009, esp. 153–155), who argues that Cato is analogous to the *pastor*. In Statius, rather than tension between the two, the simile points out the ineffectiveness of the shepherd.

²²⁰ This simile does not include a shepherd, but the ‘breeder’ here plays a similar role. The context of this simile is treated only briefly here, since it is the subject of discussion in Chapter 3.

tunc uacuo sub corde mouet, qui molle domandi
ferre iugum, qui terga boni, quis in arma tubasque
natus, ad Eleas melior quis surgere palmas:
talis erat turmae ductor longaeuus Achiuae. (10.227–235)

Adrastus rejoices in the face of misfortune, and his spirits rise. So on the top of Pholoe the breeder of swift horses, when birth has renewed his stud in the spring, bustling with cattle, is happy to see some struggling up the slopes of the mountain, others swimming in the shallows, and yet others contending with their parents; then in his clear mind he ponders, which should be tamed to bear the soft yoke, which have strong backs, which was born for arms and trumpets, and which is better to ascend to the Elean palms. Such was the aged leader of the Argive host.

Adrastus' *nutritor* is similar to Eteocles' comparison to a pastor in book 7, in that each elaborates on how the leader assigns roles to his men. When the priest Thiodamas proposes the night raid, he claims his dead predecessor Amphiaraus has sanctioned it (10.189ff.). Thiodamas chooses three men for the night-raid, to each of whom ten others are assigned (10.249–252), but the general reaction to the suggestion of the night-raid has been enthusiastic, and the others are indignant that they are not allowed to go (10.223–226). The simile that follows indicates Adrastus' organisation of the men, dividing them into groups based on their strengths; just as Eteocles had done after the catalogue of Theban allies (7.390–397). But there is a key difference: Eteocles' shepherd had allowed the entire flock out, including the pregnant ewes, while Adrastus' *nutritor* makes careful decisions on who is suited to different jobs.

Statius also recalls Eteocles' preparations for the ambush in book 2, but there is as much, if not more, contrast as similarity with this prior sequence in the *Thebaid*.²²¹ Adrastus' simile is followed in the text by a speech which appears to respond to Eteocles' leadership in relation to the ambush in book 2: Adrastus gives the maxim that 'a crowd is

²²¹ There are obvious similarities, which are reinforced through verbal parallels: both occur at night, and with their enemy unprepared, and Statius uses the term *dolus* in both instances, 2.498, 10.243, 259. During the raid itself, there is further recollection of the ambush of book 2. Thiodamas' strength wavers and he is compared with a tigress that has killed great cattle, 10.288–293. This recalls Tydeus' weariness and lion simile in book 2, as Lovatt (2005, 229–233) points out. The narrator also says that Thiodamas wishes to have 'a hundred arms and a hundred hands for battle', *optet nunc bracchia centum/ centenasque in bella manus...* 10.293–294. This clearly recalls the comparison of Tydeus' to Briareus, through which Tydeus was figuratively the equal of his fifty opponents during the ambush, 2.595–607, discussed above. There is also a variation on the 'one day' motif which is also used of the ambush: the Theban Amphion 'is not for long happy in his recent slaughter, and sees the earth warm with countless squadrons, and a nation perishing in a single catastrophe', *non longum caede recenti/ laetatus uidet innumeris feruere cateruis/ tellurem atque una gentem exspirare ruina*, 10.467–469.

never suited to hidden guile': *numquam apta latent/ turba dolo* (10.242–243). Rather than fifty men who fail to operate successful as a group in book 2, the Argive force retains the formation originally enforced by Thiodamas, of three small groups, each with a leader. Here, as in book 2, there is engagement with the management of numbers of men, but implicitly this more organised approach of the Argives is the better one, since their raid is successful, aside from the deaths of Hopleus and Dymas.²²²

A final simile including a *pastor* that reflects on Argive leadership occurs in book 10, directly after a description of scenes of mass chaos—culminating in arming—in Thebes. Statius even compares this internal scene with war: *uix Mauors ipse uidendo/ gaudeat* ('Scarcely would Mars himself rejoice at the sight', 10.556–557), *bellum intrasse putes* ('You would think war had entered', 10.560). After this, he compares the disruption with bees when a *pastor* smokes them out of their hive:

sic ubi pumiceo pastor rapturus ab antro
armatas erexit apes, fremit aspera nubes,
inque uicem sese stridore hortantur et omnes
hostis in ora uolant, mox deficientibus alis
amplexae flauamque domum captiuamque plangunt
mella laboratasque premunt ad pectora ceras. (10.574–579)

So when a shepherd has roused armed bees, about to take plunder from their pumice cave, the fierce cloud roars, and they encourage each other in turn with their buzzing, and all fly against the face of their enemy, and soon they embrace with their ailing wings, and mourn for their yellow home and their captive honey, and press the wax they have laboured over against their chests.

Again, there is narrative trespass,²²³ but in this case, the vehicle is a recognisable analogue for human society, the orderly bee colony.²²⁴ The bees thus become an effective vehicle with which to convey chaos verging on civil war through contrast with their usual state. Statius is alluding here to the *pastor*-bee simile in book 12 of the *Aeneid*, in which Aeneas is compared with a *pastor* who tracks bees and smokes them out, causing chaos in

²²² The Argive night-raid is explicitly sanctioned by the gods, if we are to believe Thiodamas, 10.188ff., which is another key difference between the two.

²²³ E.g. *rapturus*, 574; *armatas*, 575; *sese... hortantur*, 576. Williams (1972 ad 578–9) notes that '*captiua* is not the same as *capta*'.

²²⁴ See esp. Verg. *G.* 4.281ff. Anderson (1968, 11) notes on the *pastor*-bee simile in the *Aeneid* that 'whereas bees can be ideally evoked as an insect-parallel to the ordered purposes of men, this shepherd has produced the very opposite result, disorder, something closely approximating civil war on the insect level...'

the hive (*Aen.* 12.587–592).²²⁵ Statius’ simile is different, however, in that there is no clear individual analogue for the *pastor*, and the simile therefore cannot be read in conjunction with other pastoral imagery used for an individual, as is the case with the *Aeneid*.²²⁶ The focus thus falls very heavily on the internal chaos at Thebes, and it becomes clear that the disturbance from an external force is producing internal strife that is not just physical but political. In the text that follows, the populace openly dissents from the king:

nec non ancipitis pugnat sententia uulgi
 discordesque serit motus: hi reddere fratrem—
 nec mussant, sed uoce palam claroque tumultu—,
 reddere regna iubent; periit reuerentia regis
 sollicitis... (10.580–584)

The opinion of the fickle people is at odds and sows discordant motions: these people order that he return his brother (nor do they murmur, but speak openly with their voice and in clear protest), and that he return the kingship; in their disturbed state, awe of their king has perished.

In what follows, a collective quote is given expanding upon the Thebans’ thoughts, which are various (10.584–589). A final group asks for Tiresias’ advice, leading into the prophecy that a person ‘of the serpent race’ must be sacrificed (10.589–615). The contextualisation of this simile type within a sequence of narrative that expounds at length on internal discord at Thebes again strikes an unusual note: in contrast with the *Aeneid*, we may see this as the culmination of a progression at Thebes, from muttering and isolated individual objections to the king, to open dissent by the populace as a whole.²²⁷ There is an expectation that this simile will give a different perspective on an Argive for whom the *pastor* is analogue, but instead, this simile again reminds us of the disjuncture between king and Theban people.

²²⁵ Williams (1972 *ad* 574f.) lists lexical parallels, and notes that ‘the point of the comparison’ is the same in each: ‘the confused activity of the besieged’.

²²⁶ Note the use of *turbaret* of Aeneas in the main narrative, 12.556. Anderson (1968), Hornsby (1968) and Chew (2002) all read this simile in terms of Aeneas’ comparison with a *pastor* earlier in the *Aeneid*: when read this way, this simile indicates a shift in Aeneas’ character, since here he knowingly inflicts violence. Anderson (1968, 11–12) disagrees with Hornsby (1968, 150) who asserts that Aeneas’ attack on the bees in the *Aeneid* is to protect his flock, since there are no sheep in the simile.

²²⁷ On which see Caiani (1989).

The perversion of an epic ideal

From the embassy of Tydeus to Eteocles, to the commemoration of the dead through the figures of Ide and Aletes, the sequence narrating the ambush of Tydeus and its aftermath explores leadership as a microcosmic preface to the war proper. In the embassy, Tydeus joins a chorus of individuals, including the anonymous Theban in book 1, who suggest that Eteocles has no regard for the lives of his citizens, and as if to prove this point, Eteocles sends his men to ambush Tydeus, and all but one are slaughtered. During the ambush itself, leadership of the Fifty is also problematised, as they fail to act in an organised and unified manner, while their single opponent, Tydeus, figuratively then eventually actually becomes their numerical equal. The theme of numeration continues in Eteocles' sleepless anxiety over whether the ambush has been successful or not, and Ide's lament for her sons, in which the disconnection between Eteocles' evaluation of his men and the personal cost of their loss becomes clear.

Statius also initiates during his ambush narrative a sequence of similes in which the image of the *pastor* (or an analogous figure) reflects more broadly on the leader's role as his people move towards involvement in war. In Statius' adaptation of this simile, there are several models, none of which is simple analogy with action in direct description: absence, transference onto figures of lesser status that gives a 'splitting' effect, reversal, perversion and the complete absence of a tenor are all models of (non-)correspondence in evidence. The effect is unsettling, and draws attention to problems of leadership, both Argive and Theban.

This nexus of imagery is employed at several crucial points in the build-up to war, and provides an evaluation of Eteocles in particular. Statius' use of pastoral similes is complex and often jarring when read against the epic tradition's 'horizon of expectations'.²²⁸ The series of similes through which Eteocles is characterised demonstrates his flawed leadership through the application of the shepherd paradigm, either through absence, or the displacement of leadership qualities onto non-authority figures, or the ironic application and therefore perversion of these qualities where they are applied to the Theban king. This use of imagery also provides a connection between

²²⁸ Jauss' term (1982). See also Scott (2009, 9–10) on audience expectations for the use of similes in Homer.

Eteocles' role in the ambush and the outbreak of war against Argos; the principles—or problems—of leadership witnessed during the ambush are equally applicable to full-scale war.

During the war itself, Statius compares anonymous groups of Thebans with *pastores*, and in this way the protective-defensive aspects of rulership are taken over by collective entities. Strikingly, these are the only successful shepherd figures in the *Thebaid*. The reversal of the usual application of the *pastor* paradigm, which represents the single man's relationship to his group, is striking; instead, this role is taken up by an anonymous collective. Statius' figures of authority disregard completely the ideology that the epic shepherd paradigm represents, and this role is taken up instead by the group. The example in *Thebaid* 10 in which the shepherd who rouses the bees has no analogue in the main narrative again demonstrates Statius' innovation: we expect based on *Aeneid* 12 that this simile will reflect on the action of a single Argive man; but without a recognisable analogue in the main narrative for the shepherd, the simile is focused entirely on the internal political strife at Thebes. The ideal of the shepherd paradigm, which is present in epic from Homer on, is thus derailed completely.

On the Argive side, the use of this imagery is again innovative. Statius avoids using the shepherd as analogy for Adrastus; the closest he comes to this is when Adrastus is compared with a *nutritor* of horses in book 10, in which Adrastus successfully plays a role in ensuring the relative success of the night-raid. Here he is implicitly contrasted with Eteocles in his commission of the ambush of Tydeus, providing a further link between the two. In book 7, the crossing of the Asopos that Hippomedon effects represents an important boundary on the march from Argos to Thebes. In both of these cases, the shepherd or 'breeder of horses' is again depicted at a decisive point in the inception of hostilities: in Hippomedon's case, the war proper; in Adrastus' the night-raid, a sort of war-in-miniature, just as the narrative of the ambush of Tydeus had been. Theban and Argive leadership is in this way conveyed very differently through the vehicle of the traditional epic image of the shepherd.

Chapter 3

Book 3: Argive Decision-making and the Gods

In *Thebaid* 3, Statius presents the most detailed decision-making sequence of the *Thebaid*, which recounts the process by which Argive involvement in war is activated. Unlike the *Iliad*, for instance, which thrust its audience *in medias res*, the *Thebaid* includes events leading to war—and on more than one occasion.¹ In Statius' extended dramatisation of decision-making in book 3, the Argive decision to engage in war is explored through a series of alternating scenes which interweave divine and human action: the gods, on the one hand; and on the other the spread of information, debate and decision-making on the human plane (3.324–721). There is not always an explicit link between these, but the alternation of these two modes and the imagery shared between them indicates that these scenes form a mutually reinforcing portrait of a complex movement towards war. This chapter examines the role of leaders and people in the escalation from the ambush of the single man Tydeus to full-scale Argive deployment for war, a development that is crucial to the plot and therefore the narrative of the *Thebaid* itself.

The first part of this chapter contributes to the discussion of events at Argos through a reading of the gods as a vivid reflection on mass psychology and action at Argos. I argue that through his treatment of the gods in this decision-making process, Statius provides deep insight into the complex nature of Argive leadership. Statius presents a series of Argive points of view, including that of the mass, but by the end of the book, no clear decision to engage in war has been made; in other words, Adrastus does not make a purely unilateral decision, and this in turn upsets a simplistic reading of his role as an autocrat. This reading also calls into question whether we may regard the mass at Argos as victims of their leaders' decisions, since they play a prominent role in the progression

¹ So Horace on Homer. *Ars P.* 146–152: *semper ad euentum festinat et in medias res/ ...rapit*. See also Aristotle on Homer, *Poet.* 1451a 16–29. On the application of these principles by Statius in his *Thebaid*, see Gibson (2010, 31–32).

towards full-scale war,² and in turn, how we are to regard Adrastus' performance as a leader, since he does not even attempt to dissuade his people when they call for war.

The second part of this chapter assesses Adrastus' character as leader through other treatments of Argive decision-making in the *Thebaid*, which provides context for the analysis of book 3. Adrastus' role is then compared briefly with other models of leadership shown in decision-making processes during the *Thebaid*: the *de facto* Lemnian leader Polyxo, Eteocles, Creon and Theseus. Working with the observations in both of these sections, I conclude that Statius provides in his *Thebaid* a variety of models of decision-making within different communities.

The approach in this chapter is informed by pre-existing scholarship on the gods in the *Thebaid*, which have been the subject of a large volume of scholarship.³ This chapter utilises critics' observations regarding the allegorical quality of Statius' gods.⁴ Feeney's discussion of this aspect of Statius' gods is particularly useful: working from Lewis' (brief) observations, Feeney explicates Statius' allegorical treatment of the gods most fully, also issuing the warning that 'our apprehension of them is going to be inextricably involved with the experience of reading the allegories themselves, and... the fictional energy lavished on these creations is not going to be otiose'.⁵ In other words, even where the gods elaborate on human action and psychology when we interpret them allegorically, this cannot be divorced from their description *qua* gods.⁶ Similarly, Keith recognises the allegorical nature of Statius' gods, for which Statius is indebted to Ovid.⁷ Like Feeney, Keith stresses that the description of the gods as characters is inseparable from their

² See 'Introduction: Prior Scholarship', on readings of the mass in the *Thebaid* as the victims of kings' decisions.

³ Vessey 1973, *passim*; Ahl 1986, 2834–2852, 2860–2863; Feeney 1991, 337–391; Davis 1994; Dominik 1994a, 1–75; Hill 1996; Hardie 1999, Criado 2000; Ganiban 2007, *passim*; McNelis 2007, esp. 25–49; Hill 2008a; Hardie 2012, 201–214; Tuttle 2013.

⁴ E.g. Lewis 1936, 49–56. Vessey (1982, 574, 578) also views Statius' gods as 'allegories of abstract forces', citing Juno's use of Sleep in 10.49–346.

⁵ Feeney 1991, 379. See Feeney (1991, esp. 364–371, 376–380) on the 'process of becoming allegorical agents' seen in Statius' gods.

⁶ Von Albrecht (1997, 950–951), by contrast, separates the categories of 'god' and 'allegory'. Von Albrecht adds later (1997, 953) that 'the new powers are called Pietas and Clementia; they are not parts of myth or nature but dwell within man and have to be practised by man'. However, these two categories largely cross over: Von Albrecht's 'gods' are clearly allegorical, as Feeney shows; and abstractions such as Pietas were divinities in their own right at Rome.

⁷ Keith 2002, 396–7; Keith 2007, 19–23.

influence, when interpreted allegorically, on human action.⁸ Ahl, meanwhile, attempts to reconcile a reading of both modes as human and divine causes of the action: ‘Events result from the interaction of individuals whether by chance or by external manipulation. But external forces cannot operate unless the individual is predisposed to behave as required’.⁹

At the other end of a spectrum of interpretations of Statius’ divine machinery is that of Dominik, who separates divine and human causation completely, which facilitates a reading of both gods and kings in the *Thebaid* as a consistently negative portrait of the ‘use and abuse of power’.¹⁰ Dominik justifies this approach by claiming that since the gods are ‘corporeal’ and have ‘objective status’, they cannot be read as allegorical figures, an interpretation in direct contrast with Feeney’s. Dominik’s approach is problematic for more than one reason. Firstly, it assumes that ‘corporeal’ and ‘allegorical’ are necessarily mutually exclusive categories where gods are concerned (contra Feeney). Secondly, if the gods are to be read as the causes of events, then kings are surely to be exonerated for their actions.¹¹ Aside from this, gods such as Venus in book 3 and Pietas in book 11 attempt to prevent rather than promote war, and therefore fall outside of Dominik’s generalisation concerning the gods’ ‘abuse of power’. In addition, Statius’ description of the gods itself does not support a reading of them as absolutely separable from the explication of human action: Statius describes his gods in terms that suggest their influence is to be read allegorically, as will be seen below.

The gods of *Thebaid* 3 have been of particular interest in Statian scholarship,¹² especially the clear parallelism with and adaptation of *Aeneid* 7,¹³ including the ‘epistemological

⁸ Keith 2002, 396–7: ‘[Tisiphone’s] diseased aspect metaphorically figures the mental contagion with which she affects the brothers’ minds’.

⁹ Ahl (1986, 2851–2852), who views Polynices here as an ‘essentially independent agent’. This comment occurs in a discussion of Polynices’ journey to Argos.

¹⁰ Dominik (1994a) dedicates Chapters 1 and 2 of his monograph to these respectively.

¹¹ Hence the reading of Vessey (1971a, 88–90), who views the Fury as having ‘responsibility for the war’ rather than human characters.

¹² Lewis 1936, 50–51; Vessey 1973, 151–164; Feeney 1991, 367–370; Dominik 1994a, 14–21, 116–122; Fantham 2006; Ganiban 2007, 55–61; Hardie 2012, 204–207; Tuttle 2013.

¹³ Fantham 2006, 158–161; Ganiban 2007, 55–61. In *Aeneid* 7, Juno approaches Allecto and entrusts her with causing strife in Latium, commenting that Allecto has the ability to cause animosity even between brothers, *tu potes unanimos armare in proelia fratres*, 7.335. Hardie (1990, 230) notes that Juno’s words are more appropriate to the story of Eteocles and Polynices.

disjunction' Statius creates between the reader's knowledge and the understanding of the characters.¹⁴ However, the gods have not yet been read allegorically for an understanding of how the decision is made to engage in war, and especially for the way they reflect on the role of the crowds that gather in Argos. This chapter treats the gods of *Thebaid* 3 as having the potential for allegorical meaning that critics thus far have identified, and pays special attention to Statius' employment of language that suggests this function for them, while recognising that they are still capable of retaining their status as characters in the poem. Here this methodology is applied especially to the gods' role of elaborating upon group action and psychology.

In his *Thebaid*, Statius employs a variety of techniques to indicate that the gods' actions are to be read as allegories for collective human psychology and action. Statius describes a god or gods as having multiple appearances or manifestations, using vocabulary such as *innumerus*, *uarius*, *mille*, *dissimilis*, *multus*, or words beginning *mult-* (e.g. *multiuagus*), sometimes combined with the a noun, such as *facies*, *uultus*, *simulacrum* or *figura*.¹⁵ Statius also uses the metaphor of 'putting on' an appearance, employing terminology used for clothing.¹⁶ Gods are also described as imitating crowd phenomena, such as noise (e.g. *clamor*, *murmur*) and dust (e.g. *puluis*), and sometimes this imitation is explicit.¹⁷ In some of these cases, the gods show an understanding of and willingness to exploit the collective psychology of the mass.¹⁸ In other cases, the collective in question may 'sense'

¹⁴ 'Epistemological disjunction' is Ganiban's phrase (2007, e.g. 55).

¹⁵ Statius has several memorable examples: the social order of the Underworld, in which there are 'various Deaths in sequence', *uariae in ordine Mortes*, 9.24; Vulcan's images of the god Sleep, *mille intus simulacra dei caelauerat ardens/Mulciber*, 10.100–101; the dreams of various appearance which surround Sleep, *innumero... uultu*, 10.112. The adjective *innumerus* is repeated for Somnus' multiple effect, 10.147–148.

¹⁶ Statius also uses this image for a god's simulation of an individual: e.g. Virtus 'puts off' her disguise as Manto; discussed by Lovatt (2013, 84).

¹⁷ E.g. Bellona in book 4, who roars 'like a squadron', *turmale*, 4.10. Mars later terrifies the Thebans by raising dust on the plain, and imitating the noise of the horses and men, 7.116–121.

¹⁸ E.g. Mars in 7.116–121. Similarly, Tisiphone reports a rumour to Polynices that Eteocles is coming to fight, in order to set the duel in motion, *et illum/ aduentare ferunt portis*, 11.201–202. The gods demonstrate a sort of metaliterary awareness in these instances, of motifs attached to crowds regularly in epic.

the presence of the god, also suggesting that the god may be read allegorically in relation to human events.¹⁹

Pauor, the companion of Mars in book 7, provides a good example of this effect, and is very similar to the portrait of Mars and Fama we will see in *Thebaid* 3.²⁰ Even before Pauor is introduced, Mars' effect on the human collective is signalled, in the 'innumerable threats' resounding in Mars' palace (*innumeris minis*, 7.50–52). When *pauor* is described accompanying Mars, he too has 'innumerable' manifestations (*innumerae monstro uocesque manusque/ et facies quacumque uelit...*, 7.111–112). The shock of the god's impact is collective: 'their hearts leap' (*exsiluere animi*, 7.122). The collective quote that follows is even attributed to Pauor (7.122–126). Pauor again has multiple appearances, *haec Pauor attonitis; uariosque per agmina uultus/ induitur*, 7.127–128. Through the description of Mars and Pauor as multiplicities, Statius indicates that they reflect on groups of people rather than individuals in his narrative.

Another means by which Statius indicates the gods' influence may be read allegorically as an elaboration of human activity by groups is through their description as leaders, which gives a slightly different effect. The god may mingle with a group, and in these instances *misceo* and related terms, or prepositional phrases with *inter* and the like, are used.²¹ Statius' gods are also occasionally connected with groups through top-down verbal connections, such as *ciet*, *duco* and *traho*.²² Statius also occasionally uses *dux* for divinities.²³ In addition to these, simple juxtaposition of divine action and the description of action by a group is of itself suggestive of an allegorical reading of the god in question. While this is not an exhaustive list of the features of Statius' gods, it exemplifies the means by which Statius indicates that his gods are to be read allegorically in terms of

¹⁹ E.g. Tisiphone, whose effect is on both horses and men, *sensere acies subitusque cucurrit/ sudor equis sudorque uiris...*, 9.150–151.

²⁰ Hardie (2012, 204–211) recognises the similarity of these instances, and treats them together.

²¹ E.g. Tisiphone says she 'mixes' with the men in arms, *me sacra premebat/ tempestas, ego mixta uiri furialibus armis/ bella deum et magnas ridebam fulminis iras*, 11.89–91.

²² In 12.134, Juno leads the Argive women, *ipsa per auersos ducit Saturnia calles*. In 12.105, *Fama trahit miseris*, referring to the Argive women. In 2.682–690, Minerva instructs Tydeus to return to Argos. On this last instance, see Lewis (1936, 52) and Feeney (1991, 365–366).

²³ Theseus claims Natura is the Athenians' *dux*, 12.645; on the other hand, the Furies 'lead' the Thebans, *anguicomae ducent uexilla sorores*, 12.647. The abstractions *dolor luctusque* are *duces* for the Thebans, 12.23–24. On the personification and deification of abstractions, see Axtell 1907 (esp. 55 on Natura).

large human groups. With these observations on Statius' treatment of the gods in mind, we may approach *Thebaid* 3.

Decision-making at Argos

Even before Statius turns to Argos in book 3, the audience is primed for the prominence and significance of collective feeling that is so important to the Argive section of the book. The spread and reception of the tale of the ambush—especially through Tydeus himself—is a constant theme leading up to his return to Argos. The idea is referred to by the Thebans Chromis and Menoetes during the ambush: Chromis uses the prospect of future Fama to spur his men on, *unusne, uiri, tot caedibus unus/ ibit ouans Argos? uix credit Fama reuerso* (2.620–621); Menoetes, perhaps responding to Chromis, offers to act as Tydeus' messenger to Thebes in return for being spared (2.650–652). Tydeus himself considers returning to Thebes, recalling Chromis in the process (2.682–685: cf. *ouans*, 2.621, 685). Minerva succeeds in discouraging Tydeus, but she too is concerned with the reception of the story, specifically people's belief: *huic una fides optanda labori* (2.689). The failure of Menoetes' appeal to Tydeus anticipates Maeon's return to Thebes as a sort of substitute for Tydeus, even if he fails to reproduce Tydeus' message faithfully (2.690–703; cf. 3.59–77, 83–87). Tydeus effects a reversal, first by ordering a Theban subject to Eteocles—his last remaining soldier—to report on his behalf (*mandat, iubeo*, 2.696, 699); and secondly, by issuing orders to Eteocles, just as Eteocles had done to Tydeus in the embassy scene (2.426ff.).²⁴ As with Minerva, credibility is a factor when Maeon reports his story, as he scarcely can believe it himself, even though he was present, *uix credo et nuntius* (3.62). In this way, Statius prepares the audience for the importance of the reception of the news of the ambush by the masses, both at Argos and Thebes.

More than once in this context, the audience is described in terms of social stratification, with specific reference both to leader and people. Menoetes expresses his bitterness at king Eteocles in his offer to Tydeus, splitting Thebes into *uulgus* and *rex*: *sine tristia Thebis/ nuntius acta feram uulgique per ora pauentis/ contempto te rege canam...* (2.650–652).²⁵ When Tydeus considers returning to Thebes, this too is in terms of a

²⁴ Vessey (1986, 2985) comments that 'if he left as an ambassador, Tydeus returns as *imperator*'.

²⁵ Note the use of *canam*, a term for the activity of poets and seers, and also *fama* itself: *bella canit*, 2.213. On Statius' use of *cano* elsewhere, see Masterson (2005, 299).

bipartite division, this time between *populus* and *dux: ille etiam Thebas spoliis et sanguine plenus/ isset et attonitis sese populoque ducique/ ostentasset ouans...* (2.682–684). This social distinction is not the only way Statius explores the importance of the public reception of the ambush story before we get to Argos. As discussed above in Chapter 2, Statius provides a scene of mourning in which the Thebans move out of the city *en masse* to find those who have died in the ambush, and homes in on Ide and Aletes, who view the ambush in terms of *fama* in different ways. In this way Statius presents the total process of the creation of *fama*, from the action itself to the community’s reception and perpetuation of the story. This concern with the Theban reception of the ambush looks forward to the prominence of the spread of information on the other side, in Argos. After these scenes at Thebes, Statius introduces the gods into the action in a divine council, echoing that in *Thebaid* 1, in which Jupiter tells the gods emphatically that war is fixed (1.197–302; 3.218–323). Jupiter commands Mars to intervene at Argos, but his specific instructions are to make sure Tydeus is ‘believed’ as he returns:²⁶

‘talis mihi, nate, per Argos,
 talis abi, sic ense madens, hac nubilus ira.
 exturbent residues frenos et cuncta perosi
 te cupiant, tibi praecipites animasque manusque
 deuoeant, rape cunctantes et foedera turba,
 cui dedimus, tibi fas ipsos incendere bello
 caelicolas pacemque meam. iam semina pugnae
 ipse dedi: remeat portans immania Tydeus
 ausa, ducis scelus, et turpis²⁷ primordia belli,
 insidiasque fraudesque, suis quas ultus in armis.
 adde fidem...’ (3.229–239)

As you are, my son, as you are, make your way through Argos, with your sword dripping in this way and gloomy in this anger. Let them throw their sluggish reins into disorder, and despising all things, let them desire you, to you let them dedicate their lives and hands headlong; sweep on those who delay, and throw treaties into confusion, you to whom we have granted this. For you it is allowed to set the sky-dwellers themselves alight in war, and my very own peace. I myself have provided the seeds of conflict. Tydeus is returning bearing monstrous deeds, the crime of the leader and the beginnings of a disgraceful war, ambush and deceit, which he has avenged with his own arms. Ensure that he is believed.

²⁶ On this scene, see Ahl (1986, 2845–2846).

²⁷ Here I depart from Klotz’s text, in which the comma is placed after *turpis*; I understand it as agreeing with *belli*.

Jupiter is explicit that he wishes for Mars to have an effect on the Argives collectively, denoted through a series of plurals, both jussives and participles: *exturbent, cuncta perosi, cupiant, deuoueat, cunctantes* (3.231–233). In his final instruction, the scope of this effect is denoted through location, *per Argos* (229). The effect is to be both psychological and physical, *animasque manusque* (232). The idea that Tydeus’ story must be believed engages with the spread of information to which Statius has already drawn attention beforehand, and echoes Minerva’s warning to Tydeus that he should hope only for his story to be believed (239; cf. 2.689). In this way Statius shows the gods recognising and exploiting a collective human tendency that Statius has emphasised in his account of the ambush already. Jupiter instructs Mars to exploit the collective psychology of the mass as a political tool, looking forward to the prominence of the Argive populace in the scenes to come in book 3.

When Statius turns back to description on the human plane, Tydeus is spreading news of the ambush as he travels back to Argos:

medias etiam non destitit urbes,
 quidquid et Asopon ueteresque interiacet Argos,
 inflammare odiis, multumque et ubique retexens
 legatum sese Graia de gente petendis
 isse super regnis profugi Polynicis, at inde
 uim, noctem, scelus, arma, dolos, ea foedera passum
 regis Echionii, fratri sua iura negari.
 prona fides populis; deus omnia credere suadet
 Armipotens, geminatque acceptos Fama pauores.

(3.336–344)

And he did not fail to inflame with hatred the cities on his way, those lying between Asopos and ancient Argos, retelling his story multiple times and everywhere: that he had gone as an envoy from a Greek race to seek the kingdom of the exile Polynices, but suffered force, night, crime, arms, treachery, which were the compact of the Echionian king, and that the brother had been denied his rights. The people are inclined to believe him; the god of war persuades them to believe all things, and Fama doubles the terror they apprehend.

Tydeus’ retellings are multiple and ubiquitous, *multumque et ubique*, covering the cities he passes between Asopos and Argos. Tydeus’ tales also have a psychological effect on the audience: *inflammare odiis, geminatque acceptos Fama pauores* (3.338, 344).²⁸ Here

²⁸ Note the poetic resonance of Statius’ use of *retexo* here: *OLD retexo* §3b. As Tydeus makes his way back, there is a coincidence here of its two senses of ‘follow[ing] (a course, etc.) in the reverse direction, retrace’, *OLD retexo* §3a, and ‘to go back over or retrace (a story, argument,

retexens governs indirect speech over four lines that summarises Tydeus' story: first that the mission was on behalf of Polynices, *legatum... Polynicis* (339–340); then an asyndetic string of nouns that outlines the events of the ambush, linked to the first part with *inde* (340–341); then a moral and legal condemnation of Eteocles, recalling the first section (341–342). Here Tydeus appeals to shared Greek values in a moral evaluation of Eteocles' actions as he passes through these cities (*legatum... Graia de gente; foedera; iura*, 339, 341, 342).

Stattius shows Tydeus telling his story three times, each given in a different grammatical construction: first on his way back to Argos, in the cities through which he passes (3.324–344); in Adrastus' council on his return (3.345–364); and finally, when he is surrounded by his *comites* and wife (3.394–406).²⁹ These multiple re-tellings of his story make him a human personification of rumour itself, since he himself covers the space the rumour travels.³⁰ Tydeus is connected with the gods' activity as he becomes a reification of Jupiter's *fama*, and even at this early stage, Tydeus' spreading of news of the ambush is explicitly connected with the gods' activity. Two lines conclude this section to link Tydeus to the divine scene excerpted above: Mars ensures that Tydeus' story is believed, *prona fides populis* (343; cf. *adde fidem*, 239), and performs the task of an orator by persuading the people to believe everything, *credere suadet* (343).³¹ *fama* even enhances the psychological effect of the god's efforts by 'doubling' the fear of the people (3.344). From the outset, then, Stattius skilfully interweaves description of human and divine action in his narration of the aftermath of the ambush.

Here Stattius hints at the elliptical and sometimes inaccurate nature of *Fama*. Tydeus reports his news three times, and each time a different construction is used to summarise its contents: indirect speech, direct speech, and reported questions. It is in the nature of

etc.), §3b. On the reversal of Tydeus' journey, enhanced by echoes in the text, Gervais (2013, xxiv and *ad* 375).

²⁹ Tydeus in fact first recounts his deeds to Minerva, *ingentiaque acta recenset*, 2.706; he even offers her a second artistic rendering by way of thanks, provided that he make his way home, in the form of a temple depicting the deeds of his ancestors and 'faces of great-hearted kings', 2.732–733. Tydeus relates the story of the ambush in truncated form yet again during war proper in 8.664–672, this time to the opposing Thebans.

³⁰ Hardie (2012, 205 n78) notes that in book 3 Tydeus 'functions as a personification of *Fama*' as he returns to Argos, but does not elaborate further.

³¹ I agree with Snijder (1968 *ad* 343) that *prona fides populis* is not a generalisation about *populi*. This reading is affirmed by the repetition of *fides* from 3.239.

reported constructions to be elliptical, summarising events in an impressionistic way, and as such the form of Tydeus' report in Statius' text mimics rumour itself. There is a similar effect in *fama*'s reporting of the betrothals of Argia and Deipyle in book 2, which spreads *per urbes* (2.205–209). In addition to the summarising and simplification of content here, *fama* extrapolates beyond the description of events and predicts war, ending resoundingly with the short sentence *iam bella canit* (2.213).

In Statius' fullest description of Mars after Tydeus' return to Argos, Mars is accompanied by both Fama and Pauor:³²

et iam noctiuagas inter deus armifer umbras
desuper Arcadiae fines Nemeaeaque rura
Taenariumque cacumen Apollineasque Therapnas
armorum tonitru ferit et trepidantia corda
implet amore sui. comunt Furor Iraque cristas,
frena ministrat equis Pauor armiger. at uigil omni
Fama sono uanos rerum succincta tumultus
anteuolat currum flatuque impulsa gementum
alipedum trepidas denso cum murmure plumas
excutit: urguet enim stimulis auriga cruentis
facta, infecta loqui, curruque infestus ab alto
terga comamque deae Scythica pater increpat hasta. (3.420–431)

And now the arms-bringing god among the night-wandering shades strikes the land of Arcadia and the countryside of Nemea and the Taenarian peak and Apollo's Therapne from above with the crash of his armour and fills terrified hearts with love of himself. Frenzy and Anger adorn his crest and Fear his arms-bearer governs the reins of his horses. But alert for every sound, Fama girt with empty tumults flies before the chariot, and propelled by the gusts of her groaning wing-footed steeds, she shakes out her disturbed feathers with a dense murmur: for the charioteer drives her with bloody goads to speak things true and false, and the troublesome father from his lofty chariot thunders at the back and hair of the goddess with his Scythian spear.

Here, the gods are described in terms that suggest their influence is to be read allegorically to reflect on the action and psychology of the mass at Argos. The god 'fills hearts' with love for himself, *trepidantia corda/ implet amore sui* (423–424).³³ Fama is 'alert for every sound', denoting her multiplicity (425–426). The effect of the gods is

³² Hardie (2012, 204–207) discusses this portrait of Mars, but without reference to Statius' conception of how leaders and crowds interact in this book.

³³ Lewis (1936, 50–51) notes of this section: 'Mars does not act independently at all. He is simply summoned by Jupiter; and it is equally significant that Jupiter commands him, not to interfere in the war, but simply and solely to stir it up'.

shown through *trepidantia*: Tydeus uses *trepidus* to describe the vulnerability of the Thebans after the ambush (3.360), and his audience's response is also agitation, *trepidi de sedibus astant/ Inachidae...* (3.365–366). Fama is girded by *uanos tumultus*, the noun here denoting civil disorder and even civil war (426).³⁴ The phrase *denso cum murmure* employs an adjective frequently used for mass (428).³⁵ The noun *murmur* is also a term used for the noise which crowds make (427).³⁶ Statius clearly describes Mars, with companions, with reference to collective thought and activity at Argos.

The abstract divinity Fama, whose meaning shades from 'rumour' to 'fame',³⁷ personifies an inherently collective phenomenon.³⁸ Here Statius draws on his epic predecessors in his portrait of Fama, especially *Aeneid* 4, in the idea that she speaks both 'things done and not done', *facta infecta* (430).³⁹ This crowd phenomenon is notoriously unreliable, perhaps reflecting the permutations possible when a multitude of people spread information.⁴⁰ The capacity of *fama* to go beyond merely repeating what has been heard relates to her disordering, psychological effect, and she is designated *dea turbida*, conveying her disorderly nature (2.208). In *Thebaid* 3's first portrait of Mars, she is driven on by Pauor (3.425–431) and Statius makes this psychological association again in book 4, where *turbatrix Fama* again has a disturbing psychological effect: *accumulat crebros turbatrix Fama pauores...* (4.369). Here *creber* denotes the multiplicity of *fama*, and the tendency for amplification of the psychological effect in *accumulat*. In Jupiter's address above, Mars is also a figure of disorder on a mass scale: *exturbent resides frenos* describes the breaking-up of their formerly peaceful state (3.231); *foedera turba*, Jupiter's instruction to Mars, also suggests movement from an organised state to chaos (3.233).

³⁴ OLD *tumultus* §1–2, esp. 2b.

³⁵ E.g. the formation of the Fifty prior to the ambush, *densaque nemus statione coronant*, 2.526.

³⁶ E.g. *iam murmura serpent/ plebis Echioniae*, 1.168–169.

³⁷ Hence the title of Hardie's (2012) monograph.

³⁸ See Bettini (2008, esp. 352–358) on the social role and power of Fama, including its ability to determine society's perception and judgment of behaviour, and thus the course of events as well.

³⁹ Cf. *haec tum multiplici populos sermone replebat/ gaudens, et pariter facta atque infecta canebat*, *Aen.* 4.189–90. See Bettini (2008, 354–355) on the potential for Fama to be either unreliable or truthful.

⁴⁰ Cf. 6.302–303 on the Arion story: *...si certa priorum/ fama...* But cf. Bettini (2008, 354–355), who notes that 'the fact that it is shared and public by nature guarantees *fama*'s reliability... On the other hand, the absence of a source who can personally assume responsibility for it renders *fama* unbelievable and discredited'. Bettini later notes that it has either no author, or too many (358). In the case of the action of *Thebaid* 3, Fama unusually has an identifiable source in Tydeus.

The description of Mars' effect on the mass is violent, suggesting its overwhelming and ineluctable nature. In Jupiter's initial instructions to Mars, he says 'they' will dedicate themselves 'headlong', *praecipites* (3.231). Jupiter instructs Mars to 'sweep' away those who are reluctant, using the top-down connection *rape*, again suggesting violence (3.233). Statius recalls this instruction in the later description of Mars sweeping (*rapit*) 'a thousand battle-lines before him' (3.577–578). The image of Mars 'setting alight' the gods in war yet again demonstrates the god's violence (3.234–235). The most lengthy portrait of Mars shows him urging on Fama 'with bloody goads' (3.429).

Jupiter clearly makes the connection between his instructions to Mars concerning rumour and the initiation of war between the two cities, saying that Mars must build on the seeds of war that Jupiter has already provided: *semina pugnae, turpis primordia belli* (227, 235). The phenomenon *fama* is collective not just in the sense that she requires large numbers of people to operate, but also because she inspires collective action, a conception of her efficacy that is found in other parts of Statius' poetry.⁴¹ Statius' treatment of Fama is graphic and violent, suggesting the powerful compulsion of *fama* for the mass. The depiction of Fama as an agent of Mars also suggests that rumour—a collective personification—has an essential role to play in the outbreak of war.⁴²

Furthermore, Mars is a charioteer, and his accompaniment by more minor figures is also relevant to this reading in terms of leaders and mass.⁴³ Mars is the warrior, and Furor and Ira adorn his helmet (424); Pavor has the reins as *armiger* (425); the *auriga*—presumably Pauor—drives Fama on with 'bloody goads' as she flies before the chariot (429–430). Mars also incites Fama to action, thundering at her from behind (430–431). Beginning

⁴¹ Fama's role here may have been inspired by *Aeneid* 7, in which Allecto, having 'infected' Turnus, offers to spread a rumour to involve neighbouring cities: *finitimas in bella feram rumoribus urbes, accendamque animos insani Martis amore*, *Aen.* 7.549–550. In Statius' *Thebaid*, this marshalling role of *fama* is even given in Tydeus' catalogue entry, 4.101–102. Cf. also Eteocles' thought that *fama* may have spread about Tydeus and he has been assisted, 3.10–11. Similarly, *fama* brings men to the Argives' games, 6.1–2, 250. Cf. Agamemnon in Statius' *Achilleid*, who similarly employs *fama* concerning Helen's abduction to gather a force for the Trojan war; here, as in Tydeus' case the leader details a valid grievance to encourage involvement in the Trojan war, *Achil.* 1.399–404.

⁴² See Gibson (2010, 37–40) on the role of rumour in the outbreak of war; Gibson treats *Thebaid* 2 and 7, but not *Thebaid* 3.

⁴³ Mars is often depicted as a charioteer: e.g. Verg. *Aen.* 12.331ff., *G.* 3.90f., Sil. *Pun.* 4.430ff., Val. Fl. 5.618ff., 6.28f. 6.28f. In Verg. *Aen.* 8.433ff., when Aeneas' armour is 'ordered', one of the items the Cyclopes are making is a chariot for Mars, *quibus ille viros, quibus excitat urbes*.

with Jupiter's instructions to Mars, the gods themselves display a hierarchy in the description of their dealings with Argos.⁴⁴ Statius' gods are framed in terms of a hierarchy that emulates human social order.⁴⁵ There also seems to be a rough correlation between this hierarchy and their 'effects' on the human level, with divine figures at the bottom of this system, such as Fama and Pauor, reflecting on mass activity. In this connection it is noteworthy that while Statius describes Mars as a character who converses with Venus, and is depicted in his chariot at the reins, Fama is given no anthropomorphic features at all. In a sense, then, the description of the gods here mirrors the way in which their influence may be read allegorically: as with humans, pre-eminent divine figures are characterised to a much greater extent than the anonymous mass.

Statius concludes this portrait of Mars with a simile comparing him to *dux* Neptune driving the winds over the sea (3.432–439). The tenor and vehicle are close here, with god compared with god. Neptune's action closely parallels that of Mars: Mars drives several abstractions in front of him (3.424–5, 429–430), while Neptune drives weather phenomena, the *tristis comitatus* consisting of storms and rain showers (3.434–437). In both cases the single figure determines the course of his companions' actions: Mars works through his *auriga*, who urges Fama on with goads; Neptune directly 'drives' his winds over the sea. The use of both *dux* and *ago* for Neptune are particularly striking, as terms commonly used for leadership.⁴⁶ Mars' depiction on a chariot already figures him as a leader, and the analogy with Neptune confirms this. Both gods direct the action of groups; in other words, they are performing as leaders.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Jupiter is described as sending other gods on his behalf, rather than interacting directly on this level; with the exception of Capaneus. In book 7, Jupiter again mobilises Mars, who this time drives on Pauor, replicating the three-tiered structure we see here in the portrait of Jupiter, Mars and Fama.

⁴⁵ On this, see Chapter 1. See especially the divine council of 1.197ff., which includes a 'crowd of wandering half-gods', *turba uagorum/ semideum*, 1.205–206. Axtell (1907, 97) observes that many abstractions at Rome are 'elevated to the rank of divinity and provided with temples, flamens, priests, altars, and all the wherewithal of a real cult, [but] they are nevertheless practically mere qualities or states restricted to this, that and the other, a non-descript and shadowy crowd that cannot be classified with the anthropomorphic gods.'

⁴⁶ On *dux*, see Chapter 1. The verb *ago* is commonly used of leading an army, on which see *OLD ago* §13, and Chapter 4, esp. Tables A and D: 237, 239.

⁴⁷ Additionally, charioteering is a metaphor for the poet, which suggests Mars' control over the course of the composition, on which see Lovatt (2005, 23–40, esp. 25).

Mars' involvement in book 3 culminates with a final brief mention which makes his connection with the mobilisation of the mass for war explicit:

et iam suprema Tonantis
iussa fremunt agrosque uiris annosaque uastant
oppida; bellipotens prae se deus agmina passim
mille rapit; liquere domos dilectaque laeti
conubia et primo plorantis limine natos:
tantus in attonitos cecidit deus. (3.575–580)

And now the final orders of the Thunderer roar, and ravage the fields and the age-old towns of men; the war god sweeps before himself a thousand battle-lines in all directions; they are happy to leave their homes and their beloved wives and their children, who weep at the first threshold: so great was the god that fell upon them in their astonishment.

Again, collective imagery is used for the description of the god, who makes a noise like a crowd, *fremunt* (576).⁴⁸ The image recalls the earlier portrait of Mars as a warrior (3.420–439); here, rather than Pauor driving Fama before the chariot, Mars ‘sweeps along battle-lines before himself’ (577). The use of *agmina* is striking, as a term used for an army on the march; it is proleptic, looking forward to the involvement of Argos in battle; but this is specifically the massive scope of epic warfare, *mille*.

Again, Statius connects the worlds of gods and men, by juxtaposing description of these (cf. 3.229–239, above). Following the initial description of the god Mars, Statius describes an anonymous third-person plural, *liquere, laeti* (3.578). Finally, this anonymous group is explicitly connected with the god, *tantus in attonitos cecidit deus* (3.580). This last description of Mars precedes a lengthy and memorable scene of the populace arming itself independently:

arma paternis
postibus et fixos superum ad penetralia currus
uellere amor; tunc fessa putri robigine pila
haerentesque situ gladios in saeua recurant
uulnera et attrito cogunt iuuenescere saxo.
hi teretes galeas magnorumque aerea suta
thoracum et tunicas chalybum squalore crepantes
pectoribus temptare, alii Gortynia lentant
cornua; iam falces auidis et aratra caminis
rastraque et incurui saeuum rubuere ligones.
caedere nec ualidas sanctis e stirpibus hastas,

⁴⁸ Cf. in this book lines 3.593 and 3.606, which are discussed below.

nec pudor emerito clipeum uestisse iuuenco.
inrupere Argos maestique ad limina regis
bella animis, bella ore fremunt. (3.580–593)

They have a desire to snatch arms from their ancestral doorposts, and the chariots affixed to the inner sanctuaries of the gods. Then they restore javelins worn out with foul rust, and swords sticking in neglect, for the purpose of cruel wounds, and renew them with a grindstone. These men try on their chests smooth helmets and the bronze mail of great corselets, and tunics creaking with rough iron. Others bend Gortynian bows. Now sickles and ploughs and hoes and curved mattocks have grown savagely red in the greedy forges. Nor are they ashamed to cut down strong spears from sacred stock, or to cover a shield with an ox that has served its time. They burst into Argos and at the threshold of the king they roar for war in their hearts, and war in their mouths.

This scene clearly recalls *Aeneid* 7, where the Latins also arm themselves, a description that comes directly after Juno's opening of the gates of war (*Aen.* 7.620–640). This parallelism is structural, but there are more similarities in detail. Both authors mention the refurbishment of weapons that have not been used for a long time.⁴⁹ Both also discuss the repurposing of agricultural tools.⁵⁰ There are various other verbal reminiscences.⁵¹ Both authors create a montage effect by giving a series of portraits of activity, including variegation of the crowd.⁵² From the the ambush through to this point of book 3, there has been an escalation of collective feeling, which the gods' description has reflected upon in a series of vignettes, interspersed with direct description of human action.

While Virgil's scene leads into the appeal that opens his Latin catalogue, after Statius' arming scene, the crowds gather outside Adrastus' house; in this way the arming scene serves as a link between Mars and his companions and the king of Argos himself. In 3.592–593, this crowd brays at the king's door for war. Their action is violent (*inrupere*, 3.592), and the gemination of *bella* suggests their repetitive demand for war (3.593). They 'roar' for war, a sound characteristic of crowds, and one that recalls the earlier description of Mars (*fremunt*, 3.593; cf. 3.576). There is a clear progression here, with movement from the gods' sphere into the social sphere of Argos.

⁴⁹ *Theb.* 3.580–584; *Aen.* 7. 636. See esp. *paternis, patrios*, *Theb.* 3.580; *Aen.* 7.636

⁵⁰ *Theb.* 3.588–589; *Aen.* 7.635–636.

⁵¹ Cf. *recurant*, *Theb.* 3.583, *recoquant*, *Aen.* 7.636; *falces*, *Theb.* 3.588, *falcis*, *Aen.* 7.635; *aratra*, *Theb.* 3.588, *aratri*, *Aen.* 7.635; *galeas* 3.585, *galeam* 7.638; *aerea suta/thoracum*, *Theb.* 3.585–586; *thoracas aenos*, *Aen.* 7.633. Cf. also the use of *amor* in both, *Theb.* 3.582, *Aen.* 7.636.

⁵² *Thebaid: hi, alii*, 3.585, 587; *Aeneid: pars, pars hic, ille*, 7.624, 626, 638.

The gods' activity in book 3 is clearly to be read allegorically, and we can read their actions in terms of the crowd scenes later in the book; in other words, collective action takes place without the direction of any human leader, and Statius describes groups acting independently of leaders at Argos. At the same time, we see prominent Argives acting independently of the populace's gradually swelling inclination for war. So while the gods' influence when interpreted this way is on a large groups of people, a distinction is created along the lines of social stratification: leaders are immune to the gods' 'effects'.

Tydeus tells his ambush story a second time when he 'happens' to arrive back at Argos as Adrastus is holding a council:

utque introgressus portas—et forte uerendus
 concilio pater ipse duces cogebat Adrastus—
 improuisus adest, iam illinc a postibus aulae
 uociferans: 'arma, arma, uiri, tuque optime Lernaee
 ductor, magnanimum si quis tibi sanguis auorum,
 arma para! nusquam pietas, non gentibus aequum
 fas aut cura Iouis; melius legatus adissem
 Sauromatas rabidos seruatoremq; cruentum
 Bebrycii nemoris. nec iussa incuso pigetue
 officii: iuuat isse, iuuat, Thebasque nocentes
 explorasse manu; bello me, credite, bello,
 ceu turrem ualidam aut artam compagibus urbem,
 delecti insidiis instructique omnibus armis
 nocte doloque uiri nudum ignarumque locorum
 nequiquam clausere; iacent in sanguine mixti
 ante urbem uacuum. nunc o, nunc tempus in hostis,
 dum trepidi exsanguisque metu, dum funera portant,
 nunc, socer, haec dum non manus excidit; ipse ego fessus
 quinquaginta illis heroum immanibus umbris
 uulneraque ista ferens putri insiccata cruore
 protinus ire peto!' trepidi de sedibus adstant
 Inachidae, cunctisque prior Cadmeius heros
 adcurrit uultum deiectus... (3.345–367)

He entered the gates (and by chance venerable father Adrastus himself was assembling the leaders for a council) and unexpectedly he is there, yelling loudly already from the doors of the palace: 'Arms, arms, men, and you, most excellent leader of Lerna, if you have any blood of your great-hearted ancestors, prepare arms! Nowhere do peoples have a sense of duty, nor a sense of right or care for Jupiter; I had been better to approach the feral Sarmatians or the bloody keeper of the Bebrycian grove. But I do not complain of the orders I was given nor do I regret my commission. I am pleased I went, pleased to have investigated guilty Thebes in person. With war, believe me, with war men chosen for ambush and lined up with all types of arms hemmed me in, as if I were a strong tower or a city

secured with a close construction, and with treachery at night, though I was unarmed and unfamiliar with the place—but in vain; they lie mingled in their blood before an empty city. Now, now is the time to attack the enemy, while they are terrified and pale with fear, while they are carrying the dead, now, my father-in-law, while this hand has not fallen from their memory; I myself, tired from those enormous shades of the fifty heroes and bearing these wounds, which are dried with putrid blood, ask to go straight away! The sons of Inachus are alarmed, and stand from their seats, and before all of them, the Cadmeian hero rushes up with his face cast down.

Tydeus' account here in direct speech is elliptical, as with the indirect speech of his report as *fama*; however, its emphases are very different from those discussed above. The speech is impassioned, as the repetitions of language within the speech suggest.⁵³ In the speech, Tydeus also appears to 'respond' to images within the main narrative, by amplifying the attack on himself to the scale of war, *bellum*, and comparing the attack to one on a city, *ceu turrem ualidam aut artam compagibus urbem* (355–359). This enhancement is also part of the rhetorical drive of Tydeus' speech, in which he demands the ambush escalate into full-scale war now (360–365).

The response to this speech demonstrates the consultative form of government Adrastus employs at Argos, a system implicitly opposed to that at Thebes, where Tydeus had arrived to find Eteocles seated high on a throne surrounded by weapons, *ibi durum Eteoclea cernit/ sublime solio saeptumque horrentibus armis* (2.384–5). By contrast, on (re-)entering Argos, Tydeus bursts into a council called by Adrastus (*cogebat*, 346), marking out his role in creating the forum into which Tydeus intrudes. Statius calls the participants in the council *duces*, and the use of this plural is of itself significant, since Statius very rarely uses it of Theban groups in the *Thebaid*.⁵⁴ Statius also marks Adrastus as a figure of authority by *uerendus* and *pater ipse* (345, 346).⁵⁵ The use of *pater* is especially resonant for a Roman audience, as a title awarded to emperors for their civic role, as opposed to a military one.⁵⁶

These opening comments by the narrator offer a framework within which to view the action that follows. Statius first gives the collective response to Tydeus, *trepidi de sedibus*

⁵³ E.g. *arma* three times (348, 350); *bello* (355, 355); *nunc* three times (360, 362). Cf. Snijder (1968 *ad* 348), who says this suggests shouting.

⁵⁴ See Chapter 1: the Fifty who ambush Tydeus are an exception to this.

⁵⁵ Here I read *uerendus* with P, as opposed to the reading of ω , *uerendos*.

⁵⁶ E.g. Aug. *RG* 1.35, on the title *pater patriae*.

astant/ Inachidae (3.365–366). After this, Polynices is the first individual respondent, and Statius draws attention to this, pointing out that he speaks before all others, *cunctisque prior...* (3.346–347).⁵⁷ Polynices’ response to Tydeus is often read as disingenuous, but even when interpreted this way, the speech raises some important points for the way we conceive of leadership and group action.⁵⁸ Polynices offers to go by himself to Thebes, but frames this offer as in lieu of collective military action, and recognises the widespread suffering that war would cause on his behalf:

et nunc uestra quidem maneant in pace quieta
 moenia, nec uobis tanti sim causa tumultus
 hospes adhuc. scio—nec me adeo res dextra leuauit—,
 quam durum natis, thalamo quam triste reuelli,
 quam patria; non me ullius domus anxia culpet
 respectentue truces obliquo lumine matres.
 ibo libens certusque mori, licet optima coniunx
 auditusque⁵⁹ iterum reuocet socer; hunc ego Thebis,
 hunc, germane, tibi iugulum et tibi, maxime Tydeu,
 debeo. (3.372–381)

And now, may your walls indeed remain in quiet peace, nor may I be a cause of such great upheaval for you—I am who am still a guest. I know—and a favourable situation has not raised me up so far—how hard it is to be torn from one’s children, how saddening it is to be torn from one’s wife, and from one’s homeland. May no one’s house be distressed and blame me, and may furious mothers not look on me with sidelong glances. I shall go willingly, certain to die, even if my excellent wife and my father-in-law, heard before, should call me back again. I owe this throat to Thebes; I owe this to you, my brother, and to you, great Tydeus.

Importantly, Polynices’ offer presupposes the idea that war will occur (3.376–378). The offer to obviate a full-scale war creates a greater sense of tragedy for the reader, who is aware that war will occur, only for Polynices and Eteocles to later fight individually to decide the matter. In addition, Polynices frames the potential impact on the community negatively, as he lists those who will suffer from a full-scale war.

⁵⁷ In 2.174–175, where the sequence of speakers is similarly stressed in the response to Adrastus’ speech to these two men, *uisique inter sese ordine fandi/ cedere...*

⁵⁸ Ahl (1986, 2872) says ‘Statius leaves no doubt as to Polynices’ insincerity’.

⁵⁹ Snijder (1968 *ad* 369) notes the the difficulty in *auditusque*, and gives a summary of conjectures made for this, none of which is convincing. Klotz notes *ad loc.* that *auditus* is difficult, but so are the conjectures. Shackleton-Bailey (1983, 52–53) accepts the reading *auditusque*, and makes sense of this as a reference to Polynices’ fight with Tydeus on his doorstep in *Thebaid* 1.

This leader-group dynamic is again brought to the fore in book 11, when Polynices addresses Adrastus to announce a duel to end the war (11.155–192), and Creon speaks to Eteocles (11.263–296). The duel is an epic means of military resolution from Homer’s *Iliad* on, whereby single combat effectively determines the outcome of collective engagement.⁶⁰ Polynices’ speech reflects on this function of the duel through his relationship to those who fight on his behalf:

tunc tempus erat, cum sanguis Achiuum
integer, ire ultro propriamque capessere pugnam,
non plebis Danaae florem regumque uerendas
objectare animas, ut lamentabile tantis
urbibus induerem capiti decus. ast ea⁶¹ quando
praeteriit uirtus, nunc saltem exsoluere fas sit,
quae merui. (11.157–163)

Then was the time, when the blood of the Argives was untouched, to go of my own accord and to undertake my own fight; not to thrust forward the flower of the Danaan people and the esteemed souls of kings, in order that I might don on my head an ornament mournful for so many cities. But since the time for courage has gone by,⁶² may it now at least be permissible for me to pay the penalty I deserve.

Polynices here recalls his position in book 3, this time perhaps with more sincerity.⁶³ He again recognises—in a slightly different way—the community impact of the war, pairing *plebis Danaae florem* with *regum uerendas... animas* (159–160). Creon similarly accuses Eteocles of ‘drain[ing] a city once full of citizens’, again registering the leader’s responsibility for his people’s deaths (11.273–280). Like Polynices, Creon lists those Thebans and their allies who have already died, including his own son, in order to demonstrate his point (11.280–286). As if keenly aware of this dynamic, in the final battle

⁶⁰ E.g. the Paris-Menelaus duel in *Iliad* 3, which fails because Aphrodite spirits Paris away, *Il.* 3.1ff. Cf. the fight between Turnus and Aeneas in *Aeneid* 12, which Turnus alludes to in *Aen.* 11.434–444; note here the repetition of *solum*, 434, 442. Gaskin (1992, 303) takes Turnus’ offer of *deuotio* too as ‘not seriously meant’.

⁶¹ Here I read *ast ea* rather than Klotz’s *aspera*, the reading of P and ω.

⁶² Here I utilise the translations of SB, ‘...since the time for that valour has gone by...’, and Joyce, ‘...seeing the hour for courage has passed...’

⁶³ Ahl (1986, 2872) also links Polynices’ speech in book 11 to that in book 3, noting that Polynices says much the same thing in book 11, ‘but without the happiness’.

of the epic, Theseus targets Creon, and effectively reduces full-scale battle to a duel to produce a swift resolution (12.752–753);⁶⁴ this is precisely what the brothers do not do.⁶⁵

In book 3, then, Statius through Polynices registers a potential narrative alternative through which full-scale war and all its consequences for the community could be avoided. Statius draws to the surface the importance of the decision-making process here as part of the plot of his epic. The feud between Polynices and Eteocles will escalate into full-scale war, then de-escalate into their duel. Statius presents his reader with a tension between the scale of war that epic—and specifically the Theban tradition—demands, and the possibility that this could be avoided. This tension in a sense is resolved in Theseus’ attack on Thebes, which is strictly speaking on a large scale, but which Theseus largely manages to reduce to single combat with Creon.

In book 3, the reaction to Polynices’ proposal to fight alone in lieu of full-scale warfare is uniform:

sic uariis pertemptat pectora dictis
obliquatque preces. commotae questibus irae
et mixtus lacrimis caluit dolor; omnibus ultro
non iuuenum modo, sed gelidis et inertibus aevo
pectoribus mens una subit, uiduare penates,
finitimas adhibere manus, iamque ire. sed altus
consiliis pater imperii que haud flectere molem
inscius: ‘ista quidem superis curaque medenda
linquite, quaeso, meae, nec te germanus inulto
sceptra geret, neque nos auidi promittere bellum.
at nunc egregium tantoque in sanguine ouantem
excipite Oeniden, animosaque pectora laxet
sera quies: nobis dolor haud ratione egebit.’ (3.381–393)

In this way with varied speech he [Polynices] tests their hearts and diverts their prayers. Anger is stirred up by complaints, and distress mixed with tears grows warm. At once to all hearts comes a single purpose, not only to the young men, but to those chilled and inert with age, to widow their homes, to call upon neighbouring forces for assistance, and to go now. But father Adrastus, deep in wisdom and not ignorant of how to wield the weight of authority, said: ‘Indeed, leave these things to the gods and to my care to be remedied, I ask. Your brother will not wield the sceptre with you unavenged. Nor are we keen to promise war. But now receive the outstanding son of Oeneus, who exults in such great

⁶⁴ Note the use here of *solum*, which is repeated, 12.752.

⁶⁵ Cf. Coroebus’ speech to Apollo in Adrastus’ tale in book 1, where he asks to be punished instead of the people of the city, 1.643–661.

bloodshed. May late-coming rest relax his spirited heart. For me, distress will not lack reason.’

The sequence of action here replays the pattern of action in book 1 when Adrastus first meets Polynices and Tydeus. In book 1, Statius introduces Adrastus as a king governing a peaceful city, immediately placing him into a relationship with his populace, *rex ibi tranquille.../ ... populos Adrastus habebat* (1.390–391). His first action is to calm the two strangers he finds fighting ferociously on his doorstep (1.408–447).⁶⁶ Tydeus and Polynices are so fierce that the narrator compares them with youths fighting at the Olympic games, with the key difference that they do not even fight for glory (1.423–426). By book 3 Polynices and Tydeus are working in concert; but Adrastus’ role is still to calm their frenzy, as on their first night at Argos. We have, then, a pattern of action whereby Adrastus must act to counterbalance the rashness of his (future) sons-in-law.

Adrastus’ response in book 3 provides further insight into the operation of power structures through decision-making at Argos. The council’s reaction is unanimous, abstracted as a single *mens* (385), and Statius is explicit that both young and old are keen for war (383–385). The subsumption of the group’s reaction within a single entity is marked through the combination of *omnes* and *unus* (383, 385). By using *irae* and *dolor* as subjects, Statius again abstracts the unanimous reaction of the group (382–383). To introduce Adrastus, the narrator comments on his experience as king: he is ‘deep of counsel’ and experienced in ‘turning the weight of authority’ (386–388).

Adrastus first suggests they leave the matter to the gods’ and his own *cura*, a key leadership term suggestive of Adrastus’ conception of his own role, and recalling Eteocles at the start of book 3.⁶⁷ He then furthers this conception of his own role in his last sentence, placing emphasis on *ratio* as a response to their emotion.⁶⁸ The use of *dolor* recalls the narrator’s description of the group just prior (3.383). Adrastus is an exception to the general reaction to Polynices, and stands apart from the collective response, even of the *duces* that make up his council. Adrastus also views his role in terms of a balance of

⁶⁶ Moreland (1975, 26–9) notes that ultimately this order is in the service of destruction, managed by Jupiter. Vessey (1970, 318–320, esp. 318) notes that the men’s dress here reflects their ‘bestial fury’.

⁶⁷ This is discussed in Chapter 2.

⁶⁸ Here *nobis* could refer to Adrastus alone or the council as a whole. Cf. *nos*, 390.

rationality to collective emotion, and speaks to calm others' reactions, rather than inflame them.⁶⁹

Later, readers are privy to Adrastus' thoughts, as he meditates further on his position and role, with reference specifically to the *populus*:

septima iam nitidum terris Aurora deisque
pupureo uehit ore diem, Perseius heros
cum primum arcana senior sese extulit aula,
multa super bello generisque tumentibus amens
incertusque animi, daret armis iura nouosque
gentibus incuteret stimulos, an frena teneret
irarum et motos capulis adstringeret enses.
hinc pacis tranquilla mouent, atque inde pudori
foeda quies, flectique noua dulcedine pugnae
difficiles populi; dubio sententia tandem
sera placet, uatum mentes ac prouida ueri
sacra mouere deum. (3.440–451)

Now the seventh Aurora with purple face carried shining day to earth and gods, when the aged Perseian hero first brought himself from his private palace, much agitated and uncertain in his mind about war and his impassioned sons-in-law, whether to sanction arms and strike new goads against his people, or whether to hold the reins of anger and to hold in place swords moved by their hilts. On the one hand the calm of peace persuades him, and on the other, disgraceful inaction, a source of shame, and the people hard to turn from new delight in battle. At last, a late thought pleases him as he doubts: to impel the minds of seers and the rites of the gods, prophetic of truth.

Adrastus' three considerations revolve around the question of war and his people: *gentibus, populi* (445, 449). The use of *ius dare* for Adrastus in this context (444) encodes his role as king, indicating that he alone can provide legitimacy for the movement to war.⁷⁰ His last consideration reads as a pendant to the more balanced first two, *hinc... inde* (447), and enjambment emphasises the shock of Adrastus' final thought, *flecti.../ difficiles populi* (448–449). The verb *flecti* recalls the narrator's comment on Adrastus'

⁶⁹ Ahl 1986, 2872–2873. Gervais (2013 *ad* 554f.) comments on the use of *ratio* and *medenda* here, two relatively rare words in the *Thebaid*, viewing this scene as part of a more general tendency: 'We may... speak of a Theban propensity towards irrationality and being swept up by circumstances, which Adrastus attempts to counter'.

⁷⁰ See *OLD ius* §3b, and esp. §4a: *iura (ius) reddere (dare)*, 'to give decisions on points of law, administer justice'. The phrase indicates authority: e.g. Verg. *Aen.* 1.506, *G.* 4.562.

experience in his role before his address in the council (3.387–388); but here, Adrastus admits to himself the difficulty of his task, despite this.⁷¹

In Adrastus' list of considerations, the narrator employs the image of charioteering, focalised through Adrastus, for the king's conception of his role. The metaphorical terms *stimuli* and *frena* echo Mars' description on his horse (3.420–439). The verb *flecto* is also used of 'turning' horses.⁷² This common charioteering imagery of leadership is suggestive of how Adrastus views the nature of the crowd, and his role as leader in relation to it:⁷³ like an animal, it is inherently unruly, and requires rational guidance. The use of this imagery draws attention to the parallelism of Adrastus and the gods as 'leaders' of the mass in the book: the gods have been described as providing a stimulus to action that Adrastus now considers attempting to control. As with Adrastus' emphasis in his speech on *ratio* (393), Adrastus here sees himself as a figure of control and guidance for the mass.

Statius builds a portrait of power at Argos in which Adrastus is not autocratic in the absolute sense, but is someone who allows within a monarchical system the consideration of various points of view, both in the council and the city at large. In the scene in which Tydeus tells his tale of ambush to the *duces*, Adrastus plays a minimal role, reacting to the propositions of others rather than initiating action himself, and thereby providing a balance; but it was he who had called the *concilium*, thereby providing the forum—albeit accidentally—for Tydeus and Polynices to convey their desire for war (3.345–346). Adrastus' thoughts also indicate his own awareness of the importance of popular thought, in terms of a psychological observation that the populace's inclination for war is hard to change. Implicitly, then, he views his own role as a figure of guidance in relation to the mass; in other words, he cannot simply dictate action from above. While Adrastus *tyrannus* works within a system that is notionally top-down, Statius achieves a complex

⁷¹ We may wonder how he is aware of his people's predilection for war: until this point, the only description of this on the human level is that of those in his council, which cannot be designated *populus*. Adrastus is not privy to the description of the gods that goes before, but appears to discern the atmosphere at Argos that this description in a different mode elaborates.

⁷² OLD *flecto* §7. See esp. *Aen.* 1.156, *flectit equos*, used of Neptune turning his horses, as part of a simile that I will discuss below.

⁷³ Again, Virgil's Latinus is recalled, who 'drops his reins', *rerumque reliquit habenas*, 7.600. Later in the *Thebaid*, the metaphor recurs in a simile describing Thiodamas, 8.289.

balance between Adrastus' autocratic position and political realities at Argos. In this sense Adrastus' performance of leadership is very different—perhaps opposite to—that of Eteocles, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Adrastus' thoughts initially stand for the choice between epic action and non-epic inertia, *hinc pacis tranquilla mouent, ... inde pudori/ foeda quies* (3.447–448). His considerations are tied up closely with the course of the story and the progression of Statius' plot, and pit the heroic demands of the Theban tradition against peace, the characteristic with which Statius introduces Adrastus in book 1 (*rex ibi tranquille.../ ...populus Adrsatus habebat*, 1.390–391). Adrastus' attempt to quell the feeling for war is uneasy—if we may call it an attempt at all. The external audience knows from this tradition that the outcome of deliberations must ultimately be war, but Statius creates a complicated portrait of motivations at Argos exploring the nature of leadership. In the process, Statius demonstrates how Adrastus' human leadership comes into conflict with that of the gods, whose influence on human groups as interpreted allegorically has been outlined above. This conflict is emphasised through the imagery shared by gods and human leaders. In what follows, I will examine Statius' presentation of varying points of view in book 3, and evaluate which of these is in the end decisive within this framework.

Adrastus' first reaction is to suggest that matters be left to himself and the gods (3.388–389), and after private consideration, he commissions a consultation of the gods (3.388–389, 449–451). After Melampus and Amphiaraus observe the disastrous omens (460–551), Amphiaraus withdraws, becoming a parallel for Adrastus' earlier (shorter) withdrawal:

ille nec aspectum uolgi, nec fida tyranni
conloquia aut coetus procerum perferre, sed atra
sede tegi, et superum clausus negat acta fateri –
te pudor et curae retinet per rura, Melampu –:
bissenos premit ora dies populumque ducesque
extrahit incertis. et iam suprema Tonantis
iussa fremunt agrosque uiris annosaque uastant
oppida... (3.570–577)

He [Amphiaraus] endures neither the sight of the crowd, nor confidential discussion with the king, nor the meetings of the leading men, but in a dark abode he hides, and shut up, he refuses to declare the actions of the gods (you, Melampus, shame and cares hold back in the countryside). For twelve days he

suppresses his voice, keeping both people and leaders in suspense. And now the supreme orders of the Thunderer roar, and ravage the fields and the age-old towns of men.

When the frenzy for war reaches fever pitch, the crowd that arms itself initially clamours for war outside Adrastus' door, but he does not respond (3.592–597). Instead, Statius presents a debate between Capaneus and Amphiaraus in a series of three speeches: first by Capaneus (607–618); then Amphiaraus (620–647); then Capaneus again (648–669).

The scene of this debate is theatrical in style, much like the *agon* of a tragedy. Not only do the men debate, but the two men perform their speeches in front of crowds—presumably those that have ‘burst into Argos’ armed (3.581–597, esp. 592). Capaneus’ first speech is designed to draw Amphiaraus out, and is successful both in this and in rousing the frenzied crowd further. Capaneus frames his attack on Amphiaraus as a question of the single man faced with overwhelming opposition among the citizen body: *unius (heu pudeat!) plebeia ad limina ciuis/ tot ferro accinctae gentes animisque paratae/ pendemus?* (3.609–611). Here the line-beginnings *unius* and *tot* point up the juxtaposition of single man with many (609–610). The use of the political term *plebeius* is especially resonant for the external audience,⁷⁴ but also technically inaccurate on any reading of social stratification at Argos: Amphiaraus is related to Adrastus and becomes a commander in the expedition, as shown in the Argive catalogue (4.187–245).⁷⁵ Nevertheless, Capaneus’ rhetoric relies on an appeal to social structure, drawing on distinctions of hierarchy that abound in this Argive section of book 3. The crowd’s reaction is (characteristically) to roar, and Statius even states that this is to show assent: *laetum fremit assensuque furentem/ implet Achaea manus* (3.618–619). The other effect of Capaneus’ attack on Amphiaraus is to serve as a reminder of Adrastus’ absence from this debate, and the fact that he does not use his authority to sway the Argive populace here.

⁷⁴ For *plebeius* as a technical political term for the class of *plebs* at Rome: *OLD plebeius* §1; *plebs* §1. Cf. Statius’ comment that Creon does not allow his son a ‘plebeian funeral pyre, *plebeio... busto*, 12.60, after which he details its lavishness. The phrase *nec... uilem/ ... rogum*, again used of Menoeceus’ pyre in 12.61–62, recalls the use of this key term in the speeches of both the anonymous man in book 1 and Tydeus in book 2, discussed in the Introduction and Chapter 2.

⁷⁵ Ahl (1986, 2863–2864) notes that Statius does not mention the family connections between Amphiaraus and Adrastus, ‘nor their feuds’.

Amphiaraus' speech in response again engages with the spread of information, recalling the heavy emphasis on this aspect of the aftermath of the ambush. Here, Amphiaraus is faced with a populace frenzied for war through the earlier spread of *fama*, but his direct warning about war is ineffective. Statius suppresses the response of the crowd here, suggesting—by contrast with Capaneus—that it is not well received. Amphiaraus' outburst to the crowd appears to have little effect, and paradoxically the crowd gathers around Amphiaraus' door, but then does not heed the information he provides. Statius makes it clear that his silence under these circumstances has a similar psychological effect to *fama*, adding to the already frenzied atmosphere (3.574–575). Amphiaraus' frustrating position here points up the bind the Argives are in: whatever he does, war must happen.

On the other hand, the crowd reacts enthusiastically to both of Capaneus' speeches. After his second, the reaction is heightened: *rursus fragor intonat ingens/ hortantum et uasto subter uolat astra tumultu* ('Again the huge roar of the agitators thunders, and flies in a vast uproar to the stars', 3.669–670). The reaction of the crowd is again raucous (cf. *fremit*, 3.618), but this time the noise hyperbolically flies heavenwards, *subter...astra* (670). The phrase *uasto...tumultu* is also hyperbolic, suggesting collective agitation verging on violence.⁷⁶ In the simile that follows, the violence of the turmoil at Argos is encapsulated through a comparison to a 'rushing torrent' fanned by spring winds, again emphasising the sweeping force of the crowd's emotion (3.671–676). Ironically, it is Capaneus, the scorner of the gods, who is fulfilling the wishes of Jupiter here, rather than the holy man himself.

Throughout this section of the *Thebaid*, Statius engages with *Aeneid* 7, in which the Latins' decision to engage in war against Aeneas is explored at length, culminating in the Latin catalogue (7.37–817; catalogue in 641–817).⁷⁷ Adrastus' seclusion makes him a parallel for Latinus in *Aeneid* 7, who also shuts himself away (7.599–600, 618–619). Along with Adrastus, Amphiaraus becomes a second parallel figure for Latinus, albeit in

⁷⁶ *OLD tumultus* §1–5, esp. §2.

⁷⁷ On which see Fantham (2006, 158–161) and Ganiban (2007, 55–61).

a different way.⁷⁸ He also withdraws, but for the longer period of twelve days.⁷⁹ Like Latinus—as opposed to Adrastus—Amphiarus engages with the mass that brays for war, directly addressing the Argive crowd in an attempt to dissuade them. Details in these speeches encourage this reading of Amphiarus as a parallel for Latinus: he addresses the crowd at his door as *miseri*, just as Latinus does (3.629, 644; *Aen.* 7.596); both are clear that the wars to come will be disastrous (3.629–645; *Aen.* 7.595–597); and both address the men who act as agitators for the war (Capaneus, 3.627–628; Turnus, *Aen.* 7.596–597). Amphiarus then retreats to silence after his speech, just as Latinus does.

While there are clear points of contact, there are also key divergences: Latinus assumes that involvement in the war is according to fate (*Aen.* 7.594); but Amphiarus suggests to his audience that fate and the gods oppose the movement to war (3.629–630, 640–644), and only in his final lines admits that war is inevitable, *sed quid uana cano, quid fixos arceo casus?/ ibimus* (3.646–647). In his much longer speech, Amphiarus elaborates for the crowd the disaster to come, and reflects on the fact that it would be better for him to have stayed ignorant of the future (3.552–565), which echoes the unusual narratorial comment on the practice of divination that follows the augury itself: *nos prauum et flebile uulgas,/ scrutati penitus superos...* (3.563–564).

By splitting the role of Latinus between Adrastus and Amphiarus, Statius is able to create a variety of effects. Unlike in the *Aeneid*, in which Latinus makes only brief objections (7.594–599), Statius has Amphiarus take up a position opposed to the war in extended scenes of public debate between him and Capaneus, the *contemptor superum* facing off against Apollo’s priest.⁸⁰ Capaneus, on the other hand, has no parallel in the Virgilian model: he is closest to Turnus; but he does not engage directly with Latinus over the matter of potential war.⁸¹ Statius creates a very different dynamic between his

⁷⁸ Fantham (2006, 158) notes that ‘the function of *mora belli* is shared between Statius’ king and prophet’. Without reference to Latinus, Ahl (1986, 2864) calls Adrastus and Amphiarus the ‘good men’ of the epic, ‘counsellors, however vainly, of wisdom and restraint’.

⁷⁹ *Aeneid* 7 also has a doubling effect, with Latinus shutting himself away twice: first after the crowd crowds around his palace, 7.599–600; then when he has been asked to open the gates of Ianus, 7.619.

⁸⁰ 3.602–603. In *Thebaid* 7, Statius’ Capaneus again confronts a priest, this time the Theban Eunaeus, in battle, 7.649ff.

⁸¹ Turnus’ encouragement of discord in Virgil is given in indirect speech, over 1.5 lines, 7.578–579. He does not directly engage with Latinus, even though Latinus addresses him in his speech,

two figures of opposition, presenting two figures of authority with contrasting opinions who present their case openly in front of Argive crowds. Much more so than in the *Aeneid*, Statius explores the engagement of leaders with the crowd through speech, marking out the importance of this interaction in the decision-making process. Even more strikingly, Statius has a prophet attempt to persuade the people of their folly in demanding war, and in the process, Statius demonstrates that despite Amphiaraus' superior position of knowledge, he is unable to counteract the mass phenomenon of *fama* when it has taken root among the people.⁸²

This adaptation of *Aeneid* 7 in turn has repercussions for a reading of Adrastus as leader. Latinus has a minimal role in Virgil's seventh book; Adrastus intervenes even less. At no point in this book does Adrastus engage with the crowds outside that Statius describes. He hides himself away, to his 'innermost chambers', emerging still pondering what to do and deciding to consult the gods (3.440–449; 449b–451). In book 3, he is also absent for large tracts, not appearing at all from 3.451 to 3.678. By doing so, he refuses even an attempt at public guidance or control. In this way Latinus as an intertextual model places extra emphasis on Adrastus' passivity as a leader. This opens up the possibility for his (weak) leadership to be usurped by more active figures of authority; in this case, Amphiaraus, who is the figure who attempts to dissuade the crowds outside from war, and Capaneus, who is even more successful in fomenting the frenzy for it. We may see a loose parallel for Adrastus' performance as leader here in an earlier scene in the book, when Tydeus returns and Statius pointedly states that Polynices responds 'first before others', speaking before even Adrastus, and promoting a greater emotional response that the king then must deal with (3.346–347). As we will see, this passivity is evident in his involvement in the war itself.

The final scene of book 3 introduces yet another perspective on events, when Argia approaches Adrastus and presents the most cogent case for war of all the participants in the debate over the movement to war thus far. Argia appeals emotively to Adrastus on the basis of her husband's (and thus her own) sorrow, his status, and the future shame of

7.596–597. Parkes (2012 *ad* 393–4) provides models from the *Iliad* and *Aeneid* for the debate between Capaneus and Amphiaraus.

⁸² Cf. the situation at Thebes, where it is the leader, rather than the people, who appears to ignore the warnings offered by prophets; on which see Chapter 2.

Thessander as the son of an exile (3.678–710). She appeals to her father as sole figure of authority at Argos : *tu solus opem, tu summa medendi/ iura tenes; da bella, pater* (‘You alone have the resources, you the highest authority; grant war, father’, 3.695–696). She also has the foresight to realise that when the time comes for war, she may regret the plea she now makes (3.707–710). This final scene brings to the fore the last in a series of perspectives on whether the Argives should engage in war or not, and gives unusual prominence to the voice of a woman in the question of whether Argos should attack Thebes.

Adrastus’ response, as with his response to the debate in his council in book 3, reflects on his duty as Argive king. Earlier in book 3, the reader was given insight into Adrastus’ considerations after the idea of war was broached, which effectively entailed the choice between peace and war, but also took into account ‘the people hard to turn from new delight in battle’ (*flectique noua dulcedine pugnae/ difficiles populi*, 3.448–449). At the end of book 3, Adrastus states his considerations to his daughter, and again they are threefold:

sed mihi multa dei (nec tu sperare quod urges
desine), multa metus regnique uolubile pondus
subiciunt animo (3.714–716)

But the gods lay before my mind many things (but do not cease to hope for that which you urge), as do my fears, and the changeable burden of kingship.

The ‘gods’ give Adrastus pause, an implicit recognition that the ornithoscopy does not bode well for the war. The ‘changeable burden of kingship’ recalls the introduction to his speech during the council, after Tydeus’ and Polynices’ speeches, *...imperiique haud flectere molem/ inscius* (388–389).⁸³ In the last four lines of book 3, Statius produces a portrait of leadership that contrasts heavily with the rashness with which Eteocles sent out his men to be slaughtered by Tydeus. Adrastus counsels delay (*morae, cunctamur*, 3.719), and by doing so is a parallel for Fabius, one of the figures with which Statius’ Eteocles was so blatantly contrasted through the use of the *pastor* image, as discussed in Chapter 2. Adrastus has been up all night considering what is to be done, unlike his Theban counterpart, who was kept awake wondering what has happened to his ambushers at the beginning of this book. To underline this contrast, the last word of book 3 is *curae*, the

⁸³ Snijder (1968 *ad* 715) notes the recollection.

term also used of Eteocles' sleeplessness—but for a very different reason—at the start of the book (3.5). While these men contrast in their approach to leadership, however, they are both flawed in this role.

Stattius uses a range of imagery in book 3 to convey implicitly the role of leaders, both divine and human. Each subsequent vignette of Mars builds on the character of the mass and in turn the leader's role in relation to the mass, which is to direct this irrational and uncontrollable phenomenon to determine the direction it will take. An example is the image of the charioteer, who must take control of forces that are inherently chaotic, and suggests that Adrastus is deficient in his role.

Stattius makes further commentary on the nature of the crowd and the leader's role in relation to it through the imagery of natural phenomena. When Stattius' frenzied crowds arm and first burst into Argos, Stattius compares the noise they make with the 'groans' of the Tyrrhenian sea, or Mt Etna's rumblings, explained in mythological terms:

it clamor ad auras,
quantus Tyrrheni gemitus salis, aut ubi temptat
Enceladus mutare latus; super igneus antris
mons tonat, exundant apices fluctusque Pelorus
contrahit, et sperat tellus abrupta reuerti. (3.593–597)

Their clamour rises to the heavens, as great as the groan of the Tyrrhenian sea, or when Enceladus tries to change sides; the fiery mountain resounds thunderously in its caves: the peaks overflow, Pelorus narrows his waves, and the land which has been ripped away hopes to return.

From its formation in 3.580–593, Stattius' crowd has associations with natural events of huge force, even violence.⁸⁴ Here, the disruption is extremely violent, to the extent that it may disrupt the geography of the landscape, and Sicily may be reunited with Italy's mainland.⁸⁵

Stattius also uses storm imagery to elaborate on mass behaviour, introducing this strand of imagery early, even before the formation of the crowd at Argos. In his most extended portrait of Mars, Neptune, who is *dux*, sweeps the winds before himself:

⁸⁴ See Snijder (1968 *ad* 595, 596) for Stattius' use of Virgilian imagery here.

⁸⁵ Snijder 1968 *ad* 596, 597.

qualis ubi Aeolio dimissos carcere Ventos
 dux prae se Neptunus agit magnoque uolentes
 incitat Aegaeo; tristis comitatus eunti
 circum lora fremunt Nimbique Hiemesque profundae
 Nubilaque et uulso terrarum sordida fundo
 Tempestas: dubiae motis radicibus obstant
 Cyclades, ipsa tua Mycono Gyaroque reuelli,
 Dele, times magnique fidem testaris alumni. (3.432–439)

Just as when the leader Neptune drives before himself the Winds that have been let out of their Aeolian dungeon, and urges them, who are willing, over the great Aegean. A gloomy retinue roars around the reins as he goes, showers and deep storms and clouds and squalls dirty with the churned-up depths of the earth. Though their roots are shaken, the Cyclades stand in the way, and you yourself, Delos, fear that you may be torn from your Myconos and Gyaros, and you appeal to the loyalty of your great foster-son.

The action is analogous with Mars', in front of whom *fama* flies, *anteuolat* (3.426). Mars is accompanied by several abstractions (3.424–5, 429–430), and Neptune by weather phenomena, the *tristis comitatus* consisting of storms and rain showers (434–437).⁸⁶

Statius' simile works with the well-known sequence in *Aeneid* 1 in which Virgil compares Neptune calming the sea, which has been churned up by Aeolus' winds, to a statesman calming a crowd (*Aen.* 1.50–156, esp. 148–156):⁸⁷

ac ueluti magno in populo cum saepe coorta est
 seditio, saeuitque animis ignobile uulgus,
 iamque faces et saxa uolant, furor arma ministrat;
 tum, pietate gravem ac meritis si forte uirum quem
 conspexere, silent arrectisque auribus astant;
 ille regit dictis animos et pectora mulcet:
 sic cunctus pelagi cecidit fragor, aequora postquam
 prospiciens genitor caeloque inuectus aperto
 flectit equos, curruque uolans dat lora secundo. (*Aen.* 1.148–156)

And as when often among a great populace a riot has arisen, and the people of low birth rage in their hearts, and now firebrands and rocks fly, and frenzy furnishes weapons. But then, if by chance they catch sight of a man with the gravitas of duty and service, they are silent and stand up with their ears alert. He guides their passion and soothes their hearts; thus did the entire crash of the sea subside, when the father, looking out over the flat sea and riding under a clear sky, guided his horses and, as he flew, gave reins to his favourable chariot.

⁸⁶ Hardie (2012, 206–207).

⁸⁷ Statius refers to Aeolus in two more similes in the *Thebaid*: 6.298–300; 10.245–248. The second of these is discussed below.

The reminiscence is immediately cued by *Aeolio... carcere* in the first line of Statius' simile (3.432).⁸⁸ Even without looking at the substance of Statius' simile, the imagery resonates for a reader recalling its original context. Virgil's simile has been the focus of much scholarship, especially for the way it conveys the 'precariousness' of cosmic order, and the 'equation of control of the natural and control of the political worlds'.⁸⁹

Broadly speaking, Statius' simile engages thematically with the same concerns as Virgil, but Statius' simile diverges in important aspects. In both contexts, there is a subordination of gods, with Aeolus acting at the behest of Juno, and Mars acting at Jupiter's command; but with the key difference that Mars' fomentation of disorder at Argos is ultimately sanctioned by Jupiter and Fate (*Theb.* 3.229–239; *Aen.* 7.323–340).⁹⁰ Statius converts the simile back to the model of its Odyssean original, with the gods creating disorder on the human level that is divinely sanctioned from the top.⁹¹ In other words, whereas Virgil's Neptune must quell the storm that Aeolus unlawfully starts, Statius' Neptune here is not only an agent of disorder, driving the winds on (3.433–434), but also analogous to Mars, whom Jupiter himself has instructed to intervene. The potential for this sort of scenario is hinted at in *Aeneid* 1, when Neptune addresses the winds, asking if they dare to mix sky and earth without his sanction, *meo sine numine* (*Aen.* 1.133).⁹² Fundamentally, then, the action at Argos is very different from Aeneas' quest, with disorder occurring in accordance with the gods' wishes.

It has been long recognised that Virgil's statesman simile becomes reified in the political strife of book 7, and Virgil uses a simile in the later book that mirrors this first one, comparing a king's interactions with his people to a wave against a headland (*Aen.* 7.583–

⁸⁸ A Virgilian feature, departing from its Odyssean model, as Hardie (1986, 90–91) points out.

⁸⁹ Hardie 1986, 90–97, 103–110, 204–207 esp. 95: the winds '[threaten]... the hegemony of the Olympian gods... but also the structure of the physical cosmos itself...'. See also McKay (1989, 250–251). On the cosmic aspect of this portrait, see also Cowan (2015, 105–106), who cites Hardie (1986), and Feeney (1991, 137).

⁹⁰ See Cowan (2015, 110–113) on the status of Aeolus in *Aeneid* 1.

⁹¹ Mack (1999, 142) comments that in the *Aeneid*, Neptune 'instead of creating the storm [as in the *Odyssey*], puts an end to it'. In Statius, Neptune again creates a storm, paralleling Neptune at Argos, on which Hardie (2012, 207) comments: 'this is in line with the Statian tendency not to prevaricate about the role of the Olympian gods in abetting strife and disorder'.

⁹² On which see Cowan (2015, 112).

589);⁹³ but in terms of socio-political engagement, especially the question of Aeolus' authority and the interpretation of its relevance to contemporary Roman politics, the episode has been read variously.⁹⁴ In *Thebaid* 3, Statius transposes the image of uncontrolled winds from *Aeneid* 1 to a context clearly analogous to events recounted in *Aeneid* 7, a nod to the parallelism of leadership that connects *Aeneid* 1 and 7.⁹⁵ This combination of allusions to two Virgilian contexts confirms the relevance of the gods to a reading of social and political structures at Argos.

Statius' reference to Virgil's memorable sequence resonates deeply with his exploration of leadership at Argos, even more so when we consider Statius' striking removal of human agency from Virgil's image. God is compared to god, and Neptune as vehicle is close to the tenor Mars. The result is that there is a total absence of leadership on the human level, either real or figurative. Statius' use of leader language to describe Neptune highlights this absence on the human plane, indicating we are to think of the god in terms of influence over the mass: *dux, agit, comitatus* (433–434). Cowan's recent work addressing Virgil's simile makes the important observation that kingship literature does not include 'strength' or 'control over subjects' as kingly virtues, but that this is what Virgil is concerned with in these two sequences.⁹⁶ On Cowan's reading, Statius' storm imagery confirms a reading of Adrastus' inability to control and direct the populace as a failure of leadership. In response to the mob, Virgil's statesman does precisely what Adrastus does not: *ille regit dictis animos, et pectora mulcet...* (*Aen.* 1.153). Statius draws on Virgil to critique Adrastus' ability to direct and control the disruptive populace;

⁹³ Cowan 2015, esp. 107: in book 7 'parallelism is unquestionably produced by the "righting" of this reversal of the tenor-vehicle relationship'. Latinus later picks up the narrator's storm imagery in his speech: *frangimur heu fatis... ferimurque procella!* *Aen.* 7.594.

⁹⁴ Phillips 1980; Bertman 1983; McKay 1989. Cowan (2015, 108) gives an overview of relevant scholarship. On contemporary Roman politics, see Philips (1980, 22–24), Sarkissian (1985), McKay (1989, 254–255) and Zieske (2010).

⁹⁵ Cowan 2015, esp. 97–99. Hill (2008b, 55–59) notes that the intervention of Tisiphone at Oedipus' behest in *Thebaid* 1 also parallels Aeolus' intervention at Juno's in *Aeneid* 1, noting that the former is 'suitably disturbing' and contrasts the passage in the *Aeneid*, which provides a model of government with mechanisms to deal with the abuse of power. Hill (2008b, 60–62) also notes that a recollection of Virgil's Aeolus has already occurred in the description of the storm that besets Polynices in 1.136ff, especially through *claustra... Aeoliae*, 1.346–347, and the comparison to a storm at sea, 1.370–375.

⁹⁶ Cowan 2015, *passim*.

implicitly, the gods do this instead.⁹⁷ Statius' use of simile is again evocative beyond correspondence and contrast of tenor and vehicle, suggesting associations through engagement with his model text.

After Amphiaraus and Capaneus' debate has reached its conclusion, Statius again employs an extended simile in his treatment of the crowd. As with the Sicilian image, discussed above, the focus is initially on the crowd's noise:

rursus fragor intonat ingens
hortantum et uasto subter uolat astra tumultu
ut rapidus torrens, animos cui uerna ministrant
flamina et exuti concreto frigore montes,
cum uagus in campos frustra prohibentibus exit
obicibus, resonant permixto turbine tecta,
arua, armenta, uiri, donec stetit improbus alto
colle minor magnoque inuenit in aggere ripas.
haec alterna ducum nox interfusa diremit. (3.669–677)

Again, the huge crash of the supporters thunders, and flies towards the stars with vast turmoil; like a rushing torrent, whose strength the spring gusts of wind serve, and the mountains stripped of their solid chill, when, wandering, it exits over the plains as obstacles fail to keep it out, and houses, fields, cattle, men resound as they are mixed up in the whirlpool, until, immoderate, it comes to rest, lesser than a high hill, and finds banks in the great rampart. Night intervened to separate this altercation of the leaders.

Interpretations differ as to what the *torrens* that is the focus of this simile refers to: following on as it does from the description of the crowd's clamour, this noise is an obvious candidate; but it could also refer to the *duces*, mentioned in the final line, following the end of the simile.⁹⁸ While the simile could be loosely based on Homer's for Hector in *Iliad* 13 (137–142), this compares Hector to a stone compelled by winter rains that stops when it reaches the plain, rather than the water itself.⁹⁹

This simile also recalls a different part of the *Aeneid*, when Aeneas wakes up and stands on his roof to see the Greeks invading Troy (*Aen.* 2.304–308). Virgil compares what Aeneas sees to fire falling on a cornfield or a 'rushing torrent', *rapidus torrens*, the exact

⁹⁷ McKay (1989 251–252) discusses Virgil's use of horsemanship imagery for Aeolus, which connects with imagery used in *Thebaid* 3 for both gods and Adrastus, discussed above.

⁹⁸ Cf. Parkes (2012 *ad* 139–44), who thinks this refers to Capaneus, who 'is like a *rapidus torrens*, carrying all with it (673–5), until blocked by a *magno... aggere* (676)'.

⁹⁹ Parkes (2012 *ad* 139–44) adduces this example, along with *Theb.* 7.744–751.

phrase Statius uses to open his simile here (3.671; *Aen.* 2.305).¹⁰⁰ In Virgil's simile the objects of the water's destruction are natural, in keeping with the pastoral focus of the simile: fields, crops, the 'work of oxen' and woodlands (2.306–307). Statius' objects, meanwhile, are men, animals and their dwellings (3.674–675). Statius' use of such a violent image is significant in the context of an internal debate over the prospect of war: it suggests the disruption here is analogous to enemy invasion, despite the fact that the men who crowd Argos are *socii*. As at Thebes, then, where the anonymous man, Maeon and Aletes became representative of internal division between leader and people, a failure of leadership has resulted in a schism among citizens at Argos, including between king and subjects.

In *Thebaid* 3 it is striking that the gods are described in terms that suggest they are allegorical for groups on the human level, but both Adrastus and Amphiarus are implicitly immune to their effects. Above, I observed that Statius singles out Adrastus as exempt from the generalised reaction to Polynices' speech (3.383ff.). When night arrives after the third and longest description of Mars, Statius says this settles the cares (*curas*) of men and wild animals; but while Nox is 'gentle to all', this excludes Adrastus and Polynices, ...*illa quidem cunctis, sed non tibi mitis,Adraste,/ Labdacio duci* (3.415–418).¹⁰¹ While other leaders appear keen for war, the feelings of several leaders are explicable outside of the gods' immediate effects. Polynices has obvious pre-existing personal reasons for desiring war against his brother. Capaneus is 'roused' by Mars, but this love of war is long-held, rather than part of the general enthusiasm depicted in *Thebaid* 3, *ingenti... Mavortis amore/ excitus et longam pridem indignantia pacem/ corda tumens* (3.598–600). It is not until book 7, when the war has begun, that Amphiarus demonstrates his battle-fervour.¹⁰² Argia, meanwhile, has personal reasons for urging Adrastus to undertake war, and presents a rational case for Adrastus to agree to this (3.678–721, discussed above).

There are other instances in the *Thebaid* where the gods as allegorical figures influence collective action, but leaders remain immune to this influence. In Hypsipyle's version of

¹⁰⁰ Snijder (1968 *ad* 671) notes the parallel of this, *Il.* 5.87ff., and *Sil. Pun.* 5.520ff.

¹⁰¹ The phrase denoting Polynices here, *Labdacius dux*, is also used of Eteocles in 2.210.

¹⁰² *ardet inexploto saeui Mauortis amore*, 7.703.

events on Lemnos, she too is excluded from the general frenzy for killing, and is the only woman, *sola*, to refrain from killing her male relatives: *illa ego nam.../ ...raptum quae sola parentum/ ocului* (5.34–36).¹⁰³ Hypsipyle later again asserts her difference from the other Lemnian women, juxtaposing the women as a group with herself, *illae autem... nam me* (5.81).¹⁰⁴ Within Hypsipyle’s story, Polyxo tells the women of Lemnos that she is not ‘immune’ to crime, *...nec uos immunis scelerum securae cogo* (5.123).¹⁰⁵ This admission is intended to persuade her audience, but also suggests Polyxo is a defective leader—if only a de facto one. After the death of Opheltes, Eurydice calls into question Hypsipyle’s innocence, questioning whether she has ‘innocent hands’ (*insontes manus*, 6.149–150) and is alone of all the women ‘immune’ to the frenzy that affected the other women (*unam/immunem furiis!* 6.150–152).¹⁰⁶ The same phenomenon is seen at the duel in book 11, where several individuals escape the effects of the Furies described there, as opposed to the masses that view the duel.¹⁰⁷ The gods’ influence on humans, when conceptualised allegorically, does not always exclude prominent individuals,¹⁰⁸ but these examples draw an implicit distinction between leading figures and the mass, suggesting that leaders are less likely to be consumed by the irrational emotional forces that the gods serve—among other things—to elaborate upon. In *Thebaid* 3, there is an opposition played out between figures of authority and the mass of people at Argos upon which the gods serve to elaborate. Unlike the *populi*, who develop an irrational and intense desire for war, Adrastus and Amphiarus operate independently of this. Statius’ gods in *Thebaid* 3 are to be read allegorically as an elaboration of events on the human plane, but while

¹⁰³ This claim may be validated by Valerius Flaccus’ version of the story, where again Hypsipyle is singled out, with the implication she is guiltless: *decus et patriae laus una ruentis*, 2.243.

¹⁰⁴ Nugent (1996, 60–62) notes this opposition in a discussion of Hypsipyle’s ‘variable position, between observer of and participant in the events’. Nugent (66–68) also notes that Hypsipyle claims she alone was raped by one of the Argonauts (Jason). The hint that Hypsipyle gives that she was not in fact raped by Jason leads to the question of whether she was in fact part of the Lemnian massacre: Nugent 1996, 68.

¹⁰⁵ Statius uses *immunis* again in his *Achilleid* to denote again immunity from the frenzy for war: *feruet amor belli*, 1.412; *nusquam immunis humus*, 1.423. Cf. *immunis Fatis*, *Silu.* 2.1.222, where again this marks a distinction from the mass, *anxia plebes*, 2.1.223. In the *Thebaid*, Lycurgus is also *immunis* as he does not take part in war, 5.643.

¹⁰⁶ Note the collectivity of *gentilibus*, balanced against Hypsipyle’s individual immunity, *unam*.

¹⁰⁷ Adrastus, Jocasta and Antigone are all opposed to the duel.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. e.g. winged Fama, who envelops Thebes in 2.209–210. Here Fama’s all-encompassing nature is described using the image of pouring, *perfundit*, 2.209. In this instance, Statius specifies that the leader too is part of the god’s effect, 2.210.

their influence is on the Argives collectively, this collectivity is selective, and since distinctions of their effects are drawn along the lines of social stratification, they reflect on leadership at Argos.

Pre-eminent individuals are also more likely to be the subject matter of rumour, and at the same time they are more likely to be excluded from the reception and perpetuation of *fama*.¹⁰⁹ Statius frequently pairs *Fama/fama* or *rumor* with *nuntius* or similar, thereby drawing a distinction between unofficial information and reliable report, the latter generally being governed by named individuals with authority. So for instance the *nuntius* Palaemon reports the death of Amphiaraus in direct speech (8.134–149); even then, Adrastus finds the tale difficult to believe, *stupet haec et credere Adrastus/ cunctatur...* (8.150–151). Adrastus requires the confirmation of not one but two men to believe the report (8.151–152). Statius then turns to *audax fama*, who amplifies the tale by saying that more than one man has fallen into the earth. Here *fama* has a disordering effect, with the Argive troops rushing back despite not being under orders to do so, *sponte agmina retro/ non exspectato reuocantum more tubarum/ praecipitant* (8.153–155). The rumour also affects the men mentally, causing despondence among them (8.155–158). Adrastus' reception of accurate information from multiple sources contrasts with the inaccurate reception of information by the mass, whose reaction is correspondingly frenzied, marking the distinction between the leader and his men.

Again, when Polynices hears about the death of Tydeus in book 9 there is a disjuncture signalled between common knowledge and authority:¹¹⁰

Fama per Aonium rapido uaga murmure campum
spargitur in turmas, solito perniciosior index
cum lugenda refert, donec, cui maxima fando
damna uehit, trepidas lapsa est Polynicis ad aures.
deriguit iuuenis lacrimaeque haesere paratae,
et cunctata fides; nimium nam cognita uirtus
Oenidae credi letum suadetque uetatque.

¹⁰⁹ So for instance Argia's axiomatic comment on the relationship of *fama* to *duces*: *atque illum sollers deprendere semper/ Fama duces tumidum narrat raptoque superbum/ difficilemque tibi...*, 2.345–347. Seneca asserts the importance of *fama* to rulers in *de clementia*, e.g. 1.8.1, 1.15.5, 1.18.3, 1.21.4. Seneca says explicitly that more care needs to be taken by those with *magnam famam*, since the rumour picks up their actions and words, 1.8.1.

¹¹⁰ Cf. the report of Tydeus' death that opens the book, indicated with only *audita*, 9.1.

sed postquam haud dubio clades auctore reperta est,
nox oculos mentemque rapit. (9.32–40)

Roaming Fama with swift murmur spreads through the Aonian plain into the squadrons (a speedier divulger than usual when she relates sorrowful news) until she slips down into the frightened ears of Polynices, whose greatest loss she conveys with her speech. The young man stiffened, and his tears, though ready, did not flow, and he was slow to believe: for he knew the courage of the son of Oeneus too well, and it persuades and forbids that his death be believed. But after the disaster was reported by a reliable source, darkness seized his eyes and mind.

Polynices is slow to believe rumour, indicating he regards it as unreliable; he only believes the news when it is given by a reliable figure, *haud dubio... auctore* (39). We might also compare Lycurgus in book 5, though the connection of *nuntius* to *fama* is looser. The scope of the report of Opheltes' death is limited to Lycurgus and his house, *subitus.../ nuntius implebat lacrimis ipsumque domumque...* (5.638–639). Later, Statius turns attention to the city at large, where Fama is running wild with inconsistent reports that foment civil disturbance—almost civil war. Here, *fama*, again depicted as a swift winged figure, is inconsistent, reporting two incompatible stories:¹¹¹

uolucres equitum praeuerterat alas
Fama recens, geminos alis amplexa tumultus:
illi ad fata rapi atque illi iam occumbere leto,
sic meritam, Hypsipylen iterant creduntque... (5.691–694).

Recent Rumour had gone ahead of the swift squadrons of cavalry, embracing twin uproars with her wings: these men say over again and believe that well-deserving Hypsipyle is being dragged to her fate, and those men that she has already met with her death...

These examples vary in detail, but engage with the fundamental difference in conception between official and unofficial information, the latter almost always labelled *fama*. These different means of communication are often concurrently active, but perform very differently. *fama* is a group phenomenon with scope, such as cities, and rather than conveying a direct and clear message, has a swift and unreliable second(or more)-hand

¹¹¹ Cf. Creon's attempt to silence Tiresias when he realises that his son is being demanded; but *fama* is already embracing the prophecy in Thebes: *iam Fama sacratam/ uocem amplexa uolat, clamantque oracula Thebae*, 10.626–627. Here, the second sentence presents an alternative version of the first, with *Thebae* and *fama* parallel figures in each. Cf. Val. Fl. 3.622: '*fama*, or informant trustier than that' has not come. Cf. also *Aen.* 10.510–512, where *rumor* and a messenger, *nuntius*, are paired and thereby opposed.

source. Statius' binary conception of how information is handled in his epic informs how we read individual as opposed to group response, and the ways in which the two elements, the leader(s) and the mass, respond to events are correspondingly different. Fundamental to both, however, is the belief of the hearers, which is what Jupiter asks Mars to supply in book 3.

Amphiaraus' refusal to disclose information about the augury in *Thebaid* 3 is given in terms of a tripartite division: *uulgus, tyrannus, proceres* (3.570–571). This is closely followed by a bipartite division: *populumque ducesque* (3.574). The narrator's description of Adrastus as *rex* as the crowd roars for war again draws attention to social hierarchy in this scene: *inrupere Argos maestique ad limina regis/ bella animis, bella ore fremunt* (3.592–593; my emphasis). When the crowd gathers at Amphiaraus' door, Capaneus recalls this contemptuously: *unius—heu pudeat!—plebeia ad limina ciuis/ tot ferro accinctae gentes animisque paratae/ pendemus?* (3.609–611; my emphasis). Just prior to this, the narrator has again drawn attention to social structures at Argos, this time in bipartite form, *turba ducum vulgique frementis* (3.606). This detail that the *uulgus* is 'roaring' again recalls the group at Adrastus' door, *fremunt* (3.593).

These divisions draw attention to social structures at Argos in the decision-making processes that follow Tydeus' return, allowing for reflection on how they operate. I noted above how Statius denotes the diffusion of information about the ambush in terms of social divisions, and that *Fama/fama* is often distinguished from official sources of information, such as *nuntii*. Statius prompts an awareness of societal stratification in this book, and at various points—including within Adrastus' list of considerations—draws them to the reader's attention as information spreads and with it a swell of emotion. In what follows, Statius shows this stratification play out in memorable scenes of leaders interacting and crowds reacting. In the case of *Thebaid* 3, social structure is indicated numerous times, making the subversion of these structures more pointed. The series of speeches and reactions in this book indicates a conception of the operation of power at Argos, regardless of the formal system that underlies it.

This stratification adds a further element to analyses of *Thebaid* 3 that emphasise an 'epistemological disjunction' in *Thebaid* 3, whereby the reader realises what must happen

to fulfil the epic's plot but the characters do not.¹¹² The heavy irony that occurs through the reader's awareness of the gods' machinations and the characters' lack of understanding creates pity for those embroiled in the war, which Jupiter says is 'fixed', a statement echoed by Amphiaraus later (*fixa dies bello*, 3.243; cf. ...*quid fixos arceo casus?/ ibimus*, 3.646–647).¹¹³ This is heightened by the fact that Jupiter is the one who engineers circumstances under which the Argive populace do not heed his warnings: *fama* originates with Jupiter's instructions to Mars and finds expression in the spread of rumour that drives the Argive people into a frenzy, which ultimately makes them disregard the ominous auspices.¹¹⁴

On this reading of the allegorical nature of the gods and the interaction of leaders with the mass in this book, there is a further important disjunction in this book on a socio-political level. This distinction between leaders and mass is often obscured in statements about the understanding of events by generalised 'Argives', or more broadly, 'humans'.¹¹⁵ The split between divine and mortal, which is taken as analogous to that between reader and characters, is not clean in this book.¹¹⁶ Amphiaraus has an insight into the inevitability of the war, replicating Jupiter's pronouncements, as mentioned above, and as such a reader identifies with his frustrating understanding that war will happen regardless of what he does or says. While Statius is not explicit that Adrastus hears the outcome of the augury, we may assume that he is in a similar position;¹¹⁷ and his position is more pitiful in that

¹¹² The phrase is Ganiban's (2007, e.g. 55), as noted above.

¹¹³ On the inevitability of the war in book 3, see Ganiban (2007, 55, 58, 59).

¹¹⁴ Tuttle (2013, 85–86) summarises this succinctly: 'Blindness to the true warnings is ironically engineered by the god of bird-signs himself'. Ganiban (2007, esp. 55, 59, 61) suggests that intertextual models enhance the reader's sense that war is inevitable, and therefore also the gap between reader and characters.

¹¹⁵ Tuttle (2013, 72) states that 'the results of, and reactions to, the portents reveal an inextricable futility in the *Argives*' attempts to determine or understand the future'. Ganiban, after excerpting the content of the ornithoscopy in book 3, generalises that 'although the reader has received numerous indications about the war from Statius' comments and descriptions of divine actions, the *Argives* have not'. Ganiban (2007, 61). later adds that 'by not understanding the omens, the *humans* therefore commit the *nefas* that the gods have planned and encouraged' [my emphases for all quotes].

¹¹⁶ Feeney 1999, 188–190.

¹¹⁷ Tuttle (2013, 84) says that Adrastus is not told about the augury. However, Adrastus commissions the augury in 3.449–451, and later in his conversation with Argia (discussed below), the gods are the first of the considerations he lists in the question of whether to go to war, 3.714–716. Snijder (1968 *ad* 714) says this 'proves that Adrastus knows of the outcome of his priests' consultation of the gods', and provides a good discussion of the omission of a scene detailing this.

he has piously commissioned the augury. The narratorial tirade about the human tendency to wish to know the future makes this ability to gain insight into future events thematic in the book. The exploration of internal politics thus frustrates the reader's natural inclination to try to identify the leaders' and people's motivations, instead providing a social disjuncture that is drawn along social lines.

There is then a fragmentation at Argos between leaders and people, and between the leaders themselves, as seen in the debate of Amphiaraus and Capaneus. In the final scene of the book, Argia presents her view to her father, again splitting the Argive point of view. There is further fragmentation in the way Latinus' role is split between Adrastus and Amphiaraus. This splitting between Adrastus and Amphiaraus enhances the effect of fragmented authority at Argos, where there is no single figure of leadership, but a series of dominant personalities—including the Argive populace—whose drive is described through the single entities of the gods. The fragmentation and disruption at Argos shades into civil war itself as men arm themselves and sweep into the city, like the god Mars himself. Statius hints at this in his use of the *torrens* simile, discussed above, in which he describes the chaos at Argos in terms of the destructive potential of war. Statius is clearly concerned to explore the beginnings of internal chaos and civil disruption through this series of conflicts, and this has clear connections with the poem's major thematic concern with problematic leadership at Thebes.

Who decides to go to war?

This analysis raises the question: who actually decides to go to war on the Argive side? Again, the model in *Aeneid* 7 assists in an evaluation of Statius' portrait of decision-making at Argos. Virgil describes the gods engaging with humans individually, with Allecto targeting first Amata, then Turnus (and then the hunting dogs of Ascanius).¹¹⁸ In Virgil's epic, the direct physical intervention of Juno is required, as she opens the gates of

Dominik's (1994a) comment on Adrastus' reaction to the omens is not entirely consistent: Dominik first says Adrastus is guilty of ignoring omens about the war against Thebes (77). Later he notes 'Adrastus' vain attempts to forestall violence against the will of the supernatural powers' and his resistance to the gods' plans (93, 122, 126).

¹¹⁸ The ruse of the hunting dogs in the *Aeneid* is transferred to *Thebaid* 7, where Tisiphone maddens the tigresses of Bacchus, 7.564ff.

war, ‘replacing’ Latinus (*Aen.* 7.601–622). Through Amata, Allecto foments dissension ‘not only in the royal family but in the city at large’ as the Latin women follow her.¹¹⁹ Rather than targeting individuals at Argos, Statius’ gods are described directly in relation to the mass, through a set of devices that are specifically collective. This lengthy meditation on how decisions are made at Argos in book 3 posits a strong link between public response and the movement to war.

Viewing the action of book 3 in these terms is highly suggestive for a reading of socio-political affairs at Argos. Jupiter’s first instructions to Mars are geared towards mobilisation of the mass through the natural crowd phenomena of rumour and fear, and these exploit conditions specific to the political system of Argos with Adrastus as king: his style of kingship ensures that *fama* will have success in the movement to war. Meanwhile, Statius’ leaders are immune to the gods, and work independently of these mass phenomena, regardless of whether they support the movement to war or not. In this way, gods and human leaders jostle for control of the populace, and gods become leaders in their own right. Scholarship has focused on the tension between divine and human, but when we read the gods’ influence on the populace at Argos allegorically, there is also a social disjuncture on the human level between leaders and populace.

Statius’ complex depiction of the gods in this way elaborates on the political complexity involved in the movement to war at Argos in *Thebaid* 3. This book demonstrates how the Argive populace develops from a civilian to a military crowd, and without the detailed direct description we find in historiography, Statius suggests the complex factors involved. In the absence of any direct statement, we are entitled to ask: who decides that the Argives will attack Thebes? In the book’s final scene, Argia attempts to persuade Adrastus, which suggests that he is the decisive figure; but any clear unilateral decision by Adrastus is suppressed, and the reader is left hanging.¹²⁰ Instead, there is the impression of a complex political process which cannot be reduced to a simple scheme.¹²¹ The decision-making process in this case is neither top-down nor determined by popular

¹¹⁹ Mack (1999, 143–144), who also discusses Allecto’s scene with Turnus and Ascanius’ dogs (143–147).

¹²⁰ Cf. Elmer (2013, 62ff.) on Agamemnon’s unilateralism in the *Iliad*.

¹²¹ Ganiban (2007, 56) notes Adrastus’ reluctance to go to war, and that he is ‘overwhelmed by the fury for war among his people’.

opinion, but an interaction of both. The prominence of massed Argives in this process challenges a conception of the populace as passive victims of leaders' decisions, as they appear active in the political life of the city.¹²² As a result, there is no clear figure of leadership at Argos, and the division between different parties means there is no 'Argive' point of view, but rather a multitude of these, which remain unresolved for the reader. The book in this way provides a deep reflection on the nature of Adrastus' role as *tyrannus* in Argos' autocracy, which is substantially different from that of the Theban kings.

It is no surprise, then, that *Thebaid* 3 is the most speech-heavy book of the *Thebaid*, and the book narrates—especially in the Argive section—very little action.¹²³ As events unfold at Argos, several different points of view are foregrounded, as a series of negotiations takes place between various parties. Statius presents a sequence of confrontations: on the divine level, Mars departs to fulfil Jupiter's orders, but Venus begs him to desist;¹²⁴ Tydeus and Polynices' enthusiasm is met with Adrastus' insistence on rationality; Amphiaraus and Capaneus debate, their binary opposition on the question of war enhanced by the fact that they are priest and *contemptor diuum* respectively (3.598); in this scene the crowd's reaction to Capaneus demonstrates it stands on his side; and the final scene moves to the private discussion between Argia and Adrastus. Through this variety of speeches, Statius fragments the reader's viewpoint. The shifting emphasis on different points of view fractures the poem at this point, resulting in a lack of narratorial objectivity. In other words, the divisive social principle that underlies the debates at Argos informs the organisation of the poem itself.

Statius also frequently omits indications of whether certain Argives or groups are party to information: we are not told explicitly whether Adrastus and the Argive crowd know what the auspices have foretold, nor do we know if Adrastus knows about the crowd

¹²² Cf. critics' interpretations of the *Thebaid* in these terms, as outlined above ('Introduction'). Cf. Anderson (1980, 14) on *Aeneid* 7: 'We cannot claim that... the Italians are unwitting pawns in the game that Allecto plays at Juno's request, but from their own viewpoint they are eager participants in warfare, flocking into the city, abandoning fields and herds in order to turn themselves into well-armed murderous warriors...'

¹²³ Dominik 1994b, 277: Table 1.

¹²⁴ Taking this back to Thebes, we may see Maeon and Eteocles as the first pair, discussed in the last chapter; or Maeon and Tydeus, who bear news of the ambush to Thebes and Argos respectively.

itself, nor if Argia knows of events in the council and around the city itself, nor can we be sure what Staius' omission of a reaction to Amphiarus' speech implies. These confusions add to the sense of internal chaos at Argos, in which Staius draws attention to means of communication and hierarchy to demonstrate how these systems are being flouted. Staius is singling out particular moments for the reader, rather than a comprehensive, forensic portrait of attitudes and actions at this time. The book demonstrates on a number of levels that the people of Argos are so fractured that we cannot identify an 'Argive' point of view, but this is instead divided in multiple ways.

Models of Decision-making in the *Thebaid*

Here a brief comparison is made with other key scenes in which decisions are made that are crucial to the advancement of the plot, in order to contextualise the decision-making process Staius depicts in book 3. In order to offer a more substantial review of Adrastus' leadership role, I look first at other instances in which we see Adrastus interacting with collectives to determine the outcome of events. I then move on to a brief comparison with the several other instances of decision-making that Staius presents: first the women's decision to attack the men of Lemnos in book 5; then decisions made by Eteocles and Creon at Thebes, which scholarship has treated extensively; and finally, the decision of Theseus to attack Thebes in book 12, another instance that has been appraised by scholarship, but which has been interpreted variously.

Adrastus

Adrastus' role in the epic is largely non-military, but he plays a leadership role in other respects. When Polynices and Tydeus first arrive at Argos, he is characterised as a peace-loving monarch, as shown above. In book 2, again we see Adrastus as a figure of esteem among his people in a civil capacity: at the wedding of Argia and Deipyle, a shield falls and the sound of a trumpet is heard, interrupting proceedings, and the response of the crowd is to turn to the king, *in regem conversi omnes* (2.256–262; quote from 262).¹²⁵

¹²⁵ In this instance, as in book 3, Adrastus' response to the disturbance is silence, and he does nothing to assuage any ill-feeling created by this bad omen. Again, the effect here is exacerbated by rumour, *cunctos tamen omina rerum/ dira mouent, uariisque metum sermonibus augent*, 2.263–264. There is irony here as Staius explains to the reader the cause, which is Argia's wearing of Harmonia's necklace, 2.265–305.

Later, Adrastus plays a diplomatic role on behalf of the Argives when he interacts with Hypsipyle, in which context he is labelled *dux Talaionides* (5.17–27, esp. 18).¹²⁶ When the Argives wish to hear Hypsipyle's story in book 5, Adrastus 'before all others' asks her to tell them more, *cunctis tunc noscere casus/ ortus amor, pater ante alios hortatur Adrastus...* (5.40–41).¹²⁷ Later, in a religious capacity Adrastus works on behalf of the Argives as a group as he addresses Opheltes at his funeral: Statius introduces him by juxtaposing himself and the many Argives, *cunctis silentibus heros/ ...Adrastus* (7.91–92); after the speech, Statius tells us Adrastus offers this prayer 'on behalf of all': *dux ea pro cunctis, eadem sibi quisque uouebat* (7.104). Adrastus as a leader is held in high esteem by his people, and successfully performs non-military leadership, but in the face of social and political disturbances, he fails to have any impact on the Argives.

Within the battle books of the epic, Adrastus' role is limited. In book 8, he is depicted very briefly 'urging on his troops' when news comes of the descent of Amphiaraus to the underworld, *hortanti... maniplos/ Adrasto* (8.134–135). In book 9, he is again mentioned briefly as he reacts to Polynices' grief at the death of Tydeus (9.76–78). The greatest direct impact he has on the fighting occurs when Tisiphone (disguised as Halys) gives Hippomedon a false report that Adrastus has been captured, with the result that Hippomedon is drawn away from the fighting (9.144–176).¹²⁸ In a sense, Tisiphone's use of Adrastus again emphasises his non-military associations in the epic, since he draws Hippomedon away from battle.

During the war itself, Adrastus is not shown directing or engaging in any sort of military action, but does take part in several important decision-making sequences. The first is in book 7, when Jocasta makes her way to the newly established Argive camp (7.470–607);¹²⁹ the second when Amphiaraus has died and a replacement must be chosen (8.259–

¹²⁶ Cf. Beye (1969, 43) who notes that Jason's audience with Hypsipyle is part of his leadership role. Here Statius describes Adrastus surrounded by *proceres*, implying a three-fold conception of the army, with Adrastus' pre-eminence signalled spatially, *hic rursus simili procerum uallante corona/ dux Talaionides...*, 5.17–18.

¹²⁷ Here Adrastus' pre-eminent status is denoted by *pater*.

¹²⁸ In this sequence Tisiphone exploits the assumed reliability of report from a *nuntius*, rather than *fama*, the distinction between which is discussed above.

¹²⁹ Vessey (1971a, 88) notes that Jocasta's intervention here and in book 11 are at 'critical junctures in the war'.

293); and the final instance—perhaps the most important—is the council in which the Argives decide on a night-raid (10.176–261).

In book 7, Adrastus again is shown as an authority figure, and it is he who orders that Jocasta be allowed in, *remeat iam missus Adrasto/ nuntius: excipiunt iussi mediosque per enses/ dant iter* (7.486–488).¹³⁰ Jocasta then speaks to the Argive *duces*, addressing them first as *proceres* as she asks where Polynices is (7.488, 490–492). Her speech is split into two parts: the first is to Polynices (7.497–519), the second to the Argives as a group (7.519–527). As in book 3, Statius creates a theatrical scene where the reaction of the troops collectively is prominent: her words ‘break’ the troops (*frangebant... cohortes*, 7.527); tears flow (7.528–529); the crowd is ‘turned’, *sic flexa Pelasgum/ corda labant, ferrique avidus mansueuerat ardor* (7.532–533).¹³¹ Polynices too reacts, and appears to be coming around to her plea (7.534–538), and Statius adds that Adrastus ‘does not prevent him’ (7.537–538). However, as in book 3, there is a counterargument presented to the crowd. Tydeus addresses his *socii*, arguing against Jocasta and for war (7.538–559, esp. 539). The crowd again reacts, and Statius points up their fickle nature by commenting that their opinion changes yet again:

rursus mutata trahuntur
agmina consiliis: subito ceu turbine caeli
obuius aduersum Boreae Notus abstulit aequor.
arma iterum furiaeque placent; fera tempus Erinys
arripit et primae molitur semina pugnae. (7.559–563)

Again the army is changed, swept along by the debate: as when there is a sudden whirlwind in the sky and the South Wind meets the North Wind, and rips away the sea that opposed it. Arms and frenzy again please them, and the wild Erinys seizes them, and contrives the seeds of first battle.

The language of storms here recalls that of book 3, denoting the crowd’s irrationality—and even potential violence. The model of action is different from that of book 3 in many respects; but most notably the crowd reacts to both sides of the argument (rather than just one), and the gods are not described as influencers of the crowd itself, which may explain

¹³⁰ Vessey (1971a, 87–89) notes similarities and differences between this scene and Statius’ tragic models, especially the addition of divine machinery to explain the course of events and parallelism with Jocasta’s later speech to Eteocles in book 11.

¹³¹ Here again the verb *flecto* is used of the individual’s effect on the crowd, a term also used of Adrastus in book 3: *imperiique haud flectere molem/ inscius*, 3.387–388; *flectique noua dulcedine pugnae/ difficiles populi*, 3.448–449.

the more balanced crowd reaction to the speeches. Again, the crowd is easily led and fickle, changing opinions quickly, and there is a fragmentation of point of view as leaders conflict in direct speech—again, including a woman.¹³² No single figure of authority emerges to control this group, and Adrastus is barely present in the action. As in book 3, the reader is also aware that despite these vacillations on the characters' parts, the war cannot be averted.¹³³

Another Argive council is held in book 8, and while the matter in question is very different from that of book 7, the process is again revealing for how we view Argive leadership. Adrastus is introduced again as exceptional in the Argive camp: while the others sleep, he stays awake listening to the sounds of the Thebans celebrating (8.259–270). Just before dawn, he calls a council, *concilium rex triste uocat* (8.275). When the matter for discussion is described, an anonymous third-person plural is used of the men involved: 'they' ask who is to replace Amphiaraus (8.275–277); and they also quickly decide that they want Thiodamas, *haud mora, cuncti/ .../ Thiodamanta uolunt* (8.277–279). Again, it is noteworthy that while Adrastus formally convenes the council, it is the group who decides on the appointment.¹³⁴

The final Argive war council is the most significant instance of Argive leadership after the scenes in book 3, and again has key similarities, but also important differences. In book 10, Thiodamas makes his way into the inner circles of the council to argue for military action, *uentum ad consilii penetrare domumque uerendam/ signorum* (176–177).¹³⁵ Thiodamas presents an argument for undertaking a night-raid, and thus plays a role analogous to that of Tydeus in book 3, albeit on a smaller scale; similarly, Tydeus in book 3, had 'by chance' stumbled back into Adrastus' council to demand war against Thebes. Statius notes that this council is new, consisting of *subiti proceres* after the deaths of six of the Seven (10.179–181), and Thiodamas addresses these collectively as *duces* (10.188). There is even a recollection of Polynices' speech in book 3, when

¹³² Cf. the prominence of Argia's point of view in book 3, discussed above.

¹³³ Vessey (1971a, 89–90) notes that 'Jocasta's plea *had* to fail', and that Statius adapts Virgil's device of the stag—using two tigers instead—to ensure the outbreak of fighting.

¹³⁴ Here Statius adds further depth to the question of leadership in the simile comparing Thiodamas taking up his new position to an 'Achaemenian boy' ascending to the throne, 10.286–293, on which see Hollis (1994).

¹³⁵ Cf. Thiodamas 'leaping into the middle', *prosilit in medios*, 10.164.

Thiodamas says that he will go alone if others are not willing, ...*comitum licet agmina cessent,/ solus eo* (10.217–218). Thiodamas' speech is effective in producing a desire for action, just as Polynices' had been: he 'rouses' the Argives (*erigit*, 10.187), and the speech has the desired effect of creating a unified collective drive for action, ...*euntque/ non secus accensi proceres quam si omnibus idem/ corde deus: flagrant comitari et iungere casus* (10.219–221). Thiodamas achieves unity of purpose, and direct action follows on swiftly from his speech, as he chooses thirty men for the task (10.222).

As in book 3, Adrastus is the presiding figure of the council, and again he has a role in reacting to Thiodamas' suggestion. But here there are key differences from the decision-making process of book 3, and here Adrastus successfully performs his role as leader. Unlike in book 3, here Adrastus rejoices along with the crowd, rather than standing apart from the general reaction to Thiodamas' suggestion, *gaudet in aduersis animoque assurgit Adrastus* (10.227). As in book 3, Adrastus gives a brief speech, but this time in support of the venture and to celebrate the favour of the gods, which again differentiates this instance from the calls for war in book 3.¹³⁶ At the same time, Adrastus warns the enthusiastic men that only a limited group may take part, issuing the maxim that 'crowd is never suited to concealed guile', *numquam apta latent/ turba dolo* (10.242–243). The comment here is implicitly a critique of Eteocles' arrangement of Tydeus' ambush, in which leadership was problematic and implicitly a reason for the Fifty's failure, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Statius draws attention to the organisation of the night-raid, including the question of its leadership, through a sort of doubling effect. Immediately after his speech, Thiodamas chooses thirty men for the raid (10.222–223). After Adrastus limits the number of men involved, there is again a note on how the force for the night-raid will be arranged, when Thiodamas chooses two other men to act as leaders of groups of ten (10.249–252).¹³⁷ After Adrastus' intervention in the proceedings, Thiodamas takes up his leadership role of

¹³⁶ Thiodamas claims the inspiration of the gods through the figure of Amphiaraus, 10.188–218.

¹³⁷ SB *ad loc.* thinks there is some incongruity here in that Thiodamas has already picked out thirty men in 10.222–223, on which he notes: 'forgetting 222f.'. But 10.249–252 is concerned with how these men are arranged under three leaders, not simply who is part of the force. *ter denos*, 10.222, looks forward to this arrangement, as Williams (1972 *ad* 222) notes. The choice of the men and their splitting into groups is thus done in two phases, emphasising the process of choosing and ordering itself.

urging the men on in the field (10.266–271; cf. *erigit*, 10.187). The scene thus is a similar shape to the decision-making scenes in book 3, but in a compressed form.

Adrastus does not prevent the action that Thiodamas proposes, but acts to modify the initial reaction of his audience by suggesting that they limit their number. Again, Adrastus is depicted acting as a counterweight to the frenzy of others, a point that Statius emphasises prior to his disruption of the council through his use of language: *horror, formidando tumultu, tremendous, exundant stimuli, furor* (10.160–168). Statius even gives a graphic comparison of Thiodamas with a follower of Cybele (10.170–175). Explicitly, Thiodamas ‘disturbs’ the men, *exturbabat* (10.219). In response, Adrastus is a voice of reason, and as in book 3, Statius uses the imagery of charioteering as the men’s courage is ‘reined in’, *uirtus iuuenum frenata quieuit* (10.245). Finally, to emphasise the effect of Adrastus’ words, Statius compares the situation to Aeolus confining his winds, a simile that clearly recalls book 3:

non aliter moto quam si pater Aeolus antro
portam iterum saxo premat imperiosus et omne
claudat iter, iam iam sperantibus aequora uentis. (10.246–248)

Just as when his cave is in a state of unrest, father Aeolus again imperiously shuts the entrance with a rock and closes the passage completely, when the winds are already hoping for the sea.

For this night-raid, which is a sort of war-in-miniature corresponding in many details to the ambush of Tydeus in book 2, Adrastus plays a successful role as leader by asserting his authority over the troops to restrict their numbers, an implicit difference from the leaderless and chaotic Fifty who attacked Tydeus. Again, leadership is fragmented on the Argive side, as both Thiodamas and Adrastus take a leading role, but here their coordination is successful. Adrastus’ leadership success here is perhaps why this is one of the few places he is called ‘leader’ during the war proper—and he is called this twice in the context of the night-raid, first *ductor* after the simile comparing him with the breeder of horses (10.235), then *dux* when Thiodamas entrusts to him the emblems of his priestly office (10.255). This sequence thus becomes a microcosm of full-scale war, a miniature example in which—by contrast with the war at large with Thebes—Adrastus manages to successfully play his role as leader.

Adrastus' last appearance in the epic comes when Polynices proposes the duel with Eteocles. This sequence in a sense replays Adrastus' first action in book 1, of quelling the fighting between Polynices and Tydeus; but it also recalls the decision-making sequence of book 3, where Adrastus was 'immune' to the collective effects of the gods. After Tisiphone has inspired Polynices to the duel, he addresses Adrastus (11.154–192), whose response is evident even in the speech, in which Polynices asks, 'Why do you shudder?' (*quid horres?* 11.168). Both men weep, and Statius uses the verb *mulcere* (11.196) for Adrastus' attempt to soothe Polynices, a verb that recalls the statesman simile of *Aeneid* 1, quoted above;¹³⁸ but the Fury (disguised as Phereclus) cuts him off, eclipsing his role and suppressing his point of view. When Jocasta similarly entreats Eteocles, she assumes that Adrastus has an active role to play in influencing Polynices: *ast ibi uix unus pugnas dissuadet Adrastus,/ aut fortasse iubet* (11.351–352). Adrastus does in fact try to prevent the duel (11.424–446), but Statius prefaces his speech with a rhetorical question that comments on the problem of Adrastus' leadership:

ipse quidem et regnis multum et uenerabilis aeuo,
sed quid apud tales, quis nec sua pignora curae,
exter honos? (11.427–429).

He himself indeed is esteemed in royal power and in age, but what is external honour among such men, who do not even care for those dear to them?

Adrastus' appeal is based on his authority, but he fails to influence the course of events yet again, and flees.

Adrastus is characterised as a contemplative ruler who favours consultation with the other *duces* of his council, but he frequently loses control of affairs to frenzied and more boisterous characters who commandeer Adrastus' own deliberative forum. Adrastus at no point in this epic succumbs to the irrationality that various gods serve to elaborate upon, and his inclinations tend to be non-martial, as announced in the first description of him in book 1. While he has limited success as an effective leader in the night-raid sequence of book 10, aside from this he repeatedly fails to assert his authority as king in the face of individuals who become through their actions *de facto* leaders of the Argives.

¹³⁸ Lovatt (2005, 303) notes this lexical parallel, and that Adrastus is like the gods in that he lacks control in book 11.

Lemnos, *Thebaid* 5

Here I compare very briefly Statius' other models of leadership in decision-making, starting with the Lemnian episode (5.49–498). Hypsipyle relates the build-up to the Lemnian women's slaughter of their men and children, and this sequence of events has much in common with events at Argos of book 3. While she is cast as an epic narrator, elements of her story that deviate from the description in *Thebaid* 3 indicate the difference between her storytelling and that of the all-seeing narrator.¹³⁹ Hypsipyle opens her story by giving a dual cause for the Lemnian slaughter, saying that while the gods disturbed their homes, the women too were to blame: *dis uisum turbare domos, nec pectora culpa/ nostra uacant* (5.57–58). The gods are included in the story, but from a human perspective: rumour has a human, collective origin, and tells stories of the gods' activity (5.64–69; esp. *uulgarent*, 5.67). The narrator does not describe the god Fama as in book 3, but the phenomenon is materially the same, creating the social conditions under which Polyxo's promotion of the Lemnian slaughter is successful. Hypsipyle later describes what occurs in terms of deified abstractions (*Odia, Furor, Discordia*, 5.73–74). Polyxo herself later tells the women that the gods favour their activity, claiming that she has seen Venus in her sleep (5.132–142). The presentation of the gods from a human perspective sheds light on how we are to understand the socio-political circumstances of book 3, since Hypsipyle as an internal narrator cannot vouch for the activity of the gods, but they play a role through the women's belief in their activity.¹⁴⁰

As in book 3, Statius gives a memorable crowd scene during which the crucial decision that they will murder their men is made. The narrative focuses on Polyxo, who is a figure

¹³⁹ See Gibson (2004, esp. 157–161, 163, 166) and Nugent (1996, esp. 62–66, 69) on Hypsipyle's control of the Lemnian narration, which includes many epic features. Both Gibson (2004, esp. 164) and Nugent (1996, esp. 55ff.) question the reliability of Hypsipyle's story. Henderson (1991, 54–56) notes the 'heroic mockery' of the Hypsipyle episode, which constitutes the 're-making' of epic with a woman's voice.

¹⁴⁰ Gibson (2004, 158–160) asserts that Hypsipyle has an 'omniscience of the facts and also of their causation', citing 5. 57–8, but concedes that by using *fertur* and *uulgarent* she 'distanc[es] herself somewhat from responsibility for the accuracy of what she is relating, and perhaps suggest[s] an awareness of other sources'. Gibson notes that Bacchus appears to Hypsipyle later in the story to tell her Venus is responsible, but objects that she has assigned blame to Venus even prior to this. I do not see a problem with Hypsipyle retrojecting Venus' influence on the Lemnian women after Bacchus' revelation to her, as she tells her story retrospectively to the Argives; but even without his appearance, is it inconceivable that she should think of the frenzy of the Lemnian women through the lens of divine influence?

of madness, rising into a frenzy, *horrendas... furias*, like a Thyiad possessed by the god (5.90–94).¹⁴¹ She ‘rouses the city’, and in a perversion of the decision-making processes in book 3, she ‘calls a council’, *desertam rabidis clamoribus urbem/ exagitat.../ .../ concilium[que] uocat* (5.96–98). Polyxo refers to the women as *uulgus*, when she asks rhetorically, ‘Are we an inactive people?’ *at nos uulgus iners?* (5.120). Again, the meeting is characterised by disorder, *ordine nullo/ congestae* (5.101–102). But when Polyxo seizes her moment and makes a rousing speech as the Lemnian men come into view, the reaction is uniform:

nec uarius fremor aut studia in contraria rapti
dissensus, ut plebe solet; furor omnibus idem,
idem animus solare domos... (5.147–149).

Nor is their clamour varied, nor is the discord swept into contrary aims, as is customary for the common people; frenzy is the same for all, and all have the same desire to despoil their homes.

As in book 3, in Hypsipyle’s Lemnian tale crowd psychology is exploited by the gods, and also the *de facto* leader Polyxo, but Hypsipyle stands outside of the group, just as Adrastus did. Like Adrastus, she too does not attempt to act as a rational counterweight to an easily led populace, this time consisting entirely of women.¹⁴² The consequences are again disastrous, resulting in what is effectively civil war.¹⁴³

The collective phenomenon Fama later comes into play, as rumour reports that Hypsipyle’s father is still alive. Here again crowd behaviour becomes a force in the course of events, as the women react ferociously to Hypsipyle’s deception: *fremit impia plebes/ sontibus accensae stimulis facinusque repossunt* (‘The impious people roar, and stirred up by guilty goads, they demand their crime’, 5.488–489). After this the collective speech of the Lemnian women is reported, in which they complain that she alone was faithful (5.491–492: esp. *solane fida* as opposed to *nos*). In this speech, the women also question Hypsipyle’s rule over Lemnos, *quid imperat urbe nefanda?* (5.492). Hypsipyle

¹⁴¹ Nugent (1996, 59–60) notes the illogical nature of Polyxo’s argument.

¹⁴² In this sense Hypsipyle has much in common with Adrastus in book 3. Ahl (1986, 2886) comments that Hypsipyle is ‘the innocent ruler of a guilty people, forced to disguise her innocence in order to rule or even survive’. A key difference between the two is that Argos goes to war with Thebes, while the violence in Hypsipyle’s tale is confined to civil conflict at Lemnos.

¹⁴³ Gibson (2004, 167–168) demonstrates that the slaughter at Lemnos recalls the Greek invasion of Troy in *Aeneid* 2. Again, the implicit comparison of civil disorder with external invasion harks back to *Thebaid* 3, especially the *torrens* simile discussed above.

then leaves the city, fearing punishment, and explicitly states that her status as royalty does not help her, *nec regna iuuant* (5.494). Despite her authority, Hypsipyle is unable to control the course of events on Lemnos, and even though she is royal, she flees and ends up as Lycurgus' slave. Hypsipyle in this way demonstrates the same principles and problems of leadership that Adrastus does in the main narrative: despite her status at Lemnos, the action of the Lemnian women is determined by the *de facto* leader Polyxo, and this is disastrous for her community.

The Duel, *Thebaid* 11

A similar crowd dynamic is seen in the case of the duel in book 11. I have treated Adrastus' role in this context briefly above, but here I note that Statius is again concerned to show the phenomenon of a collective desire for this fight between the brothers. Again, collective abstractions are part of the description: Pietas has been sitting secluded in heaven, in mourning over *fraterna bella*, recalling the proem, *fraternas acies* (11.457–481, esp. 460).¹⁴⁴ Pietas is an inherently collective abstraction, denoting as she does the correctness of relationships that underpins order in the community.¹⁴⁵ Like the gods of book 3, Pietas is an allegorical figure reflecting on group behaviour: when she arrives at the plain, the armies suddenly soften and realise the crime that is occurring, *uix steterat campo, subita mansuescere pace/ agmina sentirique nefas* (11.474–475).¹⁴⁶ Pietas then addresses the crowd—the only god in Statius' epic to do so (11.477–481).¹⁴⁷ When Tisiphone then appears, the crowd again wishes for war, *arma placent, uersaeque uolunt spectare cohortes* (11.498). The vacillation of the crowd again reflects its fickle nature (*dubios*, 11.482). This conflict is mirrored roughly on the human level, with Jocasta and Adrastus attempting an intervention, again demonstrating that individuals may be immune to collective phenomena. In this way, yet again Statius provides a model of

¹⁴⁴ Statius compares her with the female relatives of the combatants, bringing her very close to the human action indeed, 11.461.

¹⁴⁵ The term *pietas* may of course refer to the obligations between individuals; but since these inter-individual obligations exist across the whole community, I regard *pietas* as collective in nature.

¹⁴⁶ Ahl 1986, 46: Pietas 'affords the means of bringing forth the reactions of the soldiers' to the combat.

¹⁴⁷ Juno is comparable, who mingles with the Argive women in book 12.

leadership in which figures of status fail to assert their will on a group; and the result is the death of both Eteocles and Polynices.

Athens, *Thebaid* 12

Theseus' decision to attack Thebes in book 12 also appears at first sight to be a case of unilateral decision-making; but before he even meets the Argive women, Juno engages with collectives—both the Argive women and the people of Athens—to ensure there is an environment in which his decision to aid the Argives will be acceptable. Juno's special relationship to the Argive women has already been foregrounded in book 10, when they appeal to her for aid bearing a robe as a gift (10.49–69). In book 12, Juno first ensures that the women are received well (12.464–467); then she instructs the women on how to elicit sympathy, giving them olive branches and fillets, and advising them (*docet*, 12.470) to lower their covered eyes and raise up empty urns (12.468–470). After this the Athenian populace is the focal point of the goddess' activity: Juno leads the women in, *inducit praeuia*, 12.465; and she ensures that the populace is favourable to the women, *coetumque gementem/ conciliat populis*, 12.466–467.¹⁴⁸ The women attract a large crowd, *omnis Erectheis effusa penatibus aetas/ tecta uiasque replent* (12.471–472), and the question that follows is focalised through them: *unde hoc examen et una/ tot miserae?* (12.472–473).¹⁴⁹ The goddess 'mingles' with the crowd, again 'teaching' the Athenians, *docens* (12.475). The women are also ubiquitous, spreading news of events at Thebes:

dea conciliis se miscet utrisque
cuncta docens, qua gente satae, quae funera plangant
quidue petant; uariis nec non affatibus ipsae
Ogygias leges immansuetumque Creonta
multum et ubique fremunt. (12.474–478)

The goddess mixes with both gatherings, teaching them everything: from what race they are born, what deaths they bewail, and what they are seeking; the women themselves, in various speeches, do not fail to complain extensively and everywhere of the Ogygian laws and savage Creon.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. *conciliat populis*, 11.654, where Statius says the death of Menoeceus has found Creon favour with the people.

¹⁴⁹ This could be punctuated as direct speech, since it is not grammatically connected to the description of the crowd, but clearly represents their thought or speech.

Juno does not simulate a human character, but Statius describes her intervening in her own person. Through her spreading of information, she becomes a version of Fama, again recalling book 3's emphasis on collective reception of information. Juno's intervention is successful, and the people of Athens show the *turba* of women to the altar of Clementia, *uulgo monstrante* (12.512–513). Statius innovates on previous treatments of the Theban myth by having a group, rather than the individual Adrastus, ask Theseus for assistance.¹⁵⁰ As in book 3, there is emphasis on collective opinion and psychology prior to the decision for military action, and again, this is conveyed partially by means of a god. When Theseus finally appears, it is to the shouts of the crowd, *ad sidera uulgi/ clamor* (12.521–522), and the crowd desires to see both Theseus and Hippolyte (12.532–535). Evadne speaks on behalf of the women to Theseus (12.545–586), and the response is immediate, as Theseus states, *nulla mora est* (12.596), sending Phegeus to give Creon the simple choice between pyres or war (12.594–598). Theseus clearly directs action here: he urges his men on, *hortaturque suos uiresque instaurat anhelas* (12.600); the reaction is enthusiastic, resulting in a pseudo-catalogue of the army (12.611–638); and he gives a speech directly to the army (12.642–649).¹⁵¹

Out of its context, Theseus' decision to attack Thebes has been interpreted as basic unilateralism,¹⁵² but this does not take into account Statius' emphasis on the social conditions under which this decision takes place, both leading up to his appearance, and after his decision, which is met with enthusiasm. Additionally, Statius draws attention to the Athenian process of decision-making earlier in book 12, where Argia wonders how long it will take for Theseus to make a decision, and whether his *proceres* and *haruspex* would assent to war (12.209–212). She imagines a process like that at Argos in book 3, where Adrastus' council and the augury were important to decision-making. Argia perhaps signals that she 'knows' other treatments in which Theseus did not make a

¹⁵⁰ *LIMC* 'Adrastus' 232–233: the version in which Adrastus goes to Athens or Eleusis to ask Theseus for help goes back to Greek tragedy, for example Euripides' *Supplikes*. See also Tyrtaios (*IEG* 12. 8) on Adrastus' 'honey-sweet speech'. Panoussi (2007, 125–128) notes that the women 'restore... ritual order' and are a 'collective unit and model for the ultimate reconciliation among men'.

¹⁵¹ Note too that here Theseus, rather than a divine figure like Bellona in book 4, hurls a spear to declare war, 12.649.

¹⁵² Criado (2015) simplifies this decision-making process, by not taking into account Juno's activity and the support Theseus has from his people.

decision regarding Thebes immediately and ostensibly unilaterally.¹⁵³ By introducing this model through Argia and then adopting another for the actual decision-making process, Statius draws attention to the fact that Eteocles, Creon, Adrastus and Theseus all operate within the same political system; what differs is how they perform their role in this system, and the fact that Theseus' decision is morally justified. What had been a source of commentary on the difference between Athenian democracy as opposed to Theban monarchy in Euripides' *Supplices* is here a comment on how the single framework of monarchy may be performed in various ways.¹⁵⁴

Thebans: Eteocles and Creon

Finally, we turn to decision-making at Thebes, starting with Eteocles. Literature on leadership has focused on the 'tyranny' demonstrated in the epic by these kings; here I offer a comparative approach to other models of leadership. Eteocles' initial decision not to hand over power after his allotted year is explained in terms of divine influence: Laius-as-Tiresias appears to Eteocles in his sleep arguing for Eteocles to retain his kingship; in a graphic scene, Laius opens the wound dealt by Oedipus, and pours gore over his grandson (2.120–124). Statius gives the later decision to ambush Tydeus, which sets events of book 3 in motion, a negative moral evaluation. No context is given for this decision, and Statius simply says that after Tydeus leaves, Eteocles devises 'crime' and 'deception', *nec piger ingenio scelerum fraudisque nefandae/ rector eget* (2.482–483). In this case, Statius presses the disjuncture between king and people: as Tydeus leaves, Theban mothers curse both Tydeus and Eteocles himself (2.479–481), a division that Tydeus' rhetoric in his interview with Tydeus also promotes—or perhaps even creates (2.458–461). The speeches of Maeon and Aletes after the ambush, and the simile comparing Eteocles to a wolf in book 4, all contribute to this strand of thought. In book 3 at Argos, there too is a division between leader and people; but there with the Argive people braying for war, rather than the king ordering it. Statius' portrait of social disjuncture at Argos is more subtle and sophisticated—in part because it is explored at greater length—but it certainly responds to the tyranny that Statius depicts at Thebes through basic opposition.

¹⁵³ In Euripides' *Supplices*, for instance, Theseus initially refuses Adrastus' request, but his mother Aithra persuades him; on which see Zeitlin (1986, 146–147).

¹⁵⁴ Braund (1996, 15) notes that in the absence of the gods at the end of the poem, Theseus resembles a deity himself.

The other Theban king the epic depicts in action is Creon, who ironically voices the most vehement opposition to his predecessor Eteocles, regardless of whether we regard his rhetoric in book 11 as genuine.¹⁵⁵ Creon calls Eteocles the ‘worst of brothers and leaders’, *fratrumque ducumque/ pessime*, and in the speech that follows critiques Eteocles with reference to the collective destruction Eteocles has caused, *funeribus patriae lacrimisque potentem* (11.269–270): the Thebans are now either dead or in mourning.¹⁵⁶ Creon’s speech places special emphasis on the link between collective Theban suffering and Eteocles’ leadership, a perversion of the king’s responsibilities, as seen in Chapter 2.

When Creon accedes to the kingship, it is explicitly with the support of the people, due to his ancestry and Menoeceus’ act of self-sacrifice, *conciliat populis* (11.652–654: cf. Juno at Athens, *conciliat populis*, 12.477). Statius immediately places Creon in the tradition of tyrannical Theban kings who do not learn from their predecessors, *pro blanda potestas/ sceptri malesuadus amor! numquamne priorum/ haerebunt documenta nouis?* (11.655–657). He issues a direct order that the Argives are not to be buried, *iubet* (11.661–664).¹⁵⁷ When Phegeus arrives with Theseus’ choice of burial or war, there is again no consideration of the people’s wishes: he says ‘let them come’ *ueniant* (12.691), and again issues an order, this time for the Theban people to arm, *armari populos tamen armaque ferri/ ipse iubet pallens...* (12.694–695; cf. *iubet*, 11.662). Again, Statius makes a point of describing the disconnection of leaders to people, by describing the despondency of the Thebans as they fight (12.721–725). The disjuncture between Creon and his people is most clear when Theseus kills him and the Thebans instantly welcome Theseus as a guest (12.782–785). Creon’s unilateralism is analogous to Eteocles’, and Statius draws attention to this through his commentary on how the Thebans view their leaders’ decisions and become victims of these.

In all cases in the *Thebaid*, then, Statius is concerned to show the socio-political context of decision-making, but two different models are given: decisions by non-Theban leaders

¹⁵⁵ Eteocles himself suggests Creon’s rhetoric is not to be trusted, 11.298–308. Creon’s speech begins with a focus on collective loss, but the latter part is about his son, 11.283–292

¹⁵⁶ Note also the comment that Thebes, which had been ‘thronged’ with people, has been drained and is now empty, *urbem... civibus artam/ hausisti/ uacuam/ deest legentes*, 11.273–275.

¹⁵⁷ His next step is to banish Oedipus, 11.669–672.

are made in the context of popular support; Theban leaders act in spite of popular sentiment, producing disgruntlement and sometimes even direct opposition.

Fragmented Argive leadership

The Argive section of book 3 is the longest sequence of decision-making in the epic, and is a critical point in the plot at which the Argives decide to enter war with Thebes. In this book, Statius alternates mutually reflective divine and human scenes to give a nuanced and politically sophisticated portrayal of the Argive decision to engage in war. Statius' allegorical gods enrich a reading of the social and political factors that lead to war. Just as gods 'mix' with crowds of people, Statius' story of events at Argos mixes poetic modes, but indicates that they constitute a mutually reinforcing portrait of events through their shared language and imagery. Statius' description builds to a climax on both human and divine levels, almost to the point of civil war in the city, as the frenzy for war escalates and Argos feels the ineluctable onrush of Mars.¹⁵⁸ Statius describes the gods exploiting peculiarities of leadership at Argos, and we must take into account the gods' significance as allegorical figures to understand the complexities of Statius' portrait of the build-up to war.

Critics have underplayed the social and political aspect of these scenes, and have focused instead on the role of the gods as agents independent of the human action. In doing so, Statius' foregrounding of the role of the masses in the decision to attack Thebes has not been recognised, nor has the division between leaders and crowds at Argos. At numerous points, Statius delineates Argos' social hierarchy, if only to draw attention to the difference between these formal structures and their operation in reality.¹⁵⁹ The question of group psychology and action is pertinent to that of leadership. Despite his authority as king, Adrastus in book 3 chooses not to—or perhaps assumes he is unable to—influence or control the crowd, and leadership is taken up instead by various other figures. The

¹⁵⁸ Ash (1999, 3) notes that in a civil war 'escalation, rather than a deliberate declaration of war, typifies civil conflict, which makes untangling the moral issues particularly challenging'.

¹⁵⁹ Millar (1998, 208), writing on crowds in Rome in the late republic, makes this useful distinction, between 'formal structures; the social realities of participation or otherwise in those structures; and the exercise of power, persuasion, and force between those individuals and groups who did participate'.

narrative itself consequently becomes fragmented into a variety of points of view as a series of debates between individuals takes place.

Adrastus' leadership is deliberative in style, and he is immune to irrational collective phenomena, but he recognises at the same time the importance of popular feeling in the decision-making process. Argia's interview with Adrastus that ends the book suggests that ultimately he has the power to decide, but this is heavily qualified by the events of book 3 leading up to this scene. Even the brief survey given above of other decision-making sequences in the *Thebaid* confirms the basic observation that although kings at Thebes and Argos work within the same formal system of monarchy, the two cities provide inverse models of leadership and crowd behaviour. In turn, this alters the way we view the moral message of the *Thebaid* as a whole. It is true that Statius emphasises the negative reactions of the populace at Thebes to their kings' decisions, and also the collective victimhood of the Thebans due to these. By contrast, at Argos the mass has a prominent role to play in the decision to go to war, and the causes of mass warfare are thus much more complex than a simple, unilateral decision by an all-powerful tyrant.

Chapter 4

Book 4: Argive Military (Dis)order and Catalogue

Through its regimented organisation, the epic military catalogue organises the army into a series of contingents that recreate the army textually, lending the army structure and order.¹ Through a series of discrete entries,² the poet conveys the army's grandeur in its broadest scope, asserting the significance of his epic through broad geographical scale and the huge numbers of men involved.³ By presenting the army as an orderly, unified whole, the catalogue also demonstrates how a mass of men amalgamates for the purposes of a single goal: this is achieved especially through the verbal connection between a leader or leaders and the army as a whole, and through the syntactic connections between leader and troops in each entry, which provide an important 'narrative vignette'⁴ that indicates the sphere and nature of each leader's role, thereby conveying the underlying army structure.⁵

Through accretion, Roman epic creates a pool of regular expressions for this connection: the most common is *ago*, but verbs such as *duco* and the related nouns *dux* and *ductor* are

¹ I therefore use 'catalogue' and 'parade/march', and also 'entry' and 'contingent' to distinguish the textual and military conceptions of the catalogue and its units. Statius' catalogue describes a scene, as Kytzler (1969, 220–221) notes. This is part of a trend of integrating catalogues more naturally into their context: Reitz 2013, 233; Lovatt 2014, 212; Kleywegt 2005, 203. Cf. Carspecken (1952, 49, 56–58) on Apollonius Rhodius. Recent scholarship has utilised this imitative, visual aspect of catalogues either explicitly or implicitly: Saylor 1974; Reitz 1999a, 361, 364; Kyriakides 2007. Cf. Phorbas' failure to 'keep pace' with the army as he narrates, *Theb.* 7.368–373.

² I adopt Sammons' broad definition and terms of analysis: a catalogue is a list with three or more discrete 'entries' conforming to a 'rubric' that gives features common to each entry: 2010, 8–10. For variations, see Beye (1964, 345–346), Minchin (1996, 4, who stipulates a minimum of four entries), Reitz (2013, 230) and Kyriakides, (2007, xiii).

³ See Bassett (1938, 212–213) on Homer's 'vast Greek army'; Carspecken 1952, 39–40; Crossett 1969, 242; Minchin 1996, 11, 18; Scott 2009, 43–4; Sammons 2010, 19–20, 153 with n62.

⁴ Sammons 2010, 12–13. Sammons (2010, 13 n27) refers to Barney (1982, 201–203) on the idea of the 'narrative vignette'.

⁵ Each entry of the catalogues in *Iliad 2* includes leadership as an essential element: Carspecken 1952, 40; Powell 1978, 255–256; Sammons 2010, 136. The set of verbs and phrases used to express this is limited, with most being ἄγω or related terms: Beye 1964, 348; Minchin 2011, esp. 156.

also used, and, less frequently, *rapio*.⁶ Virgil's catalogue of Latins in the *Aeneid*, for instance, varies its entries more than Homer's, even including entries that lack a contingent altogether.⁷ However, where Virgil does give a verbal connection between leader and troops, there is a loose pattern of repetition, the favoured connection being the verb *ago* with *agmen* or *agmina* as object.⁸ Innovations on this cumulative model of epic catalogue are effective *qua* innovations, in their departure from epic convention.⁹ Through these connections the epic military catalogue becomes loosely programmatic for the way in which the army will operate as a corporate entity.¹⁰

Through its structured presentation of the army, epic catalogues contrast with the chaos of battle that follows, and as such become 'emblems of order', with the entire army lined up.¹¹ Epic catalogues may also function to resolve pre-existing problems of leadership: for instance, the Greek catalogue of the *Iliad* fixes the list of participants and leadership structure after an extended exploration of leadership.¹² Traditionally, the leaders' task within the catalogue and that of the poet himself thereby coincide: as the leaders lead

⁶ See Table A (237) for syntactic connections in the catalogues of Roman epic, which collectively provide a pool of regular expressions.

⁷ E.g. the shared leadership of Catillas and Coras, 7.670–677, and Umbro, who has no tropas, 7.750–760. Other entries include leader and troops but with no connection between them, e.g. Aventinus' entry, 7.655–669. Courtney (1988, 3–4) discusses Virgil's innovations on Homer's catalogues.

⁸ See Table A: 237. The verb *armo* is used for *ago* in *Aen.* 7.648, which retains the assonance. Cf. Agrippa on the shield of Aeneas, *agmen agens*, *Aen.* 8.683.

⁹ Lucan's epic provides good examples. Batinski (1992, 19–20) notes the dissonance between expectation and Lucan's catalogues: Lucan omits the names of contingent leaders altogether, which emphasises the dominance of Caesar and Pompey, and also elides the catalogue's commemorative capacity. On this tendency in Lucan, see also Gorman (2001). Batinski (1992, 19–24) notes that by giving Gallic place-names from where Caesar has gathered his Roman troops, this becomes a 'catalogue in reverse', in which regular features of the catalogue are transferred to the Gauls themselves, in turn reinforcing Caesar's depiction as a *hostis*. See also Roche (2009 *ad* 392–465) on Lucan's catalogues.

¹⁰ At the most basic level, Apollonius' catalogue of individual Argonauts indicates how this force is different from those in the *Iliad*: Carspecken 1952, 44–45, 57; Beye 1969, 35; Beye 1982, 77–83; Kleywegt 2005, 204. Lovatt (2014, 211–214) views Valerius Flaccus' catalogue as a source for how the Argonauts work as a team, and how this 'shape[s] our impression of what is to come', 211. Lovatt considers inclusions, the motivation of the scene, characterisation, division of roles and arrangement of space in the consideration of how this group operates collectively.

¹¹ Feeney (1999, 190), who adds: 'we might see the epic catalogue as an element in tension with the mayhem that follows when the tidily itemized groups collide and try to annihilate each other'. Cf. Georgacopoulou (1996), whose chapter title captures this idea: 'Ranger/Déranger'. Sammons (2010, 8) similarly notes that the catalogue is characterised 'by methodical and orderly presentation'.

¹² Sammons 2010, 135–148, 162.

their troops in formation, so the author orders the troops in his catalogue.¹³ On this reading, the catalogue is not just an orderly literary form, but also an assertion of shared will among the characters that allows the fulfilment of the plot.¹⁴

In addition to these observations, recent scholarship has recognised the catalogue as bearing an important metapoetic comment on the poet's problem of selecting and ordering his material in his epic.¹⁵ Prior to the Greek catalogue of *Iliad* 2, Homer makes an appeal to the Muses that outlines the rubric of his catalogue, including the comment that his ability to include the mass, *πληθός*, is limited, even if he were to have 'ten mouths and tongues, a heart of bronze and a voice that could not be broken' (...οὐ' εἴ μοι δέκα μὲν γλῶσσαι, δέκα δὲ στόματ' εἶεν,/ φωνὴ δ' ἄρρηκτος, χάλκεον δὲ μοι ἦτορ ἐνειη, *Il.* 2.488–492; quotes from 488–490).¹⁶ Through this comment he problematises his inclusion of the mass, which are represented in the catalogue numerically and geographically.¹⁷ Subsequent epic follows this limitation to the naming of leaders, but poets vary their appeals that outline their inclusion. In addition, epic catalogues traditionally include named figures in the catalogue whose actions are not narrated in the poem, 'supernumeraries',¹⁸ allowing these figures to partake in the poem's perpetuation of fame, if only perfunctorily.¹⁹ Through these supernumeraries, the poet suggests other possible poems, and thereby 'explores the limits of narrative poetry'; that is, the catalogue

¹³ This coincidence is especially evident in *Iliad* 2, where *κόσμος* and related terms are used of both of these tasks. On *κόσμος* as a term for arrangement, including 'well-deployed forces', see Ford (1992, 122). Cf. also Walsh (1984, 7–21), Ford (1992, 26, 77, 86, 122–3), Mackie (1996, 18–20, 135) and Elmer (2013, 48–59, 86–104, esp. 52). Elmer (2013, 86–104) notes that in this way Homer's Greek catalogue becomes 'a definitive statement of social and poetic order' (101). Sammons (2010, 180) also mentions this coincidence briefly.

¹⁴ Elmer (2013, 107) summarises this.

¹⁵ On which see esp. Sammons (2010) and Reitz (2013). This process of selection is evident in Statius' proem, where he selects his material from Theban myth, 1.3–45.

¹⁶ *Il.* 2.488–492.

¹⁷ On this see Sammons (2010, 148–158), who views this as a comment on Homer's 'creative solution' to the problem of mass (154). Reitz (2013, esp. 229–232) also discusses this phenomenon.

¹⁸ This begins with Homer:

Bassett 1938, 210–212; Edwards 1980, 82; Sammons 2010, esp. 137–138, 158–180; Dickinson 2011, 151. This phenomenon is also found in Apollonius Rhodius: Carspecken 1952, 41, 43, 49; Beye 1982, 80. And also in Roman epic, such as *Aeneid* 7 and 10, on which see Harrison (1991, 106) and Feeney (1999, esp. 190–194). Macrobius criticises Virgil for this, *Sat.* 5.15.6–13.

¹⁹ Kyriakides 2007, xiv–xvi, 2–3; Sammons 2010, esp. 197–204: through naming, characters 'enjoy some measure of poetic fame' (199).

becomes a reflection on the poet's task of choosing his material, and on the genre of epic itself.²⁰ The length and placement of entries in military catalogues is therefore often out of keeping with characters' importance in the narrative.²¹ Through the catalogue, then, the poet makes a comment on his narrative inclusions that reflects on his treatment of leaders as opposed to the mass.

The Argive catalogue is thus significant in two respects for my study, and this chapter is roughly divided according to these. Firstly, we may read the catalogue as a source for the Argive military structure, outlining how this group will operate as a corporate entity. I start with a discussion of Statius' opening poetic appeal, and how this shapes our reading of the catalogue in terms of leadership, after which I briefly contextualise the catalogue in book 4. I then examine two sets of relationships which are relevant to this reading: the first between individual figure(s) and the army, through which the impetus is provided for the march itself, and through which the catalogue becomes a collective expression of the power and purpose of individuals; the second between contingent leaders and troops in each entry. I also consider the way Statius includes leaders and their massed troops in each entry, as promised by the appeal: this includes considerations of the space accorded to leaders and troops, arrangement of entries, physical pre-eminence of leaders, the treatment of city lists, and the way in which these two elements are depicted 'in the scene'. From this reading, I draw conclusions about the structure of the army, including its unity and emphasis on individualism; I also question its ability to function as an 'emblem of order' that contrasts with its immediate narrative surrounds.

When viewed in light of these functions of military catalogue as developed in the work of Statius' epic predecessors, Statius' Argive catalogue is striking for its innovations, many of which are significant for a reading of leadership: its entries are long and extremely digressive, and Statius often takes the reader away at length from the task of enumeration; no human figure motivates the formation of the catalogue, but rather Bellona is described

²⁰ Sammons 2010, esp. 1–22, 139–140, 147–148, 194–196; quote from 22. Sammons (2010, 21–22) outlines Aristotle's discussion on the poet's imposition of unity on a single episode. Sammons (2010, 159–164) also notes that those figures named in the catalogue who do not appear later function like the *πληθὺς* in their suggestion of other possible narratives.

²¹ E.g. Bassett (1938, 212) comments that Homer's placement of the Boeotians first is 'quite according to the Homeric way of describing new and insignificant heroes with greater fullness than the chief characters'. Cf. Powell (1978, 260) on Ajax's short entry.

overseeing the muster; within entries, leadership is not conveyed through repeated and common syntactic connections, but each leader's role is conceived of differently. Statius includes the now-deified Hercules as a leader in the centre of his catalogue, and further complicates a reading of Hercules' small contingent through the use of a delayed variation on the traditional 'epic (in)capacity' motif,²² and finally—and most unusually—the catalogue does not include 'supernumerary' figures, those men that are named in a military catalogue who do not appear at all in the narrative of the epic. Keeping in mind these observations, we may proceed to an examination of Statius' Argive catalogue.

Structure, appeal and context

Statius' catalogue describes the Argive army in a series of eight entries that duplicates the line-up of men as they advance in order, marked off from the main narrative by an appeal for poetic assistance (4.32–38). In order, the leaders of these contingents are Adrastus (4.38.5–73), Polynices (4.74–92), Tydeus (4.93–115), Hippomedon (4.116–144), Hercules (4.145–164), Capaneus (4.165–186), Amphiaraus (4.187–245) and Parthenopaeus (4.246–308).²³ Aside from Hercules' entry, which is striking for other (obvious) reasons, Statius follows both the number of assailants as established first by Aeschylus (seven), and the pool of major figures found in other tragedy.²⁴ However, a key difference is that tragic accounts of the war against Thebes provide lists of individuals, rather than leaders with contingents whose provenance is given through a list of proper names.²⁵ Tragedy does not exclude massed action from its renditions of the attack on Thebes, but its catalogues operate differently from those in epic.

²² Hinds' term: 1998, 94.

²³ See Table B: 238. Here I include the poet's comment in 4.145–146a in Hercules' contingent. I also include the 'negative entry' of Mycenae in 4.305–308 and the Atalanta scene, 4.309–344, in Parthenopaeus' entry.

²⁴ Gantz (1993, 514–517) gives a summary: Pausanias says that the number of attackers was 'reduced to seven' by Aeschylus, probably to match the seven gates of Thebes, 2.20.5–6.

²⁵ This is not to say that troops are excluded from tragedy's action. In Euripides' *Phoenissae* 108, the servant says to Antigone, χωρίζουσι δ' ἀλλήλων λόχους. In this play, the phrase προσῆγε (λόχον) is used of Parthenopaeus, Polynices and Capaneus: 1104–1105, 1124, 1129.

In what follows I view the Argive catalogue in terms of its epic function, with reference to the typology of this ever-evolving epic set-piece,²⁶ which was used consistently by post-Homeric epicists, who considered it vital to the genre.²⁷ For my purposes, the Greek catalogue of *Iliad* 2 is especially relevant, as the model to which subsequent epic poets looked, and the toponyms of which Statius utilises in his Argive catalogue.²⁸ Virgil's catalogue of Latins in *Aeneid* 7 is also an important model, whose structure is closest to this one. But the tradition of epic catalogue collectively forms the typology from which Statius is working, meaning that adherence to and departures from this are therefore important to a reading of the Argive catalogue.

Statius opens his catalogue with an appeal for poetic assistance that marks a departure from the main narrative:

nunc mihi, Fama prior mundique arcana Vetustas,
 cui meminisse ducum uitasque extendere curae,
 pande uiros, tuque, o nemoris regina sonori,
 Calliope, quas ille manus, quae mouerit arma
 Gradivus, quantas populis solauerit urbes,
 sublata molire lyra: neque enim altior ulli
 mens hausto de fonte uenit. (4.32–38)

Now to me, prior Fame and secret Antiquity of the world, whose care it is to remember leaders and to extend their lives, lay out the men. And you, Calliope, queen of the sonorous grove, lift up your lyre and tell what bands, what arms Gradivus set in motion, and what great cities he left bereft of their peoples: for no deeper inspiration comes to anyone from the drained fount.

The first part of the appeal is to Fama and Vetustas concerning leaders; the second to Calliope, concerning the troops and other information collectively. The appeal gives the rubric of the catalogue: first the leaders; then the bands, *quas... manus*, and arms, *quae...*

²⁶ Kyriakides 2007, xvi: 'Since catalogues are a given feature... of the epic in particular it is logical to expect the formation of a typology'. Extant epic military catalogues are: Hom. *Il.* 2.484–760, 2.816–877; Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 1.18–226; Verg. *Aen.* 7.641–817, 10.163–214; Luc. 1.392–465, 3.169–297; *Ilias Latina* 161–221, 222–251; Sil. *Pun.* 3.222–414, 8.356–621, 14.192–257, 258–291; Val. Fl. 1.352–483, 5.567–618, 6.42–170; Stat. *Theb.* 4.32–344, 7.243–373. Ovid plays on the epic catalogue, e.g. in his list of Actaeon's dogs, *Met.* 3.206–236, on which see Reitz (1999a, 364–365). Antimachus' *Thebaid* also included a catalogue, fr. 16–17 Wyss, as noted by Courtney (1988, 5).

²⁷ Carspecken 1952, 40–41. Feeney 1999, 190: 'All epics appear to need a catalogue.' The *Ilias Latina* indicates how essential its inclusion in epic was, with the catalogue taking up over 8% of the poem.

²⁸ Carspecken (1952, 41) notes that Homer's catalogue of ships was a model for later epicists. On Statius specifically, see Juhnke (1972 88–92, with Übersicht 4) and Smith (2017, 240–243).

arma, Mars has set in motion, and their cities of origin, *quantas... urbes*.²⁹ Statius announces that his catalogue will stand in the tradition of the contingent-based catalogue which starts, as we have it, in *Iliad* 2. This catalogue type includes both leaders and troops, and each entry effectively becomes a mini-catalogue of place-names, whether towns, cities, rivers or mountains.³⁰ As well as individual *duces*, then, Statius promises geographical and numerical scope.

A Muse or Muses were traditionally the poet's reference point for his authority and poetic programme; however, Statius unusually appeals to Fama and Vetustas.³¹ Statius does assert a need for assistance of a sort in this first section, but in the form of two figures that are abstractions of the stream of human information. Statius appeals to Fama, but then develops his conception of this figure through the addition of Vetustas. Statius is thus appealing to the long tradition of stories about the Seven, rather than a divine poetic figure like a Muse or Apollo, but only for the leaders of the catalogue.³² The appeal to the Muse Calliope in the second part is more traditional, in which he summarises the information he will supply about the troops and their origins.³³ Statius effectively provides two appeals, with two distinct poetic sources for each, rather than the usual single one, and in doing so, he creates a heavy distinction between leaders and troops.

Statius' Fama recalls Homer's appeal in *Iliad* 2, where the 'Muses that have dwellings on Olympus' (Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι, 2.484) are the source of *all* his catalogue material, information that cannot be supplied by limited human knowledge, κλέος (2.484–493).³⁴ Virgil constructs a similar opposition between human and divine knowledge to Homer in his appeals of *Aeneid* 7 and 10, *et meministis enim, diuae, et memorare potestis;/ ad nos uix tenuis famaeprelabitur aura* ('For you are able both to remember, goddesses, and to recount; to us does scarcely a thin waft of Fama slip down', 7.645–

²⁹ The phrase *quantas... urbes* is ambiguous, and can denote greatness or numerical magnitude: 'how great' or 'how many', *OLD quantus* §1a, 1e. Cf. Smith (2017, 253n43) who assumes this means 'how many'.

³⁰ Kyriakides (2007, 34) uses the term 'internal catalogue' for this.

³¹ Parkes (2012 *ad* 32–5, 33) notes that this is unusual.

³² So the ancient scholiast *ad* 4.32–33: *ideo ista numina inuocantur, quia nullum bellum Thebano antiquius fuit*, 'the appeals are to these divine powers since no war was more ancient than the Theban one'.

³³ Noted by Parkes (2012 *ad* 35–6). Parkes (2012 *ad* 32–5) also notes that this second set of information appears 'almost as an afterthought'.

³⁴ On κλέος in Homer's appeal of *Iliad* 2, see Sammons (2010, 164–165).

646).³⁵ These two important predecessors of Statius base their appeals on the deficiency of human knowledge abstracted as κλέος and Fama/*fama*; by contrast, Statius suggests that *fama*—specifically a version of *fama* that shades into ‘tradition’—has the ability to supply the required information, but only about the leading figures.³⁶

Statius’ use of *pande* of his leaders also suggests a divergence from Virgil, who appeals exclusively to the Muses, *pandite nunc Helicon, deae, cantusque mouete* (7.641; 10.163).³⁷ Statius uses the same verb but unusually makes *uiros* the object, rather than divine Helicon, another suggestion that in listing the leaders he is not revealing information with a divine source. Statius’ appeal is suggestive for how we are to read the Argive catalogue that follows: it lays special emphasis on the leaders by sectioning them off from the other information, and indicates that unlike the learned geographical information that will be contained in the catalogue, the *duces* are already in some way familiar.

The catalogue appeal is also important for a reading of Statius’ conception of his place in the tradition of storytelling. Word order encourages a reader to attach the *cui* clause to Fama and Vetustas, or Vetustas alone (4.33); however, the *cui* clause may also be attached to the narrator himself, *mihi* (4.32).³⁸ It may even refer to all three, knitting Statius’ poetic output into the broader continuum of poetic memory and storytelling, which itself becomes part of Fama-Vetustas. Statius produces a neat chiasmus to encapsulate the process, *meminisse ducum uitasque extendere* (4.33).³⁹ This distinction of source becomes a distinction of treatment, which manifests itself in Statius’ poem: the poem’s commemorative function is asserted according to army structure, whereby Fama and Vetustas—and Statius, who provides part of this—will grant an extended poetic life

³⁵ On Statius’ adaptation of Homer and Virgil here, see the discussion in Parkes (2012 *ad* 32–5).

³⁶ Myers (2016, 42–43) observes this.

³⁷ Kytzler (1969, 223 esp. n1) notes the ‘contamination’ of the appeal in *Aeneid* 7. Cf. also *Met.* 15.622–623: *pandite nunc, Musae, praesentia numina uatum, / scitis enim, nec uos fallit spatiosa uetustas.*

³⁸ Like *cui*, *pande* is singular, referring to both Fama and Vetustas, two conceptions of the same concept: ‘prior tradition’, or ‘repository of the past’.

³⁹ Cf. Adrastus’ Coroebus story, where the men are willing to ‘extend’ their fame in return for their lives, *famam posthabita faciles extendere uita*, 1.607. Adrastus demonstrates the process in action, perpetuating *fama* by telling the story: note the catalogue verb *pando*, 1.561, on which see Vessey (1986, 2992). In the *Aeneid*, Jupiter says to Hercules, *sed famam extendere factis, / hoc uirtutis opus*, *Aen.* 10.468–469. On this speech, see Benario (1967, 29).

to leaders, while the mass remains anonymous. This distinction of treatment reworks the traditional ‘epic (in)capacity’ motif.⁴⁰ Starting with Homer, the catalogue is a locus for epicists to problematise their ability to narrate the deeds of, or even name, all the men involved.⁴¹ Numerical scale and the poet’s corresponding inability to name all men involved are common components of this sort of statement.⁴² This metapoetic principle—or problem—is applicable to the composition of all epic: the poet must select and impose order on his material, so that it can be contained within the bounds of the single poem.⁴³

At the same time, Statius strikes a gloomy note in his annotation of the catalogue’s inclusion of city lists from where the massed troops come. The phrase *quantas populis solauerit urbes* (4.36) is placed emphatically last in a rising tricolon.⁴⁴ Statius frames his inclusion of lists of cities, which give the origins of the massed troops, as ‘cities bereft of their people’. This pessimistic annotation looks proleptically to losses in the war to come, bringing to the fore the community impact of the war. Statius recalls the sombre note in the poem’s proem, where he also references the loss of life, but for both Argos and Thebes: *egestas alternis mortibus urbes* (1.37). The consolation of *fama* is available to his leaders in return for their deeds; but for the mass, who may suffer heavy loss of life, this is implicitly denied. In accordance with this commemorative prescription, Statius’ Argive catalogue directly names a single leader for each contingent, with the exception of Polynices, who is identified through periphrasis.⁴⁵

The events leading to the march-catalogue scene provide a lens through which to view leadership in the catalogue itself. When we view the catalogue as an expression of large-scale unity, the question of how the catalogue is created becomes important. Frequently

⁴⁰ Hinds’ term (1998, 94), as mentioned in the introduction.

⁴¹ Hinds 1998, 94–95. Sammons (2010, 157–158) discusses Homer’s treatment of this distinction.

⁴² On the ‘(in)capacity’ or ‘deficiency’ topos and catalogue, see Reitz (2013, esp. 229–232) and Wijsman (2000, *ad* 6.41, 42, 42–170). Lovatt (2006, 64–65) calls this the ‘the rhetoric of inability’. This motif will be treated in more detail in the section on the entry of Hercules, below.

⁴³ Cf. Masterson (2005, 312–313), who claims that in 12.797–799, the use of this motif is paradoxical, since Statius lists those things he professes to have an inability to narrate; however, the very point is that Statius cannot narrate these in full, and includes them in the compressed form of a list instead.

⁴⁴ Parkes (2005, 362 esp. n19) compares this with the use of *uasto* for the effects of war in 3.576 and 4.27, and *desolo* in 6.917.

⁴⁵ See Table C: 238. Kytzler (1969, 220) notes the match of seven commanders to seven contingents.

catalogues are preceded by a scene in which leader(s) instigate the marshalling of troops that the catalogue portrays, demonstrating in effect how the scope of the war broadens from individual(s) to mass. These ‘arch-leaders’ may be omitted from the catalogue proper, instead playing a significant role as active agents outside it, sometimes as the subject of a top-down verbal connection with the whole army.⁴⁶ The Argive catalogue is preceded by a book that dramatises fragmentation at Argos, and this is clearly based on *Aeneid* 7, where the muster of the Latins takes place immediately after scenes of the frenzied populace arming itself.⁴⁷ By contrast, the inception of the catalogue scene demands explanation after the long space of time that has lapsed between books 3 and 4. When book 4 opens, Statius views Argive participation in war as inevitable, ...*cum fracta impulsaque fatis / consilia et tandem miseris data copia belli* (4.3–4).⁴⁸ After this, however, the catalogue occurs spontaneously, without the agency of any Argive leader. If anyone, we expect Adrastus to motivate the march and therefore catalogue, but Statius chooses to omit the unifying relationship of Adrastus—or any other leader—to the army as a whole.

In this leadership vacuum, Bellona presides over the preparations for the march, a figure of chaos who contrasts with Adrastus’ more subdued approach:

prima manu rutilam de uertice Larisaeo
ostendit Bellona facem dextraque trabalem
hastam intorsit agens, liquido quae stridula caelo
fugit et Aoniae celso stetit aggere Dirces.
mox et castra subit ferroque auroque coruscis
mixta uiris turmale fremit; dat euntibus enses,

⁴⁶ E.g. Agamemnon is singled out prior to the Greek catalogue, *Il.* 2.480–483, discussed below. In the catalogue itself, his entry, like Hector’s later, is unique in its inclusion of a patronymic followed by a stop, *Il.* 2.577, 817: Powell 1978, 261. Neither Apollonius Rhodius nor Valerius Flaccus include Jason in their catalogues: Lovatt 2014, 213–4. In Valerius Flaccus, Jason is the single impulse behind the mission, but uses the agency of Athena and Juno to have the ship built and men gathered, 1.90–99; on which see Lovatt (2014, 212). Here, Jason is singled out through *ecce*, his central position in the group, and his cutting of the ship’s cables to literally get the men moving: 1.484–489, 494. In Lucan, despite Laelius’ pivotal role, Caesar is said to call together the troops that make up the catalogue, *Caesar... euocat*, 1.392, 395. Cf. Hannibal’s force in *Punica* 3, where Mago is first, but Hannibal motivates the catalogue, and is explicitly *ductor* of the whole, 3. 220–221, 406–414.

⁴⁷ On which see Chapter 3.

⁴⁸ Ash (2015, 210) observes that *miseris* here may be taken two ways: it may ‘evoke pity’ for the Argives, or taken with *tandem* could suggest they are wretched because they have had to wait so long.

plaudit equos, uocat ad portas; hortamina fortes
praeueniunt, timidisque etiam breuis addita uirtus (4.5–12)

First Bellona directly showed her red torch from the Larisaeian peak and with her right hand hurled her trunk-like spear, which fled whistling through the clear sky, and stood firm on the high rampart of Aonian Dirce. Next she entered the camp and mingling with the men, who flashed with steel and gold, roared like a squadron; she gives swords to men as they depart, claps their horses, calls them to the gates; those who are brave advance ahead of her encouragement, and a little courage is added even to those who are fearful.

Bellona is *prima* (4.5).⁴⁹ In the context of a catalogue that includes a series of items, this may be read as a marker of her place in a series, even if she is outside the catalogue proper.⁵⁰ For example, the *externus dux* Aeneas is first in the line of Etruscan ships: *Aeneia puppis/ prima tenet rostro Phrygios subiuncta leones...* (*Aen.* 10.156–157), long before the appeal introduces the catalogue proper (10.163ff.).⁵¹ Aeneas' ship is first, while Massicus' ship is first in the catalogue, a placement that has puzzled some modern scholarship.⁵² The Servius *auctus* explains simply: *inter auxilia accipiendum: nam Aeneae prima est nauis.*

Bellona's description combines various aspects of her conception as a divinity, including her cult, evoked through spear-throwing (6–7); she is anthropomorphic, as she 'mingles' with and encourages the men, physically interacting with them, *dat... plaudit... uocat* (10–11); but is also allegorical, as the hugeness of her spear shows the huge collective operation underway (*trabalem*, 'like a tree-trunk', 6), as does her roar (*turmale*, 'in the manner of a squadron of cavalry', 10).⁵³ Athena in the *Iliad* plays a similar role, and is perhaps a model, but Athena's description complements in this distinct mode the actions of the Greek leaders, initiated by Agamemnon on Nestor's advice.⁵⁴ Bellona is more akin to Virgil's Juno, who like Bellona enacts a Roman military custom by opening the gates

⁴⁹ Cf. Parkes (2012 *ad* 5) on *prima*: 'stylistically balancing *tertius* (1); structurally balancing *mox* (9)'.

⁵⁰ Cf. *prima* for Argia, who is first in the women's catalogue, *Theb.* 12.111. *primus* and *princeps* are the first words of Virgil's catalogue of Latins, *Aen.* 7.647 and *Sil. Pun.* 3.231 respectively. Cf. *πρῶτά, πρῶτον* and *πρῶτα*, *Ap. Rhod. Argon.* 1.23 and *Eur. Phoen.* 118, 1104, all for first entries.

⁵¹ Aeneas is also part of the catalogue's appeal, *Aen.* 10.163–165.

⁵² Harrison 1991 *ad* 183.

⁵³ *OLD* s.v. *trabalis, turmalis*.

⁵⁴ *Hom. Il.* 2.432–440, 441–446; cf. 2.446–452, esp. 2.446–7, 450–2: Parkes (2012 *ad* 9–10) observes the similarity.

of war.⁵⁵ Bellona's intervention is corporeal, *manu* (4.5), just as Juno's had been: *tum regina deum caelo delapsa morantis/ impulit ipsa manu portas, et cardine verso...* (*Aen.* 7.620–621).⁵⁶ In the *Aeneid*, the *regina deum* (620) acts while the *rex* Latinus does not, and they are juxtaposed to make this 'replacement' clearer. As in the *Aeneid*, in the *Thebaid*, the appearance of the goddess and her contrast to the reluctant leader points up the absence of an initiating individual figure on the human plane.

Bellona's description as the single figure presiding over this catalogue is unsettling. The exact nature of this goddess is not well understood, but her cult site was important in Roman politico-military operations.⁵⁷ Her spear-cast in Statius recalls the Roman declaration of war, in which one of the *fetiales* hurled a spear from her pillar;⁵⁸ being the goddess herself, her cast spans the distance between the two cities. While not entirely mutually exclusive from the operation of her cult at Rome (so far as we can tell), Statius draws more on the poetic—specifically epic—associations of this goddess.⁵⁹ In the *Thebaid* she is mentioned nine times, and once in the *Achilleid*.⁶⁰ Statius describes her frequently as engaging in direct preparations for fighting, as a sort of secondary goddess or assistant to Mars. In book 7, she is Mars' charioteer, controlling the horses 'with bloody hand', *regit atra iugales/ sanguinea Bellona manu longaue fatigat/ cuspidē* (7.72–74).⁶¹ In book 8 she beats on the doors of the Thebans, leading to their own (shorter) catalogue (8.348, 353–362). Bellona also effects changes in the direction or

⁵⁵ On the Roman practice of spear-throwing, see Livy 1.32.2–14 and Ovid *Fast.* 6.207–208: *hinc solet hasta manu, belli praenuntia, mitti, / in regem et gentes cum placet arma capi.*

⁵⁶ *OLD manus* §2c: 'by direct or personal action'. It may also denote force or violence, *OLD manus* §8. This need not refer to a particular hand, *pace* Parkes (2012, 5–6). Cf. Hippomedon: *di bene quod pugnas rapidum deiecit in amnem/ sanguinea Bellona manu*, 9.296–297. *ipse/a manu* is used frequently for divine action that has a tangible effect on the human plane, and as such becomes a sort of shorthand for the breaking of this boundary: e.g. Virg. *Aen.* 5.241, 7.142–143, *G.* 4.329. Cf. *ipse deus*, *Theb.* 6.743.

⁵⁷ *LTUR* 1, 190–193. Livy names her nineteen times, seventeen for her temple as the senate's extra-*pomerium* meeting place. Mattingly (1958, 26–27) views Bellona as a possible *numen* of a more major goddess, such as Diana or Virtus, but does not examine her treatment in poetry.

⁵⁸ See Ov. *Fast.* 6.199–208 and Servius *ad Aen.* 9.52. Cf. *Theb.* 2.718–719, where again she is again *hastata*. Fishwick (1967, 149, 155–157) discusses Bellona's carrying of spears.

⁵⁹ Roche (2009 *ad* 565) makes a similar comment on Lucan's recollection of Verg. *Aen.* 8.700–704.

⁶⁰ Cf. the *Aeneid*'s two, 7.319, 8.703; Ovid's single instance in *Met.* 5.155 (and discussion of her cult in *Fast.* 6); Valerius Flaccus' four, 1.546, 2.228, 3.60, 7.636; and Silius' two, 4.439, 5.221.

⁶¹ In Silius Italicus' epic she is also a charioteer, *Pun.* 4.438f.

nature of the fighting: Hippomedon thanks her for directing the fighting into the Ismenos, ‘with bloody hand’, *sanguinea... manu* (9.296–297).⁶²

The Bellona Statius inherits is not just bloody but associated with civil bloodshed. In the *Aeneid*, Juno says Bellona will be *pronuba* for Lavinia’s marriage, for which the people will pay: *sanguine Troiano et Rutulo dotabere, uirgo, / et Bellona manet te pronuba* (*Aen.* 7.318–319).⁶³ A more vivid and grisly image of Bellona with a ‘bloody whip’ and in the company of the Dirae and Discordia is later given on the shield of Aeneas, cementing her civil war associations (*Aen.* 8.700–703). In Neronian writers, too, Bellona is associated with forces of chaos, especially civil war. In Petronius, first the beneficent deities Peace, Faith, Justice, Concord leave the earth, and these are replaced by a ‘chorus of Dis’ (*Ditis chorus*): Erinys, Bellona, Megaera, Letum, *insidiae*, *lurida Mortis imago*, and Furor (249–263). Calpurnius Siculus also employs a grim portrait of *impia* Bellona as an agent of civil war: in the time of Nero’s peace, impious Bellona will turn her ‘frenzied teeth’ against her own vitals, she who had spread civil war around the world:

...dabit impia victas
post tergum Bellona manus spoliataque telis
in sua uesanos torquebit uiscera morsus
et, modo quae toto ciuilia distulit orbe,
secum bella geret (Calp. *Ecl.* 1.46–50).

...impious Bellona will place her conquered hands behind her back and despoiled of her weapons, turn her frenzied teeth against her own flesh, and just as she spread civil wars over the whole earth, will wage war with herself.

Again, in this graphic description, Bellona’s hands and weapons are points of reference for her description (*manus, telis*, 47).

Statius’ Bellona also recalls Lucan’s Caesar, which is again unsettling for the question of leadership in the poem: on the battlefield Caesar also interacts with his troops at close quarters: *ipse manu* (twice); *ipse* (7.557–81, esp. 567, 574, 576). Both Bellona and Lucan’s Caesar have a hands-on style of leadership, mingling with their men to encourage

⁶² Smolenaars (1994 *ad* 72f.) suggests this is taken from Seneca’s *Agamemnon* 81f., where Bellona also has a bloody hand, *sanguinolenta... manu*, and again is the agent of *impia... arma*. Cf. also *Theb.* 12.720–721, when Theseus arrives and Bellona rouses a different sort of war.

⁶³ Cf. Stat. *Achil.* 1.33–34: *ecce nouam Priamo... / fert Bellona nurum*.

action.⁶⁴ Lucan explicitly compares Caesar with Bellona; and Statius' Bellona recalls Lucan's Caesar. This association with Caesar—Lucan's Caesar, no less—is disturbing in the context of the start of the catalogue, suggesting that the motivating factor behind the march to war is a bloody force of frenzy, discord and civil strife. In Book 10, Bellona is associated with Capaneus' assault on the walls of Thebes through a simile, and again she has associations of bloodiness and violence: *ceu suprema lues urbi facibusque cruentis/aequatura solo turres Bellona subiret* (10.854–855). As with Lucan's Caesar, Capaneus is a figure that threatens order—this time cosmic order—through his attack on the gods.⁶⁵ It is alarming then that this figure associated with disorder and bloodshed, and specifically civil war, should open the catalogue in the absence of leadership on the human plane.⁶⁶ As in book 3, Statius creates tension between human leadership and a god who is described in both collective terms and as the general of the army.

Catalogue entries

Adrastus

The final scene with Argia in book 3 suggests king Adrastus as the figure to mobilise the army; but in book 4 he plays no such role. Epic contingent-based catalogues, such as the Greek one in *Iliad 2*, are ordered on two levels, between arch-leader and the army as a whole; and within contingents, between leaders and their respective groups. Adrastus is the leader of the catalogue's first entry, and commentators have noted that this first position is a natural, emphatic place for the 'commander' with his contingent in the catalogue's structure.⁶⁷ But this is based on an assumption that entries are given in descending order of military status, which is unsupported by precedents from Greco-Roman catalogue: most frequently, a single leading figure of a force is either not listed at all within a catalogue or not in first place.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Micozzi (2007 *ad* 133–135) and Parkes (2012 *ad* 5–11) note the relevance of Lucan's Caesar here.

⁶⁵ Capaneus is also compared with the Aloidae, 10.849–852.

⁶⁶ Even so, Bellona is grouped with Virtus, Mars and Minerva as opposed to the Furies before the duel in 11.411–415.

⁶⁷ So Parkes (2012 *ad* 63) on 'commander Adrastus'.

⁶⁸ E.g. Homer's placement of the Boeotians, on which see Bassett (1938, 212), Carspecken (1952, 47–48), Kyriakides (2007, 15), Dickinson (2011, 150). Beye (1964, 362) notes that this is also

In fact, even Adrastus' inclusion as one of the Seven is not straightforward, since more often in extant sources he plays an accompanying role to seven other men.⁶⁹ Adrastus' old age, which Statius frequently emphasises, makes him inappropriate to an epic military role: old men usually serve as counsellors for (younger) fighting men.⁷⁰ Adrastus' parallelism with Virgil's Latinus leads to the expectation he will be absent from the catalogue altogether.⁷¹ Even the inclusion of Adrastus is noteworthy, then, but the assumption that his placement suggests military status is questionable on the basis of catalogue precedent. If this is not the point of his placement in the Argive catalogue, we are entitled to ask what effects Statius creates through this.

Adrastus' entry is structured around the king himself, beginning with a direct description of Adrastus in the march scene (4.38–43), and ending with a bull simile (4.68–73). He is singled out with *ipse* (4.40, 63, 68). Adrastus does not have a top-down syntactic connection with his men, but the verbs used of him are all of simple movement, both in direct description and simile: *uix sponte...incedit, subit, taurus...meat* (4.40, 68–69); and he does the first of these 'scarcely willingly' (40). Statius' description of how the men from Sicyon have come to be part of this entry is also given without the agency of Adrastus (*iunguntur*, 4.49), and after the Elisson digression, the men of Ephyre and Cenchreae are again included without his agency (*it comes*, 4.59). Adrastus' inactivity is emphasised by the arrangement of the entry, in which Adrastus is juxtaposed with a bustle of activity: his *manipuli* carry his weapons, bar his sword (41–2); his *auriga* grooms

true of Homer's *androktasiai*. An exception is Homer's Trojan catalogue, led by Hector. Crossett (1969, 244) notes that Trojan catalogue begins with 'three... significant figures on the Trojan side', Hector, Aeneas, Pandarus, and that it is apt that Hector is first in the Trojan catalogue since 'he is the leading Trojan warrior'.

⁶⁹ See Table F: 241. See also Gantz (1993, 514–517). Euripides' *Phoenissae*, 1104–40 is the single exception, where—notably—Adrastus is the only leader listed without a gate, 1134–1138. On the possible inauthenticity of this catalogue, see Mastronarde (1994 *ad* 1104–40). Fernandelli (2000, 91) also thinks this is 'probably an interpolation'.

⁷⁰ Older statesmen do not fare well in war, an epic topos, on which see Falkner (1995, 3–34, esp. 14–22, on the anomalous Nestor). Hypsipyle states that the aged should not be violated by weapons, *Theb.* 5.258–9. In the *Aeneid*, Priam's stand against Pyrrhus is weak, Verg. *Aen.* 2.506–558, and Evander says he is too old to fight, and sends Pallas instead, 8.560–571. Aeson in V. Fl. 1.336–340 says he would join his son's mission if he had his former strength.

⁷¹ Adrastus recalls Latinus at the level of both plot and word. On the latter, see Parkes (2012 *ad* 38 and 68) and Kytzler (1969, 223n1). Adrastus is better compared with Latinus than Turnus, *pace* Parkes (2012 *ad* 63).

his horse (42); his horse strains against its bit (43). He stands among ‘those who issue encouragement’, *inter adhortantes uix sponte incedit Adrastus...* (4.40).⁷²

Adrastus’ entry depicts the troops in the scene itself, and preceding the simile that ends the entry, the group is summarised:

haec manus Adrastum numero ter mille secuti
exultant; pars gaesa manu, pars robora flammis
indurata diu—non unus namque manipulis
mos neque sanguis—habent, teretes pars uertere fundas
adsueti uacuoque diem praecingere gyro. (4.63–68)

This band, three thousand in number, followed Adrastus rejoicing; some carried javelins in their hands, some spears hardened in flames (for the troops are of neither one custom or blood), and some were accustomed to whirl smooth slings and to encircle the sky in a hollow ring.

Here the troops are depicted clearly in the march scene. They are given a number to show mass, *ter mille* (63). They are also variegated through armour, marked by triple anaphora of *pars*, broken by a parenthetical remark about how men in his contingent lack a single custom or consanguinity: *non unus namque manipulis/ mos neque sanguis* (64–6).⁷³

Within this contingent, Adrastus’ physical position shows how he ‘leads’ the catalogue, taking up an advanced physical position: *arma manipuli/ pone ferunt*, 4.41–42; *secuti*, 4.63 (my emphasis). The verb *sequor* denotes the relative physical positions of leader and troops, but also conveys social or political order in a basic metaphor.⁷⁴ Adrastus’ sombre appearance and reluctance also contrasts with his band, which ‘follows exulting’, *secuti/ exultant* (4.63–64).⁷⁵ Reading the catalogue as a spatial imitation of the army parade, Adrastus is the first leader in the march as a whole: for both army and individual

⁷² We could—but need not—read Adrastus as the implied object of *adhortantes*. Parkes (2012 *ad* 38–73) notes the ‘contrasting eagerness of those surrounding him’.

⁷³ Lovatt (2005, 182–183) notes that Statius draws attention to the heterogeneity of Adrastus’ troops, which contrasts those of Tydeus. Parkes (2012 *ad* 64–7) notes this diversity ‘emphasises the disunity of the troops’.

⁷⁴ The verb *sequor* means ‘go after’ or ‘follow’, spatially or temporally (*OLD sequor* §1, 3–4), or ‘follow the lead or guidance/ authority of, obey’ (*OLD* §9a, c) or ‘support’, in politics or war, (*OLD* §11, 12, 13, 14, esp. 12a). Parkes (2012 *ad* 63) notes this suggests ‘obedience’ as well as position.

⁷⁵ Cf. Harrison (1991 *ad* 812–3) on *exulto*: ‘a demeanour of confident aggression’.

contingent, then, Adrastus takes an advanced, ‘leading’ position. But in both cases there is an inversion whereby the troops paradoxically enforce their will on this ‘leader’.

Adrastus’ disinclination to advance impedes the sense of the catalogue’s movement.⁷⁶ His entry starts unimpressively in the middle of a line, and his name is delayed (4.38, 40).

Through this portrait Adrastus contrasts not only with the men around him, but also the narrator’s inspiration, *regina* Calliope (4.34–35). The Muse creates anticipation for the catalogue and signals the movement to war, but we are met instead with the unenthusiastic king, who contrasts with the divinity: *nemoris regina sonori; rex tristis et aeger* (4.34, 4.38).⁷⁷ Adrastus’ appearance is anti-climactic, and stands in tension with the poet’s drive to fulfil the *fatum* of the plot.⁷⁸

The entry is also interrupted by a long digression attached to the entry’s first list of cities, which consists of seven proper names in an ascending pattern (4.44–48), followed by two more place names, *Drepani* and *Sicyonis*, attached with *iunguntur*, the first word of this second section (4.49–52). To further explain these, a relative clause is given in which the men from these places are those ‘whom sluggish Langia licks and Elisson, curved with its winding banks’ (4.51–52). We then slide even further down this grammatical vortex as the narrator picks up on the river Elisson and elaborates on its reputation:⁷⁹

iunguntur memores transmissi ab origine regis,
qui Drepani scopulos et oliuiferae Sicyonis
culta serunt, quos pigra uado Langia⁸⁰ tacenti
lambit et anfractu riparum incuruus Elisson.
saeuus honos fluuio: Stygias lustrare seueris
Eumenidas perhibetur aquis; huc mergere suetae
ora et anhelantes poto Phlegethonte cerastas,
seu Thracum uertere domos, seu tecta Mycenes

⁷⁶ Parkes 2012 *ad* 38.

⁷⁷ Adrastus is dubbed *rex* again later in the entry, 4.49.

⁷⁸ Lovatt (2005, 285–305) notes that while *editores* of epic games effectively have control over the narrative, even in the context of the games Adrastus has less than his epic counterparts, such as Aeneas, and that Adrastus loses control of the narrative completely in book 11. Even at the beginning of book 4, we see that the course of the plot is out of his hands.

⁷⁹ The river’s errant nature is a metaphor for the entry’s composition. Statius plays on the etymology of the river’s Greek name in *incuruus* and *anfractu*, as the ancient scholiast *ad* 4.52 notes: *hunc Graeci ita vocant, tractum nomen a flexibus*. Cf. Luc. 3.208: *errantem Meandron*.

⁸⁰ Klotz reads *strangilla*; but there are a variety of readings. P has *strangilla*; Dç have *stagilla*; ω has *langia*. The scholia also have *langilla* and *stangia*. I read Langia here along with Hill, Micozzi (2007) and Parkes (2012) *ad loc*.

impia Cadmeumue larem; fugit ipse natantes
amnīs, et innumeris liuescunt stagna uenenis. (4.49–58)

Those are joined who remember the king sent over long ago, those who sow the crags of Drepanum and the plantations of olive-bearing Sicyon, those whom the lazy Langia licks with her silent shallows, and the curved Elisson with its winding banks. This river has a savage honour: it is said to purify the Stygian Eumenides with its harsh waters: here they are accustomed to immerse their faces and the horned snakes, panting after drinking from Phlegethon, whether they have overturned Thracian houses, or the impious dwellings of Mycene, or the Cadmean Lares; the stream itself flees them as they swim, and the depths grow dark with innumerable poisons.

Through a series of connections that give the reader a sense of going off course, the narrator includes material more and more tenuously linked to the city list promised in the catalogue's rubric, and at its most digressive point, the obscure river Elisson is described.⁸¹ The entry divagates like the curving river itself, but despite its tenuous link to the task at hand, the river is described over six lines, greater than for any other of the places listed in the entry. Additionally, the description is placed emphatically in the centre of the entry's concentric pattern.⁸²

The Elisson has its own catalogue-within-a-catalogue, a paradigmatic list with each element including a proper noun or adjective to identify famous exemplars of civil strife: *Thracum, Mycenes, Cadmeum* (4.56–57).⁸³ The idea that their activity is 'customary', *suetas* (4.54), and the repetition of disjunctives, *seu...seu...-ue*, (4.54, 56–57) also suggests a recurring pattern of action. The river's reputation is introduced using the storytelling motif *perhibetur* (4.54), and Statius reports the activity of the snakes in accusative-infinitive, but while still describing their activity, he reverts to the indicative: *uertere, fugit, liuescunt* (4.56, 57, 58).⁸⁴ In doing so he knits the narrative at hand more closely to the set of paradigms. This list recalls Tisiphone's first appearance in Statius'

⁸¹ There is little evidence in the poetical tradition for this river. Cf. *Elisos*, 8.766, 12.631. The river is possibly the 'Helisson', which is mentioned several times by Pausanias. This river is in Sicyon, Paus. 2.12.2. It is also a tributary of the Alpheius, Paus. 5.7.1, 8.29.5, 8.30.1.

⁸² Steiniger (2005, 18–19) identifies this concentric pattern, which Parkes (2012 *ad* 38–73) calls 'complicated', but Parkes later (2012 *ad* 51–8) says that the digression on the Elisson is 'central'.

⁸³ This recalls the infection of Amata by Allecto in *Aen.* 7.407, *consiliumque omnemque domum vertisse Latini*. This is yet another nod to Virgil's book after the sustained engagement with it in *Thebaid* 3, as discussed in Chapter 3. Cf. Val. Fl. 2.128, where Venus instructs Fama to disturb Lemnos: *cunctas mihi uerte domus*.

⁸⁴ We could also supply *sunt* rather than *esse* for *suetas* in 4.54.

epic, as she responds to Oedipus' prayer, further integrating the paradigms into the fabric of the *Thebaid*.⁸⁵

inamoenum forte sedebat
Cocytus iuxta, resolutaque uertice crines
lambere sulphureas permiserat anguibus undas...
centum illi stantes umbrabant ora cerastae
turba minor diri capitis. (1.89–91, 103–104)

By chance she [Tisiphone] was sitting next to unlovely Cocytus, and with her hair let loose from her head, she allowed the serpents to lick the sulphurous waters... a hundred horned snakes stood up and cast a shadow over her face, the lesser crowd of her dreadful head.

While Statius formally adheres to the expectation of a city list in Adrastus' entry, digressiveness is taken to an extreme, at the end of which is the gloomy image of the Furies' recurring strife, which in turn connects with images throughout the *Thebaid*. The *Thebaid* includes other scenes of lustration with water, and that is what *lustratio* suggests here,⁸⁶ but these snakes pollute the water, rather than purifying it. The imagery of polluted water certainly has poetic resonance, but specifically in terms of genre, since the exemplars given in list-form in Adrastus' entry are associated with (in)famous stories treated in tragedy.⁸⁷ Statius implies that his current project fits into this list through the recollection of imagery used earlier in his own epic.

The catalogue is the most epic of commonplaces from Homer on, but Statius in his first entry derails its central concern with describing leaders with their troops. In this connection Statius' use of *innumerus* (4.58) is particularly striking, the first of four instances in this catalogue, in which the term clusters.⁸⁸ This term calls up the traditional catalogue '(in-)capacity motif', whereby the poet hints at the problem of including large numbers of men in his poem. Here, instead of applying this idea of uncountability to men,

⁸⁵ Steiniger (2005 *ad loc.*) notes this parallel.

⁸⁶ Cf. Minerva in 8.762–764, and Atalanta in 9.602–604.

⁸⁷ On these see Parkes (2012 *ad* 56, 56–7).

⁸⁸ 4.58, 153, 174, 241. The other instances are discussed below. Cf. Laius' use of this term in the Underworld later in book 4, this time to denote the scope of war, *bellum, innumero venit undique bellum/agmine...* 4.637–8.

Stattius applies it to the poisons of the snakes, as Stattius takes us very far from the enumeration the catalogue is meant to contain.

Adrastus' entry ends with a bull simile that explores his relationship to other leaders, *iuuenci* (4.71) and territory, *possessa diu...pascua* (4.69–70). The bull is old, but still *dux*:

ipse annis sceptrisque subit uenerabilis aequae:
ut possessa diu taurus meat arduus inter
pascua iam laxa ceruice et inanibus armis,
dux tamen: haud illum bello attemptare iuuencis
sunt animi; nam trunca uident de uulnere multo
cornua et ingentes plagarum in pectore nodos. (4.68–73)

He himself enters, stately equally in years and authority: as a tall bull moves among pastures he has been master of for a long time, now slack of neck and with empty shoulders; but he is still the leader: the young bullocks do not have the heart to challenge him in battle; for they see his horns maimed from many wounds, and the huge scars of blows on his chest.

The simile initially recalls Agamemnon in *Iliad* 2, who is compared with a bull directly before the Greek catalogue:

ἤύτε βοῦς ἀγέληφι μέγ' ἔξοχος ἔπλετο πάντων
ταῦρος, ὃ γάρ τε βόεσσι μεταπρέπει ἀγρομένησι,
τοῖον ἄρ' Ἀτρείδην θῆκε Ζεὺς ἡματι κείνῳι,
ἐκπρεπέ' ἐν πολλοῖσι καὶ ἔξοχον ἠρώεσσιν. (2.480–483)

Just as a bull is by far pre-eminent among all in the herd, for he stands out among the gathered cattle, so did Zeus on that day make Agamemnon pre-eminent among many, and stand out from the heroes.

Each simile explores the leader's status in his own group; that is, it reflects on his relationship to his own army. Both also stress pre-eminent physical appearance, which itself is a facet of, or contributes to, the individual's stature.⁸⁹ In Adrastus' case the bull is not only physically pre-eminent and central (*arduus inter/pascua*, 4.69–70),⁹⁰ but the simile draws attention to his age (4.68). The bull, like the man, has held sway for some time (*possessa diu*, 4.69; my emphasis), and his shoulders are 'empty' (4.70). The simile asserts that Adrastus derives his status from past exploits, for which his wounds serve as an attestation (4.72–73). The simile departs from Homer's Agamemnon, whose

⁸⁹ I therefore disagree with Scott (2009, 54–55) who interprets this stress on Agamemnon's appearance according to an opposition of 'warlike' and 'non-warlike', whereby Scott is able to claim that the simile 'drain[s] the potential warlike qualities from the similee'.

⁹⁰ The bull's central position may recall Adrastus' direct description, *inter adhortantes*, 4.40.

relationship both to the mass and other leading figures in the army is given in the final line of the excerpt quoted above (2.483). Adrastus' bull is syntactically isolated from the mass, and his relationship is limited to that with other leader figures.

In spite of old age and an unmartial nature, Adrastus' bull is a leader, *dux tamen*.⁹¹ After this statement of leadership, Statius then adds elements that do not correlate with the immediate context: the *iuuenci* potentially pose a threat to the bull (4.71–73).⁹² After its Homeric beginning and positioning, the simile unexpectedly draws on Latin epic's development of the bull simile into a trope for civil war, which resonates with the dispute between Eteocles and Polynices.⁹³ Statius also uses this image for Eteocles and Polynices in the *Thebaid*, thereby linking the image in Adrastus' entry with the epic's thematic concerns more broadly.⁹⁴ In this case the possibility of a domestic challenge is denied, but even so, the spectre of civil war has been raised.⁹⁵ In this way, at the same time as Statius asserts that Adrastus is *dux*, he also suggests that leadership is always open to challenge, opening up the potential for domestic disruption in the Argive force that is analogous to the Eteocles-Polynices storyline.

The first word of Adrastus' entry is *rex* (4.38; cf. *regis*, 4.49), and the last image of him is as *dux*, in the bull simile. But rather than actively promoting the attack on Thebes, the catalogue portrays him as a reluctant figure; instead, Bellona is styled figuratively as the general at the head of this march-catalogue, overseeing the collective preparations that this scene depicts. While Adrastus is unambiguously the king, his role as *dux* is more complicated. Not only does this rest on past feats, alerting us to his inappropriateness for war, but it also draws on unsettling images for civil war indicating this role open to challenge. If placement first in the catalogue suggests leadership at all, it stands in tension

⁹¹ Parkes (2012 *ad* 69–73) notes several uses of human terminology for animal in this simile, e.g. *armis* and *bello*, 4.70–71. Parkes (2012 *ad* 71) also avers that the position of *dux* in the line 'forcefully' reminds us that he is "“master” of the herd”.

⁹² Parkes (2012 *ad* 69–73) notes that these *iuuenci* stand for 'Argive princes'.

⁹³ See esp. Verg. G. 3.219–236, Luc. 2.601–609. Micozzi (2007 *ad* 69–73) and Parkes (2012 *ad* 69–76) provide epic models for this simile. See Parkes (2008, 388–389) on this development of this simile type, and Micozzi (1999, 347) on the Homeric and Lucanian influences here.

⁹⁴ On Ovid's use of bulls as symbols for kingship at Thebes: Kytzler 1962, 144–149; Keith 2004–2005, 189–191; Parkes 2012 *ad* 404.

⁹⁵ The bull's scars also activate the civil war theme by recalling Adrastus' past battles, also perhaps referred to in the 'memory' of those who join Adrastus from Sicily, 4.49–51.

with his actual role in the catalogue—and the war itself.⁹⁶ Adrastus' first position in the catalogue may actually convey the exact opposite. That is, by placing him first, Statius points up the fact that while Adrastus is pre-eminent in authority, he does not perform a leadership role for the Argives.

Polynices

Polynices' entry, which is second after Adrastus', also opens and closes with the leader.

Polynices' initial description shifts the mood from Adrastus, as he jauntily advances:

proxima longaeuo profert Dircaeus Adrasto
signa gener, cui bella fauent, cui commodat iras
cuncta cohors: huic et patria de sede uolentes
aduenerere uiri, seu quos mouet exul (et haesit
tristibus aucta fides), seu quis mutare potentes
praecipuum, multi, melior quos causa querenti
conciliat. (4.74–80)

Those standards next to the aged Adrastus his Dircaean son-in-law advances, whom the army supports, and whose anger the whole company assists. For him men have even arrived of their own volition from his native city: they whom either the exile moves (and loyalty increases and adheres to those in trouble); or for whom it is most pressing to change those in power; and many whom the better cause wins over to his side as he protests.

The verb *profert* indicates forward movement, but how we are to envisage the scene as a whole is unclear. Some form of the expression 'move the standards' is often used of armies on the march, often employing the verb *moueo*, or sometimes *fero* or *refero*.⁹⁷ The use of *signa* perhaps indicates that Statius is thinking of the contingent in Roman terms,⁹⁸ in which case a *signifer*, rather than the leader Polynices, would be bearing the standards. If read this way, the verb *profert* may be taken as causative; in other words, Polynices

⁹⁶ In this Adrastus lives up to possible etymologies of his name, 'the one not "doing"' or 'the "one not inclined to run"': Parkes 2012 *ad* 38–73. On Adrastus' role during the war, see Chapter 3.

⁹⁷ Other examples in epic abound: *qui tenet... signa mouet*, Luc. 1.420–422, of the men displaced from their positions to join Caesar's army, also in a catalogue context; *signa mouere*, Luc. 1.419–422, 6.11–14; *haec manus signa ferebat*, Sil. *Pun.* 14.257, again in a catalogue context; *signa refert*, Val. Fl. 2.110. Cf. also the leader Cupauro 'advancing' the Centaur, the tutelary figure of his ship, *Cupauro promouet Centaurum*, Verg. *Aen.* 10.194–5.

⁹⁸ *OLD signa* §10–11.

‘has someone bring forth the standards’.⁹⁹ On such a reading it is not possible to know where Polynices is in relation to his troops.

Polynices’ contingent is split into two: those from Thebes, *patria de sede*; and those from Argive areas. The first of these shows further fragmentation, with their diverse motivations specified explicitly: some are ‘moved’ by the exile; some wish to change ruler; ‘many’ think that Polynices has the ‘better cause’.¹⁰⁰ The summarising opening uses *uolentes* to show allegiance as a matter of choice rather than familial or state obligation, a civil-war motif (4.76).¹⁰¹ It is an oddity of itself that troop allegiance must be explained in the catalogue: the epic catalogue has a role in fixing the role of characters, by establishing straightforwardly each figure’s sphere of influence. By dwelling on his troops’ motivation to join him, this section of Polynices’ entry reads more like the detailed analysis of historiography, rather than the simple listing of an epic catalogue.¹⁰²

The second part of Polynices’ contingent is again motivated independently of its leader:

dederat nec non socer ipse regendas
Aegion Arenenque, et quas Theseia Troezen
addit opes, ne rara mouens inglorius iret
agmina, neu raptos patriae sentiret honores. (4.80–83)

His father-in-law himself had given him Aegion and Arene to rule, and the strength that Theseus’ Troezen contributes, so he shouldn’t go ingloriously, mobilising only a scanty force, nor feel the loss of his homeland honours.

The city list is embedded in a purpose clause showing Adrastus’ concern that Polynices may lack troops and therefore feel a loss of honour (4.82–83).¹⁰³ Polynices’ gifted authority over these cities demonstrates they are conceived of as a transferable resource; that this compensates for his *raptos...honores* presupposes the troops as a symbol of his

⁹⁹ E.g. Tac. *Hist.* 2.30: *nolle requiem, non expectare ducem, anteire signa, urgere signiferos*. Later in the *Thebaid* the position of the standard bearer is made clear: *signifier ante omnes... Theb.* 10.555. In Luc. 1.477, *fama* reports that Caesar ‘himself’ is bearing the standards, *ipsum omnes aquilas conlataque signa ferentem*. Here the use of *ipsum* suggests this is unusual. Alternatively, we could read *signa* metonymically for the army: *OLD signum* §11.

¹⁰⁰ Note the parallel relative clauses and sound patterns: *seu quos mouet, seu quis mutare, multi melior quos*, 4.77, 78, 79 [my emphases].

¹⁰¹ Ash (1999, 1) discusses this idea of ‘cause’.

¹⁰² Parkes (2012 *ad* 76–80) notes the ‘historiographical flavour’ here.

¹⁰³ There is thus a contrast with Tydeus’ entry, where he rouses troops from his own city, *patriae... agmina gentis*, 4.93, rather than his ‘loss of homeland honours’, *raptos patriae... honores* being addressed.

prestige.¹⁰⁴ The rubric's promise of a list of cities is fulfilled, but only as a function of the relationship between the two leaders Adrastus and Polynices, relegated into a segment that focuses on the epic *gloria* and *honor* of the leader Polynices. Paradoxically, this group of only three cities that Adrastus hopes will compensate for lost honour is compressed into a single line, the least impressive of all the city lists in the catalogue (4.81). Polynices' entry is also the shortest in the catalogue, and Statius signals the dissonance between his lack of power and his role as motivator for the attack, *cui bella fauent, cui commodat iras/ cuncta cohors* (4.75–76; my emphasis).

In several ways this entry looks like an addendum to Adrastus'. Unlike in tragedy, Polynices requires a contingent to fulfil the catalogue's rubric, and the explicit comment that Adrastus must provide him with troops denotes the difficulty of Polynices' epic position. Adrastus' compensation to Polynices could have formed part of the narrative leading up to the catalogue, but instead, Statius includes this problem in an epic commonplace that firmly establishes the scope of each leader's authority. Adrastus must provide the bulk of Polynices' military support, which challenges a conception of Polynices' contingent and entry as wholly discrete according to the definition of catalogue 'entry' given above.¹⁰⁵ In addition, of all the Argive leaders, Polynices is the only one not named directly in his own entry, while Adrastus is (4.74).¹⁰⁶ Epic catalogue occasionally does not name an entry leader, but this is relatively rare.¹⁰⁷ A further point that detracts from the independence of Polynices' entry is that Adrastus is singled out

¹⁰⁴ This is implicit in Agamemnon having the greatest number of ships in the *Iliad*, πολύ πλεῖστοι καὶ ἄριστοι, 2.577–578, and his later offer of cities to Achilles in 9.149–156. Cf. Carspecken (1952, 44–45) on ship numbers showing 'power and influence' in Homer.

¹⁰⁵ Sammons' definition of 'entry' is employed in this study (2010, 9, 14). Similarly, Sammons (2010, 176) notes that the 'unusual cross-reference' to Agamemnon in Menelaus' entry in Homer's Greek catalogue 'calls into question whether the Atreidae occupy two separate entries or share one'.

¹⁰⁶ Argia is also named, and Theseus is also introduced in the entry through *Theseia Troezen*, perhaps to indicate the important role he has in the epic. This perhaps even annotates his 'replacement' of Polynices as the figure who resolves the military action in the poem through a sort of duel with Creon. On Theseus' connection with Troezen, see Parkes (2012 *ad* 81) and the ancient scholiast (*ad* 80–81).

¹⁰⁷ Homer always names leaders directly. Cf. Hercules *Alcides*, Philoctetes *Poeantie*, Menoetius *Actorides*, in Val. Fl. 1.354, 391, 407; Kleywegt 2005 *ad* 391–393. Pollux is called *Lacon*, but is easily identified as he is paired with Castor, Val. Fl. 1.425. Lucan completely omits leaders' names, a radical innovation on the catalogue typology.

through intensive *ipse: socer ipse* (4.68).¹⁰⁸ Polynices meanwhile is *Dircaeus...gener*, relegating him to a relationship with his father-in-law (4.74).¹⁰⁹

The entry introduces a pattern of action that recurs in the *Thebaid*: Polynices' *honor* and *gloria* cannot be restored without accession to the throne of Thebes, and Adrastus repeatedly and unsuccessfully attempts to compensate Polynices for this. During the games, Adrastus first gifts Polynices a slave-girl, *has Adrastus opes dono uictoribus ire/ imperat; at generum famula solatur Achaea* (6.548–549). Later, Adrastus does not allow the Polynices-Agreus swordfight, but rewards Polynices with a wreath and declares him the winner for his lost honour: *tum generum, ne laudis egens, iubet ardua necti/ tempora Thebarumque ingenti uoce citari/ uictorem* (6.921–923).¹¹⁰ As in the catalogue of book 4, Polynices is not named in both of these instances, but identified as *gener* to Adrastus (6.549; 6.921). Adrastus' attempt to prevent the climactic Eteocles-Polynices duel is the ultimate expression of this pattern, where he gifts Lerna and Argos to Polynices to dissuade him from the duel: *...scepri si tanta cupido est,/ exuo regales habitus, I, Lernam et Argos/ solus habe* (11.433–435).¹¹¹ Here the catalogue adumbrates an underlying principle of the poem, that Polynices is driven by desire for *regnum*, but only of Thebes, and despite his best efforts, Adrastus cannot effectively compensate Polynices for his loss.

Polynices' entry begins with leader and troops, but develops to focus solely on Polynices' emotional state. He imagines reunification with his family, along with *regnum*, in a confusion of private desire with desire for power:

iam regnum matrisque sinus fidasque sorores
spe uotisque tenet, tamen et de turre suprema
attonitam totoque extantem corpore longe

¹⁰⁸ Parkes (2012 *ad* 68) notes that *ipse* 'distinguishes the leader from... his contingent'. Cf. Lovatt (2014, 218) on Jason *ipse*, Val.Fl. 1.604. In the *Iliad*, Agamemnon ἀντὸς supplies the Arcadians with ships, 2.612–614, just as Adrastus supplies Polynices with troops here.

¹⁰⁹ Lovatt (2005, 34) notes that Adrastus almost always thinks of Polynices in terms of himself, i.e. as his son-in-law. Cf. Argia's use of *gener* in direct speech of Polynices' relationship to Adrastus. The combination *socer-gener* also calls up civil war: Catull. 29.25; Luc. 1.1–4; *Aen.* 6.830–831.

¹¹⁰ Parkes (2012 *ad* 82–3) notes this similar pattern of action in books 4 and 6. Lovatt (2005, 253–254 and 2009, 175) notes the repeated pattern of action in books 6 and 11. Lovatt (2009, 175) is scathing: Adrastus 'give[s] a consolation prize to his own incompetent son-in-law'.

¹¹¹ On this, see Ahl (1986, 2884).

respicit Argian; haec mentem oculosque reducit
coniugis et dulcis auertit pectore Thebas. (4.88–92)

Already he holds his kingdom and his mother's embrace and his faithful sisters in his hope and his prayers. Yet he looks back from a distance at Argia, stunned and leaning out with her whole body from the top of a tower. She leads back her husband's mind and eyes and turns sweet Thebes from his heart.

The contingent advances away from the city, *profert* (4.74); but Polynices' psychology is figuratively moving in the opposite direction: *respicit* (90) suggests mental 'turning' as well as physical,¹¹² as the next sentence clarifies, *haec mentem oculosque reducit* (4.91). Here the directional language of the march scene is used metaphorically to contrast the advance of the march with Polynices' backward-looking psychology.¹¹³ Argia's influence on Polynices is intrusive because it breaks down the separation of (female) teichoskopie viewer and the men of the army.¹¹⁴ Her emotion at this point is even registered, *attonitam* (4.90). Her action in drawing Polynices' gaze back to her suggests leader-like control over the leader himself, *reducit* (4.91). In the process, Argia turns from viewer to viewed.

The ambivalence that Polynices demonstrates in this entry is part of a wider pattern of binary opposition in this entry. Like Polynices' psychology, his contingent is split between those from Thebes and those from Argive areas. Additionally, terms for familial connections abound in the entry, referring both to Argos, *gener*, *socer*, *coniugis* (4.75, 80, 92) and Thebes, *matris*, *sorores* (4.88). Geminatio of vocabulary reinforces this splitting, dual effect: *movet* and *movens* emphasise the split between Theban forces and those supplied by Adrastus (4.77, 82–83); *regendas* and *regnum* refer to troops Adrastus gifts,

¹¹² OLD *respicio* §5–8. Cf. *respexit* used of Turnus, *Aen.* 12.671, on which Gaskin (1992, 305–306) comments: 'The verb... is full of tragic depth... Turnus looks back, as it were, on a past which was lost even before it played out'.

¹¹³ This dual-directional conflict again parallels the main plot, in which conflicting forces pull in different directions. See e.g. the brothers' bull simile, *in diversa trahunt*, 1.131–138. Cf. also the anonymous Theban's simile, *qualiter hinc gelidus Boreas, hinc nubifer Eurus/ uela trahunt...*, 1.193–194: Moreland 1975, 21, 25.

¹¹⁴ Both Lovatt (2006) and Augoustakis (2013a) review the commonplace of the epic female teichoskopie viewer, noting that Antigone later parallels Argia, first as Phorbas lists the Theban allies men (7. 253ff.), then in 11.363–364. In the latter case, Antigone appeals to Polynices to 'look back' at her, and she thereby becomes an active participant in the action: Lovatt, 2006, 66; Augoustakis 2013a, 169–170. Lovatt (2006, 61–63, 66) notes Statius' specification that Antigone not be seen in book 7, and that there is a parallel between Argia in 4 and Antigone in 11. Cf. *respicit*, 4.91, and Antigone's instruction to Polynices, *paulum... hanc respice turrem,/ frater...*, 11.363–364. Parkes (2008, 399) notes Argia's similarity with the *Achilleid's* Deidamia in 2.23–30, but with the difference that Deidamia exerts no influence on Achilles, as Argia does.

as opposed to Theban *regnum* (4.80, 88).¹¹⁵ In the final line, Thebes is *dulcis*, further underscoring Polynices' ambivalence (4.92).¹¹⁶

Again, the entry foreshadows Polynices' role in the battle books: Polynices appears at the beginning of the fighting, but Statius is explicit that he is reluctant to attack Thebans, *nec segnem Argolicae sensere Eteoclea turmae,/ parcior ad ciues Polynicis inhorruit ensis* (7.688–689).¹¹⁷ After this, he is absent in a military capacity until the duel of book 11. In this way the entry provides a deep psychological insight into the leader, but in doing so, marginalises the catalogue's usual function of listing leaders with troops. Polynices' turn backwards also counteracts the forward momentum of the march, disrupting it as in Adrastus' entry, albeit in a different way. The entry manifests binary opposition as both a structuring principle for the entry itself and for the way in which leader and troops are described. In this way, Polynices' troops, which are fragmented in their origin and motivation, become a reflection of the emotional state of the leader himself.

Tydeus

Tydeus is the third leader in the catalogue, and makes a thunderous entry: *ecce inter medios patriae ciet agmina gentis/ fulmineus Tydeus, iam laetus et integer artus...* (4.93–94). The words *ecce* and *fulmineus* begin the entry's first two lines (4.93–94), and this is followed by the simile of the snake rejuvenated (4.95–100). Again, Tydeus' entry is framed around the individual. Tydeus' entry starts with a focus on his reinvigoration after the ambush, not only directly, *iam laetus et integer artus*, but also through the snake simile (4.94–100). At its end, the entry returns to Tydeus, who stands at the centre of a group of men, *undique magnanimum pubes delecta coronant/ Oeniden...* (4.112–113). The description of Tydeus' emotions in both sections enhances this sense of framing: *laetus et integer artus*; cf. *hilarem bello, non ille minis Polynicis et ira* (94, 113, 114).

¹¹⁵ Further repetitions are found: *patria de sede—patriae... honores*, 4.76, 83; *fides—fidus*, 4.78, 88. Note also the 'twin points' of his spears, *gemino... ferro*, 4.86. On *geminus* as a civil war term, see Masters (1992, 108–110). On doubling as an important theme in the *Thebaid*, see Hardie (1993b).

¹¹⁶ This final example, *dulcis*, again implies a distinction between Eteocles from the Theban people, since it is with the latter that Polynices is at odds, while 'Thebes' is 'sweet'.

¹¹⁷ On which see Bonds (1985, 227). Note too Polynices' reaction when Jocasta persuades him not to fight: *uariaque animum turbante procella/ exciderat regnum*, 7.536–537.

Strictly speaking, *inter medios* could refer to Tydeus' place in either his contingent or the parade at large: the line end, connecting Tydeus to his troops, perhaps encourages us to read it as the former; but given that *ecce* shifts our 'gaze' to Tydeus to open the new entry, the phrase is a marker relative to the previous entry, that is, within the catalogue as a whole (4.93).¹¹⁸ The observation that Tydeus is *inter medios* suggests Tydeus is 'out of place' in the catalogue. The catalogue starts afresh with Tydeus, then, and the resistance of Adrastus and the ambivalence of Polynices is here countered by a more energetic leader.

Tydeus also has a strong top-down connection with his troops (*ciet agmina*, 4.93). Here the verb is more nuanced than simply 'urging on (his troops)'. Statius uses the verb *ciet* for urging hasty action, and frequently in the *Thebaid*, for the initiation of war, with *bellum/-a*, *arma*, and *furores* as its object.¹¹⁹ The verb in this way creates an association with the martial forces Statius describes through the gods in the work. Bellona herself takes this verb as she initiates war in book 12: *iamque alternas in proelia gentes/dissimilis Bellona ciet* (12.721). While the verb could be applied to either muster or the current march scene of the catalogue,¹²⁰ the use of *ecce* draws our attention to the scene at hand, and suggests that this verb is to be read in the context of the army's march.¹²¹ Tydeus is depicted not simply as a leader, but as an agitating figure that stirs up the mass for war.

Statius also recalls Tydeus' role as agitator and the disruptions of Mars and Fama in his explanation for what motivates Tydeus' troops to join his contingent:

huic quoque praesentes Aetolis urbibus affert
belli fama uiros...
omnibus aeratae propugnant pectora crates,

¹¹⁸ Compare the use of *proxima...signa* for Polynices, 4.74–5, *inde* for Hippomedon, 4.116, each of which is in the entry's first line. The term *ecce* also echoes the first appearance of Tydeus in book 1, before he fights with Polynices, 1.401.

¹¹⁹ 4.672, 11.116, 11.349, 12.683; 8.385; 9.671. Cf. *OLD cieto* §4b: 'stir up, provoke (wars, disturbances, etc.)'.

¹²⁰ Parkes 2012 *ad* 32–344 (iii): 'Statius is exploiting the tension between... mustering for war and gathering after muster'. See *OLD cieto* §1–3; *agito* esp. §1, 6, 9; *excito* §1–3. On the tension between description of sailing and muster in *Iliad* 2, see Bassett (1938, 208–15), who notes that Nestor tells Agamemnon to draw up the troops, meaning the catalogue is 'anchored in place', and book 2 has to be rewritten if the catalogue is not part of it (209). On this aspect of Homer's catalogue, see also Crossett (1969, 244), Carspecken (1952, 55–56) and Heiden (2008, 146).

¹²¹ See *Aen.* 6.165 and *Sil. Pun.* 4.270 for similar instances.

pilaque saeua manu, patrius stat casside Mauors.
 undique magnanimum pubes delecta coronant
 Oeniden, hilarem bello notisque decorum
 uulneribus; non ille minis Polynicis et ira
 inferior, dubiumque adeo cui bella gerantur. (4.101–102, 110–115)

The rumour of war brings men to assist this man from Aetolian cities... Bronze shields cover the chests of all the men, fierce spears are in their hands, and ancestral Mauors stands on their shields. On all sides a select company surrounds the great-hearted son of Oeneus, who is cheerful in anticipation for war, and glorious in his famous wounds; he is no less than Polynices in threats and anger, so that it is unclear for whom the war is being waged.

Not only are Tydeus' troops from one area, unlike Adrastus' and Polynices', but they are explicitly homogeneous in their armour (110–111).¹²²

Tydeus' entry is more regular than Adrastus' and Polynices' in his relationship to his contingent and the division of the entry between leader and troops, and the force he commands is unified. But again we see Statius depart from the catalogue typology. The narrator's comment on Tydeus' cheerful attitude for war is a contrast with Adrastus *tristis* (4.38. Cf. *laetus*, 4.94; *hilarem bello*, 4.113), but again the insight into the leader's psychology is unusual, and runs contrary to the epic ideal of leaders suppressing their emotions.¹²³ Tydeus' is 'not less than Polynices in anger', again referring to his ambush on Eteocles' orders (4.114). His anger is so great that it is even unclear for whom the war is waged (4.115).¹²⁴ This is a striking way to end the entry, and opens up a comparative—even competitive—element between the two leaders. Polynices appears ambivalent about attacking Thebes, but his surrogate brother Tydeus feels equal animosity, confirming that with Tydeus the catalogue is set firmly back on course for the mission to Thebes. This contrast with Polynices looks forward to Tydeus' belligerent response to Jocasta's pleas when Polynices wavers (7.539–559). Tydeus acts to set them back on track for attack—and convinces their mass audience of this too.¹²⁵

¹²² Lovatt (2005, 183) notes that Tydeus' troops have a 'coherent and strongly presented regional identity'.

¹²³ See for instance Valerius Flaccus' Jason: *ipse etiam Aesonides, quamquam tristissima rerum/castiganda duci vultuque premenda sereno./ducibus indulget lacrimis aperitque dolorem*, Val. Fl. 3.369–71; cited by Lovatt (2014, 217).

¹²⁴ Gervais (2015, 74) notes that during the ambush sequence 'Tydeus behaves as Polynices' "mental image"', 2.417–418, and that he 'rages "as if he himself were being denied the? A? crown"', 2.447.

¹²⁵ This is discussed in Chapter 3.

Again, we see details in the entry that look forward to the death of the leader. The simile comparing Tydeus with a snake (4.95–100) looks forward to his future biting of Hippomedon’s head: *a miser, agrestum si quis per gramina hianti/ obuius et primo fraudauerit ora ueneno* (99–100).¹²⁶ The list of cities in this entry again contains a digression that refers to Tydeus’ gnawing of Hippomedon’s head: in 4.102–109, there is a reference to Achelous, the river whose ‘face’ (*uultus*, 4.106) Hercules disfigured by wrestling, and who no longer lifts his ‘maimed brow’ (*truncam...frontem*, 4.109) above the water.¹²⁷ Again, we see the details in the entry—including the troops’ city list—pressed into the service of foreshadowing the leader’s future acts. When the entry turns back to the scene at hand, Tydeus is again the focal point, both in the text and in the scene, as he is described as physically central among a select bunch of his troops, *undique...coronant* (4.112–113). Tydeus’ entry is more regular in its inclusions than those that come before, but still the entry is dominated by the leader.

Hippomedon

The next leader, Hippomedon, is connected through his men with *agito*, a near-synonym for Tydeus’ *ciet*: *hos agitat pulchraeque docet uirtutis amorem/ arduus Hippomedon* (4.128–129). The simplex, *ago*, is common in catalogues, making this choice more striking.¹²⁸ This verb contributes to Hippomedon’s characterisation as passionate and energetic,¹²⁹ but also signifies that he plays an agitating role in relation to his troops. Again, Statius’ use of the verb elsewhere is revealing for this entry: Eteocles, when he reacts in anger to Tydeus, is compared to a snake *totumque agitata...* (2.413); Amphiaraus describes the Argives’ deaths through the bird augury, *quae saeua repente/ uictores agitat leto Iouis ira sinistri* (3.538); Amphiaraus is disturbed by what he has seen, *alio curarum agitante tumultu...* (3.620). The verb is again combined with *tumultus* to introduce Eurymedon during the fighting, spelling out its association with upheaval:

¹²⁶ Kytzler 1969, 228–229.

¹²⁷ Cf. also his performance in the games: Vessey 1973, 198.

¹²⁸ See Table A: 237; Parkes 2012 *ad* 128; *OLD ago* §13.

¹²⁹ Klinnert 1970, 122. Klinnert (1970, 122 n13) says: ‘Bemerkenswert ist, daß diese exhortation nur Hippomedon erwähnt wird. Bei den anderen Heroen wird nur erwähnt daß sie das Volk anführen; auch hier ist ‘agitat’ bei Hippomedon der stärkste Ausdruck dafür.’ I do not agree that in the case of the other heroes we are simply told ‘that they lead the people’, as we will see. Parkes (2012 *ad* 128) notes that this verb ‘hints at Hippomedon’s passionate leadership’.

patriumque agitare tumultus, 11.33.¹³⁰ The frantic activity of Lucan's Caesar at Pharsalia is also recalled again. Lucan compares Caesar with Bellona, and Statius' Bellona looks very much like Lucan's Caesar; but Lucan compares Caesar with Bellona *or* Mars, *Bistonas aut Mauors agitans* (Luc. 7.569). Again, the verb does not simply establish Hippomedon's role of leader in relation to his troops, but characterises this role as one in which he rouses them frantically, indicating that his role is antithetical to order, and enhances the inherent unruliness of the mass.

Hippomedon's entry is even more striking for the second verbal connection between him and his troops, *docet*, unprecedented in extant military catalogues.¹³¹

hos agitat pulchraeque docet uirtutis amorem
arduus Hippomedon; capiti tremit aerea cassis
ter niueum scandente iuba, latus omne sub armis
ferrea suta terunt, umeros ac pectora late
flammeus orbis habet, perfectaue uiuit in auro
nox Danaï: sontes Furiarum lampade nigra
quinquaginta ardent thalami; pater ipse cruentis
in foribus laudatque nefas atque inspicit enses. (4.128–135)

These tall Hippomedon stirs up, and teaches love of beautiful courage. On his head trembles a bronze helmet, its crest bristling three times white, and iron stitching rubs his whole side under his weapons, and a flaming shield covers his shoulders and chest broadly, and the night of Danaus lives, finished in gold. Fifty guilty marriage beds burn with the black fire of the Furies; the father himself on the bloody threshold praises the crime and inspects the swords.

The verb *docet* could be understood in various ways: as an elaboration of *agitat*, suggesting 'verbal encouragement rather than physical stimulus';¹³² or as indicating an exemplary role in relation to his men; or both.¹³³

In the second case, connections with the entry more broadly are possible, especially the subsequent description of the Night of Danaus on his shield.¹³⁴ By recalling Pallas'

¹³⁰ Cf. Polyxo, who inflames the Lemnians to murder: *desertam... urbem/ exagitat...*, 5.96–97 [my emphasis].

¹³¹ Varro connects *duco* to *doceo*, and *dico* with *disco*: *Ling.* 6.62. Valerius Flaccus uses *doceo* for Orpheus in a catalogue, but there it has a clearer application to the scene, 1.470–471.

¹³² So Parkes (2012 *ad* 128).

¹³³ Dewar (1991 *ad* 91) comments that Hippomedon 'may be an exemplar of courage to his men...'

¹³⁴ See Micozzi (2007 *ad* 133–135) on the relationship between *uirtus* and *laudat nefas*.

baldric from the *Aeneid*, the shield is ominous,¹³⁵ and suggests Hippomedon's poor moral judgment.¹³⁶ There are obvious parallels between Hippomedon and Danaus. Each is a named figure of authority to his respective group. The description of the shield focuses on Danaus individually, as the 'night of Danaus' (4.133), with intensive *ipse* distinguishing Danaus as an individual. The phrase *pater ipse* has a stronger connotation of authority and status in relation to those around him (4.134).¹³⁷ Danaus, like Hippomedon to his troops, bears a relationship to his children collectively, who are not mentioned but represented through abstract *nefas* and concrete weapons (4.135). Their respective roles in relation to their groups sit poorly when read against each other: Danaus 'praises crime' *laudat...nefas* (4.135), whereas Hippomedon 'teaches love of *uirtus*', *docet uirtutis amorem* (4.128). Bearing in mind that this shield is in full view of Hippomedon's contingent, the juxtaposition is even more uncomfortable, since these men are presumably the object of *docet*. The term *uirtus* is of itself complicated by Statius' negative association of it with a propensity to violence.¹³⁸ And yet again, Lucan's Caesar is lurking in the background: Danaus' description as a micro-manager recalls Bellona's appearance before the catalogue: *inspiciat enses* (4.135); *inspiciat et gladios* (Luc. 7.560). Both Hippomedon and Danaus are figures of authority for their respective groups, but the images on Hippomedon's shield complicate the outwardly positive description that opens the entry.

Danaus appears twice in the *Thebaid* in Argive ancestor parades, demonstrating that he looms large in the historical consciousness of the Argives: at the weddings of Argia and

¹³⁵ *Aeneid* 10.495–499: specific parallels are in Steiniger (2005 *ad* 131–135, 134) and Parkes (2012 *ad* 133–134). This also recalls Turnus, with whom Statius' Hippomedon is elsewhere associated, on which see Hardie (1986, 118–119), Fernandelli (1996 and 2000) and Parkes (2012 *ad* 131–135). See also Ovid's fourteenth epistle, from Hypermestra to Lynceus, for the paradox of 'praiseworthy crimes': *laudis*, 14.120; *laudat*, *Theb.* 4.135. The terms *nefas* and *nefandus* are used for Hippomedon's *aristeia*: *nefas*, 9.347, 432, 602, 882, 887; *nefandus* 9.18, 665.

¹³⁶ Parkes (2012 *ad* 131–5) says this suggests his 'warped moral judgement and savage joy in killing'. Kytzler (1969, 227) says Hippomedon's armour indicates that he is associated with a sacrilegious enterprise. Similarly, Dewar (1991 *ad* 332ff.) says this 'marks him out as a sinner'.

¹³⁷ Danaus is also literally a 'father'. Examples abound of *pater ipse*, e.g. Jupiter in council, 1.204; Adrastus, *pater ipse duces cogeat*, 3.346; Virgil's Latinus, *Aen.* 7.92

¹³⁸ Fantham (1995) discussing Lucan, notes that *uirtus* 'cannot have a straightforwardly positive value in civil war'. Lucan's memorable statement about the nature of *uirtus* in civil war is a key to reading this aspect of his epic: *scelerique nefando / nomen erit uirtus*, Luc.1.667–668. Negative descriptions of *uirtus* may also reflect on the nature of war generally: see e.g. Smolenaars (1994 *ad* 51f.) on *tristissima uirtus*, 7.51. See also Pollmann (2008) on the ambivalence of *uirtus* in epic.

Deipyle (2.215–223); and at the funeral games for Opheltes (6.268–294).¹³⁹ On both occasions, reference is made to Danaus’ propensity to crime, specifically through its manifestation in his appearance (2.222; 6.292–293). The father as exemplary figure is a motif of Roman literature.¹⁴⁰ Virgil’s Aeneas styles himself as exemplary figure to his son, and instructs him to recall the *exempla* provided by his ancestors (*Aen.*12.435–440).¹⁴¹ Aeneas opens this exhortation to Ascanius with the instruction *disce, puer* (12.435). This address is unusual, and broadens the audience to the readers and listeners of the poem, providing both Iulus and them with instruction on *uirtus* and *labor*.¹⁴² The coincidence in Virgil’s poem between Aeneas’ exemplary role to both his son and Virgil’s Roman audience (his ‘descendants’) demonstrates epic’s function of providing heroic exemplars: it is poets who by presenting figures for emulation ‘teach’ love of *uirtus*.¹⁴³ Hippomedon is styled as this poet figure in relation to his men, but the description of Danaus on his shield codifies Statius’ own task of providing tragic material in an epic framework: in other words, Hippomedon is a perversion of the poet in his role of presenting and inculcating *uirtus*.

Nestor is also briefly mentioned in the entry for Hippomedon, linked to the place name Pylos, *nondum nota Pylos iuuenisque aetate secunda/ Nestor, et ire tamen peritura in castra negauit* (4.126–127). This ‘negative entry’ includes Nestor only to show he is absent. Later in the *Thebaid*, Lycurgus also refuses to take part after consulting Jupiter, and the phrasing is similarly gloomy as it looks forward to the outcome of the war: *perituris armis* (5.649; cf. *peritura castra*, 4.127).¹⁴⁴ The mention of Nestor here has the

¹³⁹ Danaus also appears on Adrastus’ engraved bowl, 1.542.

¹⁴⁰ E.g. *Silu.* 4.8.57–58, which expresses a wish that Menecrates’ new-born learn from his father and grandfather; *Silu.* 5.2.51–52, where Crispinus is instructed to emulate his father. Parkes (2012 *ad* 128) gives references to both of these. See also *Silu.* 5.2.30–31, 75–77 on the exemplarity of fathers, and the poem Statius composes on his own father, *Silu.* 5.3, esp. 5.3.177.

¹⁴¹ On Aeneas’ assertion of ‘heroic endurance’ here, see Quint (1993, 94). Compare also Hannibal’s goad to Crista in Silius Italicus: *en, reddo tua tela tibi: memorabilis ista/ a nobis melius discet bellare iuuentus*, 10.119–20.

¹⁴² ‘A likely inference is that *puer* is generalizing, like *Romane* of Aeneas in 6.851; in both cases the individual addressee stands for a wider audience that is meant to hear and respond to the speaker’s message’: Tarrant (2012 *ad* 12.435), who quotes Dickey (2002, 192) as a source. The phrase *disce, puer* is also used by Statius in *Silu.* 5.2.51.

¹⁴³ E.g. Hor. *Carm.* 2.19.1–2: *Bacchum in remotis carmina rupibus/ uidi docentem*. Cf. the use of *doctus* of Muses and poets, e.g. *Silu.* 2.7.76: *docti furor arduus Lucreti*.

¹⁴⁴ Parkes (2012 *ad* 127) notes this parallel. This also recalls the soldiers from Ilium in Pompey’s catalogue in Lucan’s third book, who join Pompey’s ‘doomed camp’, *peritura castra*, 3.211.

effect of situating the current story in the timeline of epic mythology.¹⁴⁵ But more importantly, Nestor is an example of prudent observation of signs from the gods, and therefore contrasts with the energetic—but also rash—Hippomedon. Additionally, the fact that he will not take part but Pylos sends troops again points to a disjunction between leader and people, and thus to the *Thebaid*'s preoccupation with the theme of troubled leadership.

In the opening section of Hippomedon's entry, Statius uses the catalogue and narrative sequence term *ordo* to denote the troops: *maior at inde nouis it Doricus ordo sub armis* (4.116).¹⁴⁶ Poets use the comparative *maior* to denote a heightening of the action and narrative style, and Statius uses it in this metapoetic sense.¹⁴⁷ In combination with *ordo*, this recalls the final lines of Virgil's 'proem in the middle', *maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo,/ maius opus moueo* (7.44–45).¹⁴⁸ Virgil's invocation signals a change in the narration, the intention to move into a higher order of narration marking the movement into the ('Iliadic') second half of the work, and also anticipating the catalogue of Latins.¹⁴⁹ The term *ordo* has a wide range of connected uses, several of which come into play here: it denotes a row of men, specifically soldiers drawn up for battle;¹⁵⁰ these are distinct in rank from their leader;¹⁵¹ and the term also suggests arrangement—either of the men marching, or of the narrative itself.¹⁵² While the exact meaning of the word is hard to pin down, it is notable that the term can be used for both the scene at hand and the poet's

¹⁴⁵ Note the reference to Nestor's epic credentials in *nondum nota Pylos*, 4.126. Cf. the reference to Nestor in Val. Fl. 1.380–382, also in a catalogue.

¹⁴⁶ On the meaning of *ordo*, see Georgacopoulou (1996, esp. 101, 125). See also Micozzi (2007 *ad* 116), who notes that Statius plays here on the 'technical-poetic' meaning and 'concrete' meaning of *ordo*: 'la ripresa del nesso virgiliano (*maior ordo*) è giocata sullo slittamento dal significato tecnico-poetico a quello militare concreto di *manus militum*'. E.g. Val. F. 5.576–577: *ipse autem tantis concita furoribus arma/ expetit Aesonides et amicos ordine reges*, which gives the rubric for the information to follow.

¹⁴⁷ E.g. when Statius opens his Capaneus' ascent of Thebes' walls, *maior amentia*, 10.830. Cf. 4.336–337, *expectata dum maior honos* and 3.523 *maiora parantur*. Cf. too the *maior...* *Erinys* mentioned by the anonymous shade in 2.20.

¹⁴⁸ Latin usage of this phrase follows Virgil, e.g. Petron. Frg. 44.2; Proba, *Cento* 45.

¹⁴⁹ Parkes (2012 *ad* 116) notes this parallel and the idea of 'escalation'. Feeney (1999, 178) says Virgil through this combination 'announces...he is moving into a higher gear'. Feeney (2004, 99) later comments that by using this Muse as a 'generic marker of high martial epic', the appeal 'is itself radically contaminated with the erotics of the Muse's name'. Cf. Mack (1999, esp. 131).

¹⁵⁰ *OLD ordo* §1–3.

¹⁵¹ *OLD ordo* §4–6.

¹⁵² *OLD ordo* §7–8, 11–13; 9–10, 13d.

composition, perhaps punning on the catalogue's presentation of the army's order in the orderly form of the catalogue. Either way, the use of this phrase suggests a comparison with the entries that have come before this one.

Hippomedon's entry does not conform to Statius' favoured entry pattern, and rather than starting with the leader, the first line introduces the troops marching in the scene: *maior at inde nouis it Doricus ordo sub armis...* (4.116). Hippomedon does not appear until the fourteenth line, connected with the troops through *hos*, after which the entry focusses on him, either directly or indirectly (troops: 4.116–127; leader: 4.128–144). While the entry does not start with him, he is the focus of more than half of it. The narrator identifies location through proper names of rivers rather than cities in this entry: *Lyrcee, Inache, Asterion, Erasinus* (4.117–122). Here Statius focuses on the violent action of the rivers, *uiolentior, hausit, spumeus, tumuit, celer, trahens, domant* (4.119–123).

At the end of his entry, Hippomedon is compared with the centaur Hylaeus, who crashes into the river Peneus (4.139–144).¹⁵³ Within the *Thebaid*, this image is one of a string of images of Hippomedon's violence, especially through interaction with watercourses, which culminates with his death.¹⁵⁴ The simile draws upon an image used in Virgil's catalogue of Latins for Catillas and Coras.¹⁵⁵ Of these two men, who are Argive, Coras is fiercer, perhaps representing the horse part of the centaur: *Catillasque acerque Coras, Argiua iuuentus* (*Aen.* 7.672). In both Virgil and Statius, the centaur's effect on the natural world is a focus, but in Statius, the simile is developed in a different way: instead of twin brothers who act in a cooperative way, the single leader Hippomedon is compared to a centaur.¹⁵⁶ His damming of the river here also has no obvious analogue for action in the main narrative, but this detail contributes to the depiction of the centaur as an invasive

¹⁵³ See 9.220–221, where Hippomedon is compared with a centaur again, scaring the forest and his horse the ground, *ipsum nemora alta tremescunt,/ campus equum*. Hylaeus is only named in one other place in the *Thebaid*. In 6.539, he is depicted being held by Hercules as he rages (*furentem*, 6.538), another nod to his violent nature.

¹⁵⁴ Steiniger 2005 *ad* 139–14. Parkes (2012 *ad* 139–144) also notes that centaurs are 'associated with anger and violence' in this epic. Hippomedon crosses the Asopos first in 7.424–440, discussed in Chapter 2. Later he dies after a battle with the Ismenos, 9.446–521. He may also be the anonymous king who speaks mid-stream in the Langia at the end of book 4, as discussed in Chapter 2.

¹⁵⁵ *Aen.* 7.674–677: Steiniger 2005 *ad* 139–44; Micozzi 2007 *ad* 139–40; Parkes 2012 *ad* 139–44.

¹⁵⁶ The dual nature of the centaur is of itself suggestive of the civil war theme, on which see Parkes (2012 *ad* 140), especially on the use of *duplex* here.

force on the landscape. Statius' centaur is not only so terrifying that both wild and farm animals fall down in fear (4.141–142), but he even scares his 'brothers', *non ipsis fratribus horror/ afuit...* (4.142–143). This last detail, which hints at fraternal conflict, raises the spectre of civil war, just as it had been raised in the bull simile of Adrastus' entry. Tellingly, the line-end *fratribus horror* is also used prior to the duel of Eteocles and Polynices, when under the influence of Pietas the brothers think for a moment that duelling is wrong (11.46).¹⁵⁷ So again, we see the entry develop with a focus on the leader, specifically his activity in the context of fratricidal violence and non-cooperative leadership.

Hippomedon is also the subject of a hyperbolic physical description. Like Adrastus' bull, he is *arduus*, an adjective used frequently for the height and steepness of mountains, trees, sky, towers and other objects.¹⁵⁸ Statius uses the epithet several times for Hippomedon, where it seems to denote size: he throws a rock at the serpent that has killed Opheltes (5.560); he stands out during the games (6.654); and again as he defends the body of Tydeus (9.91).¹⁵⁹ The adjective is also used for his adversary Ismenos (9.418). However, the significance of this adjective goes beyond mere size. Virgil also uses the term for Turnus (9.53), Aeneas (12.789), and Polyphemus (3.169).¹⁶⁰ In the *Thebaid*, Jupiter is described using this adjective as he makes an entry into his full council, replete with all orders of deity including rivers and winds, *mediis sese arduus infert/ ipse deis* (1.201–202), an instance that may recall Turnus (*Aen.* 9.53). In Statius' *Achilleid* Neptune similarly stands out as he is saluted king of his realm, *placidis ipse arduus undis/ eminent...* (*Achil.* 1.57–58). As with the instance already cited in this catalogue of Adrastus' bull (4.69), these are concerned not just with size but the establishment of the leader's presence within a large group—perhaps even the leader's demeanour in this

¹⁵⁷ Steiniger (2005 *ad* 142) notes the similarity.

¹⁵⁸ 1.98, 6.98, 9.30. Hence the substantive *ardua*, 'heights': 2.63, 2.555, 10.230, 10.840.

¹⁵⁹ Dewar (1991 *ad* 91) says this denotes the hugeness of Hippomedon, with the possibility that this refers to Aesch. *Septem* 488. Dewar rejects Klinnert's claim that this is 'character-defining' and is equivalent to Greek γάρδος, as used in Eur. *Phoen.* 129. Lovatt (2005 119–121) also discusses the use of this epithet for Hippomedon.

¹⁶⁰ Steiniger (2005 *ad* 129) gives references. In 3.665 *arduus* is also used for Polyphemus' flanks. Virgil also uses *arduus* for the tutelary centaur of a ship, *Aen.* 10.195–197.

situation.¹⁶¹ This adjective is therefore not just as a physical description, but a lexical marker of pre-eminence in a social or military group.

Hippomedon's impressive size is developed beyond this term for height: his plume stands out, *scandente* (4.130), a verb later used of Capaneus' scaling of Thebes' walls (11.41, 180–181);¹⁶² and his armour covers his shoulders *late*, 'over a large area, widely'.¹⁶³ Statius then describes Hippomedon's descent:¹⁶⁴

*illum Palladia sonipes Nemeaeus ab arce
deuehit arma pauens umbraque inmane uolanti
implet agros longoque attollit puluere campum* (4.136–138).

A Nemean horse carries him down from Pallas' citadel, fearing his weapons, and fills the fields with its enormous flying shadow, and raises the plain with a long stream of dust.

Hippomedon is so enormous that his shadow 'fills the fields' and he raises the dust of the plain, two motifs applied to collectives, especially armies on the move.¹⁶⁵ The centaur simile also emphasises size, as it breaks through the woods, and terrifies cattle and wild animals (4.139–142). The final effect he has is again on the natural environment, and again alludes to his massive size, when he dams the Peneus with his bulk, ...*ingenti donec Peneia saltu/ stagna subit magnumque obiectus detinet amnem* (4.143–144). Hippomedon is not just huge, but assumes the characteristics of an army himself; and the entry likewise is weighted towards this huge leader.

¹⁶¹ Statius uses the term for bulls, 1.134, 4.399. Cf. Parkes (2012 *ad* 69): *arduus* 'suggests a proud bearing'. Lovatt (2005, 119–120) argues that this contributes to Hippomedon's characterisation as a giant, recalling Aeschylus' *Septem* 488 and Euripides' *Phoenissae* 126–127, where he is called a giant.

¹⁶² Parkes 2012 *ad* 129–30: '*scandente*... fits the stress on height: cf. 129 *arduus*.'

¹⁶³ *OLD late* §1.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Theseus leaping onto the battlefield: *Atticus.../ .../ desilit in campum...*, 12.709–711.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Hypseus, who overshadows his horses in Phorbas' catalogue, 7.309–310; Theseus' spear later 'fills the plain', 12.731–732.

Hercules

Directly following Hippomedon's entry is Hercules' contingent. The entry opens with a narratorial comment and the top-down connection of Hercules with his troops through *excit* (4.146):

quis numerum ferri gentesque et robora dictum
aequarit mortale sonans? suus excit in arma
antiquam Tiryntha deus; non fortibus illa
infecunda uiris famaue inmanis alumni
degenerat, sed lapsa situ fortuna, neque addunt
robur opes; rarus uacuis habitator in aruis
monstrat Cyclopum ductas sudoribus arces.
dat tamen haec iuuenum tercentum pectora, uulgus
innumerus bello, quibus haud ammenta nec enses
triste micant: flauae capiti tergoque leonum
exuuiae, gentilis honos; et pineus armat
stipes, inexhaustis artantur tela pharetris.
Herculeum paeana canunt uastataque monstris
omnia; frondosa longum deus audit ab Oeta.
dat Nemea comites, et quas in proelia uires
sacra Cleonaei cogunt uineta Molorchi.
gloria nota casae, foribus simulata salignis
hospitis arma dei, paruoque ostenditur aruo,
robur ubi et laxos qua reclinauerit arcus
ilice, qua cubiti sedeant uestigia terra. (4.145–164)

Who would be able to equal the quantity of steel and the clans and their strength in words, singing in a mortal voice? Her own god rouses ancient Tiryns; she does not fail to produce brave men, nor does she fail to live up to the glory of her huge foster-child; but her fortune has fallen from neglect, nor do resources lend strength. One of the few inhabitants shows the walls constructed by the sweat of the Cyclopes. Nevertheless, this city supplies three hundred hearts of young men, an innumerable multitude for war, who have no spear strap, and whose swords do not dismally flash: on their heads and backs are the tawny skins of lions, their clan's honour, and their quivers are choked with arrows that cannot be used up. They sing a Herculean paean, of all things rid of monsters; their own god hears from leafy Oeta, a long way off. Nemea also gives troops, and the strength that the sacred vineyards of Cleonaeon Molorchus compel. The fame of the cottage is well known, and the arms of the guest god are represented on the willow doors, and in the small field they show where he lay down his club, and the oak where he lay down his relaxed bows, and the earth where there are imprints of his elbow.

The verb *excit* parallels—in fact, is a near-synonym for—the verbs used for Tydeus and Hippomedon. It is a complex form of the verb used in Tydeus' entry, *cieo*, and both verbs

are used for summoning and mustering.¹⁶⁶ The verb *excio* is found more often than *cieo* in catalogue contexts, but is usually used for the rousing of people collectively for war that precipitates the formation of the army and therefore catalogue.¹⁶⁷ Statius uses the verb for Mars' activity in two similar situations: Capaneus is *Mauortis amore/ excitus*, as he argues for war (3.598–599); then Mars stirs up the Theban allies who will make up their catalogue, *exciuerat omnem/ Aoniam* (7.234–235). In this way Hercules parallels other leaders in the catalogue through his inspiration and unifying role in relation to the troops. This parallelism, and the entry's fulfilment of the rubric, encourages us to read the segment as an independent entry.¹⁶⁸ But Hercules is already a deity and his inspiration is passive, and it is the group that spurs itself on collectively. The conceit is striking, even more so given that Hercules was never a paradigm for leadership, but a hero who performed remarkable individual feats.

The song of the men of this contingent is not the only way in which absent inspiration is shown in this entry. The entry is split into two sections, each using *dat* for the contribution of troops (4.152, 159). In the first, the Tirynthians not only sing, but the entry takes us from the scene at hand to Tiryns, where the *rarus...habitor* shows off the Cyclopes' walls, *monstrat* (4.150–151). In the second, the Nemeans are implicitly inspired by the memory of Hercules: his arms are displayed on the doors of Molorchus' cottage, and people show where he leaned his club, and the *uestigia* of his elbows in the ground (4.161–164). The entry abounds with words related to commemoration of various types: *antiquam Tiryntha, fama, gloria nota* (4.147, 148, 161).¹⁶⁹ The reader may wonder, then, what to make of this almost-central entry, whose leadership is unusual and which engages so heavily with the artistic rendering of past events.

Singing contingents appear in the catalogues of other Latin epic. Valerius Flaccus' Corallians sing of their forefathers' deeds, *prisca suorum* (6.93), and this explicitly has a

¹⁶⁶ Cf. *Theb.* 1.228, 2.180, and especially 6.251. *exci(e)o* has the added idea of 'motion whence': *OLD* §1: 'Cause to move away (from a position), rouse, start, stir', and thence §2a 'To call out, summon'.

¹⁶⁷ E.g. the appeal of *Aeneid* 7's catalogue of Latins: *qui bello exciti reges*, 7.642. Cf. *Luc.* 3.290–292 and *Sil. Pun.* 3.222–223, both with *populos* as object.

¹⁶⁸ Most scholars now consider this entry discrete. Klinnert (1970, 79 n2) argues this is an interpolation. This was rejected by Schetter (1972, 230) arguing the Tirynthians are mentioned later in 7.725f. and 11.45ff., where they are even dressed like Hercules.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. the use of other storytelling terms: *simulatur*, 161; *ostenditur*, 162; *uestigia*, 164.

practical application in the scene itself as this recollection spurs the men on, *uiris hortamina* (6.94). Here the Corallians' recollection of exemplars from the past plays the same role as recollections of Hercules for the Tirynthians. Singing contingents are also metapoetic, through resemblance of their activity to the poet's own.¹⁷⁰ The singing of Lucan's contingent of Bardi, for instance, contrasts with Lucan's reluctance to narrate.¹⁷¹ Statius includes another singing contingent, of Heliconians, in Phorbas' catalogue of Theban allies in book 7, which recalls Virgil's entry for Messapus in the catalogue of Latins (7.691–705).¹⁷² Like Hercules' troops, the Heliconians are leaderless, sing, and are in a central position in Phorbas' catalogue:

'uos etiam nostris, Heliconia turba, uenitis
addere rebus opem; tuque, o Permesse, canoris
et felix Olmie, uadis armastis alumnos
bellorum resides. patriis concentibus audis
exultare gregem, quales, cum pallida cedit
bruma, reudentem deducunt Strymona cycni.
ite alacres, numquam uestri morientur honores,
bellaque perpetuo memorabunt carmine Musae.' (7.282–289)

You too, Heliconian crowd, come to give aid to our situation; and you, Permessus, and Olmius, happy in your melodious streams, arm foster-children unused to wars. You [Antigone] hear their flock rejoicing in their native harmonies, just as when the pale winter solstice gives way, and swans draw down shining Strymon. Go happily: your glory will never die, and the Muses will commemorate you in continuous song.

This 'Heliconian crowd', *Heliconia turba*, looks initially like a phrase denoting the Muses (7.282).¹⁷³ The entry clearly engages with poetic commemoration, especially poetic immortality (288–289). The phrase *perpetuo... carmine* has especial resonance through its recollection of the proem of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which Ovid sets out his poetic

¹⁷⁰ Parkes (2012 *ad* 156) gives examples.

¹⁷¹ Luc. 1.447–449. Feeney (1993, 277) notes on this section of Lucan: 'Faced with civil war, he [Lucan] abnegates his epic task. Only the bards of the barbarians can discharge the epic role any more'.

¹⁷² Like the Heliconians, they are unused to war, *resides desuetaque bello*, but sing of their king, and are compared with swans.

¹⁷³ Statius calls the Muses *cohors Heliconia* in *Silu.* 5.3.91, where he discusses his composition of the *Thebaid*, a locus to which Smolenaars (1994 *ad* 282) refers. During the war itself, Statius describes the death of Heliconian Corymbus, who wishes for 'fights and men', 'perhaps to sing of them', suggesting that he is indeed a poet, 8.548–553. Augoustakis (2016 *ad* 548–51, 551–2 and 552–3) links Corymbus with Virgil's Cretheus, *Aen.* 9.774–7.

programme (Ov. *Met.* 1.1–4, esp. 4).¹⁷⁴ Phorbas explicitly connects this commemorative promise with the troops' inspiration in the Heliconian entry: they may proceed cheerfully, since their honour will be preserved (4.288–289). As with the Hercules entry in the Argive catalogue, Phorbas provides—again, at about the centre of the catalogue of Theban allies—an entry that engages with the notion of memory and poetic composition, and the role this plays in the inspiration of troops.

With this parallel in mind, we may turn back to the Hercules' entry. As a 'leader' in the catalogue, Hercules is unique in the tradition of epic catalogue. He has already died and been made a god, and his relationship to the men of his contingent is therefore unusual. He is the Tiryntians' 'own god', which suggests an intimate relationship with his troops, *suus.../ ...deus* (4.167–8). He could almost be seen as an abstracted quality of the contingent itself (4.146–7).¹⁷⁵ The contingent sings of Hercules' achievements in life, demonstrating that this form of leadership, which is not ephemeral, may be effected through the recollection of great deeds. Hercules' posthumous influence on his troops in the Argive catalogue implicitly recognises that this purely psychological leadership can be as effective as a leader's direct interaction with his troops.

Hercules' role here has especial significance when we consider how he is treated in relation to the Argive leaders throughout the *Thebaid*: Hercules is a paradigm against which the actions of the Argive leaders play out, and they consistently fail to live up to his example.¹⁷⁶ The placement of Hercules in the catalogue is especially effective, as he falls between Hippomedon and Capaneus, two of the most capable warriors on the Argive side who nevertheless are more like the monsters which Hercules was famous for

¹⁷⁴ Ovid's proem has been the subject of a huge volume of scholarship: e.g. Steiner 1959, Nicoll 1980, Hinds 1987, 18–21, 121, 132.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. for example Virgil's Nisus: *dine hunc ardorem mentibus addunt, / ...an sua cuique deus fit dira cupido?*, *Aen.* 9.184–185.

¹⁷⁶ See Vessey (1973, 199) on this failure to live up to the 'Stoic Hercules'. There are numerous examples where Hercules is adduced as a foil to the Argive Seven. For those in the catalogue, see Parkes (2012 *ad* 85–6) and Smith (2017, 245 and 251, esp. n37). See also Parkes (2009a) for the Flavian tendency to use Hercules 'as a standard by which to assess other figures' (476). See also Brown (1994, esp. 30–56) on Hercules' connection with the *Thebaid*'s Nemean episode. Hercules is treated as a positive paradigm in a variety of Roman literature, on which see Galinsky (1972, 126–184), and has a special place in ancient thinking about the concept of heroism, on which see Feeney (1991, 156–157). On Homer's use of Hercules as paradigm in catalogues, see Sammons (2010, 101–102).

killing.¹⁷⁷ The figure of Hercules also brings into focus the career of Tydeus in the *Thebaid*; Tydeus comes close to deification after his death, but Minerva does not bestow the *decus immortale* she had intended to, in disgust at his final act (8.759). In the appeal which opened the Argive catalogue, Statius had addressed Fama and Vetustas, whose task it is to ‘remember and extend the lives of leaders’ (*cui meminisse ducum uitasque extendere curae*, 4.33). The phrasing of this appeal recalls the conversation between Jupiter and Hercules in *Aeneid* 10, as noted above. Through juxtaposition with Hercules, who is able to inspire men after death, Statius implies that the Argive men whose deeds he relates in the *Thebaid* will not be able to have the same function for future generations. In doing so, Statius suggests that his *Thebaid* cannot have a straightforward exemplary function.

Rather than any of the Argives, the figure associated positively with Hercules is the Theban Menoeceus.¹⁷⁸ Virtus is compared with Hercules when she disguises herself as Manto and approaches Menoeceus (10.646–649).¹⁷⁹ After his death, Pietas and Virtus bear his body to earth, but his spirit is ‘already before Jupiter, and asks for glory for himself among the highest stars’ (*nam spiritus olim/ ante Iouem et summis apicem sibi poscit in astris*, 10.781–782). In book 12 Menoeceus is compared with Hercules, with Oeta again as a geographical reference point: *haud aliter quam cum poscentibus astris/ laetus in accensa iacuit Tirynthius Oeta*. (12.66–67). The ‘leafy’ Oeta of the Hercules entry in book 4 has become ‘burning’ Oeta here. The comparison suggests that Menoeceus will receive the same honours as Hercules, that is, deification.¹⁸⁰ But they achieve this very differently, since Menoeceus commits suicide and is celebrated for a feat that preserves his fellow citizens.¹⁸¹ Statius’ Hercules entry is a comment on how his

¹⁷⁷ Fernandelli (2000, 93–97) demonstrates that Hippomedon and Capaneus are a ‘natural pair’ and share literary models. Cf. Lovatt (2005, 114–139) who demonstrates that both men are characterised as giants. In addition, both Hippomedon and Capaneus are portrayed as poet figures in their entries, again reflecting on their value as exemplary figures, as discussed above and below.

¹⁷⁸ On Menoeceus’ suicide, see Heinrich (1999) and Pollmann (2008, 363–364).

¹⁷⁹ Lovatt 2013, 84.

¹⁸⁰ Vessey (1971c, 241–243) notes that ‘Hercules...had also achieved divinity through his *uirtus*’, 241.

¹⁸¹ See Vessey (1971c, esp. 236) on the ‘selfless death’ of Menoeceus. Pollmann (2004 *ad* 66–7) agrees that deification comes about as a result of acting on behalf of Thebans—and Thebes.

poetry will commemorate *uirtus*, reflecting on Statius' own task of providing exemplars to inspire future men: Statius' Argives will fail to do this.

Capaneus

Capaneus' entry, directly after that for Hercules, begins with the leader of the contingent, as do most others. Hyperbolic height and size is a focal point, as with Hippomedon; but in Capaneus' case, Statius takes this to an extreme:

at pedes et toto despectans uertice bellum
quattuor indomitis Capaneus erepta iuuencis
terga superque rigens iniectu molis aënae
uersat onus; squalet triplici ramosa corona
Hydra recens obitu: pars anguibus aspera uiuis
argento caelata micat, pars arte reperta¹⁸²
conditur et fuluo moriens nigrescit¹⁸³ in auro;
circum amnis torpens et ferro caerula Lerna.
at laterum tractus spatiosaque pectora seruat
nexilis innumero Chalybum subtemine thorax,
horrendum, non matris, opus; galeaeque corusca
prominet arce gigans; atque uni missilis illi
cuspede praefixa stat frondibus orba cupressus. (4.165–177)

But on foot, and looking down on the whole army by a head is Capaneus, who wields four hides torn from untamed oxen, on top of which is a solid weight on which with a bronze mass is laid. The branching Hydra, recent in death, is scaly in triple ring; part is rough with live snakes, and flashes, engraved in silver; another part, with the art discovered, is hidden, and as it dies, grows black in the yellow gold; around is the sluggish river and Lerna grey-blue in steel. But a cuirass woven with the innumerable threads of the Chalybes covers the expanse of his sides and his spacious chest, a dreadful thing, not the work of a mother; and from the flashing peak of the helmet sticks out a giant; and wieldable for him alone, a cypress stands stripped of its leaves, with a sharp tip attached.

Capaneus stands out; but Capaneus is on foot. This detail has been explained with reference to the *Iliad* or Euripides' *Phoenissae*.¹⁸⁴ Epic tradition may also shed light on the effect of this description: Virgil's Aventinus is also on foot in his entry, *ipse pedes* (*Aen.* 7.666; cf. *at pedes Theb.* 4.165). At the same time, Capaneus' hugeness recalls

¹⁸² Klotz reads *resposta*, as suggested by Dieter, but here I take the reading of the primary manuscripts P and ω, which have *reperta*.

¹⁸³ Fernandelli (2000, 90, 95–96) demonstrates why this is may be the better reading, as opposed to the vulgate and scholiast's *ignescit*.

¹⁸⁴ Klinnert (1970, 22 n39) notes that this is otherwise unattested, and that there is no clear reason for it to be included: it may be a reference to Tydeus' son Diomedes and Capaneus' son Sthenelus in the *Iliad*. Fernandelli (2000, 89–90, 94, 97) explains this as a reference to Hippomedon in Eur. *Phoen.* 1114.

Virgil's Turnus, who overtops his troops by a head, *toto vertice supra est* (*Aen.* 7.784; cf. *toto despectans uertice bellum*, *Theb.* 4.165).¹⁸⁵ Turnus is on a horse, which we may infer from the designation of his troops: 'a cloud of foot soldiers follows him...' *insequitur nimbus peditum...* (*Aen.* 7.793). By hyperbolically combining the idea of being on foot with extreme height, Capaneus overtops his literary parallels in the *Aeneid*, and also the other Argives. Despite being on foot, he 'looks down on' the entire army, *Capaneus despectans...bellum* (4.165), and his huge spear can only be wielded by him, *uni...illi* (4.176).

Capaneus' entry is also clearly based on Nestor's in *Iliad* 2, and Homer's epic may provide another parallel. In *Iliad* 11, Nestor tells how in his youth he fought in the war against the Epeians, and his father Neleus refused to let him be armed and hid his horses; but even though he was on foot, Nestor stood out among those on horseback, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὧς ἱπεῦσι μετέπρεπον ἡμετέροισι/ πεζός περ ἐών, ἐπεὶ ὧς ἄγε νεῖκος Ἀθήνη (*Il.* 11.720–721).¹⁸⁶ Statius likewise engages the pairing of *eques* (or *sonipes*) and *pedes* to show leaders standing out from the crowd in his catalogue: Hippomedon, Parthenopaeus and Amphiarus are all on horses and therefore physically dominant.¹⁸⁷ In Capaneus' case, Statius plays on this opposition, with Capaneus on foot like his troops, but still standing out for his sheer size.¹⁸⁸

Capaneus' immense size and physical dominance cues a reading of the catalogue entry itself in spatial, physical terms. He has no top-down syntactic relationship with his men, who do not appear in the scene *per se*, and the entry's (delayed) city-list consists of eight city names squeezed into a short four lines and one word (4.178–182). Capaneus begins and ends the entry, and the description of him takes up more than seventeen of twenty-two lines in the entry.¹⁸⁹ Individual elements assume collective motifs of the catalogue:

¹⁸⁵ Harrison 1992, 248.

¹⁸⁶ The verb μεταπρέπει is also used of Agamemnon's pre-eminence prior to the Greek catalogue, 2.481.

¹⁸⁷ In the *Thebaid*: *...nec uertere cuiquam/ frena secundus Halys (sed tunc pedes occubat aruis)*, 2.573–574; *sonipes* and *pedes* are paired at 5.3; *turbat eques pedites...*, 8.350; *peditumque equitumque cateruis/ expirat protritit ager*, 12.657–658. Cf. also the inception of hostilities in Virgil's Latium: *pars pedes ires parat campis, pars arduis altis/ puluerulentus equis furit*, *Aen.* 7.624–625.

¹⁸⁸ The ancient scholiast *ad* 165–6 notes: *pedes quidem erat Capaneus, sed omnibus eminebat. solent enim equites altiores esse pedestribus.*

¹⁸⁹ This includes the Thamyras-Marsyas digression.

the narrator variegates his huge shield rather than his troops, using the anaphora of *pars*, 4.169–170.¹⁹⁰ Other hyperbolic descriptions of his dominant appearance are metaphorical: the noun *tractus* is a spatial hyperbole, used of ‘great spaces of land or building’ (4.173).¹⁹¹ The adjective *spatiosa*, also used of land, is used of Capaneus’ shield (4.173).¹⁹² His corselet is described hyperbolically using the idea of innumerability, *innumero... subtemine* (4.174). So while Capaneus and his troops are included in this entry, meeting the rubric’s requirements, Capaneus’ hugeness is expressed through his domination of the entry itself, and the abridgment of his city list, almost as if this catalogue entry struggles to contain him.¹⁹³ A reading of spatial domination on a textual level is cued by spatial terms used for the individual and his armour, and the leading individual Capaneus crowds out the crowd.

Capaneus’ connection with his troops is delayed to the fourteenth line of his entry, and when it is given, expression of agency on either the leader’s or the troops’ part is avoided, *huic parere dati quos...*, ‘men are provided to be subject to this man [Capaneus], those whom...’ (4.178).¹⁹⁴ Within the scene itself, Capaneus plays no active role in relation to the troops, again favouring his characterisation as an individual. Nor is any indication given of where Capaneus is standing in relation to his troops. Capaneus’ catalogue entry thus prepares the reader for the shape of the narrative to come, in which he performs a

¹⁹⁰ The noun *pars* is more usually used for groups of people: e.g. 4.64–66; 7.452–469.

¹⁹¹ Harrison (1992, 251) notes this, and that this recalls Virgil’s Tityos in *Aeneid* 6.596–597. Capaneus is in fact later compared with Tityos, with physical dominance as the focus: *hic, quantum Stygiis Tityos consurgat ab aruis, / si torvae patiantur aues, tanta undique pandit / membrorum spatia et tantis ferus ossibus extat*, 6.753–755. Lovatt (2005, 129–130) reads Capaneus here as a poetic challenge, and notes that ‘his body figuratively becomes landscape itself’, without linking this to the space of the catalogue or the relationship of leader to troops.

¹⁹² Harrison (1992, 251) notes that a similar phrase is used for Amycus in Valerius Flaccus, *spatiosa pectoris ossa*, *Arg.* 4.244. Cf. also *spatium superbi/ pectoris*, Val. Fl. 1.434–5. In the Greek catalogue of the *Iliad*, Mycalessus is ‘spacious’, εὐρύχορος, 2.498. Statius uses *spatiosus* of land in 5.550: *spatiosaque iugera*.

¹⁹³ In this sense he may perhaps recall Hercules during the expedition of the Argonauts: in Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 1.530–531, the Argo dips as he takes his place on the boat; in Val. Fl. 3.474–480, he breaks an oar as he rows single-handedly.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. *parebat legio audaci permissa Cethego*, Sil. *Pun.* 8.575;

significant role as an individual, and does not direct collective action; he supplies an epic grandeur through hyperbolic individual activity rather than epic numerical scale.

Capaneus' verbal relationship to his troops opens the entry's list of place-names, to which Statius again attaches a digression that again stands outside the rubric's function of listing leaders and troops:

huic parere dati, quos fertilis Amphigenia
planaque Messene montosaque nutrit Ithome,
quos Thyron et summis ingestum montibus Aepy,
quos Helos et Pteleon, Getico quos flebile uati
Dorion; hic fretus doctas anteire canendo
Aonidas mutos Thamyris damnatus in annos
ore simul citharaque—quis obuia numina temnat?—
conticuit praeceps, qui non certamina Phoebi
nosset et inlustres Satyro pendente Celaenas. (4.178–186)

Those are given to obey this man, whom fertile Amphigenia and flat Messene and mountainous Ithome nurture, whom Thyron and Aepy, placed on the highest mountains, and Helos and Pteleon nurture, and those of Dorion, lamentable for the Getic poet; here Thamyris, confident that he could surpass the learned Muses in singing, was condemned to silent years, both in voice and in lyre—for who would scorn deities in person?—and fell silent suddenly, since he did not know of the competition of Phoebus, and Celaenae distinguished for its hanging Satyr.

Most of these toponyms are taken from Nestor's catalogue entry in *Iliad* 2, on which Capaneus' entry is clearly based.¹⁹⁵ Capaneus in Statius' catalogue implicitly contrasts with Nestor, who is a 'negative entry', refusing to join the expedition, ...*et ire tamen peritura in castra negauit* (4.127). As in the *Iliad*, the *exemplum* of Thamyris is given as a digression related to the place-name Dorion (*Il.* 2.594–600), but Statius adds another example of a man who challenged the gods and was punished for it, Marsyas, who could have served as an *exemplum* for Thamyris to avoid (4.182–186).¹⁹⁶ The rubric defining the shared characteristics of these two examples is implied in the narrator's rhetorical question, *quis obuia numina temnat?* (4.184). Capaneus' exploits in book 10 qualify him to be added to this list.¹⁹⁷ The entry does fulfil the rubric by naming cities, but yet again,

¹⁹⁵ The entries share Aepy, Amphigenia, Dorion, Helos, Pteleos and Thyrum.

¹⁹⁶ Taking *nosset* as causal subjunctive: on potential textual problems here, see Parkes (2012 *ad* 185–6). Marsyas is mentioned in catalogues also in *Luc.* 2.207 and *Sil. Pun.* 8.503. In the *Thebaid*, Adrastus refers to Marsyas in his prayer to Apollo, *tu Phryga summittis citharae*, 1.709.

¹⁹⁷ Lovatt (2005, 130) notes that this foreshadows his death. Cf. the anonymous shade, whose life ended badly because of his disdain for the gods, 2.16–17. Similarly, Sammons (2010, 24–38 esp.

Staius commandeers these for further characterisation of the leader, and the two categories of information are not mutually exclusive in the entry. In addition, Staius implies that Capaneus is not a positive exemplar, pointing up again his contrast with Hercules in the preceding entry.

Scholarship has recognised the significance of Marsyas as a poet figure in the contexts of various catalogues, and Thamyris is an analogous figure.¹⁹⁸ Capaneus may also suggest Staius himself through this association.¹⁹⁹ In addition, scholarship has interpreted Capaneus' entry metapoetically, especially through the language of elevation.²⁰⁰ This entry perhaps also suggests Staius' treatment of Capaneus in his poem, in which his relationship with his troops—i.e. his leadership—never comes to the fore; instead, Capaneus is distinguished only for individual feats. In other words, the Capaneus entry encodes the idea that his contingent will not supply epic prestige through numbers, but through the leader's epic hugeness. When Capaneus scales the walls of Thebes in book 10, he explicitly subsumes within his own person the series of Argives leaders who have already died:

nec iam aut Oeniden aut Hippomedonta peremptos
aut uatem Pelopea Phalanx aut Arcada credunt:
quin socium coiisse animas et corpore in uno
stare omnes, ita cuncta replet. non ullius aetas,
non cultus, non forma mouet; pugnantibus idem
supplicibusque furit; non quisquam obsistere contra,
non belli temptare uices: procul arma furentis
terribilisque iubas et frontem cassidis horrent. (10.748–755)

Nor does the Pelopean phalanx believe that either Tydeus or Hippomedon have been killed, nor the seer, nor the Arcadian; but rather, that the spirits of his

28) notes that the narrative context of Dione's catalogue of attacks on the gods by mortals, in which Diomedes attacks Aphrodite, provides another entry for her list.

¹⁹⁸ Powell (1978, 262) suggests vaguely that Homer refers to this myth because he is 'fond of speaking of other *ᾠοῖδαι*'. Crossett (1969, 243) notes that Thamyris is 'a reminder of poetry and the poet'. Sammons (2010, 180) notes that Thamyris 'has direct relevance... to the activity of the poet himself'.

¹⁹⁹ See esp. Lovatt (2005, 128–139) on Capaneus as a poet figure and the relevance of this to Staius himself, especially with reference to the motif of gigantomachy, through which he becomes 'a bizarre and unexpected poet figure' (131).

²⁰⁰ Leigh (2006), independently from Lovatt (2005), reads Capaneus' elevation as metapoetic, reflecting on the type of poetry Staius must compose to include such a feat. Meanwhile, Harrison (1992, 251) notes that Capaneus' armour is described in the weaving terms *nexillis* and *subtegmine*, 4.174. This suggests—along with the language of innumerability—that this was a comment on poetry itself.

comrades have come together, and all of them stand in a single body, such does he refill their places. Neither the age, nor the adornment, nor the beauty of any man moves him; he rages equally against fighters and suppliants. Nobody stands against him, nor do they try the vicissitudes of war. They shudder from afar at his arms as he rages, and the dreadful crests, and the brow of his helmet.

Statius emphasises the single-handedness of this feat by giving a brief catalogue of the deceased Argive leaders that Capaneus supplants: Tydeus, Hippomedon, Amphiaraus and Parthenopaeus (10.748–749). Here the single figure assumes the role of his many comrades, playing on the anatomical and collective senses of *corpus*: it is as if the dead men have ‘come together in a single body’ (10.750–751).²⁰¹ This answers the opening of book 10, where the Thebans find consolation in the fact that four Argive *turmae* now lack leaders: *sed dant solacia Thebis/ quattuor errantes Danaum sine praeside turmae* (10.11–12), and Eteocles gives a rousing speech that lists the same four dead Argive leaders we are later told Capaneus appears to replace (10.24–28). These earlier references prepare the reader to view the onslaught of Capaneus in terms of the enumeration of the Argive dead: Capaneus subsumes this catalogue of other Argives into his own person.

Amphiaraus

Amphiaraus’ entry begins with a focus on the leader, specifically the explanation for his involvement in the war—and therefore in the catalogue itself. As with Adrastus, a god is a direct poetic counterpoint to Amphiaraus’ reluctance in the immediate context of the catalogue, explaining his involvement despite his reluctance, *cunctanti* (4.189). Atropos thrusts Amphiaraus into his armour, the intervention marked in the same way as Bellona’s, *ipsa manu* (4.189):²⁰²

iamque et fatidici mens expugnata fatiscit
auguris; ille quidem casus et dira uidebat
signa, sed ipsa manu cunctanti iniecerat arma
Atropos obrueratque deum. (4.187–190)

²⁰¹ The idea that a single man may play the role of a collective is not uncommon in epic, especially post-*Aeneid*, as discussed by Hardie (1993b, 3–10). Virgil’s catalogue of Latins hints at this idea, with Clausus ‘himself as big as an army on the march’, *magnique ipse agminis instar*, *Aen.* 7.707. Cf. Lausus *pars ingens belli*, *Aen.* 10.427, and *pars belli haud temnenda*, *Aen.* 10.737, with *pars belli quam magna venit*, *Sil. Pun.* 8.426. Even a shield may take up the one-many motif: *unum omnia contra/ tela Latinorum*, *Aen.* 8.446–447.

²⁰² Statius initially identifies Amphiaraus by a circumlocution, 4.187–188.

And now the mind of the fate-speaking augur has been overcome; indeed, he kept on seeing the disasters to come, and the dreadful signs; but Atropos had herself in person thrust arms onto him as he delayed, and had overwhelmed the god.

Latinus' role in *Aeneid* 7 continues to be split between Adrastus and Amphiaraus in *Thebaid* 4, with both men overcome by the machinations of the gods.²⁰³ The initial emphasis on Amphiaraus' foresight looks forward to his death, and the hand of Atropos serves as a reminder of this, as the cutter of life's thread.²⁰⁴ Amphiaraus' foreknowledge of his death is overcome by Atropos, figured as a contest between two gods, *Atropos obrueratque deum...* (4.190).

After this initial portrait in the march scene, a long digression explains on a human level how Amphiaraus has come to participate in the catalogue: Argia has given Eriphyle the necklace of Harmonia in return for his involvement (4.187–213). This scene takes us away from the catalogue's listing function, and interferes with the catalogue typology, by relating action that occurs before the march, even including direct speech by Argia to Polynices (200–210).²⁰⁵ The scene is also jarring in that it relocates—or dislocates—agency in the entry, especially so since this falls to a woman. It is Argia, singled out through *ipsa* (4.198), who is portrayed as a military leader making considerations of who should be included in the mission:

illa libens (nam regum animos et pondera belli
hac nutare uidet, pariter si prouidus heros
militet) ipsa sacros gremio Polynicis amati
deposuit nexus haud maesta... (4.196–199)

'She [Argia] herself willingly (for she sees that the spirits of the kings and the weights of war nod this way, if the prophetic seer should also fight) placed the sacred coiled necklace into the lap of her beloved Polynices, not sadly...

In her speech we also gain insight into Argia's psychology, as she imagines her post-war life as the wife of a king, opening up alternative narrative possibilities (4.200–210, esp. 207–209). Here again Statius includes material outside the rubric that colours the entry significantly: while we expect in the catalogue an embellished list of participants, Amphiaraus' reluctance and the intrusion of Argia (and Eriphyle) have an unsettling

²⁰³ This is discussed in Chapter 3.

²⁰⁴ The threads of the Fates are mentioned twice in the context of Amphiaraus entry into the Underworld: 7.774–5; 8.11–13. Cf. *Silu.* 3.3.126–127.

²⁰⁵ Kytzler (1969, 226 esp. n1) notes Statius' integration of this narrative into the catalogue.

effect. As with Adrastus, figures other than the leader himself—including gods and women—are described fulfilling the demands of the plot and *fatum*.

Like Adrastus, Amphiaraus also lacks a top-down syntactical connection with his troops: as in other entries, an oblique form of demonstrative *hic* connects leader to troops, *huius*, and as with Adrastus' entry, the contingent 'accompanies' him, *comitantur* (4.223 cf. 4.59: *it comes*):

huius Apollineae currum comitantur Amyclae,
quos Pylos²⁰⁶ et dubiis Malea uitata carinis
plaudentique habiles Caryae resonare Dianae,
quos Pharis uolucrumque parens Cythereia Messe,
Taygetique phalanx et oloriferi Eurotae
dura manus. (4.223–228)

Apollo's Amyclae accompanies this man's chariot, those of Pylos and Malea avoided by wavering ships, and Caryae fit to resound for Diana as she applauds, and those of Pharis and Cytherean Messe, and the phalanx of Taygetus, and the tough troop of swan-bearing Eurotas.

Next is the group from Elis and Pisa. Again, no top-down syntax connects them with Amphiaraus:

non hi tibi solum,
Amphiarae, merent: auget resupina maniplos
Elis, depressae populus subit incola Pisae... (4.236–238)

Not only these, Amphiaraus, serve you: sloping Elis increases your company, and the people inhabiting low-lying Pisa...

As in other entries of this catalogue, various details in the entry look forward to the leader's death. In Amphiaraus' case, there is a string of images of horses—especially ones that interact somehow with the earth. This begins with the initial portrait of Amphiaraus, *Taenariis hic celsus equis, quam dispare coetu/ Cyllarus ignaro generarat Castore prolem,/ quassat humum* (4.214–216).²⁰⁷ Later, in a description again looking

²⁰⁶ Klotz has *Helos*, Kohlmann's suggestion, for *Pylos*, despite the latter being the reading of both P and ω, on the grounds this is at odds with 4.125: 'quae lectio cum u. 125 pugnat'. Smith (2016, 9–11) gives a convincing argument that the repetition of 'Pylos' is a 'signpost to the learned reader'.

²⁰⁷ Lovatt (2005, 183, 185–186) notes the foreshadowing in 4.216. Statius emphasises Amphiaraus' role as horseman by including the detail *arma simul pressasque iugo moderatur*

forward to his death, Staius remarks that he ‘stands out’ on his horse, *procul ipse graui metuendus in hasta/ eminent et clipeo uictum Pythona coruscat* (4.221–222).²⁰⁸ As in other entries, a digression attached to his city list again looks forward to his death: after a long digression on Sparta, Staius mentions the custom in Elis and Pisa of training horses for war, *curribus innumeris late putria lacessunt/ et bellis armenta domant* (4.241–242). The story of Oenomaeus is also resonant, since despite their celebration of the art of charioteering, Oenomaeus had died in this endeavour, and Myrtilus’ curse of Pelops had resulted in a line of descendants who were tragic subjects.²⁰⁹ The entry later describes Amphiarus’ men on their horses in the march scene, again referring to their effect on the earth as they bedew the earth with foaming spit, *strident spumantia morsu/ uinacula et effosas niueus rigat imber harenas* (4.244–245). Again, the entry, even as it conveys scope according to the traditional function of the catalogue, fits into Staius’ thematic preoccupation with the Argives’ deaths.

Amphiarus is physically pre-eminent, and collective motifs are applied to him, rather than his troops. Amphiarus is high on his horse, *celsus equis* (4.214), and stands out in his group of men, *procul ipse graui metuendus in hasta/ eminent et clipeo uictum Pythona coruscat* (4.221–222). The detail that Amphiarus ‘shakes the earth’ on his horse looks forward to his death, *quassat humum* (4.216); but this is also a collective motif, used for the effect of massed armies in the field.²¹⁰ In Virgil’s catalogue of Latins, the motif is used for Clausus’ contingent (7.718–721), straight after a simile comparing the contingent with waves of ears of corn, to emphasise mass: *scuta sonant pulsuque pedum conterrita tellus* (7.722). When Amphiarus descends to the Underworld, the soldiers think that it is war as the earth gapes open, even though it is only the single man Amphiarus involved, *bella putant trepidi* (7.797). Staius then adds, *alius tremor arma uirosque/ mirantesque inclinat equos* (7.798–789), in which the reference to Virgil in *arma uiros* and the use of *alius* is metapoetic, indicating that this is a different sort of poetry he is creating.²¹¹ Here

habenas, 4.219. As he descends to the Underworld, Staius says, *non arma manu, non frena remisit*, 7.819.

²⁰⁸ Cf. *eminent ante alios iam formidantibus arua/ Amphiarus equis ac multo puluere uertit/campum indignantem*, 7.690–692.

²⁰⁹ Gantz (1993, 540–545) gives a review of the sources for this myth and their variations.

²¹⁰ E.g. Val. Fl. 6.168–170, where the earth shakes with chariots, indicating their huge number. Cf. also Lucr. 2.329–330, where Lucretius talks about horsemen shaking, *quatientes*, the plains.

²¹¹ Cf. *alio Capaneus horrore canendus*, 1.45

Amphiaraus supplants his troops as the carrier of epic grandeur, foreshadowing the focus on his death in book 7.

Parthenopaeus

Parthenopaeus' entry, which is the last, is different again in terms of leadership. The entry opens with a lively apostrophe:

tu quoque Parrhasias ignara matre cateruas—
a rudis armorum, tantum noua Gloria suadet! —,
Parthenopaeae, rapis; saltus tunc forte remotos
torua parens—neque enim haec iuueni foret ire potestas—
pacabat cornu gelidique auersa Lycaei. (4.246–250)

You also, Parthenopaeus, sweep along your squadrons without the knowledge of your mother—ah, untrained in war, how much does this novel glory persuade you! Then by chance was your fierce parent pacifying the remote woodlands and hinterland of chilly Lycaeus with her bow—for otherwise, the boy would not have been able to depart.

Parthenopaeus is the subject of a verbal connection with his troops, *rapis* (4.248). The verb *rapio* is found connecting individual to troops in several other epic catalogues.²¹² This connection suggests hot-headedness and haste, an ominous introduction to Parthenopaeus as leader. It also recalls the portrait of the gods' role in book 3, especially Jupiter's instructions to Mars to disrupt order and initiate war, where pairing with *turbo* suggests confusion and chaos: *rape cunctantes et foedera turba* (3.233). Mars' subsequent sweeping action is also described using *rapio*: *bellipotens prae se deus agmina passim / mille rapit...* (3.577–578).²¹³ The verb designates violent, swift and coercive action, destructive sometimes to the point of being fatal.²¹⁴ When Parthenopaeus is next depicted in the scene, his eagerness for war is again denoted:

prosilis audaci Martis percussus amore,
arma, tubas audire calens et pulvere belli
flaudentem sordere comam captoque referri
hostis equo (4.260–263)

He leaps forward, struck with love of Mars, burning to hear the trumpets and to dirty his yellow hair with dust and to ride back as an enemy on a captured horse.

²¹² See Table A: 237.

²¹³ Amphiaraus responds to the movement to war again with this verb, *quo rapitis arma?* 3.630.

²¹⁴ Elsewhere Statius uses this verb for violent, destructive natural phenomena: e.g. the storm Polynices experiences, 1.350, 1.361, 1.366; the snake that kills Opheltis, 4.719, 5.597, 6.212.

There is a series of verbs for which Parthenopaeus is subject that suggest violence and/or enthusiasm: *rapis* 248; *abstulit* 255; *prosilit* 260. As with other Argive leaders, the conception of Parthenopaeus' role here goes far beyond merely leadership.

Parthenopaeus' second verbal connection with a collective after *rapis* is *abstulit*, a verb that again denotes violence—even killing:²¹⁵

quas non ille duces nemorum fluuiisque dicata
numina, quas magno non abstulit igne Napaeas?
ipsam, Maenalia puerum cum uidit in umbra,
Dianam, tenero signantem gramina passu,
ignouisse ferunt comiti, Dictaeaque tela
ipsam et Amyclaeas umeris aptasse pharetras.
prosilit audaci Martis percussus amore,
arma, tubas audire calens et puluere belli
flauentem sordere comam captoque referri
hostis equo: taedet nemorum, titulumque nocentem
sanguinis humani pudor est nescire sagittas. (4.254–264)

What leaders of groves and divine powers consecrated to rivers, what Napaeans, did he not carry off with his great passion? They say that Diana herself, when she saw the boy in the Maenalian shade as he marked the grass with tender step, forgave her companion, and herself fitted Dictaeon arrows and Amyclaeon quivers to his shoulders. He leaps forward, struck with bold love of Mars, burning to hear arms and trumpets, and to dirty his golden hair in the dust of battle, and to return on a horse captured from the enemy: he is weary of the groves, and is ashamed that his arrows have not experienced the guilty glory of human blood.

abstulit and *duces* are both military terms, but Statius applies them metaphorically to Parthenopaeus' strength in the erotic sphere.²¹⁶ On the other hand, he is 'struck with bold love of Mars and burns to hear arms and trumpets', *audaci Martis percussus amore,/ arma, tubas audire calens* (4.260–261).²¹⁷ Statius uses military terms for his pastoral pursuits; and his love of war is described in erotic terms.²¹⁸ This not only confuses erotic

²¹⁵ *OLD aufero* §2b, 8, 11b. E.g. a single day 'carries off' Ide's sons, *una dies, manus abstulit una, Theb.* 3.148. The verb is also used later of the severing of an arm, *Theb.* 8.441.

²¹⁶ Scholars have considered the use of *duces nemorum* difficult. Hall emends to *deas*; Hill retains *duces*, noting Gronovius gives *quos*, 'fortasse per errorem tyothetae'.

²¹⁷ Parkes (2008, 387) notes that Parthenopaeus is 'inflamed by lust for war...rather than for the nymphs', as part of a 'tension between *amor* and *arma*', as in the *Achilleid*. Note in this connection the juxtaposition of *amor* and *arma*, 4.260–261.

²¹⁸ Parkes (2005, 363) reads this trespass of language as part of a progression of 'Arcadias' in the entry: 'lust is now directed toward fighting'. Lovatt (2005, 69) notes that the 'language of love' is applied to his lust for war; but does not note the opposite. Statius employs this crossover of language elsewhere: Nugent (1996, 56–59, 62–64) comments that the Lemnian men's martial

and military, but also suggests that a sort of madness or fury drives him.²¹⁹ Parthenopaeus displays a fatal adherence to the epic value of shedding human blood, *taedet nemorum, titulumque nocentem/ sanguinis humani pudor est nescire sagittas* (4.263–264). Here the repetition of *nemorum* (4.254, 263) underscores the disconnection between the world of war and his background. In this context, *rapio* is perhaps used by Statius not only to convey youthful enthusiasm, but also to set off this crossover of military and erotic passion, since the verb signifies sexual pursuits.²²⁰ Later his mother uses the contrast implicitly: he is barely ready for the nymphs, let alone war, *uix Dryadum thalamis Erymanthiadumque furori/ Nympharum mature puer* (4.329–330).²²¹ Statius’ Parthenopaeus has active agency in relation to his men, but this is part of a series of images through which his inappropriateness in this role is highlighted through the trespass of the erotic into the military sphere and vice versa.

As with the description of his relationship to the mass, Parthenopaeus’ description as a pre-eminent figure is adapted. Like other leaders, he is high on a horse, *sublimis agebat* (4.273).²²² The adjective *sublimis* indicates physical height, but also denotes status and elevation of poetic style (4.273).²²³ Statius also distinguishes Parthenopaeus through youth and effeminacy, a twist on the motif of physical pre-eminence: he shines with gold, *igneus ante omnes auro micat, igneus ostro* (265), and as he blushes sweetly, he is *spectabilis*, the central object of the gaze of those around him, *dulce rubens uiridique*

mission to Thrace is sexualised through language, as is the women’s attack on the men, and ‘the erotic and the violent are here so intertwined as to be inseparable’ (63). The *Achilleid* of course plays on this: Feeney (2004, esp. 93, 97–99) notes that what we have of this poem ‘displays a keen interest in the elegiac militarization of love’ suggesting that the poem’s missing part would have explored the opposite.

²¹⁹ Lovatt (2005, 55–79) discusses at length Parthenopaeus’ erotic nature, and his admission of his ‘generic transgression’ in 9.892, *arma puer rapui*, which recalls Virgil’s *arma uirumque*. Cf. Hippomedon’s ‘teaching’ in his catalogue entry, discussed above, *pulchraeque docet uirtutis amorem*, 4.128; and Amphiarus in 7.703: *ardet inexploto saeui Mauortis amore*.

²²⁰ *OLD rapio* §4: ‘To carry off (and violate), ravish.’ Adams (1982, 175) notes that ‘*rapio* has a strong implication that the act was carried out against the will of the victim’.

²²¹ The noun *puer* also has an erotic connotation: *OLD* §3.

²²² The adjective *sublimis* denotes height: 2.35, 6.682, 10.745. It is frequently used of men on horses: 5.699, 5.707, 6.326; 9.311. It also denotes status: 2.385, 10.275, 11.720. Cf. also for the conception of status, *sublime genus*, 10.225.

²²³ *OLD sublimis* §7a–c. Cf. *OLD arduus* §6, ‘sublime, lofty’ and the example at *Theb.* 10.845–846: *hac me iubet ardua uirtus/ ire*. Cf. Hor. 1.1.36: *sublimi feriam sidera vertice*.

genas spectabilis aeuo (274).²²⁴ Parthenopaeus has both active agency in relation to his men and physical pre-eminence, both of which are expected in the catalogue context; but Statius adapts these to indicate Parthenopaeus' inappropriateness to the field of war.

The beginning of the entry is dominated by Parthenopaeus (4.246–274), but the entry does include troops from Arcadia (4.275–304).²²⁵ Again, the men of his contingent are variegated: Statius explicitly recognises that these men have dissonant customs: *Arcades hi, gens una uiris, sed dissona cultu/ scinditur* (4.299–300). Statius uses anaophora to outline their varied weaponry: *hi, his, his; hic, ille, ille* (4.300, 302–304). As with the entries outlined above, Statius' entry for Parthenopaeus includes digressive material on the Arcadians, which *prima facie* constitutes the usual learned material of catalogue. Again, however, the material may be read in terms of the current context of the war, especially the way in which it reflects on Parthenopaeus as leader. Parkes views this digression in terms of a progression of 'Arcadias' that 'draws our attention to change and decline', culminating in their involvement here in the most horrific form of war possible, a conflict between brothers.²²⁶ In addition to thematic significance, the digression 'helps develop our attitudes towards Parthenopaeus', whose youth and delicacy contrasts with the toughness of the original Arcadians.²²⁷ Yet again, then, the entry's city-list material is inextricably linked both to the leader of the entry and to the concerns of the poem at large.

When Atalanta appears in the scene, she questions his ability to perform the role of *dux*, as it has been reported to her:

iamque Atalantaeas implerat nuntius aures,
ire ducem bello totamque impellere natum
Arcadium. (4.309–311)

Now a messenger had filled the ears of Atalanta that her son was going to war as a leader and compelling all Arcadia.

²²⁴ Parthenopaeus' attractiveness recalls Virgil's Turnus: *decus egregium formae... atque iuuentae*, *Aen.* 7.473; *pulchrior haud ulli triste ad discrimen ituro/ uultus et egregiae tanta indulgentia*, *Theb.* 4.251–252. Atalanta says Parthenopaeus even still looks like her, 4.336–337.

²²⁵ Parkes (2005, 360 esp. n7) notes that the Arcadian origin of Parthenopaeus is probably new.

²²⁶ Parkes 2005, 361–365; quote from 365.

²²⁷ Parkes 2005, 360–361; quote from 361.

As she questions him, it is again with reference to this role in relation to his group:

unde haec furibunda cupido,
nate, tibi? teneroque unde improba pectore uirtus?
tu bellis aptare uiros, tu pondera ferre
Martis et ensiferas inter potes ire cateruas?
quamquam utinam uires!²²⁸ (4.318–322)

Where does this crazy desire come from, my son? From where this immoderate valour in your tender breast? Are you able to prepare men for war, to bear the weight of Mars and advance among sword-bearing squadrons? But if only you were able!

Atalanta's questions are framed in terms of Parthenopaeus' role in relation to his troops, *tu...uiros...?* (4.320). The 'weights of Mars' recall the psychological portrait of Adrastus as he reluctantly joins the catalogue (*pondus curarum*, 4.39; *pondera... Martis*, 4.320–321). In Atalanta's final question, *ensiferas...catervas* could refer to Parthenopaeus' men or the enemy troops, but *inter* suggests his own.²²⁹ In a reversal of authority, she also addresses his group, asking them if they will allow their leader to go: *uos autem hunc ire sinetis/ Arcades, o saxis nimirum et robore nati?* (4.339–340).

Atalanta's last action is to entrust him to Adrastus: *nequit illa pio dimittere natum/ complexu multumque duci commendat Adrasto* (4.343–344).²³⁰ This recalls Virgil's Pallas, another Arcadian whom Evander 'assigns' to Virgil in a subordinate capacity, hoping that with Aeneas as teacher he will learn to endure military service.²³¹ Evander's hope that Pallas will be guided by the older man is an ominous parallel for Atalanta's action here. Atalanta's assessment of her son's ability to lead, and his 'transfer' to

²²⁸ Here I take the reading of the manuscripts, also retained by Parkes. Hill emends *uires* to *quires*, a suggestion made by Postgate; Hall, following Shackleton-Bailey, has *ubinam uires*. As Parkes (2012 *ad* 322) notes, the MSS reading is acceptable with *sint tibi* understood, especially since this suggests Parthenopaeus is lacking *uirtus*, a key theme of this entry, as we will see below.

²²⁹ Cf. Adrastus in his contingent, 4.40. 4.69. Tydeus *inter medios* has been discussed above, 4.93. Cf. also *interuiret* in the snake simile for Tydeus, 4.98.

²³⁰ Cf. 9.810: *mandauerat*, where Parthenopaeus is 'entrusted' to Dorceus by mother because of his youth and inexperience. Newlands (2004, 147–48) notes Parthenopaeus' comparability to Crenaeus, who is out of place in war, and still in the 'charge' of his mother.

²³¹ *Aeneid* 8.514–518. Note especially *adiungam*, 515; the description of his troops as *Arcadas*, 518; and Aeneas as teacher, *magistro*, 515. Much more could be said on the parallelism of Virgil's and Statius' Arcadia, and Pallas and Parthenopaeus specifically, but this cannot be explored further here. On the Aeneas-Pallas relationship, see Benario (1967, esp. 25).

Adrastus pits Parthenopaeus as a subordinate: Parthenopaeus is not fit to play independent leader.

The list form of the catalogue obscures the difference between the leaders in it, suggesting they are parallel figures, but the portrait within this entry undermines this sense of parallelism. It is especially troubling that Parthenopaeus should be entrusted to Adrastus, whose own entry also marked his deficiencies as leader: Adrastus is less of an Aeneas than an Evander, who is explicitly too old for martial feats (*Aen.* 8.560ff.). The entry plays on the youthful inappropriateness of Parthenopaeus, suggesting he has not reached the manhood required for war.²³² The entry is thus yet another that foreshadows the leader's death, where his youth and inexperience is emphasised: he appears even to himself to be only a boy, *puerque uidetur/ et sibi* (9.855–6).²³³

Atalanta is present from the first line of her son's entry, when Parthenopaeus' connection with his troops is qualified by the ablative absolute *ignara matre* (4.246).²³⁴ The narrator makes it clear she would have prevented his inclusion in the catalogue had she not been absent, *neque enim haec iuueni foret ire potestas* (4.249). She even appears on his armour (4.267–268). The pervasiveness of her presence means we may read the final entry as shared between mother and son, which complements the play on ending the catalogue with a woman in Parthenopaeus' name. Atalanta says he even still looks like her (4.336–337).²³⁵ Her presence in the early part of the entry anticipates her appearance in the scene in which she races to Argos in 'real time', which innovates heavily on the

²³² Parthenopaeus' entry plays on the idea of youth versus manhood, *uiridique... aeuo*, 4.274. This makes the reading *uires* in 4.322 more compelling. See Keith (2000, 8–35) on the *uir* of epic. McNelis (2007, 109) notes Statius' problematisation of manhood in the catalogue of book 7, where he uses *puer* rather than *uir* for Lapithaon. Benario (1967, 28) notes that Virgil's Pallas 'is *vir* only in relation to his inferiors, not to his betters', 'a young man sent to do a man's job, to which his strength is not equal'.

²³³ He is called *puer* as he dies, and admits he is just a boy, *arma puer rapui* (9.877, 982), which is discussed by Lovatt (2005, 55–79). In 9.892 the verb *rapio* recalls his connection to his troops in the catalogue. Cf. the use of *puer* for Butes (twice), 8.486, and Crenaeus, 9.443.

²³⁴ So Parkes (2005, 360): Parthenopaeus is 'still a child dominated by his mother'.

²³⁵ See Courtney (1988) on the tradition of catalogues ending with women: Ovid's Atalanta; Herodotus' Artemisia; Virgil's Camilla. In Valerius Flaccus, Aetes asks Jason to imagine Euryale at the end of his list of warriors, 5.610–614. In the *Thebaid*, Theseus' military catalogue in 12.611–638 ends with the 'negative entry' of Hippolyte, 12.635–638. Critics have noted the similarities—and differences—between Camilla and Parthenopaeus: Mozley 1963, 19–20; Kytzler 1969, 225. Cf. Mack (1999, 146), who says 'no reader would... expect to find a woman included in a catalogue of warriors'.

catalogue form and disrupts its list sequence.²³⁶ When she arrives, it is she, not Parthenopaeus, who becomes the focal point of the ‘leaders’, *fusi circum natusque ducesque/ solantur minuuntque metus* (4.341–342).²³⁷ As with Argia in the entry for Polynices, Atalanta represents community interest which is incorporated into the catalogue itself, and the entry looks forward to her grief at her son’s loss through a simile comparing Atalanta with a lioness whose cubs have been stolen and tracks the robber, treating Parthenopaeus proleptically as a victim (4.315–316). Atalanta disrupts the catalogue form by providing it with this unusual addendum at the end. Even more disturbingly, her attempt to persuade her son not to go to war poses a threat to the fixed nature of the catalogue: Atalanta attempts to reverse the last entry, and if she were to have her way, this would be the story of the Six, not the Seven.

Overall Structure

On this reading of the Argive entries, there is a roughly concentric pattern. Adrastus and Parthenopaeus frame the catalogue, whose old age and youth are points of emphasis, and also contrast with each other.²³⁸ Both ancient and modern scholarship regard the first and last positions these men occupy as emphatic by nature,²³⁹ but Statius chooses to place in this position the eldest and youngest, and he draws attention to these characteristics. The second and second-to-last entries, meanwhile, make up a sort of inner frame: Polynices’ entry opens with promising energy, but develops into a psychological portrait of his ambivalent feelings; Amphiaraus’ entry, meanwhile, is initially preoccupied with how his reluctance to be part of the war is overcome.²⁴⁰ Meanwhile, Tydeus, Hippomedon, Hercules and Capaneus appear in the centre, and differ dramatically from the other figures. These characters display a more customary martial enthusiasm, but they play a

²³⁶ Parkes (2012 *ad* 32–34, ii) calls Atalanta an ‘appendix’ that places strain on the catalogue form.

²³⁷ Kytzler (1969, 225) observes that Parthenopaeus is not admired by the crowd as Camilla is in the *Aeneid*.

²³⁸ Adrastus also appears in the ‘addendum’ of Parthenopaeus’ entry, reinforcing this effect. Parkes (2012 *ad* 38–73) notes a ring composition in return to themes of age, authority and movement. See also Juhnke (1972, 89) on the catalogue beginning and ending with Adrastus.

²³⁹ Quintilian states that cases in court should be presented as arguments are, *ut potentissima prima et summa ponantur*, 6.4.22; the context is different, but the principle applies nevertheless.

²⁴⁰ Argia appears in both Polynices’ and Amphiaraus’ entries, again reinforcing this sense of framing.

role in agitating their troops, rather than merely leading them.²⁴¹ Hippomedon, Hercules and Capaneus may be seen as another grouping, whereby the two live men contrast with the now-deified hero. Frequently epic catalogues are structured around some external principle, such as geography.²⁴² Here, however, Statius appears to pattern his catalogue broadly speaking as an inversion of Virgil's catalogue of Latins, in which prominent martial characters standing outside the catalogue's alphabetical sequence are placed at beginning and end (Mezentius [with Lausus], Turnus, and the exceptional Camilla).²⁴³ Statius' use of the term *dux* reinforces this loose pattern. It is used three times for individuals in the catalogue, all of which occur in the first and last entries, referring to Adrastus and Parthenopaeus: the simile for Adrastus (4.71); the reported speech informing Atalanta of her son's activity (4.310); and for Adrastus again, as Atalanta entrusts her son to him (4.344).²⁴⁴ The use of *dux* in the catalogue recalls the appeal to Fama and Vetustas, *cui meminisse ducum uitasque extendere curae* (4.33, my emphasis); but here we do not have a positive affirmation that we are seeing *duces* in action. Rather, each instance calls into question whether Statius is presenting us with the *duces* that the appeal announces at all.

²⁴¹ Kytzler (1969, 222–226) remarks on this arrangement, with Adrastus and Parthenopaeus at beginning and end as two characters who are 'coloured darkly', and the 'wilden Krieger' in the centre, also noting that Statius starts with Adrastus, Polynices and Tydeus because they are the most important. Kytzler stresses that the catalogue's atmospheric 'colour' determines placement overall.

²⁴² E.g. the *Iliad*'s Greek catalogue: Bassett 1938, 212; Carspecken 1952, 39–40, 45–48; Kirk 1985, 168–9, 178–189, with notes *ad loc.*; Minchin 1996, 2011; Sammons 2010, 138–139, 155; Dickinson 2011, 150–155; Evans and Jasnow 2014. Later catalogues are sometimes ordered geographically, e.g. Lucan's catalogue for Pompey, Silius Italicus' in *Punica* 8, and Apollonius Rhodius' in *Argonautica* 1.

²⁴³ Reitz (1999a, 361) notes the prominence of these figures in Virgil's arrangement. Analyses of the structure of Virgil's catalogue of Latins agree on little else: see Brotherton (1931, 193, 199–202), with a response from Hahn (1932). Admittedly, Statius' Parthenopaeus recalls Virgil's Camilla. Leigh (2006, 226) notes that Capaneus' model is Virgil's Mezentius; we may add to this that that Mezentius appears first, but Statius places Capaneus in the catalogue's centre, reinforcing the sense of reversal.

²⁴⁴ In addition, *dux* is used in the plural at 4.254, 4.293 and 4.341, all in the Parthenopaeus entry; here individual leadership is the focus.

Disorder at the Langia

After the catalogue is given, the Argives march out, but it is not long before chaos ensues.

Book 4 opens with the Argive catalogue, and ends with the Argive army at the Langia river.²⁴⁵

incubuere uadis passim discrimine nullo
turba simul primique, nequit secernere mixtos
aequa sitis, frenata suis in curribus intrans
armenta, et pleni dominis armisque feruntur
quadripedes; hos turbo rapax, hos lubrica fallunt
saxa, nec implicitos fluuio reuerentia reges
proterere aut mersisse uado clamantis amici
ora. fremunt undae, longusque a fontibus amnis
diripitur; modo lene uirens et gurgite puro
perspicuus, nunc sordet aquis egestus ab imis
alueus; inde tori riparum et proruta turbant
gramina; iam crassus caenoque et puluere sordens,
quamquam expleta sitis, bibitur tamen. agmina bello
decertare putes iustumque in gurgite Martem
perfurere aut captam tolli uictoribus urbem. (4.816–830)

The mass along with the leading men throws itself into the stream everywhere, with no distinctions observed, and equal thirst does not allow those mixed together to discriminate. The bridled troop enter in their chariots, and the horses are borne along, loaded with their masters and arms. The sweeping eddy deceives some of these, and others the slippery rocks. Nor does respect for status prevent them from treading on kings caught in the water, or from immersing the face of their friend as he yells. The waters roar, and the long stream is torn up from its depths. Once it was soft green, and pellucid with a pure stream, but its channel is now dirty, the riverbed lacking water from its depths. Then the ridges of the banks and the grass that has collapsed disturbs it. And now although their thirst has been satisfied, they nevertheless drink it, muddy with slime and flowing fast with dirt. You would think that the army was fighting in battle, and that an actual war was raging in the pool, or that a captured city was being sacked by the victors.

Even before Bacchus' drought, the army had been in disarray, scattered in the forest, *uaga legione* (4.647). When Hypsipyle leads the men to the Langia, they pile in, and there is total disorder, *discrimine nullo*.²⁴⁶ Thirst is a social leveller: *nequit secernere mixtos/aequa sitis* (4.817–818). Newlands reads the episode at the Langia as part of Statius' use

²⁴⁵ Von Albrecht (1997, 949) comments on Statius' tendency to 'give his books impressive finales'.

²⁴⁶ See Ash (2015, 211) on the disregard for military rank here.

more broadly—following Ovid—of the sully of the landscape as a metaphor for ‘human vice and discord’, specifically the ‘political ills of Thebes’.²⁴⁷ The scene here abounds in terms for disorder, especially *turba* and related terms: *turba* (817), *turbo rapax* (820), *turbant* (826). Here the repetition of these terms recalls the disorganised approach of the fifty Thebans during the ambush, which implicitly resulted in their defeat by Tydeus, as discussed in Chapter 2. At the beginning of book 5, Statius draws attention again to the disorder, noting how they are marshalled back into order: *dispositi in turmas rursus legemque severi/ ordinis ut cuique ante locus ductorque, monentur/ instaurare uias* (5.7–9).

At the Langia, the army’s disorder becomes the stream’s disorder, as the bank mixes with the water to create a muddy stream. The scene thus becomes a real version of the image of streams that Callimachus uses for literary genre, and indeed, this scene introduces the long delay in Nemea and consequently the putting-off of the martial action.²⁴⁸ This is the point when the ‘epic’s flow is reduced’.²⁴⁹ The scene looks forward to the Argives’ approach to the tumid river Asopos on their march to Thebes, where Hippomedon is compared to a bull as he encourages the army to cross, as discussed in Chapter 2.

In this way, Statius ends book 4, which had begun with epic’s most orderly rendering of the army as a unit, the catalogue, and ends it with an image of chaos on several levels. As the army disintegrates into the stream, Statius’ own catalogue distinction of leaders from the mass through naming also collapses: Statius has an anonymous king give a speech from the middle of the river, *atque aliquis regum medio circumfluis amni...*

²⁴⁷ Newlands 2004; quotes from 153, 144. For the broader idea that ‘Latin epic descriptions of landscape articulate the political and social complexities of Roman order’, Newlands cites Keith (2000, 36–64).

²⁴⁸ On the *Thebaid*’s rivers as ‘poetic symbols’: Brown 1994, esp. 19–21. Statius also employs this motif in his *Silvae*, on which see Chinn (2010, esp. 157ff.). On this passage specifically, see Brown (1994, 18–22), Newlands (2004, 141–146) and McNelis (2007, 87–88). Callimachus’ Hymn to Apollo is the *locus classicus* for this motif, 2.105–112, which was adapted by later authors, e.g. Hor. *Sat.* 1.10. esp. 50–51. On Callimachus’ use of rivers as symbols for poetry, see e.g. Kahane (1994).

²⁴⁹ Brown 1994, 21. Brown (1994, esp. 4–11) discusses this ‘delay’ in Nemea at length.

(4.831).²⁵⁰ In this sense, book 4 has an internal unity that mimics the course of the war itself, which sees the armies on both sides develop from ordered structures into chaos.

In addition to the disturbance of military hierarchy that we observe here, Hypsipyle's role in this Nemean interlude is curious, and contributes to the jumbled portrait of the army. Hypsipyle places her young charge Opheltes on the grass lest she be too slow as a guide for the Argives: *...ne tarda Pelasgis/ dux foret* (4.785–786).²⁵¹ As she leads the men to the Langia, she is again called *dux*:

illi per dumos et opaca uirentibus umbris
deuia: pars cingunt, pars arta plebe sequuntur
praeaccelerantque ducem. medium subit illa per agmen
non humili festina modo. (4.804–807)

They advance through the bush and the secluded places dark with green shade: some of the men surround her, and some follow in a packed mass and others precede their leader. She herself proceeds in the middle of the army column, hurrying, and not in humble fashion.

Statius points out the troops' position in relation to their *dux*: some follow, others surround, others are in front. In doing so, he plays on the basic metaphor contained in the term *dux*, by having the troops outpace their 'leader'.²⁵² Brown notes that here 'the lines recall Dido's anomalous status as a female leader among men, *Aeneid* I 497'.²⁵³

In book 5, the term *dux* is again used of Hypsipyle, this time by Tydeus when she is threatened by Lycurgus:

²⁵⁰ It is fair to suspect this is Hippomedon: his horse is Nemean, *Nemaeus*, 4.136; his catalogue entry names rivers, many of which are dried up in the Nemean episode at the end of the book: Lyrcius, 4.117, 711; Inachus 4.119, 712; Asterion 4.122, 714; Erasinus 4.122, 713. Charadron, 4.712, is in Adrastus' entry, 4.46. But this king's very anonymity may be the point. Cf. Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 4.1457–1460, where an unnamed 'someone' gives a brief speech on Hercules' role in providing the Argonauts water; this speech is much shorter, and not addressed to the water-source itself.

²⁵¹ This is, of course, ironic: through her neglect of Opheltes, the Argives linger even longer for his burial and games in Nemea. In this way the Argives 'fatally distract Hypsipyle from her maternal responsibilities': Newlands 2004, 143–144.

²⁵² Cf. 7.431, where Hippomedon leads the army over the river Asopos, 'leaving behind the leaders', *ducibus relictis*; this is discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

²⁵³ Brown 1994, 100.

anne ducem seruatricemque cohortis
Inachiae ingratis coram tot milibus audes²⁵⁴
mactare in tumulos—quanti pro funeris ultor!... (5.672–674)

Do you dare to slaughter the leader and saviour of our Inachian army, in the presence of so many thousands of ungrateful men—the avenger of such a great death!

Tydeus makes it clear that Hypsipyle's service to the Argives affords her a status that entails a reciprocal action of protection, which is important for our reading of her position in relation to the army. Hypsipyle is called *dux* twice as she leads the army to the Langia, in effect remedying the logistical failure of Adrastus to provide adequate supplies for his men. Tydeus states that she has thus earned the protection of the thousands of men in the army. Here the single *dux* and *seruatricis* is balanced off the plurality of the army, *tot milibus*.²⁵⁵ When this is considered—especially alongside Hypsipyle's regal status as daughter of Thoas, the former king of Lemnos²⁵⁶—it is hard to disregard the military and political significance of the term *dux*.²⁵⁷ Hypsipyle has performed a role as the army's general, and Tydeus' speech demonstrates that through this service she is gained a status *de hoc facto* among the men for her services to them.

Lycurgus responds to this by producing his own combination of terms to denote his own position: he complains that as *dux* and *dominus* he is not allowed to punish Hypsipyle; *...si uilem, tanti premerent cum pectora luctus,/ in famulam ius esse ratus dominoque ducique* (5.686–687).²⁵⁸ Statius has Lycurgus employ the key word *uilis* in his assertion of his authority over his subject, recalling the use of this word by the narrator and characters in books 1 and 2, as discussed in Chapter 2. The combination *dominoque*

²⁵⁴ Here I have *audes*, the reading of ω, as opposed to Klotz's *ausus*, which is the reading of P.

²⁵⁵ The term *seruatricis* is used only twice in the *Thebaid*. In 12.606, the term refers to the Medusa on the shield of Athena, again creating an association between Hypsipyle's role and martial activity. Elsewhere Adrastus too views Hypsipyle's service in terms of the massed army, *innumeras cohortes*, 5.20–21.

²⁵⁶ Brown (1994, 99–102) notes Hypsipyle's similarity to Dido, which has 'ominous undertones', 102. Nugent (1996, 65–66) notes that Hypsipyle accedes to the *imperium* of her father. Dinter (2013, 178–179) notes that Hypsipyle is 'not your average slave'. Note, however, that Hypsipyle is never called *regina* in Statius' epic.

²⁵⁷ Antigone is also called *dux*, but this more straightforwardly denotes her role as 'guide' to her single father: 11.598, 11.622

²⁵⁸ Cf. Ganiban (2013, 262 n53) in his argument that *dux* at 5.555 could not refer to Lycurgus: 'Moreover, Lycurgus is never referred to as *dux* elsewhere in the epic'.

ducique (5.687) recalls Tydeus' defence of Hypsipyle, *ducem seruatricemque* (5.672), and each gives a very different conception of leadership: one underpinned by the heavy imbalance of authority that *dominus* denotes; the other suggesting that the status of *dux* is achieved through service to the mass.²⁵⁹ It is telling here that Hypsipyle's role as *dux* to the Argives arrests Lycurgus' claim to authority, and she is not harmed. The episode at the Langia represents disorder on the level of poetics, plot and the order of the army, including its *dux*, as Statius' poetry and army takes a detour from its original route.²⁶⁰

The epic catalogue's order is usually obliterated in the chaos of war, but for the Argive army this occurs prematurely. Statius strengthens this association through a simile comparing the scene at the Langia to war itself (4.829–830).²⁶¹ When war does finally break out in book 7, it is disorderly, with distinctions of rank unobserved just as at the Langia, and in this way the scene at the Langia prefigures the chaos of war to come even more closely:

saeuus iam clamor et irae
hinc atque inde calent; nullo uenit ordine bellum,
confusique duces uulgo, et neglecta regentum
imperia; una equites mixti peditumque cateruae
et rapidi currus; premit indigesta ruentes
copia, nec sese uacat ostentare nec hostem
noscere. (7.615–621)

And now there is a fierce shout, and anger grows warm now here and now there. War comes with no order; and leaders are confused with the common people, and the orders of those in command are ignored. Cavalry and troops of footsoldiers are

²⁵⁹ Eurydice later adds to this string of comments on status: she says Hypsipyle is culpable in her neglect of Opheltes, not because of the status of her charge, but simply because she was entrusted with the care of another's child, *non regem dominumque, alienos... partus/ hoc tantum*, 6.154–155.

²⁶⁰ Ahl (1986, 2887) notes that the Nemean episode is 'literally a digression' because it is not the shortest route from Argos to Thebes.

²⁶¹ Statius compares various forms of disturbance to battle several times: Polyxo's fostering of civic disorder at Lemnos is compared with war in Scythia, 5.144–146; the Argives' cutting down of the grove is compared with the plundering of a town, 6.114–117; during the horse race, 'you would believe it was war', 6.457–458; in book 7, it is like Thebes has fallen, as she reacts to the death of her tigresses, 7.599ff.

mixed up together, as well as the rapid chariots. A disorderly mass presses on them as they rush, and there is not time to show oneself, or to recognise an enemy.

Here, we have disorder on a full scale to match that of the ambush in book 2.²⁶² The group here is explicitly disorderly (*indigesta*, 7.619). As in book 2, where the Fifty accidentally attacked each other, as war breaks out, the chaos is such that men do not have time ‘to recognise an enemy’ (7.620–621; cf. *sed ipsae/ in socios errare manus*, 2.591–592). The disorderly operation of groups is a theme—we could perhaps even say an underlying principle of action—that recurs in Statius’ epic, from the ambush of Tydeus to the outbreak of war between Thebes and Argos.

Supernumeraries, narrative and genre

I now turn briefly to the dynamic between catalogue and narrative, especially the traditional inclusion of supernumeraries in the epic catalogue that reflect on the poem metapoetically, as discussed in the introduction to this chapter. Statius’ emphasis on individualism in the Argive catalogue has perhaps been taken for granted because the extant antecedents for the *septem* are from tragedy, rather than epic, as mentioned above (Table F: 241). When viewed in its epic function, Statius’ decision not to include supernumeraries is highly unusual, and his catalogue instead serves as a direct *dramatis personae* for the action of the *Thebaid*.²⁶³ This unusual treatment of his leaders is hinted at in his appeal, in Statius signalled that human tradition, rather than the arcane knowledge of the Muses, was the source for his leading men.

This restricted focus to the seven Argive leaders is in fact evident throughout the poem, starting with the poem’s proem, when the narrator asks rhetorically which of Tydeus, Amphiaraus, Hippomedon, Parthenopaeus or Capaneus he should begin with (1.41–45). Adrastus and Polynices are absent from the list; but the narrator has already mentioned Polynices, in the beginning of this announcement of content, *geminis sceptrum exitiale*

²⁶² See Ash (2015, 212–213) on the disintegration of military hierarchy here, which Ash views as symptomatic of civil war, in which ‘the usual mechanisms of control evaporate’.

²⁶³ Parkes (2012 *ad* 32–344) notes that this catalogue is unusual in that each man has a ‘vital role’ in the action, aside from which, Hercules’ inclusion prevents the catalogue from being ‘boring’.

tyrannis (1.34). In the ornithoscopy in book 3, each bird represents a single man's death (3.460–551, esp. 524–547);²⁶⁴ by contrast, the Thebans are represented collectively, and their city walls are even referred to (3.524–528; walls: 3.529–530). In this way, the augury presents the war largely through a series of individuals, while the Thebans are conceived of *en masse*. Similarly, Statius trains focus on the Seven by having each of these compete in a single competition during the games of book 6.²⁶⁵ After the war has begun, many other lists track the action through catalogues of Argives, some full, and some only partial.²⁶⁶

By limiting its inclusions to the Seven (plus the unusual Hercules), Statius' Argive catalogue does not have the usual function of broadening the mythological backdrop to his poem, which gestures through superabundance to the poet's task of limiting and ordering his material, and in turn to potential 'other poems' against which to judge his own narrative.²⁶⁷ In addition to this limitation of named characters, Statius provides only two statistics in the Argive catalogue, restricting the sense of mass that the catalogue traditionally conveys,²⁶⁸ which again has implications for a reading of the catalogue in terms of the mythological backdrop of Statius' own narrative. With Statius' Argive catalogue, then, there is an inversion of the catalogue's expected role: rather than giving an expansive catalogue and a narrative that is limited to a small part of the Trojan war,

²⁶⁴ Note the use here of the catalogue term *ordo*, 3.531.

²⁶⁵ Kytzler 1969, 231; Lovatt 2005, 17–19. Note especially *ne desit/ una ducum numero*, 6.926–927.

²⁶⁶ 8.659–663, 8.742–744, 9.512–517, 11.176–181, 12.762–765. In 10.20–36, Eteocles lists the Argive dead as a way of encouraging his men. In 10.748–755, a list is given of men whom Capaneus resembles as he attacks the walls, as discussed above. Even after the war has ended, there is a list of the Argives the Thebans look for on the battlefield, 12.40–43. The Argives' wives and mothers are also catalogued, 12.105–28, 12.797–809.

²⁶⁷ On this, see esp. Sammons (2010, 206–210); quote from 206.

²⁶⁸ The first of these is three thousand, in Adrastus' entry, 4.63; the second is the three hundred Tirynthians, in the entry of Hercules, 4.152. Statius complicates this use of numbers further by prefacing the smaller entry with a rhetorical question regarding his own capacity to 'equal' the numbers involved here in full, *quis numerum ferri gentesque et robora dictu/ aequarit mortale sonans?*, 4.145–146. This group of three hundred men connected with Hercules cannot fail to recall the Fabii, and also the Spartan Three Hundred, both descended from Hercules: Ripoll (1998, 138 n217) suggests this *may* be a reference to the Fabii; Parkes (2012 *ad* 152–3) accepts this implicitly by citing Sen. *Suas.* 2.18. Reitz (2013, 234) notes the oddity of prefacing this small group of men with this comment. On the play on numbers with reference to the Fabii in Silius' *Punica*, see Marks (2014a). It is not possible to treat the implications of this recollection in full here, but this suggests a promising line of enquiry for future study.

Statius provides a narrative that encompasses the whole war—two wars, if we include the attack on Thebes by Theseus—and a non-expansive catalogue.

In this sense the Argive catalogue functions more like those lists of the Seven that occur in Greek tragedy.²⁶⁹ There is an unusual coincidence of prominence in this catalogue and prominence within the epic itself, since Statius structures his battle books according to the *aristeia* of each of these men: Amphiaraus (7), Tydeus (8), Hippomedon and Parthenopaeus (9), Capaneus (10) and Polynices (with Eteocles, 11). Lovatt interprets the strict match of seven leaders to seven competitions in the games of *Thebaid* 6 in terms of Statius' narrative strategy: each leader competes in a single competition, 'just as each hero has his *aristeia* later on in the poem'.²⁷⁰ In the context of discussion of the games, Lovatt notes:

Like any great poem, every part of the *Thebaid* reflects on, is a *mise en abyme* of, the whole. The games, as a self-standing episode, are a showcase for the interwoven thematic continuity, the intratextuality of the *Thebaid*.²⁷¹

This precept is applicable to the Argive catalogue, and encouraged by the many lists of Argives Statius uses in the *Thebaid* to track the progress of the war, given above. Such an interpretation is also strengthened by Statius' metapoetic gestures in the catalogue, such as terms denoting physical pre-eminence, indicating these men form the 'high points' of his epic, and will come to prominence in Statius' narrative.²⁷²

Is *Thebaid* 4.32–344 an epic catalogue?

In many ways, then, Statius' catalogue of Argives does not perform the expected function of an epic catalogue, so much so that we may ask if it is an epic catalogue at all. The

²⁶⁹ See Table F: 241. Marinis (2016, 353) tentatively makes the suggestion that 'what Statius envisages [in his Argive catalogue] is not a mere ordering, but a pregnant schema, which not least *qua* schema betokens an Aeschylean narrative program'.

²⁷⁰ Lovatt 2005, 17–19; quote from 19. Adrastus is of course an exception to this. Vessey (1970c) introduces the idea that the games foreshadow the war to come, but Lovatt develops this comprehensively (2005).

²⁷¹ Lovatt 2005, 19.

²⁷² E.g. *maior...ordo*, 4.116; *at pedes et toto despectans uertice bellum*, 4.165; *sublimis*, 2.273..

catalogue lacks a unifying figure of leadership on the human plane, and Bellona, a figure associated with civil war, presides over its formation instead. In the catalogue itself, the portrait of the army is hardly orderly. The narrative vignettes showing the interaction of leaders with troops varies wildly, and in some cases there is a divergence between leadership and the advancement of the plot—and the poet’s inspiration to compose the poem itself—at this critical juncture leading up to war. We cannot read this as an ‘emblem of order’ to contrast with the narrative around it; instead, the catalogue continues the fragmentation of Argive leadership displayed in book 3. The fragility of this military order becomes apparent in the approach to the Langia, in which distinctions of rank are broken down as Hypsipyle takes up their leadership; this military chaos becomes a confusion of plot and genre, as the Argives delay in Nemea, and delay the war. The Argive catalogue of *Thebaid* 4 reads as a series of pre-eminent and independent individuals with their contingents, a *series* of catalogues.²⁷³ And they share an implied rubric, of flawed leadership.

This disorder is also evident in the form of the catalogue itself. Within each of their entries, the leaders’ domination manifests itself in the arrangement of the entries, in which the leader is the focus and frame. Additionally, while Statius formally includes lists of cities to fulfil his rubric, the details within and digressions attached to these pertain to the leader—especially the leader’s death in the *Thebaid*—blurring the distinction between these two elements of the entry.²⁷⁴ Other features, such as extreme digressiveness and the inclusion of women as agents in the catalogue, frequently diverge from the task of enumeration; in the case of Atalanta, she even attempts to ‘undo’ the final entry of the catalogue. In this sense disorder is a feature not only of the Argive army, but of the Argive catalogue itself, as it becomes a compositional principle for Statius’ treatment of this epic commonplace.

²⁷³ See Kytzler (1969, 220, 222) on the stress on the individuality of the Seven. The sense of independence of entries is enhanced by the use of motifs usually applied to the catalogue as a whole to individual contingents, such as diversity of arms, origin or culture.

²⁷⁴ Smith (2017, 246) puts it succinctly: Statius ‘often deploys geographical references either to reflect a leader’s character or to foreshadow his death’.

The bleak atmosphere of this catalogue is also notable, from its prefacing with a teary scene of farewell and the vignette of Bellona, to its multiple references to tragedy.²⁷⁵ Elements of competition suggested through imagery in the catalogue also hint at the theme of civil conflict.²⁷⁶ This has been ascribed to a desire on Statius' part to integrate his catalogue into the poem thematically, especially the main storyline of the conflict of the Theban brothers.²⁷⁷ Through the coincidence of catalogue and narrative prominence, as outlined above, Statius fragments his narrative epic according to these individuals. When read this way, the catalogue's gloomy atmosphere may be viewed as playing more than simply a supporting function for the Theban brothers' tale. The Argive leaders as a series each provide a grim sequence in the poem, and their own stories are gloomy in their own right.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Statius draws attention to the failure of leaders in this catalogue to achieve exemplary status, and this failure is underscored by the unusual inclusion of Hercules, whose troops' song reifies the capacity for *fama* to extend men's *uitae*, which reflects on the catalogue—and the purpose of the epic itself. A series of paradoxes in the catalogue thematises flawed commemoration: the *saevus honos* of the Elisson (4.53); Danaus, who *laudat nefas* (4.135).²⁷⁸ Statius also describes artefacts on which darkness sullies light, providing visual paradoxes that embody the poet's representation.²⁷⁹ There are also multiple images of waterways that are contaminated, looking forward to the chaos at the Langia that ends book 4.²⁸⁰ In contrast with the

²⁷⁵ Kytzler (1969, 222–227) discusses the catalogue's gloominess, asserting that the farewell scene in 4.16–31 provides a 'foundational atmosphere' carried through the catalogue's entirety, thereby contrasting in tone Virgil's catalogue of Latins. Statius' denotation of the contribution of troops from cities in their respective appeals shows the difference: *Theb.*4.36, discussed above; cf. *Aen.* 7. 641–644, esp. 643–644.

²⁷⁶ E.g. 4.68–73, 4.142–143.

²⁷⁷ Kytzler 1969, 226–227. Georgacopoulou (1996, 24) notes that Statius tries to 'acclimatise' his catalogues into his epic narrative, tying them into the unified theme of Thebes' history and the fratricidal war.

²⁷⁸ Cf. *ea gloria genti/ infando de more...*, 4.242–243 [my emphasis].

²⁷⁹ E.g. Hippomedon's shield is 'flaming, *flammeus orbis*, but on it, night is depicted, *nox Danai*, 4.133, and the Furies' torches are 'black', *lampade nigra*, 4.133. Cf. *triste micant*, 4.154. The motif of tainted gold is also in evidence: the 'forbidden gold' in 4.191: Cf. 3.223–4. Cf. Parthenopaeus, who desires to dirty his yellow hair in the dust of battle, looking forward to his death, 4.262–263.

²⁸⁰ In Adrastus' entry, the Elisson is polluted, 4.53–58; the Achelous is still 'panting' from Jupiter's attack, *anhelantes*, 4.109; Hippomedon is like a centaur that crashes into a river, 4.139–144.

celebratory listing expected,²⁸¹ Statius' presentation of the Argive army announces its function of providing negative exemplars whose deeds should not be emulated, which in turn reflects on the epic's relationship to its external audience. In short, Statius sacrifices the function of the catalogue—and his epic itself—to the theme of flawed leadership.²⁸²

²⁸¹ Batinski (1992, 20) notes that we expect a 'laudatory description' of the army.

²⁸² Cf. Lovatt (2005, 78–79), who notes that when Statius narrates the duel of Eteocles and Polynices, he gives almost *damnatio memoriae*, which constitutes 'condemnation of the central aims and ethos of the epic genre'.

A: Expressions for leadership in the catalogues of Roman epic

<i>ago</i>	<i>agens</i> , <i>Aen.</i> 7.707; <i>agens</i> , <i>Aen.</i> 7.804; <i>agit</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 3.298; <i>agit</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 3.338; <i>agit</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 3.354; <i>agebat</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 8.463; <i>agit</i> , <i>Val. Fl.</i> 6.88; <i>agunt</i> , <i>Val. Fl.</i> 6.121.
<i>duco</i>	<i>ducit</i> , <i>Aen.</i> 7.652; <i>ducit</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 3.262; <i>duxere</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 3.402; <i>ducit</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 8.383; <i>ducebat</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 8.393–4; <i>ducit</i> , <i>Val. Fl.</i> 6.114. Cf. Virgil's <i>quos.../Mincius...ducebat</i> , <i>Aen.</i> 10.205–6, where the ship, Mincius, rather than the leader, has this connection.
<i>rapio</i>	<i>rapit</i> , <i>Aen.</i> 7.725; <i>rapit</i> , <i>Aen.</i> 10.178. Cf. Silius Italicus' use of this verb when he personifies Acragas, <i>mille rapit turmam</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 14.209.
<i>rapto</i>	<i>raptat</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 3.407; <i>raptabat</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 8.404.
Expressions for arming	<i>armat</i> , <i>Aen.</i> 7.648; <i>in arma uocat</i> , <i>Aen.</i> 7.693–4; <i>Mezentius in se armat</i> , <i>Aen.</i> 10.204 (the verb pointedly repeated from 7.648, also used of Mezentius); <i>expulit.../...in arma uiros</i> , <i>Val. Fl.</i> 6.79–80.
<i>moueo</i>	<i>mouet</i> , <i>Val. Fl.</i> 6.70; <i>mouit</i> , <i>Val. Fl.</i> 6.74
<i>traho</i>	<i>trahit</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 3.254.
<i>stimulo</i>	<i>stimulat</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 8.424
<i>cieo</i>	<i>agmen ciet Ocnus ab oris</i> , <i>Aen.</i> 10.198: here, the mention of origin indicates the verb denotes marshalling.
<i>imperito</i>	<i>imperitat</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 3.377.
<i>praesum</i>	<i>praefuit</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 3.284
<i>ductor</i>	<i>Pun.</i> 3.317; <i>ductor</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 3.388; <i>ductor</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 3.406; <i>ductor</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 8.463; <i>ductor</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 14.211; <i>ductor</i> , <i>Val. Fl.</i> 6.48.
<i>dux</i>	<i>dux</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 3.245; <i>duce</i> , <i>Val. Fl.</i> 6.97.
<i>monitor</i>	<i>monitor</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 8.370.
<i>rector</i>	<i>rector</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 3.238.
Other expressions for subordination	<i>sub quo</i> , <i>Aen.</i> 10.167; <i>huic...agmen...illi dederat Populonia mater</i> , <i>Aen.</i> 10.170–2. Cf. <i>spectabat Galbam</i> , <i>Pun.</i> 8.469. Cf. <i>Drancaea phalanx</i> , <i>Val. Fl.</i> 6.106, where the proper adjective denotes Drances' leadership.

B: Entries and leaders in Statius' Argive catalogue

	Adras.	Polyn.	Tydeus	Hippo.	'Herc.'	Capan.	Amph.	Parthen.
Line numbers	38.5–73	74–92	93–115	116–144	145–164	165–186	187–245	246–344 [246–308]
Number of lines	35.5	19	23	29	20	22	59	99 [63]

C: Naming in Statius' Argive catalogue

Name	Line Reference	Line # in Entry	Additional Instances Line # (Entry; Line # in Entry)
Adrastus	4.40, 63, 74, 344	3, 26	4.74 (Polynices, 1) 4.344 (Parthenopaeus, 99)
Polynices	[Dircaeus gener, 4.74–5]	[1–2]	4.114 (Tydeus, 22) 4.198 (Amphiarus, 12)
Tydeus	4.94	2	-
Hippomedon	4.129	14	-
'Hercules'	[suus... deus, deus: 4.146–7, 158] [Herculeus 4.106, 157, 297]	[2–3, 14] [13]	[Herculeus 4.106 (Tydeus 14)] [Herculeus 297] (Parthenopaeus 52)]
Capaneus	4.166	2	-
Amphiarus	[fatidici... auguris, 187–8] 4.237	[1–2] 51	-
Parthenopaeus	4.248	1	-

D: Syntactic connections in Virgil's catalogue of Latins, *Aeneid* 7

Entry Leader	Leadership Expression (line numbers)
Entry locus	
Mezentius 7.647–654	<i>agmina armat</i> (648) <i>ducit Agyllina nequiquam ex urbe secutos / mille uiros</i> (652–3)
Messapus 7.691–705	<i>agmina in arma vocat</i> (693–4)
Clausus 7.706–722	<i>agmen agens</i> (707)
Halaesus 7.723–732	<i>mille rapit populos</i> (725)
Turnus 7.783–802	<i>insequitur nimbus peditum clipeataque totis/ agmina densentur campis</i> (793–4)
Camilla 7.803–817	<i>agmen agens equitum et florentis aere catervas...</i> (804)

E: Syntactic connections in Statius' Argive catalogue, *Thebaid* 4

Entry Leader	Leadership Expression (line number(s) within entry)
1. Adrastus 4.40	<i>inter adhortantes uix sponte incedit Adrastus...</i> (=3)
2. Polynices 4.74–75	<i>proxima longaevo profert Dircaeus Adrasto/ signa gener...</i> (=1–2)
3. Tydeus 4.93–94	<i>ecce inter medios patriae ciet agmina gentis/ fulmineus Tydeus...</i> (=1–2)
4. Hippomedon 4.128–129	<i>hos agitat pulchraeque docet uirtutis amorem/ arduus Hippomedon</i> (=13–14)
5. 'Hercules' 4.167–168	<i>suus excit in arma / antiquam Tiryntha deus</i> (=1–2) ²⁸³
6. Capaneus 4.178	<i>huic parere dati quos fertilis Amphigenia...</i> (=14–15)
7. Amphiaraus 4.223	<i>huius Apollineae currum comitantur Amyclae...</i> (=37)
8. Parthenopaeus 4.246–248	<i>tu quoque Parrhasias ignara matre catervas/.../ Parthenopaeae, rapis</i> (=1–3)

²⁸³ The numbering in the entry excludes the preceding narrator's comment in 4.145–146.

F: Catalogues of the seven Argives in Greek tragedy

Aesch. <i>Sept.</i>	Eur. <i>Phoen.</i>	Eur. <i>Phoen.</i>	Eur. <i>Supp.</i>	Soph. <i>OC.</i>
369–652	103–201	1104–1140	857–917, 925–931	1313–1326
[Messenger's speech:]	[Teichoskopia:]	[Messenger's speech:]	[Adrastus' speech:]	[Polynices' speech:]
1 Tydeus	1 Hippomedon	1 Parthenopaeus	1 Capaneus	1 Amphiaraus
2 Capaneus	2 Tydeus	2 Amphiaraus	2 Eteoclus	2 Tydeus
3 Eteoclus	3 Parthenopaeus	3 Hippomedon	3 Hippomedon	3 Eteoclus
4 Hippomedon	4 Polynices	4 Tydeus	4 Parthenopaeus	4 Hippomedon
5 Parthenopaeus	5 Amphiaraus	5 Polynices	5 Tydeus	5 Capaneus
6 Amphiaraus	6 Capaneus	6 Capaneus	6 Amphiaraus	6 Parthenopaeus
7 Polynices		7 Adrastus	7 Polynices	7 Polynices (himself)

Conclusion

By viewing structures of power in the *Thebaid* in terms of leadership, this study opens up a new angle on power in Statius' epic. Statius provides the reader with various models of kingship, almost all of which are flawed in some way, and in the absence of effective figures of authority in the *Thebaid*, the role of leadership is frequently dislocated as it is assumed by other characters. Through the frequency with which this occurs, the dynamic between kingship and leadership becomes a central concern of the poem's narration of events. Although limited to three case studies, this thesis demonstrates Statius' heightened awareness of the complex relationship of individuals to groups in his epic. Statius conveys this relationship through original—often startling—manipulations of the common features of epic, which are woven into the poem's structures, which sometimes themselves manifest the disorder of Statius' socio-political commentary.

In this sense, leadership is not merely a prominent theme in Statius' epic, but part of the socio-political ideology of the poem. Social and political structures are essential to Statius' plot as a means by which the involvement of groups is assured in fulfilment of the *fatum* of the story of the Seven. The *Thebaid* begins with the conflict of two Theban brothers, and expands to include the full-scale involvement of both Thebans and Argives and their allies; in book 11, the action then contracts again, as the brothers finally face each other in a duel to resolve the conflict. Books 2 to 4 of the *Thebaid* explain the first part of this process, by which the brothers' disagreement escalates into full-scale war through a series of decisions made—whether in full consciousness or not. The question of how these decisions come about is thus part of the greater question of the war's causes, and consequently the apportionment of blame.

This study takes three case studies from *Thebaid* 2–4 and argues that these offer sequences whose significance to the question of leadership is deepened through their adaptation of epic commonplaces. While not comprehensive, these studies suggest that Statius' poem cannot be reduced to a vilification of tyranny, but that Statius shows an awareness of the complexity of the operation of social and political structures, and offers to his reader a variety of models of kingship and leadership.

My first chapter addressed Statius' leadership diction, as a foundation for further study of this theme. Even in Statius' use of *dux* and *ductor*, patterns of usage emerge that differentiate

Statius' conception of the Theban and Argive social structures. A brief survey of the terms *rex* and *tyrannus* also demonstrated that even on the most basic lexical level, Statius draws a distinction between authority and leadership.

Chapter 2 read the ambush of Tydeus of *Thebaid* 2 as a microcosm of war, in which a concern with leadership connected directly with the way the war to come is initiated. The ambush prefigures Statius' major concern in the epic with the effective operation and therefore leadership of groups. In addition, through the use of the image of the shepherd, Statius demonstrates that his leading figures do not adhere to the ideal represented by the epic paradigm of the shepherd with his flock—indeed, they are not just failures, but do not even attempt to live up to this ideal. The only successful shepherds in the work are those whose analogues are anonymous Theban groups, which completely reverses the traditional epic paradigm. This paradigm connects the ambush to the war between Argos and Thebes, and so thematises Eteocles' role in relation to his community at large; as such, this reading affirms that Eteocles is a 'tyrant', but adds depth to our understanding of his failings as a leader through the protective responsibility to his people that the shepherd simile implies.

Chapter 3 conducted an allegorical reading of Statius' gods during the scenes at Argos in *Thebaid* 3. My approach responds to prior scholarship that has focused on the relationship of divine to human in this book, by reading the gods as part of an important portrait of social and political structures through decision-making. Here, Statius draws attention to internal structures at Argos to demonstrate how these break down; the decision to wage war against Thebes is thus read not as the basic unilateralism often assumed of autocracy, but a complex series of factors reflecting a complex set of relationships. In this sequence, the Argive people are not merely the passive objects of their king's decision-making, but become active participants in the action, as do other figures of leadership at Argos, including Capaneus and Amphiaraus. Shared language reinforces the connection between divinities and crowd action, and the gods are figured as leaders themselves through imagery. Through the use of the image of the storm, specifically the storm of *Aeneid* 1, Statius implies that Adrastus has a role to perform in relation his people, but fails to do this. This reading challenges a conception of the mass in the *Thebaid* as innocent and passive victims of their leaders' decisions; at the same time, it carries a suggestion that Adrastus is culpable, since he recognises the warmongering tendencies of the populace, but does not attempt to rein them in. In this sense, Argos, like Thebes—as I demonstrated in Chapter 2—shows a disjuncture between king and subjects, as leadership becomes fragmented between a series of figures. In the process,

Statius' narrative of events itself becomes fragmented, as Statius alternates divine and human scenes, and on the human level a series of speeches asserting different points of view.

Statius' radical innovation on the common structures of epic continues in his treatment of the Argive catalogue in book 4, as Chapter 4 showed. The fragmentation of the previous book manifests itself in Statius' account of the forces arrayed to attack Thebes, and the force—as well as the form of the catalogue itself—is disorderly, in direct contravention of the traditional role of the catalogue in epic. Statius' Argive catalogue loses so many important functions of the epic military catalogue that we may ask if it is to be considered an epic catalogue at all. Rather than giving the Argive army a sense of unity, the catalogue undermines this, suggesting that we are to read this catalogue as a series of individuals. The omission of supernumeraries also means that the catalogue functions as a loose programme for the action to come, in which these same men come to prominence, forming the focus of the bulk of Statius' battle books.

In the catalogue, leaders vary in their enthusiasm for war, and figures such as Adrastus, Amphiaraus and Atalanta impede the positive progress of the march that the catalogue describes. The fragile order the catalogue adumbrates is demonstrated during the episode at the Langia, in which military and poetic order disintegrate as the army—led by Hypsipyle, rather than Adrastus—tumbles into the stream. This scene forms a pair with the scene at the Asopos in book 7, treated in Chapter 2, which signals a return to the war demanded by plot and *fatum*. The catalogue traditionally provides a means by which military order—including leadership—is established unequivocally in epic, making Statius' use of this epic commonplace more pointed. In this sense, as in Chapters 2 and 3, disorder as a primary principle of leadership, which is a primary thematic concern of Statius, is worked into the structures of epic itself, to such an extent that these structures may perform a role directly opposite to their traditional function.

In each of these sequences, Statius shows a concern with how *fama* is created. After the ambush in book 2, both Ide and Aletes view this disaster in terms of collective memory, albeit in very different ways. Ide's speech not only responds to Statius' concern with numbers in the ambush narrative and the portrait of Eteocles at the start of book 3, but to a conception of commemoration in broader terms; indeed, her fears come to life in Statius' epic itself, in which the ambushers are consistently referred to by the number fifty, rather than by name. Aletes, meanwhile, demonstrates the process through which the ambush becomes part of

Theban collective memory, by implicitly placing it in a series of (in)famous Theban tales. In book 3, Fama is depicted being activated by the god Mars to stir up war, again engaging with collective reception of information, which plays a role in the movement to war on the Argive side. The Argive catalogue is also a commemorative locus, as emphasised by the appeal that precedes it; in Statius' case, this implies that his list of Argives contributes to the stream of Fama and Vetustas (4.32). In this respect, Hercules, at the centre of the Argive catalogue, provides a foil, implying that the catalogue provides negative exemplars.

In all of these instances Statius engages with the reception of the action he narrates, creating a point of connection with Statius' conception of the commemorative role of his own epic. At various points in this study, I have suggested that, broadly speaking, Statius provides in his poem two opposed manifestations of autocracy: on the Theban side, Eteocles arrogates to himself all power at Thebes—even to the exclusion of his brother—with dire consequences for the Theban populace; Adrastus, meanwhile, engages repeatedly in processes that include others in decision-making, but does not take decisive steps himself, and leadership becomes fragmented at Argos. Both of these models are superseded by Theseus in the final book of the poem, in whom the epic's drive and personal will coincide. This is perhaps why Statius suggests that kings alone should remember the brothers' duel:

omnibus in terris scelus hoc omnique sub aevo
uiderit una dies, monstrumque infame futuris
excidat, et soli memorent haec proelia reges. (11.577–579)

In all lands, and in all ages, may one day have seen this crime, and may this unspeakable horror fall from memory, and may only kings recall this battle.

As in the final lines of Statius' poem, in which he discusses the future of his epic, Statius constructs his audience as a collective: *reges* (11.579), *Itala iuuentus* (12.815). We may thus see Statius as a sort of leader himself, who stands in relation to his massed readers, and like Hippomedon in the catalogue of book 4, 'teaches them love of *uirtus*' (4.128). His message is not a condemnation of kingship, however; instead, through numerous demonstrations of the practice of leadership within a community, Statius provides exemplars both good and bad for his readership.

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