NOTES ON STATIUS, *THEBAID* 2*

The recent edition of the *Thebaid* by Hall, Ritchie, and Edwards[1] launched a successful attack on the *communis opinio* of a bipartite manuscript tradition, with one clearly superior family (represented by the ninth-century P [*Puteanus*] manuscript), and relatively few textual problems. In doing so, they underscored the need for renewed editorial work on the poem.[2] Here I discuss five passages from *Thebaid* 2 that have not received adequate attention from editors.[3]

THEBAID 2.319–21

> exedere animum dolor iraque demens
> et, qua non grauior mortalibus addita *curis*,
> spes, ubi longa uenit.

curis *Bac? Gul P M2* (*uel* cura) *M4 U2ac*, *Heinsius* : cura *Bpc? G M O Q R S T* : cura est *D O8 S2 S3 Z10*

Polynices longs to return to Thebes and reclaim his throne. Print *cura* or *cura est*.

All editors from Mueller[4] (the first to use the readings of P) have printed *curis*, not the first time that 'idolatry'[5] of P has led scholars astray. The variants *cura* and *cura est* are supported by an allusion to Lucan, 2.5–6: *sollicitis uisum [Ioui] mortalibus addere curam | noscant uenturas ut dira per omina clades*,[6] and by Statius' syntax elsewhere in the *Thebaid*: 1.179, *sociis hanc addere mentem*; 4.12, *timidisque etiam breuis addita uirtus*; 5.33, *o miserae, quibus hic furor additus!*; 7.692, *famulo decus addit inane*; 11.322–3, *tantum miserae dolor ultimus addit | robur*.[7] It is difficult to say whether

* I wish to thank the anonymous reader for helpful and stimulating comments.

[1] J.B. Hall, A.L. Ritchie and M.J. Edwards (edd. and trans.), *P. Papinius Statius: Thebaid and Achilleid*, 3 vols. (Newcastle, 2007–8).

[2] Before this new edition, the most notable recent work on the text were articles by P.T. Eden, 'Problems of text and interpretation in Statius, *Thebaid* I–VI', *CQ* 48 (1998), 320–4; 'Adnotationes in P. Papini Stati "Thebaida"', *Mnemosyne* 51 (1998), 78–84; and W.S. Watt, 'Notes on the epic poems of Statius', *CQ* 50 (2000), 516–25; and the edition of D.R. Shackleton Bailey (ed. and tr.), *Statius. 2–3: Thebaid, Achilleid* (Cambridge, MA and London, 2003), whose readiness to print conjectures (e.g. 21 in *Thebaid* 2) was criticized by e.g. P. Asso, *BMCRev* 2004.11.02. Hall et al. emend the text even more frequently (65 conjectures in *Thebaid* 2).

[3] I am preparing an edition with commentary of *Thebaid* 2. For this article, I print the text of D.E. Hill (ed.), *P. Papini Stati Thebaidos libri XII* (Leiden, 1996^2), by now nearly standard, but use the fuller manuscript evidence of Hall et al. They cite the readings of ten 'primary' manuscripts at all times (B, D, G, M, O, P, Q, R, S, T), supplemented with nearly one hundred 'secondary' witnesses cited *passim*, and indicate variant readings (*ul*) and readings before and after correction (*ac* and *pc*).

[4] O. Mueller (ed.), *P. Papini Stati Thebais et Achilleis cum scholiis* (Leipzig, 1870).

[5] Hall et al. (n. 1), 3.137, who nevertheless also adopt the reading of P here.

[6] Statius 'corrects' Lucan's assertion that divine omens are a *cura* for mortals: Polynices has recently seen a divine omen of disaster (the fall of the shield from Pallas Athena's temple at *Theb.* 2.249–61) but any *cura* it has caused is overwhelmed by an even heavier *cura*, Polynices' long-frustrated hope.

[7] Printing *curis* would not only weaken the allusion to Lucan but also produce the unusual construction *[cura] addita curis*: of the 44 occurrences of *addere* in Statius I find no instances of a thing being 'added' to the same thing (as would be the case here). The construction would be less unusual if the implied subject of *addita* were *spes*: 'and long-deferred hope, than which there is

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cura or *cura est* is preferable. The omission of *est* is consistent with Statius' style, and its subsequent intrusion seems a likely simplification. On the other hand, *est* at the end of the line is frequently lost through corruption.[8] The presence of *cura* (without *est*) in most of the 'primary' manuscripts argues in its favour, but true readings are sometimes found in the 'secondary' witnesses.[9]

THEBAID 2.496–502

> fert uia per dumos propior, qua calle latenti
> praecelerant densaeque legunt compendia siluae.
> lecta dolis sedes: gemini procul urbe malignis
> faucibus urguentur colles, quos umbra superni
> montis et incuruis claudunt iuga frondea siluis
> (insidias natura loco caecamque *latendi*
> struxit opem) …

latendi *B Dul G Mpc O P Qpc R S T* : latenti *Mac Qac F O3*, *Lachmann* : nocendi *D Qul A M3ul Z*

The site of the doomed Theban ambush of Tydeus. Print *nocendi*.

The variant *latendi* (again, the reading of P) is accepted by all other editors. But *caecamque nocendi opem*, 'secret means of causing harm', is a more likely phrase than the pleonastic 'secret means of hiding' (even worse when *caecamque* is treated as a transferred epithet, as it is by Hall et al.: 'the means of lurking unseen' – the best way to lurk!). Furthermore, the chiasmus of line endings produced by *latendi* seems foreign to Statius' style (*latenti*, *siluae*, *siluis*, *latendi*);[10] rather, the first three line endings (note also *latis* at the end of 503) led to the corruption of the true reading (the nonsensical variant *latenti* points to this path of corruption). There is repetition between *caecamque nocendi* | … *opem* and *caeca nocentum* | *consilia* in the previous passage (489–90) that fits with other repetition between the passages (486, *instruit*, and 502, *struxit*; 487, *insidiis*, and 501, *insidias*), underscoring this 'blind' ambush as the doomed product of Eteocles' 'blind' plan to assault Tydeus.

THEBAID 2.630–3

> fratris moribunda leuabat
> membra solo Periphas (nil indole clarius *illa*

none more oppressive added to human worries'. But this interpretation would further weaken the allusion to Lucan: in order for Statius' 'correction' of Lucan to make sense, it must advance 'long-deferred hope' as a graver *cura* than divine omens, not long-deferred hope as a graver *cura* than other kinds of hope.

[8] E.g. *Theb.* 1.672, *hora est*; 1.706, *ultra est*; 5.400, *supra est*; 6.571, *aperta est*; 7.543, *morata est*; 9.583, *uisa est*; 11.250, *ira est*. In each case, the *est* is lost in at least one manuscript.

[9] Hall et al. (n. 1), 3.167–73, list 177 true readings found only in the secondary witnesses for the *Thebaid* (although they are perhaps more willing than other scholars to accept such readings).

[10] In the whole of the *Thebaid* I find 83 instances of a single word repeated at line endings five or fewer lines apart (thus *siluae* and *siluis* three lines apart, *latenti* and *latendi* five lines apart), but I find no other instances of repetition (within this five-line limit) involving chiasmus, synchysis, or any other patterning of multiple repeated words. Expanding the limit to ten lines, I find only 9.867–73, with a chiastic pattern of line endings: *cuspis*, *sonori*, *remissis*, *cornu*, *remisit*, *dextri*, *cuspis*.

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nec pietate fuit), laeua marcentia colla
sustentans dextraque latus …

illa *codd.* : illo *Watt*

Periphas supports his wounded brother. Print *illo*.

'I suspect that an original *illo* has been assimilated in gender to *indole*.' So Watt, briefly.[11] Note, too, the gender of *pietate*, and also note *colla*, directly below the corrupt *illa*. The comparison of Periphas to the neuter *nil* could also have created confusion, but the expression is common enough in Ovid, Martial and prose.[12] The most recent editions do not print Watt's correction, but translate as if they have: 'none more *than he* renowned for natural gifts or love of kin' (Shackleton Bailey); 'none more illustrious *than he* for his disposition and devotion' (Hall et al.). But the transmitted text must mean 'nothing was more illustrious than that disposition and devotion', an unlikely phrase that – most importantly – does not fit with the syntax of a previously unnoticed Virgilian allusion here: *Aen.* 1.544–5, *rex erat Aeneas nobis, quo iustior alter | nec pietate fuit, nec bello maior et armis*.[13]

THEBAID 2.682–6

ille etiam Thebas spoliis et sanguine plenus
isset et attonitis sese populoque ducique
ostentasset ouans, ni tu, Tritonia uirgo,
flagrantem multaque operis caligine *plenum*
consilio dignata uirum ...

plenum *codd.* : mersum *conieci*

Blinded by his success against the Theban ambush, Tydeus plans to travel alone to Thebes but is stopped by Pallas Athena. Print *mersum*.

Hall et al. suspected a problem in the manuscripts but emended the wrong word, changing *caligine* to *uertigine* (perhaps inspired by Mulder's gloss: *propter ingentia facta uertigine quasi correptum, ita ut mens eius sit aliena*).[14] The problem is *plenum*. Besides yielding an unparalleled image ('filled/laden with fog'), it creates repetition from the description of Tydeus earlier in the sentence ('laden with spoils and blood') that is unacceptably clumsy, even given the tolerance of verbal repetition in Latin poetry. In fact, *sanguine plenus* at line 682 is the source of the corruption at 685 from *caligine mersum* to *caligine plenum*. Statius and Silius use *caligine mersus* to describe confusion with various causes, as

[11] Watt (n. 2), 517.

[12] Ov. *Fast.* 5.126: *inuicto nil Ioue maius erat* (cf. Hor. *Carm.* 1.12.17: *unde nil maius generatur ipso*); Ov. *Tr.* 5.2.38: *Caesare nil ingens mitius orbis habet*, 5.8.25–6: *nil ingens | illo [Caesare], cui paret, mitius orbis habet*; Mart. 1.10.3: *adeone pulchra est [femina]? immo foedius nil est*, 2.54.5: *nil nasutius hac maligniusque*, 4.86.4–5: *nil exactius eruditiusque est [Apollinari], | sed nec candidius benigniusque*, 6.24.1: *nil lasciuius est Charisiano*; Cic. *Div.* 2.66: *nam quod haruspices responderint nihil illo clarius, nihil nobilius fore …*; Cic. *Fam.* 13.1.5: *nihil est illo mihi nec carius nec iucundius*, 16.5.2: *nihil potest illo fieri humanius, nihil nostri amantius*; Sen. *Controv.* 10 *praef.* 2: *nihil erat illo uenustius, nihil paratius*.

[13] As I discuss in the commentary I am preparing, this allusion is part of a meditation on the differences between Virgilian and Statian *pietas* in this passage.

[14] H.M. Mulder (comm.), *Publii Papinii Statii Thebaidos liber secundus* (Groningen, 1954), 344.

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here;[15] they adapt it from Virgil's literal usage in describing the underworld at *Aeneid* 6.267: *res alta terra et caligine mersas*. Here, it effects a double paradox: Tydeus is both on fire (*flagrantem*) and 'submerged', both 'burning' brightly and drowned in darkness (*caligine*).[16]

THEBAID 2.692–3

ille haec praeuiderat, omina doctus
aeris et nulla deceptus ab alite …

aeris *Gpc O P Qul Spc alii* : aetheris *ed. pr.* : aeros *B Gac b K Σ* : heros *D M Q R Sac T alii* : auguris *Marollius* : aetheros *conieci*

Maeon's augury had predicted Tydeus' defeat of the Theban ambush. Print *aetheros*.

The rare Greek genitive *aetheros*, found in extant Latin only in Statius,[17] would have been vulnerable to corruption, and could have produced all the extant variants. All editors print *aeris*, but the ancient scholiast 'Lactantius Placidus' had a Greek genitive in his copy of the poem (as shown by his note: *genetiuus Graecus est ut 'Memnon, Memnonos'*[18]), and *aether*, 'the upper air', is more appropriate to augury than *aer*, 'the lower air'.[19] *Thebaid* 3.524–5, also in the context of augury, makes this emendation nearly certain: *clara regione profundi | aetheros innumeri statuerunt agmina cycni*.

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[15] A blow to the head (*Theb.* 6.510), fear (10.735), ambiguous prophecy (Sil. 11.122), or uncertain historical records (8.45).

[16] Cf. a similar double paradox between cold and hot, fire and liquid, a dozen lines earlier, at 672–4: *gelidus cadit imber anhelo | pectore, tum crines ardentiaque ora cruentis | roribus et taetra morientum aspergine manant*.

[17] *Theb.* 3.525; *Silv.* 4.2.25. In both places all the manuscripts attest the Greek genitive. Statius never uses the Latin genitive *aetheris*.

[18] The lemma in Lactantius' manuscripts is *aeros*, which would be a *hapax legomenon* in extant Latin (furthermore, Hall et al. [n. 1], 3.3, remind us that the lemmata of this commentary 'are always liable to alteration to suit the manuscript to which they are newly attached … and only the body of the notes can tell us, explicitly or by implication, what the original commentator, or for that matter a successor, was commenting on'). Statius uses the Latin genitive *aeris* only once, at *Theb.* 11.591 (in a context unrelated to our passage), where it is attested in all the manuscripts.

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[19] Cf. *Theb.* 8.204–5 (on the death of the augur Amphiaraus): *ipse nihil certum sagis clangoribus aether | praecinet*; and *aether* to describe the location of flying birds at *Theb.* 5.14, 9.30.

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