

Programmatic Expectations in *Thebaid* 7.40-76

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1. Statius, *Thebaid* 7.40-76; Shackleton-Bailey Loeb text and translation

40 hic steriles **delubra notat** Mavortia silvas
horrescitque tuens, ubi mille Furoribus illi
cingitur averso domus immansueta sub Haemo.
ferrea compago laterum, ferro apta teruntur
limina, ferratis incumbunt tecta columnis.
45 laeditur adversum Phoebi iubar, ipsaque sedem
lux timet, et durus contristat sidera fulgor.
digna loco **statio**: primis salit Impetus amens
e foribus caecumque Nefas Iraeque rubentes
exsanguisque Metus, occultisque ensibus astant
50 Insidiae geminumque tenens Discordia ferrum.
innumeris strepit aula Minis, tristissima Virtus
stat medio, laetusque Furor vultuque cruento
Mors armata sedet; bellorum solus in aris
sanguis et incensis qui raptus ab urbibus ignis.
55 terrarum exuviae circum et fastigia templi
captae insignibant gentes: caelataque ferro
fragmina portarum bellatricesque carinae
et vacui currus protritaque curribus ora,
paene etiam gemitus: adeo vis omnis et omne
60 vulnus. ubique ipsum, sed non usquam ore remisso
cernere erat: talem divina Mulciber arte
ediderat; nondum radiis monstratus adulter
foeda catenato luerat conubia lecto.
Quaerere templorum regem vix coeperat ales
65 Maenalius, tremit ecce solum et mugire **refractis**
corniger Hebrus aquis; tunc quod pecus utile bello
vallem infestabat, trepidas spumare per herbas,
signa adventantis, clausaeque adamante perenni
dissiluere fores. Hyrcano in sanguine pulcher
70 ipse subit curru, diraque aspergine latos
mutat agros, spolia a tergo flentesque catervae.
dant silvae nixque alta locum; regit atra iugales
sanguinea Bellona manu longaque fatigat
cuspede. deriguit visu Cyllenia proles
75 summisitque genas: ipsi reverentia patri,
si prope sit, dematque minas nec talia mandet.

Here he marks barren woods, Mars' shrine, and shudders as he looks. There under distant Haemus is the god's ungentle house, girt with a thousand Rages. The sides are of iron structure, the trodden thresholds are fitted with iron, the roof rests on iron-bound pillars. Phoebus' opposing ray takes hurt, the very light fears the dwelling and a harsh glare glooms the stars. The guard is worthy of the place. Wild Impulse leaps from the outer gates and blind Evil and ruddy Angers and bloodless Fears. Treachery lurks with hidden swords and Strife holding two-edged steel. The court resounds with countless Threats, Valour most sombre stands in the centre, and joyful Rage and armed Death with bloodstained countenance there sit. On the altars is blood of wars, that only, and fire snatched from burning towns. Trophies from many lands and captured peoples marked the temple's sides and top, and fragments of iron-wrought gates and warship keels and empty chariots and heads by chariots crushed, groans too almost. Every violence truly, every wound. Everywhere himself was to be seen, but nowhere with easy look; thus had Mulciber portrayed him with his divine art. Not yet had he been revealed an adulterer by sunbeams and expiated a shameful union in a chained bed.

Scarce had the winged Maenalian begun to look for the king of the temple when, see, the ground quakes and horned Hebrus bellows as his waters are broken back. Then the beasts useful in war that infested the valley foamed in the quivering grasses, sign of his coming, and the closed gates of everlasting adamant flew open. Himself arrives in his car, handsome in Hyrcanian blood, and changes the broad fields with the dire spatter. Spoils and weeping crowds are at his back. Woods and deep snow yield passage. Black Bellona governs the team with bloody hand and harasses them with her long spear. Cyllene's son froze at the sight and dropped his eyes. The Father himself would be awed were he at hand, would retract his threats nor send such a message.

2. Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.41-45, Invocation of Muse; Fairclough and Goold Loeb text and translation

tu vatem, tu, diva, mone. dicam horrida bella,
dicam acies actosque animis in funera reges,
Tyrrhenamque manum totamque sub arma coactam
Hesperiam. maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo,
maius opus moveo.

And you, goddess, prompt your bard! I will tell of grim wars, will tell of battle array, and princes in their valour rushing upon death—of Tyrrhenian bands, and all Hesperia mustered in arms. Greater is the story that opens before me; greater is the task that I attempt.

Virgil, *Georgics* 3.22-39, Temple Description, Fairclough and Goold Loeb text and translation

iam nunc sollemnis ducere pompas
ad **delubra** iuvat caesosque videre iuencos,
vel scaena ut versis discedat frontibus utque
25 purpurea intexti tollant aulaea Britanni.
in foribus pugnam ex auro solidoque elephanto
Gangaridum faciam victorisque arma Quirini,
atque hic undantem bello magnumque fluentem
Nilum ac navali surgentis aere columnas.
30 addam urbes Asiae domitas pulsumque Niphaten
fidentemque fuga Parthum versisque sagittis
et duo rapta manu diverso ex hoste tropaia
bisque triumphatas utroque ab litore gentes.
stabunt et Parii lapides, spirantia signa,
35 Assaraci proles demissaeque ab Iove gentis
nomina Trosque parens et Troiae Cynthus auctor.
Invidia infelix Furias amnemque severum
Cocytus metuet tortosque Ixionis anguis
immanemque rotam et non exsuperabile saxum.

Even now I long to escort the stately procession to the shrine and witness the slaughter of the steers; and see how the scene on the stage changes as the sets revolve and how Britons raise the crimson curtain they are woven into. On the temple doors I have sculptured in solid gold and ivory the battle of Ganges' hordes and the arms of conquering Quirites; there, too, the Nile in flood and billowing with war, and lofty columns clad with the bronze prows of hostile fleets. I will add Asia's vanquished cities, the routed Niphates, and the Parthian relying on flight and arrows launched behind him; two trophies snatched by force from far-sundered foes, and the two nations that yielded a double triumph from Ocean's either shore. Here in Parian marble shall stand statues breathing life, the lineage of Assaracus and the glorious names of Jupiter's race, Tros, our ancestor, and Cynthian Apollo, architect of Troy. Wretched Envy shall cower before the Furies and Hell's stern stream, before the snaky bonds and ghastly wheel of Ixion, and the stone beyond the trickster's mastering.

3. Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.273-281, guards of Orcus
vestibulum ante ipsum primisque in faucibus Orci
Luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curae,
275 pallentesque habitant Morbi tristisque Senectus
et Metus et malesuada Fames ac turpis Egestas,
terribiles visu formae, Letumque Labosque:
tum consanguineus Leti Sopor et mala mentis
Gaudia, mortiferumque adverso in limine Bellum

280 ferreique Eumenidum thalami et Discordia demens,
vipereum crinem vittis innexa cruentis.

Just before the entrance, even within the very jaws of Hell, Grief and avenging Cares have set their bed; there pale Diseases dwell, sad Age, and Fear, and Hunger, temptress to sin, and loathly Want, shapes terrible to view; and Death and Distress; next, Death's own brother Sleep, and the soul's Guilty Joys, and, on the threshold opposite, the death-dealing War, and the Furies' iron cells, and maddening Strife, her snaky locks entwined with bloody ribbons.

Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.177-191 – Latinus' Palace
quin etiam veterum effigies ex ordine avorum
antiqua e cedro, Italusque paterque Sabinus
vitisator curvam servans sub imagine falcem,
180 Saturnusque senex Ianique bifrontis imago
vestibulo astabant, aliique ab origine reges,
Martiaque ob patriam pugnando vulnera passi.
multaque praeterea sacris in postibus arma,
captivi pendent currus curvaeque secures
185 et cristae capitum et portarum ingentia claustra
spiculaque clipeique ereptaque rostra carinis.
ipse Quirinali lituo parvaque sedebat
succinctus trabea laevaue ancile gerebat
Picus, equum domitor, quem capta cupidine coniunx
190 aurea percussum virga versumque venenis
fecit avem Circe sparsitque coloribus alas.

There, too, in order are images of their forefathers of long ago, carved of old cedar— Italus and father Sabinus, planter of the vine, guarding in his image the curved pruning hook, and aged Saturn, and the likeness of two-faced Janus—all standing in the vestibule; and other kings from the beginning, and men who had suffered wounds of war, fighting for their fatherland. Many arms, moreover, hang on the sacred doors, captive chariots, curved axes, helmet crests and massive bars of city gates; javelins and shields and beaks wrenched from ships. There sat one, holding the Quirinal staff and girded in his robe of state, his left hand bearing the sacred shield—Picus, tamer of steeds, whom his bride Circe, smitten with love's longing, struck with her golden rod, and with drugs changed into a bird with plumes of dappled hue.

4. Statius, *Thebaid* 1.369, Polynices' fear.
Pulsat metus undique et undique frater.

Terror strikes from every side, terror and his brother.

5. Virgil, *Georgics* 1.509-515, war rages
hinc movet Euphrates, illinc Germania bellum;
510 vicinae ruptis inter se legibus urbes
arma ferunt; saevit toto Mars impius orbe:
ut cum carceribus sese effudere quadrigae,
addunt in spatia, et frustra retinacula tendens
fertur equis auriga neque audit currus habenas.

Here Euphrates, there Germany, calls to arms; breaking the covenants which bind them, neighbouring cities draw the sword; the god of unholy strife rages throughout the world, even as when from the starting gates the chariots stream forth and gather speed lap by lap, while the driver, tugging vainly at the reins, is carried along by his steeds, and the car heeds not the curb!

6. Homer, *Odyssey* 5.116, Calypso shudders; Murray and Dimock Loeb text and translation
ὡς φάτο, ῥίγησεν δὲ Καλυψώ, διὰ θεάων

So he spoke, and Calypso, the beautiful goddess, shuddered

Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.279, Aeneas is dumbstruck; Fairclough and Goold Loeb text and translation

At vero Aeneas aspectu obmutuit amens

But in truth Aeneas, aghast at the sight, was struck dumb

7. Statius, *Thebaid* 7.816-7, the chasm opens
...ecce alte praeceps humus ore profundo
Dissilit, inque vicem timuerunt sidera et umbrae.

See, the ground becomes a precipice, springing asunder in a deep chasm, stars and shades fear in turn.

8. Statius, *Thebaid* 8.760-66, Tydeus' cannibalism
760 atque illum effracti perfusum tabe cerebri
aspicit et vivo scelerantem sanguine fauces
(nec comites auferre valent): stetit aspera Gorgon
crinibus emissis rectique ante ora cerastae
velavere deam; fugit aversata iacentem,
765 nec prius astra subit quam mystica lampas et insons
Elisos multa purgavit lumina lympha.

She looks at him, sees him wet with the issue of the broken brain and polluting his jaws with living blood—nor can his comrades wrest it away. The Gorgon stood rough with

hair outflung and the asps upreared before her face concealed the goddess. Turning from the prostrate man, she flees, nor ascends to the stars until the mystic torch and guiltless Elisos had purged her eyes with plenteous water.

9. Statius, *Thebaid* 10. 907, 915-17, Capaneus

907 Ingemuit dictis superum dolor

At his words the High Ones grieved and groaned.

915 ...Stygias rupisse catenas

Iapetum aut victam supera ad convexa levare

Inarimen Aetnamve putes.

You might think Iapetus had broken his Stygian chains or vanquished Inarime or Aetna was rising to the vault above.

10. Statius, *Thebaid* 10. 827-31, 834, Invocation of Muse

Hactenus arma, tubae, ferrumque et vulnera: sed nunc

comminus astrigeros Capaneus tollendus in axes.

Non mihi iam solito vatam de more canendum;

830 Maior ab Aoniis poscenda amentia lucis:

Mecum omnes audete deae!...

Seu virtus egressa modum...

Thus far of arms, trumpets, of steel and wounds. But now Capaneus must be raised aloft to fight the starry vault at close quarters. No longer may I sing in the wonted fashion of poets; I must ask for a higher lunacy from Aonia's groves...

Or was it valor past bounds...

11. Statius, *Thebaid* 10.873-876; Capaneus taunts Amphion's walls

Increpat attonitas humilesque Amphionis arces:

"Pro pudor, hi faciles carmenque imbelle secuti,

Hi, mentita diu Thebarum fabula muri!

Et quid tam egregium prosternere moenia molli

Structa lyra?"

Thus he taunts Amphion's towers as they cower dismayed, "For shame! These are the easy walls that followed Amphion's unwarlike song, the long-told legend of Thebes! And what great feat is it to flatten the structures of a soft lyre?"

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