

Indiana University Bloomington  
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Fraternal Friction on the Patriarch's *Patera*: the *ekphrasis* in Statius's *Thebaid* I.539-551

*All text and translations are from the Loeb editions*

1.) Virgil, *Aeneid* I.728-730

hic regina gravem gemmis **auroque poposcit**  
implevitque mero **pateram**, *quam Belus et omnes*  
*a Belo soliti;*

Statius, *Thebaid* I.539-543

postquam ordine mensae  
victa fames, signis perfectam **auroque** nitentem  
Iasides **pateram** famulos ex more **poposcit**,  
*qua Danaus libare deis seniorque Phoroneus*  
*adsueti.*

2.) Statius, *Thebaid* I.539-553

postquam ordine mensae  
victa fames, signis perfectam auroque nitentem  
Iasides pateram famulos ex more poposcit  
qua Danaus libare deis seniorque Phoroneus  
adsueti. tenet haec operum caelata figuras:  
aureus anguicomam praesecto Gorgona collo  
ales habet, iamiamque vagas—ita visus—in auras  
exsilit; illa graves oculos languentiaque ora  
paene movet vivoque etiam pallescit in auro.  
hinc Phrygius fulvius venator tollitur alis,  
Gargara desidunt surgenti et Troia recedit,  
stant maesti comites, frustra sonantia lassant  
ora canes umbramque petunt et nubile latrant.  
hanc undante mero fundens vocat ordine cunctos  
caelicolas, Phoebum ante alios...

When appetite was vanquished by the course of the banquet, Iasus' scion, as was his custom, asked the attendants to bring the bowl wrought with reliefs and shining with gold wherefrom Danaus and old Phoroneus used to pour libations to the gods. Its chased surface held worked figures: the golden flyer carries the snake-tressed Gorgon's severed head, and even now, so it seems, leaps into the wandering airs; almost she moves her heavy eyes and drooping countenance and pales even in the living gold. Here the Phrygian hunter is raised aloft on tawny wings, Gargara sinks as he mounts and Troy recedes; his comrades stand dismayed. In vain the hounds weary their sounding mouths, attacking the shadow and barking at the clouds. With this he pours the streaming wine and invokes all the sky-dwellers in turn, Phoebus before all.

3. Statius, *Thebaid* I.243-245

belli mihi semina sunt  
Adrastus socer et superis adiuncta sinistris  
coniuba.

Let Adrastus' gift of his daughter in a marriage  
unblessed of heaven be my seed of battle.

4. Statius, *Thebaid* II.108-110

iamque ille novis—scit Fama—superbit  
coniubis viresque parat, quis regna capessat,  
quis neget, inque tua senium sibi destinat aula.

Even now he (Rumour knows) plumes himself  
on a new wedlock, gathers strength to seize the  
monarchy and to deny it, and promises himself  
an old age in your palace.

5. Vergil, *Aeneid* V.250-257

victori chlamydem auratam, quam plurima circum  
purpura Maeandro duplici Meliboea cucurrit,  
intextusque puer frondosa regius Ida  
velocis iaculo cervos cursuque fatigat,  
acer, anhelanti similis; quem praepes ab Ida  
sublimem pedibus rapuit Iovis armiger uncis;  
longaevi palmas nequiquam ad sidera tendunt  
custodes, saevitque canum latratus in auras.

...to the winner, a cloak wrought with gold, about  
which ran deep Meliboean purple in double waving  
line, and, woven in, the royal boy, with javelin and  
speedy foot, on leafy Ida tires fleet stags, eager and  
seemingly breathless; him Jove's swift armor bearer  
has caught up aloft from Ida in his talons; his aged  
guardians in vain stretch their hands to the stars, and  
the savage barking of dogs rises skyward.

6. Statius, *Silvae* IV.vi.39-42

tamen exclamare libebit,  
si visus per membra ferēs: “hoc pectore pressus  
vastator Nemees, haec exitale ferebant  
robur et Argoos frangebant brachia remos.”

...yet you will be fain to cry, as you cast your eyes  
o'er his limbs: “This is the breast that crushed the  
ravager of Nemea, these the arms that bore the deadly  
Club, and broke the oars of Argo.”

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