

Divided Furies: Allecto, Laius, Jocasta and the Structure of the *Thebaid*

The interactions between Thebes and Hades in Statius' *Thebaid* are often used as important structural and closural devices. This paper will examine two such passages, namely the shade of Laius appearing disguised as Tiresias in Eteocles' dream in Book 2 and Jocasta's visit to the Argive camp in Book 7, as a divided allusion to Allecto's nighttime visit to Turnus in *Aeneid* 7. Wills (1998) defines divided allusion as an intertextual mechanism in which two cross-references within one work allude to one passage in another work in different ways. This type of allusion also has a closural effect, which is produced by the sense of finality found in the context. My contention is that Statius employs this device with the purpose of giving closure to the first half of the epic, which deals with the events from the expulsion of Polynices up to the beginning of the war, using *Aeneid* 7 and the outbreak of the war in Italy as his model. The cross-reference between the two *Thebaid* passages has been recognized (Dietrich 2015), and the intertextual link of the individual passages with the *Aeneid* has been analyzed (Gervais 2017, Smolenaars 1998), but a triangular connection of this kind has not been established.

Both episodes from the *Thebaid* go back to a single Vergilian source, namely Allecto appearing disguised as Calybe in Turnus' dream in *Aeneid* 7. In the wider context of the work, this episode is preceded by Amata's Maenadic frenzy and is followed by the killing of Silvia's stag, which serves as a cause for the beginning of armed conflict in Italy. In the *Thebaid*, however, this sequence of events is split into two separate episodes very distant from each other. The first episode, Eteocles' dream in Book 2, is preceded by Bacchic revelry in Thebes, with explicit mention of Maenadic activity. Both Laius and Allecto are disguised as elderly figures of prophetic/religious authority, similar in dress and behavior, and they are successful in driving

their targets mad with desire for war. This invites us to expect the events in the *Thebaid* to be parallel to the ones in the *Aeneid*, but Statius immediately moves to a new episode in Argos, leaving the story about the outbreak of the war only half-finished.

The reference to the *Aeneid* is suspended until Book 7, where it resumes with the appearance of Jocasta as she visits Polynices in the Argive camp in an attempt to persuade him to give up the war effort. Although she is not an underworld figure *per se*, the various traditions regarding her suicide and the description of her ghastly appearance make her a suitable Fury-like figure to play the same role as her late husband. While the relationship between Allecto and Turnus is clearly mirrored by Laius and Eteocles, in this episode the dynamics are more complex. Jocasta may physically resemble a war-hungry Fury but she wishes to reconcile the two brothers, although this is futile, since she is tinged with *nefas* and associated with Allecto (Ganiban 2007). Her counterpart is also not Polynices, but Tydeus, who is here modeled after Turnus through his indignant response and association with epic madness (Hershkowitz 1995). He could also be seen as a more appropriate Fury figure in this episode, since he brings the army back on the war path. After Jocasta's failure, Statius moves to the two tigresses of Bacchus, who are first driven into a mad rampage by Tisiphone and subsequently killed. With the killing of sacred animals and the revival of Bacchic imagery, the sequence of events from *Aeneid* 7 is completed and the reference started in *Thebaid* 2 is closed. These two appearances of Fury-like humans frame the narrative of the first half of the *Thebaid*, rounding off the long delay between the formal outbreak of the war and the beginning of armed combat.

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