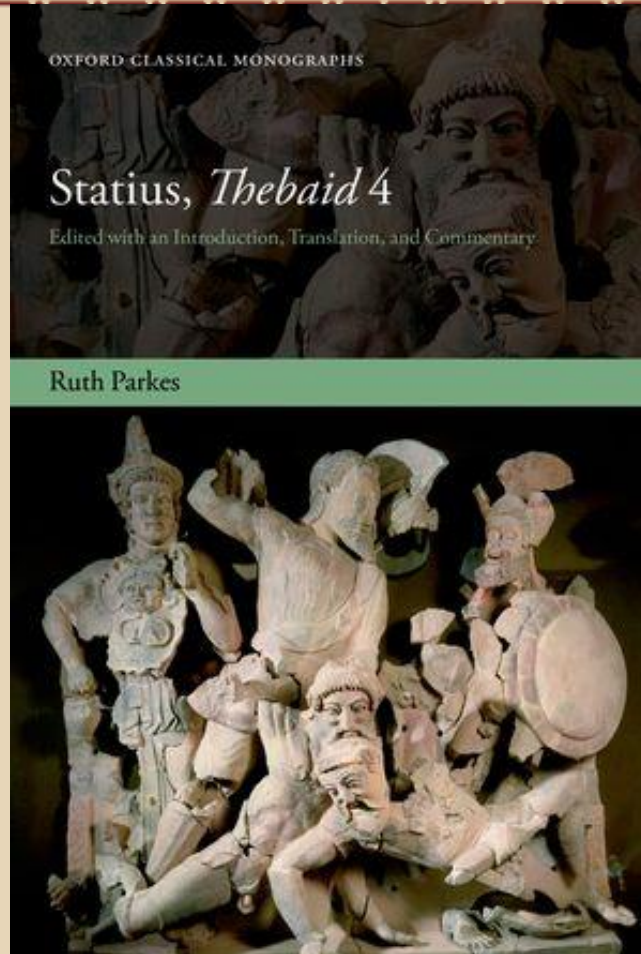


Writing commentary



Commentary



- What should be in a commentary? (consider market/publisher)

How does one write a commentary? Resources e.g. *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*; *Oxford Latin Dictionary*; online e.g. *PHI*; now *tesserae*

Information in commentaries

Structure: sections e.g.

32-344: The Catalogue (on which, see e.g. Kytzler 1969: 219--30; Georgacopoulou 1996: 103--7; Lovatt 2005: 181--6; McNelis 2007: 82--6).

Introduction for wider discussion



Text info

Conspectus Siglorum

P codex Parisinus 8051 (Puteaneus) saec. IX/X

ω ceterorum codicum uel omnes uel plerique praeter eos qui separatim laudantur
ς eorundem aliquot uel pauci uel unus

D codex Collegii S. Iohannis apud Cantabrigienses D saec. X/XI

L codex Lipsiensis I 12 saec. XI

Σ scholia uel scholiasta

(prior to text)

Commentary info

Text: apparatus criticus e.g.:

2 angustum . . . uerno **ωΣ**: angustam . . . uerno **ς**: angusto . . . uernum **P**

4 miseris **Pς**: miseri **ω**

16 nuptaeque **Pς**: innuptaeque **ω**

use of parallels in commentaries

Some examples

4 tandem miseris data copia belli: *data copia belli* echoes Verg. A. 9.720 *data copia pugnae* (note the reworking of the following line at *Theb.* 4.356); cf. also *copia pugnae* at Luc. 7.251 and *copia Martis* at Ov. *Met.* 13.208 and Sil. 8.4. The reading *miseris* is defended by Håkanson (1973: 20) and adopted by the majority of editors. The men involved in this war are 'wretched' (see e.g. 3.629--30 and further Rieks 1967: 204--6) and a parallel for the dative alongside the genitive is provided by 3.58 *ut primum inuisi cupido data copia regis*. The manuscript variant *miseri*, printed by Klotz and Hill, is possible. For 'wretched war', see e.g. Cic. *Att.* 7.18.1 *misero bello* and Ov. *Her.* 13.51 *miserabile bellum*; cf. Hom. *Il.* 3.112 *ὀϊζυροῦ πολέμοιο*; 391 n. *tandem* continues to play with the idea of delay (Introduction, II.1). The first battle narrative does not, of course, start until Book 7.

Some examples

16 pueri nuptaeque patresque: as at 3.114 (above cit., 16--23 n.), we are presented with an expected triad of children, wives, and parents (so probably *patres*, as at 2.464 where it is used of Oedipus and Jocasta: see Mulder ad loc. For the possible attestation of such use before Statius, perhaps in Vergil, see Horsfall on Verg. A. 2.579). ω 's *innuptae* may well have arisen from recollection of Verg. A. 2.238 *pueri circum innuptaeque puellae* or G. 4.476 (= A. 6.307) *pueri innuptaeque puellae*: see Hill ad loc.

Some examples

168--72: as with his devices described at Aesch. *Th.* 432--4 and Eur. *Ph.* 1130--3 (Harrison 1992: 247--8), Capanaeus' shield emblem carries symbolic import. Pictured is the triumph of Hercules over the Lernaean Hydra, a monster whose many snake heads doubled (or tripled according to Serv. Verg. A. 6.287) on decapitation until Iolaus cauterised the threat with a burning torch. For the myth, see D. S. 4.11.5; Ov. *Met.* 9.69--74 with Bömer ad loc.; Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.5.2. Like so many of the princes, Capaneus sees himself as another Hercules. However, the role of monster seems more fitting: although at 10.843--4 we find him climbing Theban battlements with a torch, he is the one burnt, by the thunderbolt of Jupiter, 10.927--30. In foreshadowing future events, the device lays bare the illusions of this protagonist: see further Klinnert (1970), 27; Harrison (1992), 248--9; Parkes (2009a), 486--7; 85--6 n.

Some examples

The choice of emblem responds to epic and tragic texts. In part, it recalls the Hydra emblem on the shield of Aventinus, son of Hercules, at Verg. A. 7.657--8 (*clipeoque insigne paternum / centum anguis cinctamque gerit serpentibus Hydram*). In part, it looks to Adrastus' device at Eur. *Ph.* 1134--8 (assuming deletion of 1136: see Mastronarde ad loc.): ταῖς δ' ἐβδόμαις Ἄδραστος ἐν πύλαισιν ἦν, / ἑκατὸν ἐχίδναις ἀσπίδ' ἐκπληρῶν γραφῇ / . . . / Ἀργεῖον αὖχην· ἐκ δὲ τειχέων μέσων / δράκοντες ἔφερον τέκνα Καδμείων γνάθοις. Fernandelli (2000: 91--7) suggests that this device, in which Statius' interest may have been provoked by Ovidian mediation, is developed according to the schema of Hippomedon's shield depicting Argus' opening and sleeping eyes (Eur. *Ph.* 1113--18). For snakes on shields, see also 222 with n., Agamemnon's shield at Hom. *Il.* 11.39--40 (κυάνεος ἐλέλικτο δράκων, κεφαλαὶ δὲ οἱ ἦσαν / τρεῖς ἀμφιστροφές, ἐνὸς αὐχένος ἐκπεφυυῖαι), the shield at [Hes.] *Sc.* 161--7 (echoed according to Taisne 1994: 280), and the Hydra on the shields of Theron (Sil. 2.158--9 *centum angues idem Lernaeeaque monstra gerebat / in clipeo et sectis geminam serpentibus hydram*) and Eurypylus (Quint. Smyrn. 6.212--19). On the shield, see Taisne (1972), 364; 374--6; Dominik (1994), 32; Fernandelli (2000).

Some examples

172 circum amnis torpens et ferro caerula Lerna: a stagnant monster-breeding marsh replaces the sea that encompasses the shield of Achilles in Homer (*Il.* 18.607--8) and of Heracles in Hesiod (*Sc.* 314--15) and which flows in circular band on the shield of Aeneas (*Verg. A.* 8.671--4); cf. also the river Euripus which divides the shield of Canthus in two at *V. Fl.* 1.453--4, the river Ebro on Hannibal's shield at *Sil.* 2.449--50 (*extrema clipei stagnabat Hiberus in ora, / curuatis claudens ingentem flexibus orbem*), and the ocean waves around the edge of the tapestries of Proserpina (*Claud. DRP* 1.269--70) and Harmonia (*Nonn. D.* 41.301--2). Vergil's foaming (*A.* 8.672 *spumabant*) ocean containing agile dolphins (*A.* 8.673 *argento clari delphines*) has become a torpid swamp of deadly snakes (169--70 *pars anguibus aspera uiuis / argento caelata*). The emphasis on hope and vitality turns to death.

Metrical comment e.g.: **409 consulit. Ille:** the pause after the initial self-contained dactylic verb reflects Eteocles' agitation.

Some examples

historical, contemporary Roman info e.g.:

630 sacris . . . nefastis: the practice of necromancy, often associated with unsavoury practices such as child sacrifice, was held in deep suspicion by the Romans; indeed, it was effectively outlawed under the law *De maleficis et mathematicis et ceteris similibus* issued in AD 357 (Ogden 2001: 157). In literary terms, its reputation was coloured by the appearance of such shady protagonists as Horace's Canidia (cf. *Epod.* 17.79) and Lucan's Erictho. For unfavourable opinions, see e.g. Cic. *Vat.* 6.14 *cum inaudita ac nefaria sacra susceperis, cum inferorum animas elicere, cum puerorum extis deos manis mactare soleas*; *Lat. Anth.* no. 402.1--5 (Shackleton Bailey) *fata per humanas solitus praenosceret fibras / impius infandae religionis apex / pectoris ingenui salientia uiscera flammis / imposuit, magico carmine rupit humum, / ausus ab Elysiis Pompeium ducere campis*; Ogden (2001), 149--59. Statius fuels the reader's uneasiness with the nature of the rites by adjectives such as *nefastus*: these are rites which go against divine law, *fas* (cf. also 456 *Acheronte nefasto*; 516 *quem scire nefastum*): see nn. on 408 and 586--7.