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Title of extract: **The Repetitions of Hypsipyle**

Name of Author: **Gibson, B.**

Title/Author of book/edition (if applicable): **Latin Epic and Didactic Poetry. Gale, M.(editor)**

Name of Visual Creator or other acknowledgement (if applicable):

Journal details –title/Vol/Year (if applicable):

Publisher: **Classical Press of Wales**

Pages scanned: **149 - 180**

Course of Study (Module name and number): **Myth in Greek and Roman Epic CLCS7006**

Name of Designated Person
authorising scanning:

E.L. Harris

Date authorised: 15.11.13

Moodle/Powerpoint

THE REPETITIONS OF HYPsipYLE

Bruce Gibson

Introduction: intersections and appropriations

The story of Hypsipyle on Lemnos is of course one which intersects with the story of Jason and the Argonauts. Before Statius, events on Lemnos are narrated as an episode of the Argonautic myth by Apollonius of Rhodes, and, in Latin, by Valerius Flaccus, from the texts that have survived.¹ Why does Statius include this material? Why does the poet have such a long digression dealing with the tale of Hypsipyle? What does it mean to have Hypsipyle give a first person narration of the events that took place on her home isle of Lemnos? Are there links between the story of Hypsipyle and the wider story of the poem, as Vessey and others have suggested?² This chapter will suggest that the Hypsipyle episode involves Statius in elaborate self-positioning in and indeed against the background of literary history, conducted in part through the presentation of Hypsipyle herself as an epic narrator. But before dealing with Hypsipyle, it will be necessary to consider literary appropriations in more general terms.

One approach to Statius' Hypsipyle might be to see the episode as a homage to the epic tradition of the Argonauts: Statius gives another version of the story in his own Theban epic as a means of acknowledging the epic contribution of Apollonius, and, more recently, of Valerius Flaccus, whose loss was so laconically mourned by Quintilian (*Inst.* 10.1.90). If we are looking for models of Statian deference in the tradition, they are not hard to find. Most famously, there is the end of the *Thebaid*, where Statius tells his poem not to attempt to follow too closely behind that of Virgil.³ But there is also the episode in *Thebaid* 10 of Dymas and Hopleus, rather more impressive versions of Nisus and Euryalus, who are yet seemingly regarded by Statius as only just worthy of acceptance by their Virgilian predecessors in the underworld (*Theb.* 10.445–8).⁴ And there is *Silvae* 2.7: Statius explains that he was afraid to attempt to compose a birthday poem for Lucan in hexameters (*Silv.* 2 *praef.* 23–5, *ego non potui maiorem tanti auctoris habere reuerentiam quam quod laudes*

eius dicturus hexametros meos timui, 'I could not have had greater reverence for so great an author than that I feared my own hexameters when I was about to speak his praises').

However, it would be misleading to suppose that Statius' view of these matters is entirely one-sided. The point should perhaps be made that, in the *Thebaid*, only Virgil is highlighted in such a direct way.⁵ There are also passages in the *Silvae* where the poet seems ready to challenge the hierarchies of literary history. *Silvae* 2.7 itself we will return to in a moment. At *Silv.* 5.3.47–63, in the lament for his father, Statius expresses his desire to build a temple for him and to establish games in his honour; the temple would exceed even the Pyramids (49–50), and Statius concludes the passage with the hope that his father would not put him second to Homer and Virgil (61–3):

atque tibi moresque tuos et facta canentem
fors et magniloquo non posthabuisset Homero
tenderet et toruo pietas aequare Maroni.

And perhaps, as I sang of your ways and deeds to you, your devotion would not place me behind grandiloquent Homer, and at the same time would attempt to make me the equal of stern Maro.

A better-known passage is *Silv.* 4.7.25–8:⁶

quippe te fido monitore nostra
Thebais multa cruciata lima
temptat audaci fide Mantuanae
gaudia famae.

Indeed with you [Vibius Maximus] as my faithful guide, my *Thebaid*, tortured with much application of the file, tries for the joys of Mantuan fame with a bold lyre.

This passage can also usefully be set alongside *Silv.* 5.3.233–4, addressed to the poet's own father:

te nostra magistro
Thebais urgebat priscorum exordia uatum;

With you as my master, our *Thebaid* pressed hard on the beginnings of the ancient poets.

Hinds has pointed out that in *Silv.* 4.7 the word *temptat*, which describes the *Thebaid*'s attempt to achieve Mantuan (Virgilian) joys, reverses the instruction to the *Thebaid* not to take on the *Aeneid* (*nec...tempta*, *Theb.* 12.816). Here, I would add that the description in *Silv.* 5.3 of the *Thebaid* pressing on (*urgebat*) the beginnings of ancient poets also reverses the

motif of respectful and distant following at the end of the *Thebaid* (*Theb.* 12.816–17):

uiue, precor; nec tu diuinam Aeneida tempta,
sed longe sequere et uestigia semper adora.

Live, I pray; and do not test out the divine *Aeneid*, but follow far behind, and always adore its footsteps.

Silvae 2.7 also shows that these structures of poetic hierarchy are not inflexible – here Lucan is the object of adulation, and the poet moreover declares that the *Aeneid* itself will venerate Lucan (*Silv.* 2.7.75–80):⁷

cedet Musa rudis ferocis Enni
et docti furor arduus Lucreti
et qui per freta duxit Argonautas
et qui corpora prima transfigurat.
quid? maius loquar: ipsa te Latinis
Aeneis uenerabitur canentem.

The untrained Muse of fierce Ennius will yield, and the difficult madness of learned Lucretius, and the poet who led the Argonauts through the straits, and the poet who metamorphoses original bodies. Yes, I will say something greater still: the *Aeneid* itself will venerate you as you sing to the Latins.

This passage is of interest for more than one reason. It also includes a reference to poetry, presumably Latin, on the Argonauts (*Silv.* 2.7.77). The lines oddly recall Ovid's catalogue of poets in *Amores* 1.15.9–30, though in Ovid's list all the poetry and the poets will survive, whereas in Statius' list the poets are not up to Lucan's standard. Notice, however, that whereas Ennius and Lucretius are mentioned by name, the poets of the Argonauts and of transformations are mentioned periphrastically in relative clauses. The poet of transformations is surely Ovid, but what of the poet of the Argonauts?

It would be very tempting to argue, especially in the context of this paper, that the poet who led the Argonauts through the straits is none other than Valerius Flaccus. However van Dam in his commentary on this passage is probably right to say that Varro of Atax, who wrote a version of the *Argonautica* of Apollonius, is referred to here, rather than Valerius.⁸ The strongest reason is that the poets then fit a chronological sequence; but if the Argonaut poet were Valerius, Valerius would be followed by Ovid, which would break the chronological order. Moreover, Ovid's list also included Ennius, Lucretius and Varro (*Ovid Am.* 1.15.19–24):

Ennius arte carens animosique Accius oris
casurum nullo tempore nomen habent;

Varronem primamque ratem quae nesciat aetas
 aureaque Aesonio terga petita duci?
 carmina sublimis tunc sunt peritura Lucreti
 exitio terras cum dabit una dies.

Ennius who lacks skill and Accius of the strident voice have a name that will never fall; what age would not know of Varro and the first ship, and the golden hide sought by the Aesonian commander? The songs of sublime Lucretius will perish at that moment, when one day will give the earth over to destruction.

As van Dam points out, Statius takes elements of the Ovidian list and adds Ovid himself to the three other poets named, simultaneously a compliment to Ovid and a judgement on Ovid as not as good as Lucan.

However, the matter does not end there, even if it is Varro who features in Statius' poem. One effect of the relative clauses used to refer to Varro and indeed to Ovid in *Silv.* 2.7 is to obscure the names of the poets, which is ironic in the light of *Amores* 1.15's concern with *fama perennis* (*Am.* 1.15.7–8): Ovid designates all the poets in his list by means of a proper name, even if in some cases the reference is allusive, as with *Ascræus* for Hesiod (*Am.* 1.15.11). Moreover, in both Ovid and Statius, having Varro as the Argonaut poet is in itself not without irony in a context of poetic survival, for Varro's poem in a sense obscures the Greek poem of Apollonius which lies behind it.

One further passage of *Silv.* 2.7 is worth examining. Lines 41–104 of the whole poem are in fact a speech addressed by Calliope to the infant Lucan, so that the passages we have already looked at are also from this speech, and are thus the words of Calliope rather than the poet. Earlier in her speech the Muse gives instruction to the poet on what subject matter he should choose (*Silv.* 2.7.48–52):

nocturnas alii Phrygum ruinas
 et tardi reduces uias Vlixis
 et puppem temerariam Mineruae
 trita uatibus orbita sequantur:
 tu carus Latio memorque gentis
 carmen fortior exseres togatum.

Let others follow the night-time downfalls of the Phrygians, and the returning ways of late Odysseus, and the rash ship of Minerva, paths worn out by poets. You, dear to Latium and mindful of your people, will in greater bravery draw out a toga-clad song.

Here Calliope warns Lucan to avoid trite poetic subjects in his future career, the fall of Troy, the return of Odysseus, and the rash ship of Minerva,

a reference to the Argo. Now this reference, however, cannot be to Varro of Atax (or to Apollonius, for that matter), just as the references to the Phrygians and to Odysseus cannot be to Homer. Why not? Calliope is addressing the infant Lucan. Varro of Atax, to say nothing of Homer, was already dead. This passage can only refer to poets writing after the birth of Lucan. Hence Valerius Flaccus can loom into the frame. The inclusion of the Argo in a list of tired epic themes should not come as a surprise. In his declaration that *omnia iam uulgata*, 'everything has now been made known' (*Geo.* 3.4), Virgil had already asked *cui non dictus Hylas puer?* (*Geo.* 3.6), 'who has not been told about the boy Hylas?', an episode from the larger story of the Argonauts.

In the passages we have examined, there is a sense in which Statius' contemporaries are written out of the action. Statius is concerned about engagement with Homer and Virgil, and as for *Silv.* 2.7, Lucan is being added to their number, and indeed, for the purposes of the poem, is regarded as superior to Virgil. Lucan is thus written back into the past of literary history; he is given, paradoxically (since the speech is made by Calliope at a time when he is an infant and has yet to write anything at all), a kind of classic status. Though we may tend glibly to think of Lucan and Statius and Silius and Valerius as 'Silver epic', we would do well to remember that for Statius, Lucan is someone who lived before his own time. And there is also an important difference between Statius' cataloguing of poets and Ovid's. Ovid does mention poets of his own time, whereas Statius is only interested in poets of the remoter past. There is another point to be drawn out of *Silv.* 5.3.233–4: Statius says that his father helped him to press on the *exordia* of old poets. No indication here, then, that the father's assistance was needed in dealing with contemporary poets.

But how might one press on those *exordia* of the old poets? Virgil is of course one model. It is a long-established commonplace of Virgilian criticism to see Virgil responding to the Homeric poems in his *Aeneid*, with *arma uirumque* as a signal to the reader to look out for the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.⁹ The general view is that Virgil's response depends on manipulation and reworking of material from Homer (and other texts as well) in order to produce something new. Aeneas experiences an 'Odyssey' in the first six books of the *Aeneid*, but it is not the same story. Similarly we have a kind of rerun of the Trojan war in the second six books of the *Aeneid*, but it is different, since it is fought by Trojans and Italians, not Greeks, and the Trojans have Arcadian Greeks on their side, while Diomedes, newly translated to Italy, declines to fight against them.

However, another form of response to earlier epic is to appropriate it by retelling its material. Statius' *Achilleid* is one example, though paradoxically

incomplete in spite of the poet's intention to do the whole job, to tell the whole story of Achilles from the very beginning right up to the end (*Ach.* 1.1–7):

Magnanimum Aeaciden formidatamque Tonanti
progeniem et patrio uetitam succedere caelo,
diua, refer. quamquam acta uiri multum inclita cantu
Maeonio (sed plura uacant), nos ire per omnem –
sic amor est – heroa uelis Scyroque latentem
Dulichia proferre tuba nec in Hectore tracto
sistere, sed tota iuuenem deducere Troia.

Goddess, tell of the great-hearted descendant of Aeacus and the child that was feared by the Thunderer, and forbidden to succeed to his father's heaven. Although the deeds of the man are very famous in the Maeonian's song (but more have been left free), may it be your wish that we should go through the whole hero – for such is my desire – and bring him out from his Scyrian hiding-place with a Dulichian trumpet and not stop with Hector being dragged, but lead the young man through the whole of Troy.

Statius' poem will include and subsume the subject matter of the *Iliad*: *nos ire per omnem – sic amor est – heroa*: the intention is to deal with the whole of the life of Achilles and cover it within the one poem.¹⁰ No matter that Horace had praised Homer for not covering the whole Trojan war within a single poem: *nec gemino bellum Troianum orditur ab ovo* (*Ars Poetica* 147), 'nor does he begin the Trojan war from the double egg' – Statius wades in with his intention to cover the whole life of Achilles, thus including the entire story of the *Iliad*. Now contrast this opening of the *Achilleid* with the opening of the *Thebaid*, the finished epic of Statius, where the poet explains his intention *not* to cover the whole history of Thebes. It is tempting to see the *Thebaid* as somehow of a different order to the *Achilleid*, since it is not attempting to treat of the entire subject (*Theb.* 1.16–17):

limes mihi carminis esto
Oedipodae confusa domus.

Let the boundary for my song be the house of Oedipus thrown into confusion.

Now clearly there is a difference between this defining of boundaries and the limitless extravagance of the *Achilleid* which essays to deal with the entire life of its hero. However this contrast should not obscure the fact that the *Thebaid* might still have its own strategies for aggrandisement and the appropriation of earlier texts.

In a sense one model for this kind of thematic appropriation might well be the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid which runs down from primal chaos

to the deification of Julius Caesar. Philip Hardie has shown how Ovid's treatment of Theban material in books 3 and 4 of the *Metamorphoses* 'is the first example of an "anti-Aeneid"',¹¹ while Stephen Hinds has given an extensive account of the reconfiguration of Virgil's *Aeneid* in Ovid's poem.¹² Thus we can look at Ovid as one who assimilated thematic material from Virgil and others and remade them into his own poem. However it is all too easy to forget that Virgil himself provides us with at least one example of this kind of appropriation, the straightforward retelling of stories taken over from a predecessor.

I am thinking of the second book of the *Aeneid*, which retells the fall of Troy: Aeneas gives his first person narration, which is exactly half of his long narration to Dido in *Aeneid* 2 and 3, itself modelled on Odysseus' narrative to Alcinous in books 9–12 of the *Odyssey*. Now, as it happens, the *Odyssey* does offer an account of the fall of Troy, in book 8. The narrative of Troy's fall in book 8 is not the account offered by Odysseus, but is told by the bard Demodocus (*Od.* 8.499–520). But because we tend to have the *Odyssey* (and books 9–12 in particular) in the forefront of our minds when we read book 2 of the *Aeneid*, this can allow us to ignore other poetic accounts of the fall of Troy. Even before we consider other accounts of the city's fall it is worth noting a curious effect of *Aeneid* 2. Because Aeneas' speech to Dido in books 2 and 3 is so closely linked to Odysseus' narrative in *Odyssey* 9–12, the presence of Demodocus' account from *Odyssey* 8 might be felt to be that much weaker, particularly as Demodocus has in a sense been written over by the appearance of the Carthaginian bard Iopas who offers the assembled company a cosmological song at the end of *Aeneid* 1.¹³ The strength of the allusion to the *form* of *Odyssey* 9–12 in *Aeneid* 2–3 might be felt to be so strong that we can be less conscious that Aeneas is revisiting the *content* of Demodocus' song in *Odyssey* 8 at the same time.

In any case, it is not as if Demodocus and Homer were the only possibilities for appropriation into a Latin account of the Trojan War. Before Virgil there existed the *Ilias parua* ascribed to Lesches and the *Iliupersis* ascribed to Arctinus, as well as the *Iliupersis* of Stesichorus.¹⁴ So though we tend to see Virgil as a poet making creative use of literary predecessors, most notably the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, in fact the second book of the *Aeneid* does retell material which had been used before. Thus in Aeneas' narrative, on the one hand there is the third book of the *Aeneid*, which uses not only the *Odyssey* but also the *Argonautica* of Apollonius as a point of departure for the different story of Aeneas' wanderings,¹⁵ but on the other hand we have *Aeneid* 2 which offers a retelling of material from earlier epic. The fact remains that *Aeneid* 2 is much closer to what Ovid is doing with

the whole of Virgil towards the end of the *Metamorphoses* than we would perhaps care to realize.

Though Statius declines to tell the whole story of Thebes, the *Thebaid* nevertheless has its own element of retelling. Just like the story of Troy's fall, successively retold both before and after Virgil, so too is the story of Thebes a story of retellings and reruns.¹⁶ At the head of the race we have the cyclic *Thebaid* (in addition, Tydeus' exploits against the fifty Thebans appear several times in the *Iliad*),¹⁷ there is the Lille Stesichorus,¹⁸ and then there is Antimachus of Colophon.¹⁹ There are also dramatic treatments, such as the *Seven against Thebes* of Aeschylus and the *Phoenissae* of Euripides. In Latin, Propertius 1.7 refers to Ponticus as the author of a poem on Thebes, and there is also the Theban material given by Ovid in *Metamorphoses* 3 and 4, as well as Seneca's *Phoenissae*.

In his *Statius and the Thebaid* (1973, 69) David Vessey writes:

We may dismiss from our consideration without diffidence the Cyclic *Thebaid*; even if Statius could have read it (which is dubious) nothing is less likely than that he would have found it of the remotest use. The long epic of Antimachus of Colophon, so long mooted as a possible 'source' for Statius, may be no less summarily excluded.

And here we have a paradox: Vessey, whose book has been a landmark in the revival of interest in Statius in the late twentieth century, writes Statius' predecessors out of the story. Without reopening the whole question of Statius' sources, I want to suggest that a measure of the poet's success in writing his Theban predecessors out of the story is Vessey's willingness to rule them out as of any value to a critic. In fact, Vessey's rejection of the possibility of influence from the Cyclic epic and from Antimachus is in any case over-optimistic. Statius' father apparently taught such obscure figures as Sophron and Corinna;²⁰ acquaintance with Antimachus or with Cyclic epic is not so implausible.²¹

So the *Thebaid* must be seen not only in the light of its deference to Virgil, but also as a retelling of the myth which writes over the tellings that have gone before. Nor should we overlook the way in which the *Thebaid* picks up on the subject matter of drama – Statius retells material which had appeared in Greek tragedy, a good example of this being the use of the *teichoscopia* motif in *Thebaid* 7.243–73 where not only is there the model of the *teichoscopia* in *Iliad* 3, but also the scene in Euripides' *Phoenissae* where Antigone looks down from the walls.²²

Repetitions of Hypsipyle

It is time to consider Statius' Hypsipyle more closely. She first appears at *Theb.* 4.746. The Argive army has vainly been searching for water, after

Bacchus' intervention at Nemea to dry up the streams in order to delay their arrival at Thebes.²³ Adrastus, the Argive commander, does not know who she is and takes her for the goddess Diana or one of her followers, in a manner comparable to Odysseus' encounter with Nausicaa in *Od.* 6 and Aeneas' with his disguised mother Venus in *Aen.* 1.²⁴ Hypsipyle, who has been nursing the child Opheltes, leaves him on the ground where he peaceably crawls amid the flowers while she leads the Argives to the stream of Langia, which has not dried up. The army readily drink the water in some confusion and the fourth book ends with a prayer addressed to Nemea from one of the kings.²⁵

Book 5 opens with the Argive army ready to depart for the war at Thebes. However Adrastus at lines 20–7 asks Hypsipyle to tell of her lineage and home. Hypsipyle replies that this request is one that renews her pain: as scholars have noted, this echoes the opening of the second book of the *Aeneid* where Aeneas is at first reluctant to tell Dido of the fall of Troy and his wanderings.²⁶ There is, however, an extraordinary contrast between the two scenes.²⁷ In *Thebaid* 5, Adrastus and the Argives are on the point of leaving for war; it is hardly the moment for such enquiries. In contrast, Aeneas is at a banquet given by Dido.²⁸ Let us look more closely at *Thebaid* 5.28–39:

ingemit, et paulum fletu cunctata modesto
Lemniās orsa refert: inmania uulnera, rector,
integrare iubes, Furiās et Lemnōn et artis
arma inserta toris debellatosque pudendo
ense mares; redit ecce nefas et frigida cordi
Eumenis. o miserae, quibus hic furor additus! o nox!
o pater! illa ego nam, pudeat ne forte benignae
hospitis, illa, duces, raptum quae sola parentem
occului. quid longa malis exordia necto?
et uos arma uocant magnique in corde paratus.
hoc memorasse sat est: claro generata Thoante
seruitium Hypsipyle uestri fero capta Lycurgi.'

She groans and after hesitating a little with modest weeping, the Lemnian begins her words: 'Great wounds, O king, you tell me to renew, the Furies and Lemnos and arms put in narrow beds and males overwhelmed by a shameful sword; look, the crime and the Fury returns, cold to my heart. O wretched women, who had this frenzy put on them! O night! O father! For I am she, so that you should perhaps not be ashamed of a kind host, she who alone snatched away and concealed her father. Why do I weave long beginnings for these evils? And you are called by arms and great designs in your hearts. Let it be enough to recall this: sired by famous Thoas, I, Hypsipyle, as a captive, endure the servitude of your Lycurgus.'

Now this passage might be said to have the characteristics of an epic opening.²⁹ Hypsipyle declares her subject matter as *Furias et Lemnon et artis | arma inserta toris debellatosque pudendo | ense mares*, 'the Furies and Lemnos and arms put in narrow beds and males overwhelmed by a shameful sword'. The mention of *Furias* then *arma* can certainly call to mind the opening of the *Aeneid*.³⁰ *Debellatos*, applied to the slaughtered husbands, also recalls Virgil's *parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*, 'spare those who submit, overwhelm in war those who are proud' (*Aen.* 6.853). But there is more detail which points us to an epic beginning. Consider again lines 34–6:

o pater! illa ego nam, pudeat ne forte benignae
hospitis, illa, duces, raptum quae sola parentem
occului. quid longa malis exordia necto?

O father! For I am she, so that you should perhaps not be ashamed of a kind host, who alone snatched away and concealed her father. Why do I weave long beginnings for these evils?

The combination of *illa ego*, it could be argued, and *exordia*, the word for a literary beginning, recall the use of the *ille ego* figure in the rejected lines at the start of the *Aeneid*.³¹

Hypsipyle's poetic status could also be confirmed by lines 38–9, where she gives her name, rather in the manner of a poetic *sphragis*. Whereas Aeneas does not give his name in *Aeneid* 2 to Dido, having already introduced himself at *Aen.* 1.595–6, Hypsipyle reverts to the model of *Odyssey* 9, revealing herself to the Argives just as Odysseus did to Alcinous and the Phaeacians (*Od.* 9.19).

Indeed Hypsipyle may be even more like a poet than either Aeneas or Odysseus, since her narration is characterized by a sense of omniscience of the facts and also of their causation. Consider for instance Hypsipyle's double explanation for the troubles on Lemnos: the decision of the gods and the fault of the Lemnians themselves (*Theb.* 5.57–8):³²

dis uisum turbare domos, nec pectora culpa
nostra uacant.

It seemed good to the gods to throw our homes into confusion, and our hearts were not free from blame.

It is true that at *Theb.* 5.61–9, in her account of Venus' departure from Paphos, Hypsipyle uses the words *fertur* and *uulgarent*, distancing herself somewhat from responsibility for the accuracy of what she is relating, as well as perhaps also suggesting an awareness of other sources.³³ However, more decisive is *Theb.* 5.157–8, *sed fallit ubique | mixta Venus, Venus arma*

tenet, Venus admouet iras, 'but Venus deceives, mixed in everywhere, Venus holds the weapons, Venus stirs up anger', where Hypsipyle claims that the goddess is stirring up the violent anger of the Lemnian women against their husbands; compare Valerius Flaccus 2.101–6 for an epic narrator's account of Venus' schemes against the Lemnians.³⁴ The women's behaviour is again ascribed directly to the intervention of Venus at *Theb.* 5.192–4 and 445–8; and we might similarly ask how Hypsipyle would have known of the slaying of Helymus by his wife Gorge in their own home, particularly as she is perfectly capable of affirming her own autopsy of events elsewhere, as at *Theb.* 5.223, where Gyas' death is recalled with the word *uidi*, 'I saw'.³⁵ The point becomes clearer if we reflect that in Aeneas' account of the fall of Troy the involvement of the gods is only made apparent to Aeneas by the revelation of his mother Venus (*Aen.* 2.620–2):

dixerat et spissis noctis se condidit umbris.
apparent dirae facies inimicaque Troiae
numina magna deum.

She had spoken, and concealed herself in the thick shadows of night. The dread forms and the great divinities of the gods, inimical to Troy, come into view.

The nearest Statian parallel to this incident is *Theb.* 5.280–3, where Bacchus, who has appeared to Hypsipyle and Thoas, tells Hypsipyle through which gate she is to take her father out of the city;³⁶ she must avoid the gate where Venus is directing the slaughter:

illa, qua rere silentia, porta
stat funesta Venus ferroque accincta furentes
adiuuat (unde manus, unde haec Mauortia diuae
pectora?).

At that gate, where you think that there is silence, stands deadly Venus, and, girt up with a sword, she helps the mad women (where does the goddess get these hands from, where does she get this warlike spirit?).

It is true that Bacchus has knowledge superior to Hypsipyle's in terms of the very precise detail of Venus' assistance. But this scene does not really parallel the scene from the *Aeneid*. The narrator has already indicated her knowledge of Venus' involvement right from the outset (*Theb.* 5.57–60). Bacchus' questions at the end of this quotation as to why Venus is acting in this way show that he does not know what the narrator Hypsipyle does.³⁷

The idea that Hypsipyle speaks as an epic narrator is further suggested by her use of epic similes – though we should note that similes are also used both by Aeneas in his narration to Dido and by Odysseus in *Od.* 9–12.³⁸

There is of course no reason why one should not think of Aeneas or Odysseus as epic narrators – after all Alcinous tells Odysseus, ‘you have told your story knowingly, like a bard’, μῦθον δ’ ὥς ὅτ’ ἀοιδὸς ἐπισταμένως κατέλεξας (*Od.* 11.368).

Some of Hypsipyle’s similes, such as the comparison between herself and a surrounded deer trying to escape from wolves at *Theb.* 5.165–9, might be felt to be unexceptional,³⁹ drawn from the character’s potential experience in the same way as the similes used by Aeneas in *Aeneid* 2 and 3. But others involve anachronistic references to the Roman present (for example, the tame animal simile at *Theb.* 5.231–5, which is reminiscent of the remarkable behaviour of tamed animals in the arena, as described by Martial and by Statius himself in the *Silvae*),⁴⁰ or call upon a range of geographical reference more suited to a Roman epic poet than to a woman of the heroic age, even if she had had to leave Lemnos and live in Nemea (for instance, the references to North Africa at *Theb.* 5.332, or to Scythia at 5.114–16 and 203–2, the latter perhaps reflecting contemporary Roman interest in the lands beyond the Danube).⁴¹ And another striking simile is not Roman in content, but almost seems to betray a suspicious knowledge of epic poetry. At *Theb.* 5.426–30 Hypsipyle compares the splendid appearance of the Argonauts to the gods as they head off to feast with the Ethiopians, recalling the divine feasting with the Ethiopians that took place in both Homeric epics (*Iliad* 1.423–4, *Odyssey* 1.22–6). The simile is tellingly introduced with the words *arcana sic fama* (*Theb.* 5.426), as if Hypsipyle is acknowledging the epic tradition.

Other features of Hypsipyle’s narrative technique, too, seem typically epic: she starts off her narration with divine anger (*Theb.* 5.57–69),⁴² expresses uncertainty as to the course her narrative should follow (*Theb.* 5.206–7),⁴³ and declines a few lines later to tell of the deaths of one and all, preferring instead to concentrate on the deaths of members of her own family (*Theb.* 5.218–19). This last passage is in fact almost a reversal of the intervention of Lucan’s epic narrator at 7.617 ff., where he explains that it would be wrong to concentrate on the deaths of individuals amid such carnage on the Republican side. One can also note in passing Hypsipyle’s usage of the verb *pandere*, a word for epic exposition.⁴⁴ There is an epic storm at *Theb.* 5.362–97, and at *Theb.* 5.398–44 Hypsipyle gives a catalogue of the Argonauts, recalling the catalogues in the first books of Apollonius Rhodius and Valerius Flaccus (A.R. 1.20–233, V. Fl. 1.352–483).⁴⁵ An odd feature of the catalogue is that Hypsipyle does not mention a member of the Argive army who claims to have been with the Argo, Amphiarus, who tells of his presence on the expedition at *Theb.* 3.517–21.⁴⁶ Thus at least one member of the Argive host is in fact already aware of what has

happened, because that person had been on the Argonautic expedition to Lemnos, where, presumably, he had met Hypsipyle.

But Hypsipyle’s tale, as well as being a retelling of other treatments of her story, is one that she herself has retold on several occasions, even before her meeting with the Argives, as Georgia Nugent has noted.⁴⁷ Hypsipyle is presented as a repeating narrator, whose story is not in fact composed on the spot, after the manner of Odysseus’ narrative to Alcinous in *Odyssey* 9 or even Aeneas’ to Dido in *Aeneid* 2. To this extent we might find another model for Hypsipyle’s narration in the narrative of Odysseus to his wife Penelope on their retirement for the night after the death of the suitors (*Od.* 23.306–43), where the epic narrator presents in indirect speech what is really a kind of abbreviated rerun of *Odyssey* 9–12.

What then is the evidence for the repetitions of Hypsipyle? The first passage is the very first line after the end of Hypsipyle’s narration (*Theb.* 5.499–500):

talia Lernaeis iterat dum regibus exul
Lemnias et longa solatur damna querela...

While the Lemnian exile repeats such words to the Lernaean monarchs and
consoles her losses with her long complaint...

The use of *iterat*, ‘repeats’, can hardly be more pointed, particularly in the light of what is to follow.⁴⁸ Because Hypsipyle had put down the child Opheltēs, an opportunity arises for the snake of Jove to inflict, inadvertently, a fatal wound.⁴⁹ Hypsipyle’s narration is thus responsible for the death of Opheltēs. After the dead child is discovered and the snake is slain, Hypsipyle then makes a lament for Opheltēs at *Theb.* 5.608–35.⁵⁰ She begins in the conventional manner, lamenting the loss of the child’s beauty and recalling his foibles, before turning from Opheltēs’ childish noises to her own words to him. What did Hypsipyle talk of to him (*Theb.* 5.615–16)?

quotiens tibi Lemnon et Argo
sueta loqui et longa somnum suadere querela!

How often was I accustomed to tell you of Lemnos and the Argo, and to win
you over to sleep with my long complaint!

Quotiens – Opheltēs had heard this narrative more than once.⁵¹ At *Theb.* 5.626–8, the same mode of self-criticism continues:

dum patrios casus famaeque exorsa retracto
ambitiosa meae (pietas haec magna fidesque!)
exsolui tibi, Lemne, nefas.

While I go over again the fate of my father and the ambitious proem to my fame (this is great piety and loyalty), I have paid to you for my crime, Lemnos.

Here notice the phrase *famaeque exorsa...ambitiosa meae*, not just the mere telling of a story, but an actual attempt at securing her own fame as well (the prefix in *re-tracto* also points to Hypsipyle's repetition). It is striking that when she is faced with the child's death, Hypsipyle reads in herself a kind of ambition, a concern with fame, which is a poet's concern. And so when Lycurgus, the father of Opheltis, discovers the fate of his child, his immediate reaction is a desire for violent revenge on Hypsipyle. But look how this violence is voiced (*Theb.* 5.658–60):

ferte citi comites; faxo omnis fabula Lemni
et pater et tumidae generis mendacia sacri
exciderint.

Bring her quickly, my companions: I will make her swelling pride forget the whole story of Lemnos and her father and the lies of divine lineage.

Lycurgus' revenge is couched in terms of poetic destruction, though that destruction would obviously be effected by violence against the person of Hypsipyle.

Another reference to earlier versions of Hypsipyle's narrative comes in book 6, at the funeral of Opheltis. Eurydice laments for her son, and then refers to her trust in Hypsipyle (*Theb.* 6.146–53):

primitias egomet lacrimarum et caedis acerbae,
ante tubas ferrumque, tuli, dum deside cura
credo sinus fidos altricis et ubera mando.
quidni ego? narrabat seruatum fraude parentem
insontesque manus. en quam feralis putemus
abiurasse sacrum et Lemni gentilibus unam
immunem furiis! haec illa (et creditis ausae?)
haec pietate potens solis abiecit in aruis...

I have endured the very first portion of tears and bitter slaughter, prior to war's trumpets and swords, while with sluggish concern I trust the loyal embrace of a nurse and have her suckle the child. Why should I not have done this? She used to tell of her father saved by a trick, and of her innocent hands. Look – we are to believe that she foreswore such a wicked rite and that she alone was exempt from the local madness of Lemnos! This same woman (do you believe her when she has dared this?), this woman noted for her piety set my child down in the lonely fields...

So again we have a sense of Hypsipyle's narration having being told before – and in this case it was probably told at a very early point in her career

chez Lycurgus. Eurydice suggests that her belief in the story was a reason for entrusting Opheltis to Hypsipyle.⁵² This is perhaps a hint that Hypsipyle originally told her story in a situation analogous to Aeneas' when he first arrived in Carthage. There have of course been several retellings since, most of them perhaps heard by Opheltis.⁵³ All this would suggest that Hypsipyle is a practised teller of her tale, thus even more like a poet than either Aeneas or Odysseus, her predecessors. But in fact her tendency to narrate goes even further back. Even within her account in *Thebaid* 5 she represents herself as narrating events on Lemnos to her father Thoas (*Theb.* 5.244–7):

trepido scelus ordine pando,
quis dolor, unde animi: 'uis nulla arcere furentes;
hac sequere, o miserande; premunt aderuntque moranti,
et mecum fortasse cades.'

I unfold the crime in frightened sequence, what is the women's pain, whence their courage comes: 'There is no force to keep them off in their frenzy; follow this way, O wretched one; they press on us and will be here if one delays, and perhaps you will fall with me.'

Thus Statius' Hypsipyle not only repeated her story in Nemea, but even narrated it to her father amid the slaughter and confusion on Lemnos.

However it is also worth considering other narrations by Hypsipyle that are earlier in the tradition than Statius. The first that we have is not even from epic, but from Euripides' fragmentary play, the *Hypsipyle*.⁵⁴ Bond in his edition of the play suggests that the prologue included some account by Hypsipyle of her adventures, but what is more certain is that there is in the exodos of the play (in fr. 64 Bond) an exchange between Hypsipyle and her sons where she responds to their questions as to what had happened to her. Even more strikingly, fr. 1.ii.21–3 seems to anticipate the idea of a Hypsipyle who is prone to narration:⁵⁵

ἦ τὰν Ἀργῶ τὰν διὰ σοῦ
στόματος ἀεὶ κληζομένην
πεντηκόντερον ᾔδεις...

Are you singing of the fifty-oared *Argo* that is always sounding on your lips...

Thus, Euripides' play shares with Statius not only the device of having Hypsipyle as a first person narrator, but also the idea that she is frequently narrating her story. The difference between these two texts, however, is that while she is speaking, Statius' Hypsipyle is in control of the whole narration even to the extent of having similarities with the overall epic narrator of the *Thebaid*.

There is also a narration from Hypsipyle in Apollonius of Rhodes. At A.R. 1.793–833 Hypsipyle makes a speech to Jason, which, significantly, offers a retelling, another version of the narrator's own account of the Lemnian massacre at A.R. 1.609–23. Despite her claim at A.R. 1.796–7 that she is giving Jason the truth as to why there are no men on Lemnos, she tells him that in the end the men of Lemnos went off to enjoy their new brides, taking all the male children with them. At the end of this speech by Hypsipyle (1.834–5), the narrator of the poem explicitly points out that Hypsipyle did not tell the truth about what had happened to the Lemnian men. On one level Apollonius' Hypsipyle anticipates the criticisms of Hypsipyle made by Eurydice in Statius, who does not regard Hypsipyle's story of herself and her heroic saving of her father as authentic.⁵⁶ If we want to go even further, we could say that the criticism of Eurydice could also be applied, retrospectively, to Aeneas: after all, Dido in *Aeneid* 4, in a moment of extreme emotion, denies the authenticity of Aeneas' claims to divine parentage (Virg. *Aen.* 4.365–7). And the Odysseus who tells the story of his wanderings in *Odyssey* 9–12 is also the Odysseus who is such a conspicuously successful liar.⁵⁷ When we bear in mind that Apollonius' Hypsipyle was capable of lies, the intertextuality might almost be felt to contaminate even Statius' Hypsipyle. Notice too that Statius' Hypsipyle is very keen to deny any kind of love involvement with Jason, instead describing herself as a victim of her guest's compulsion (*Theb.* 5.463–5):⁵⁸

nec non ipsa tamen, thalami monimenta coacti,
enitor geminos, duroque sub hospite mater
nomen aui renouo...

And indeed I myself nevertheless bring forth twins, memorial of a forced marriage-bed, and beneath my harsh guest as a mother I renew the name of my grandfather.

Is this Hypsipyle telling the truth here, did she really resent her union with Jason? This goes against what is implied by Ovid in *Heroides* 6 where Hypsipyle is in love with Jason.⁵⁹ And while Hypsipyle is a first person voice in Ovid, she is a first person narrator who, as is characteristic in the *Heroides*, only has a partial awareness of the truth. She has been deceived by Jason, and is henceforth also dependent on whatever rumours come to her about Jason and his doings. So again we have a voice of Hypsipyle which contrasts with her authoritative voice in Statius.

What of Hypsipyle in Valerius Flaccus?⁶⁰ There, we have a different kind of narrative from Hypsipyle, one which is clearly subordinate to the epic narrator's own account of the arrival of the Argonauts. Hypsipyle's account is of the story of her rescue of her father, but it is not a verbal but an artistic

representation of the rescue of Thoas (V. Fl. 2.408–17):

dixit lacrimans, haesuraque caro
dona duci promit chlamydem textosque labores.
illic seruati genitoris conscia sacra
pressit acu currusque pios: stant saeua paentum
agmina dantque locum; uiridis circum horrida late
silua tremit; mediis refugit pater anxius umbris.
pars haec frondosae raptus expresserat Idae
inlustremque fugam pueri; mox aethere laetus
adstabat mensis, quin et Iouis armiger ipse
accipit a Phrygio iam pocula blanda ministro.

She wept as she spoke, and brought out gifts that would stay with the dear prince, a cloak and her woven labours. There she embroidered the rites that were privy to her father being saved and the holy chariots: savage throngs of frightened women stand there and give way; all around the green wood trembles, shuddering; and her anxious father flees in the midst of the shadows. This part had depicted the rape on leafy Ida and the famous flight of the boy; soon, he happily was serving at table in heaven, and indeed the very armour-bearer of Jove receives pleasant drafts from a Phrygian servant.

So in Valerius, Hypsipyle's narrative is a cloak – *chlamydem textosque labores*⁶¹ – an embroidery, reminiscent of Catullus 64, though on a rather smaller scale, that familiar game of visual narrative being described through the medium of words. And though this is Hypsipyle's narration of rescuing her father, it is also Valerius' account of what Hypsipyle's gift was like.

But it is Valerius himself who takes responsibility for Hypsipyle's fame and reputation (V. Fl. 2.242–6):

sed tibi nunc quae digna tuis ingentibus ausis
orsa feram, decus et patriae laus una ruentis,
Hypsipyle? non ulla meo te carmine dictam
abstulerint, durent Latiis modo saecula fastis
Iliacique lares tantique palatia regni.

But now what words can I bring worthy of your deeds of great daring, Hypsipyle, you who are the glory and single honour of your falling country? No ages shall remove you, told about in my song, providing the ages go on with the Latin calendar, and the Trojan homes and the palace of so great a realm.

As Debra Hershkowitz has noted,⁶² this passage recalls the prospect of literary immortality offered to Nisus and Euryalus by Virgil at *Aen.* 9.446–9. Of course Statius himself would also echo the Virgilian passage in *Theb.* 10.446–9 when suggesting that Hopleus and Dymas could be attendants to Nisus and Euryalus amid the shades. Ironically Valerius'

imitation of Virgil is more confident than Statius',⁶³ but what is the irony? The irony lies in the fact that if we take Statius to be writing after Valerius Flaccus,⁶⁴ then we have a situation where Valerius declares that Hypsipyle will survive through his song for as long as Roman civilization will survive. Yet in fact within a matter of a few years, here is Statius giving Hypsipyle another commemoration, as if Statius is already writing Valerius Flaccus' version of Hypsipyle out of literary history. Remember how Statius referred to an Argonaut poet as *et qui per freta duxit Argonautas* (*Silv.* 2.7.77), where the periphrasis does allow for ambiguity (though in the context it is probably Varro of Atax who is being referred to). But one other effect of the periphrasis is also to lessen the commemoration – people like Lucretius and Ennius get their names mentioned, the Argonaut poet does not. We should also recall the passage earlier on in *Silv.* 2.7.48–51 where Calliope tells the young Lucan that other people can be left to hackneyed subjects such as the Argo: *trita uatibus orbita sequantur* – 'let them follow the paths that are worn away by the poets' (*Silv.* 2.7.51).

So one effect of the Hypsipyle episode is to surpass a whole range of poetic predecessors. Part of that outdoing, I would argue, is on the level of form: Statius' Hypsipyle is the one who is closest to the power of an epic narrator. Her story is practised and clearly, even in a very early telling, was sufficient to make such an impression on Eurydice and Lycurgus, the parents of the hapless Opheltes, that they entrusted their child to the woman who had been brought to Nemea as a slave. Part of Statius' outdoing however consists in his willingness to tread the kind of paths which Calliope had warned Lucan not to bother with. The Hypsipyle story had been told before:⁶⁵ certainly by Euripides, Apollonius and Ovid, and probably by Valerius Flaccus if we accept the standard chronology. But of course this can also be said of the whole of the *Thebaid* as well, a story certainly subject to repetitions. As is well known, the *Thebaid* ends with the prospect of going on for more, if Statius had felt like it – he could have gone on to discuss all the lamentations for the dead of the war, and if he had really wanted to we could have had more material on the war of the Epigoni against Thebes, as Philip Hardie has pointed out in his discussion of the poem's closure.⁶⁶

Conclusion: closure, beginnings and unity in the Hypsipyle episode

Mention of the theme of closure may allow us, as a kind of a false new beginning, to consider the issue of closure in the Hypsipyle story in the *Thebaid*. One effect of the story's inclusion must be to destabilize various kinds of closure. As we already have seen, closure in literary history, the sense of something final, the shutting down of the possibility of further succession

is something which poets will strive for – Valerius seems to predict that his song will give Hypsipyle her survival. If, as is likely, Statius follows on after this, then his own move is one of shutting down the possibility of retelling the Hypsipyle story, yet at the same time making that assertive move can never be as stable or as secure as poets would wish. Valerius says that his version of Hypsipyle will last, then along comes Statius. By redoing Valerius, Statius takes on the mantle of stability in the tradition, yet at the same time he reminds us that Valerius' confidence was misplaced.

But the episode also has other closural implications which it is worth looking at briefly. Hypsipyle's story is one which has a number of beginnings and endings. Her story begins with a lack of fulfilment – the Lemnian men have gone off to Thrace to wage war against the inhabitants and no resolution has been reached.⁶⁷ One might normally expect such a story of warfare to end with the victory of the Lemnians over the Thracians. However the men of Lemnos are still away when Venus decides to intervene and Polyxo makes her first speech at *Theb.* 5.104–29 urging on the women of Lemnos to murder their as yet absent husbands.⁶⁸ At 5.103, however, at the precise moment when Polyxo finishes her speech, the fleet of the Lemnians is suddenly seen, whereupon Polyxo makes a second speech at 5.132–42 urging the women to take advantage of this opportunity for revenge.⁶⁹ After the sacrificial death of one of the sons of the Lemnians, the fleet then arrives at 5.170, and there are scenes of rejoicing for the men, who interestingly make their own narratives about their exploits against the Thracians at 5.188–90, much as Odysseus tells his story to Penelope at the end of *Odyssey* 23. These scenes of homecoming and rejoicing, however, have closural overtones of a successful conclusion to the war against the Thracians. Nightfall, which might be expected to bring an end to the narration of the Lemnian war against Thrace, is however the time for the Lemnian women not to end but to begin their attack, which is murderously executed, though Hypsipyle does manage to save her father Thoas who is dispatched from Lemnos by sea. Thus it appears that the tale of Thoas is over – his daughter has managed to save him, but that is the end of the story.

The story of the last night of the Lemnian men can of course be compared to the fatal final night of Troy described in *Aeneid* 2.⁷⁰ However, whereas the continuation of Aeneas' account in *Aeneid* 3 takes the listener away from the Troad to his wanderings over the Mediterranean prior to arriving at the court of Dido in Carthage, in the case of Lemnos, the night of slaughter does not bring about an ending. At line 296 the story of Lemnos resumes with the arrival of the next day, and the sense of desolation after all the killing. We hear of Hypsipyle building a pyre for her absent father,⁷¹

and how she was made queen of the island in the place of her father, and then the change of the feelings of the Lemnian women to regret and the building of altars in honour of the ghosts of the husbands they had slain. Hypsipyle uses an epic simile of a herd of cattle which has lost its monarch (*Theb.* 5.330–7):

sic ubi ductorem trepidae stabulique maritum,
quem penes et saltus et adultae gloria gentis,
Massylo frangi stupuere sub hoste iuuencae,
it truncum sine honore pecus, regemque peremptum
ipse ager, ipsi amnes et muta armenta queruntur.
ecce autem aerata dispellens aequora prora
Pelias intacti late subit hospita ponti
pinus...

So when trembling heifers are astonished when the leader and husband of the fold, in whose power are the tracts and the glory of the adult race, is broken beneath a Massylian enemy, the maimed herd goes about dishonoured, and the very field, the very rivers and the silent herds lament the king who has been taken away. But look the Pelian ship of pine, parting the waters with its bronze prow goes as a stranger far and wide on the untouched sea...

Here we have an extraordinary transition. The simile which Hypsipyle uses to describe the state of the Lemnians after the loss of their menfolk (and the building of monuments, which might, like funerals, be regarded as a closural figure even without the simile), is then followed by the sudden *ecce autem* and we are into the middle of the subject matter of other epic poems, from the first book of Apollonius and from the second book of Valerius. Again our expectation of an emphatic ending is thwarted here, all the more so as the sudden picture of the Argo, the *Pelias...pinus*, recalls another opening, the first line of Catullus 64, *Peliaco quondam prognatae uertice pinus*, the beginning, oddly enough, of another story at a tangent to the story of the Argonauts and the golden fleece, that of Peleus and Thetis, which of course in Catullus has its own tangential (or enclosed) story of Theseus and Ariadne.

As the Argonauts approach, at 5.347 we are told by Hypsipyle that the Lemnians believed that the ship was an attack from the Thracians, thus indicating their fear that the earlier war fought by their husbands had not been brought to a successful conclusion. Instead, as was later discovered, the ship is the Argo. After an extended description of the Argonauts dealing with a storm and the ineffectual efforts of the Lemnian women to prevent their landing, Jason lands at *Theb.* 5.416–19 and seeks a friendly reception from the Lemnians. After a kind of mini-catalogue of the Argonauts, we are then back to a new beginning, since we hear that Venus and Amor repeat

their actions on the Lemnians (*Theb.* 5.445–6):

ergo iterum Venus et tacitis corda aspera flammis
Lemniadum pertemptat Amor. tunc regia Iuno
arma habitusque uirum pulchraeque insignia gentis
mentibus insinuat...

Therefore again do Venus and Cupid make trial of the Lemnian women's rough hearts with their secret flames. Then royal Juno insinuates into their minds the arms and clothing of the men, and the emblems of their noble lineage...

Here we go again: the story seems to be starting again (*iterum*) with Venus again intervening just as she had done at the very beginning of Hypsipyle's narration, while the mention of Juno's involvement combined with *arma habitusque uirum*, which might serve as a reminder of Virgil's epic opening, gives us another new start. Hypsipyle then tells of her coercion into a liaison with Jason, and how she bore twin sons but has no knowledge of what happened to them. Again we find an abrupt transition, just as there was prior to the arrival of the Argonauts (*Theb.* 5.463–7):

nec non ipsa tamen, thalami monimenta coacti,
enitor geminos, duroque sub hospite mater
nomen aui renouo; nec quae fortuna relictis
nosse datur: iam plena quater quinquennia degunt
si modo fata sinunt aluitque rogata Lycaste.
detumuerunt animi maris et clementior Auster
uela uocat...

And indeed I myself nevertheless bring forth twins, memorial of a forced marriage-bed, and beneath my harsh guest as a mother I renew the name of my grandfather. Nor have I been allowed to know what fortune they had when I left them behind: now, if only the fates allow it and Lycaste brought them up as I asked, they have lived for four spans of five years. The sea's spirit sank back and a kinder south wind summons the sails...

Now in Valerius' account (and in A.R. 1.861–74 it is Heracles who exhorts the Argonauts to leave behind Lemnos and not to endure delay there) the Argonauts are waiting for the weather to improve before leaving and it is Hercules who urges them on to depart. Here in Hypsipyle's account, however, in contrast to Apollonius and Valerius, there is no preparation for the departure except the vague hint *detumuerunt animi maris*, 'the sea's spirit sank back'.

The same might be said of the next instalment in the story. We hear of the Argonauts' departure, and how the women of Lemnos watched as the ship sailed away at *Theb.* 5.481–5. Again this could be an ending to the

story, yet we then hear of a *fama* reaching the island that in fact Thoas was alive and reigning on the isle of Chios (*Theb.* 5.486–9), with the result that Hypsipyle's deception becomes known.⁷² She then decides to flee the island. This is again a repetition of an earlier pattern in her story, although one earlier element is absent, the assistance of Bacchus (*Theb.* 5.496): *sed non iterum obuius Euhan*, 'but Bacchus did not meet me again', a glance back at the help that Bacchus had provided to Hypsipyle as she arranged the escape of her father.⁷³ Instead Hypsipyle is carried off by pirates who then sell her as a slave to Lycurgus. At this point Hypsipyle closes her story, though one possible intertext should serve as a warning that the story is not over: one may recall how Eumaeus told his story to Odysseus at *Odyssey* 16.390–484, a tale which ended with his being carried off and sold and thus ending up keeping pigs on Ithaca. This is not however the end of Eumaeus' story, so the force of the intertext too would suggest that the very sudden end of Hypsipyle's narration might not be the true close of her tale.

Indeed when Statius the poet resumes the role of narrator, there are still one or two tricks with Hypsipyle's tale. We have already heard how Bacchus was engineering an encounter between Hypsipyle and her sons, at *Theb.* 4.746. How does the Hypsipyle episode end?

In fact Hypsipyle's departure from the text is even more abrupt than her arrival in it. We hear in the remaining portions of book 5 and book 6 of the hostility of Eurydice and Lycurgus towards her. She is present at the funeral of the child (*Theb.* 6.177–8), since she enjoys such support from the Argives for her help in leading them to the waters of the spring Langia, but then she more or less drops out of the text. Her sons participate in the chariot race (*Theb.* 6.340–5),⁷⁴ which is in the end won by Amphiarus (*Theb.* 6.518–30).⁷⁵

But there is one last reference to Hypsipyle. We have seen that Hypsipyle's narration has been repeated on numerous occasions, right from her first (obviously partial) narration to Thoas in the midst of the commotion on Lemnos. We have also seen that though the story might be felt to be a unity concentrating on the figure of Hypsipyle, this narrator plays with devices of closure and beginning throughout her account. On a wider scale, the Hypsipyle episode raises interesting questions with regard to thematic unity. We tend to think of the story of Hypsipyle as a minor section of the story of the Argonauts, and subordinate to that overarching narrative. By having Hypsipyle not only give her account of events on Lemnos, in such a way that the arrival of the Argonauts is tangential to her story, but also take on the mantle of epic narrator so consistently, Statius undercuts attempts to limit, to pigeonhole myth into separate stories. Instead of Hypsipyle being a part of the story of the Argonauts, they are a part of her

story. And though in the *Thebaid* Hypsipyle might be a part of the story of the Argives on their way to Nemea, there is a sense in which they are a part of her story. And it is significant that as a counterweight to the complex and shifting narrative offered by Hypsipyle about herself, there is another narrative in the text about her, the brief narrative of the ecphrasis of the temple dedicated to Archemorus (*Theb.* 6.242–8).⁷⁶

mirum opus adcelerasse manus! stat saxea moles,
templum ingens cineri, rerumque efflictus in illa
ordo docet casus: fessis hic flumina monstrat
Hypsipyle Danaïs, hic reptat flebilis infans,
hic iacet, extremum tumuli circum asperat orbem
squameus; expectes morientis ab ore cruenta
sibila, marmorea sic uoluitur anguis in hasta.

What wonder that their hands hastened the task! A monument of rock stands, a huge temple for the remains, and the sequence of matters represented on it unfolds the events: here Hypsipyle shows the rivers to the weary Danaans, here crawls the lamentable child, here he lies, the scaly one roughens his coils around the edge of the tomb; you would expect bloody hisses from his mouth as he dies, so does the snake turn about on the marble spear.

Whereas Valerius reported that the cloak made by Hypsipyle for Jason (V. Fl. 4.408–17) contained her account of her rescue of Thoas (and also the abduction of Ganymede), in Statius, Hypsipyle's account of events on Lemnos is contained in her epic narrative. But the poet also monumentalizes his own Hypsipyle, by including on the stone temple not another account of Hypsipyle on Lemnos, but a depiction of her as she appeared in his own composition, in the story of Archemorus. There could be no further replication of the Lemnian story after the narrative from Hypsipyle in book 5, but Statius takes the opportunity to affirm his own narrative in the temple carvings. Valerius Flaccus' confidence in his own unique ability to commemorate Hypsipyle in Latin may have been misplaced.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Monica Gale for her editorial patience and her response to the first draft, and also to John Henderson and Stephen Hinds for their valuable comments and suggestions.

Notes

¹ Ehlers 1985, 334–9 argues convincingly for an early, Vespasianic dating of Valerius Flaccus. See also Smolenaars 1994, xvii–xviii for a brief discussion of the datings of Valerius Flaccus and Silius Italicus relative to Statius' *Thebaid*, arguing

that a case can be made for Statian allusion to both epicists. As for the Lemnian episode itself, Smolenaars 1994, xvii n. 4 remarks that 'the priority of the "Lemnian episode" in *Argon.* II to *Theb.* V is unquestioned'. Smolenaars' commentary on *Theb.* 7 argues extensively and regularly for Statian allusion to Valerius, as do the commentaries of Wijsman (1996 and 2000) on books 5 and 6 of Valerius Flaccus.

² See Vessey 1973, 170–87, who argues for thematic parallels between the tale of Hypsipyle and the surrounding narrative: note e.g. 187 'But the Argives who listen to the tale cannot see any moral for themselves.' Cf. Götting 1969, 87–90, Jorge 1990, 130 'so it is with the character of Hypsipyle who in her suffering, *pietas* and courage in book 5, foreshadows the ordeals and *aristeia* of the Theban and Argive womenfolk later in the poem'; 135 'The narrative of Hypsipyle thus functions as a cameo exposition of the central themes of the *Thebaid*: the mutability of fortune, the corruption of power and the inherent impiety of civil war'. Dominik 1994, 54–62 offers a structural analysis of the Hypsipyle episode at 54–5. Different again is Nugent 1996, 69: 'In my view, this narrative enables the poet to dramatize *in parvo* ("in small compass") the larger question of the relation to the father, which is relevant *both* to the tale of Oedipal Thebes with which it intersects *and* to the project of Statius *vis-à-vis* the poetic father, Vergil. That dramatization will inevitably be marked by ambivalence and follow a circular path back to the point of origin.'

³ *Theb.* 12.816–17 *uiue, precor; nec tu diuinam Aeneida tempta, | sed longe sequere et uestigia semper adora*. The bibliography on these lines has grown rapidly in recent years; see e.g. Hardie 1993, 110–11; Malamud 1995, 21–7; Nugent 1996, 70–1; Morton Braund 1996, 7–8; Hinds 1998, 91–5.

⁴ See further Hinds 1998, 92 on these lines.

⁵ Contrast Silius Italicus, who has Ennius as a living character in his poem at 12.390–414, Homer as a shade encountered in the underworld by Scipio Africanus at 13.778–97, and even a minor character called Vergilius who appears for one line at 17.441 as the slayer of one Caudinus; note also 8.592–4 where the poet praises Mantua as a home of the Muses. The distinction between direct mention of an intertext and more oblique modes of reference is rightly insisted on by Laird 1999, 38 n. 79 in discussing Homer and Virgil: 'Apparent quotation of Homer in Virgil is *not* tantamount to mentioning Homer.'

⁶ Discussed by Hinds 1998, 93–4; cf. Henderson 1998, 217–18.

⁷ See e.g. Henderson 1998, 220–1 on these lines. On the whole poem, see Malamud 1995.

⁸ See van Dam 1984, 487. For the fragments of the Argonaut poem of Varro of Atax, see Courtney 1993, 238–43.

⁹ For the importance of Apollonius in Virgil, see now Nelis 2001, who offers powerful evidence for the need to reconfigure the tendency to focus on Homer in Virgil at the expense of other intertexts. The ideological nature of intertextuality itself is demonstrated by Laird 1999, 34–40; note the following remark on Homer and Virgil (38): 'to "see" a Homeric intertext in Virgil is an act of *interpretation*, not plain description'.

¹⁰ On the opening of the *Achilleid* see further Hardie 1993, 63 and n. 8, Hinds 1998, 95–6.

¹¹ Hardie 1990, 225–6.

¹² Hinds 1998, 104–22.

¹³ For the song of Iopas, see now the discussion of Nelis 2001, 96–112.

¹⁴ See further Austin 1964, ix–x; Davies 1989, 60–76.

¹⁵ Nelis 2001, 22–66.

¹⁶ Cf. Henderson 1998, 221–2.

¹⁷ For a convenient introduction to the cyclic *Thebaid*, see Davies 1989, 22–8. The *Iliad* refers to the involvement of Tydeus against Thebes at 4.370–400, 5.125–6, 5.800–8, 6.222–3, 10.285–90, 14.113–27.

¹⁸ See further Parsons 1977.

¹⁹ See now the edition of Matthews 1996, especially 20–6 for an overview of Antimachus' *Thebaid*. For interest in Thebes in the Hellenistic period, see Ziegler 1966, 19–22, Cameron 1995, 296.

²⁰ For the poets taught by the elder Statius, see *Silv.* 5.3.147–58.

²¹ Note also that Pausanias 9.9.5 is evidence for knowledge of the cyclic *Thebaid* as late as the second century AD.

²² For Statius' use of the *teichoscopia* see further Smolenaars 1994, 119–23.

²³ For the importance of *mora* (delay), see Vessey 1973, 165–7 and Brown 1994, 4–8, who also sees the drought caused by Bacchus in metapoetic terms (21): 'Epic's flow is reduced and inspiration derives from a single secret fount; we are now, as it were, *inter Silvas*.' The drought may have been in Antimachus: see Matthews 1996, 136–8 on fr. 29 and 30. On the other *aition* of the Nemean games, which associates the festival with Hercules and Molochus, see Brown 1994, 30–56.

²⁴ On the Argives' encounter with Hypsipyle in *Theb.* 4, see Vessey 1973, 169; Jorge 1990, 131–3; Aricò 1991, 198; Gruzeliier 1994, 153–6; and Brown 1994, 95–7 who also notes similarities with Actaeon's encounter in the woods with Diana in *Ov. Met.* 3.155–252. Brown 1994, 116–17 suggests that Hypsipyle's bashfulness in *Theb.* 5.28 may recall the bashful but also deceitful Hypsipyle who tells the Argonauts what has happened on Lemnos at A.R. 1.793–826.

²⁵ On the effect of this book division see Aricò 1991, 198.

²⁶ See e.g. Götting 1969, 60–1; Brown 1994, 115; Gruzeliier 1994, 156–7; Nugent 1996, 47–52, 69–71; Frings (whose whole article is concerned with the intertextuality between *Aeneid* 2 and Hypsipyle's narrative) 1996, 146, 150–2. Jorge 1990, 134 n. 16 also notes a similarity with Virgil's – in fact Aeneas' – description of Andromache at the start of Andromache's narrative at *Aen.* 3.320.

²⁷ Cf. Brown 1994, 111–12, and 114 ('Woman becomes the narrator, man the audience') and Henderson 1998, 245: 'This promotion of the woman's voice to tell the underside of *uirtus* displaces the site of epic from within: it is as if Virgil's Andromache were to step out of her narrated inclusion within Aeneas' perspective and take over the telling of *Aeneid* II + III for a "Troades"-style narrative.' On women in the *Thebaid* see further the valuable discussion in Jorge 1990 *passim*, and Lesueur 1992.

²⁸ See Jorge 1990, 131, who sees similarities between Hypsipyle and Aeneas, Dido and Andromache from the *Aeneid*, Dominik 1994, 60 n. 87. For similarities between Apollonius' Hypsipyle and Lemnos and Virgil's Dido and Carthage, see

Nelis 2001, 112–17, 180–2. For the links between Statius' Hypsipyle and Virgil's Dido, see Brown 1994, 99–102; Gruzelier 1994. For Valerius' Hypsipyle and Virgil's Dido, see Aricò 1991, 205 and Hershkowitz 1998b, 138–46, who sums up (146): 'Hypsipyle is the Sense to Dido's Sensibility, and, in contrast to Dido's increasingly barbaric character, she is presented as a Romanized daughter and wife.' As Vessey 1973, 177 n. 1 notes with reference to Dido and Hypsipyle, 'The similarity between the two heroines was brought out by Ovid in *Heroides* 6 and 7.'

²⁹ Compare also Virg. *Aen.* 2.3 *infandum, regina, iubes renouare dolorem* which Laird 1999, 200–3 sees as similar to an epic opening.

³⁰ For *arma uirumque* in Hypsipyle's narrative, see Henderson 1998, 246.

³¹ On the rejected lines at the start of the *Aeneid*, see further Austin 1968. Compare also the appearance of *ille ego* in quite a different context, at *Silv.* 5.5.38–41, where Statius contrasts his previous poetic success in consoling others with his present inability to console himself on the loss of a child. Brown 1994, 114–15 notes the parallels between *Theb.* 5.34–9 and Virgil *Aen.* 1.378–9 *sum pius Aeneas, raptos qui ex hoste penates | classe ueho mecum* and 1.595–6. For *exordia*, see further Brown 1994, 41–3, who notes that *exordium* can be a technical term in weaving, and also (104) draws attention to the similarity between Bacchus' *nectam fraude moras* at *Theb.* 4.677 and Hypsipyle's *quid longa malis exordia necto?* at 5.36.

³² Vessey 1970, 45 sees the causation offered by Hypsipyle as reflecting 'the double cause of the war between Polynices and Eteocles'. Brown 1994, 119–20 remarks that 'alone in the *Thebaid*, the Lemnian narrative presents the gods in their traditional, three-dimensional pro-active role as predeterminants of men's affairs'. Cf. Feeney 1991, 337–91 for a full treatment of the gods in the whole poem. Aricò 1991, 206 compares *Theb.* 5.57–8 with Aeneas' lines on the gods' involvement in the destruction of Troy at the start of *Aeneid* 3.

³³ Cf. also *Theb.* 5.452 *nec superum sine mente, reor*. For this technique see Stinton 1976, Horsfall 1990.

³⁴ For Venus' involvement in the various Lemnian narratives, see Dominik 1997, 32–4.

³⁵ The instances where Hypsipyle claims or implicitly claims autopsy are: *Theb.* 5.164, 5.223, 5.238, 5.256 (*cernere erat*), 5.295, 5.398 and 434 (*cernimus*), 5.483 (*prosequimur uisu*). Nugent 1996, 62 notes that *uidi* (*Theb.* 5.223) and *conspexi* (*Theb.* 5.238), verbs of watching, are the only 'actions' performed by Hypsipyle in her narrative of the killings.

³⁶ The episode recalls Aeneas' rescue of Anchises from Troy in *Aeneid* 2: Frings 1996, 152–7. Aricò 1991, 204 makes a similar point about Hypsipyle saving her father in Valerius.

³⁷ Other passages where Hypsipyle displays a similar omniscience characteristic of a third person epic narrator are *Theb.* 5.197–200 on the activities of the god Somnus in making only the men fall asleep (cf. *Theb.* 10.137–59 where the god Somnus makes only the Theban side fall asleep), 5.201–3 on the involvement of the Furies (cf. the *Thebaid*, passim!), 5.302–3 on the withdrawal of Venus and the Furies from directly affecting the Lemnian women, 5.356–7 on the reactions of Pallas and Mars to the women of Lemnos as they resist the arrival of the Argonauts, 5.362–4

where Jove is the cause of the storm, and 5.394 where the lightning is ascribed to Jove. Considerations of space prevent me from offering a full discussion of these, but I hope that the point has been made that Hypsipyle's narrative often assumes the same kind of authority that an epic narrator's would. Such exploitation of the conventions of epic narrative can be paralleled elsewhere in Statius: see my discussion (Gibson 1996, 460–1) of the description of nocturnal calm which introduces the famous poem on insomnia (*Silv.* 5.4).

³⁸ Hypsipyle's similes (I use the term broadly to include examples such as *Theb.* 5.361–2 where the Argonauts are said to be as far away from the land as Gortynian arrows travel) occur at *Theb.* 5.92–4, 5.144–6, 5.165–9, 5.203–5, 5.231–3, 5.261–4, 5.330–4, 5.338–9, 5.361–2, 5.426–30. For Odysseus' similes see e.g. *Od.* 9.391–3, 10.410–14, 12.251–4. In his narration to Dido, Aeneas uses similes at *Aen.* 2.15, 2.223–4, 2.304–8, 2.355–8, 2.379–81, 2.416–19, 2.471–5, 2.496–9, 2.516, 2.626–31, 3.637 (which is, however, spoken by Achaemenides), 3.679–81. It is striking how much denser the concentration of similes is in *Aeneid* 2.

³⁹ Though Gruzelier 1994, 158–9 rightly compares this simile with the simile of the wounded deer applied to Dido at Virg. *Aen.* 4.69–73.

⁴⁰ See e.g. *Silvae* 2.5, and Mart. 1.6, 1.14, 1.22, 1.48, 1.51, 1.60, 1.104; Howell 1980, 118–19. Cf. Mart. 2.75, on a tame lion which suddenly killed two boys raking the sand in the arena, and note also the simile of tamed animals tasting blood again at Luc. 4.237–42. For anachronistic similes in the main narrative, see *Theb.* 6.596–601 (which mentions Parthian shot), 6.880–5 (on mining in Spain), 8.286–93 (on the succession to the Parthian throne, though the epithet used is *Achaemenius* – cf. Tac. *Hist.* 1.40 *igitur milites Romani, quasi Vologaesum aut Pacorum auito Arsacidarum solio depulsuri ac non imperatorem suum inermem et senem trucidare pergerent*).

⁴¹ For the contemporary importance of the Danube frontier in Statius' time, see Wilkes 1983, 255–70; Strobel 1989.

⁴² On Venus' anger, see Dominik 1994, 54–9.

⁴³ Cf. Nugent 1996, 62–3: 'At one point in her story, Hypsipyle hesitates and delivers a version of the classic bardic formula "Where should I begin?" (*Theb.* 5.206 f.), which the epic poet traditionally uses to signal both the wealth of potential material available and also his (or, in this case, her) complete control over the possibilities of narrative.'

⁴⁴ *pandam* is used by Adrastus (*Theb.* 1.561), when he is about to tell the story of Coroeus. In the *Thebaid*, note also 4.34, 5.46 (Adrastus to Hypsipyle, *pande nefas laudesque tuas gemitusque tuorum*), 5.244 (Hypsipyle to Thoas, *trepidus scelus ordine pando*). Cf. also e.g. Lucr. 1.55, *Silv.* 5.3.235.

⁴⁵ On the storm, see Dominik 1994, 60–1, and – for the tradition of epic storms – Juv. 1.8–9, Morford 1967/1996, 20–58. For discussion of the catalogues of Apollonius and Valerius, see Hershkowitz 1998b, 39–43.

⁴⁶ On Amphiaraus, who was not in the lists of Argonauts given by Apollonius and Valerius, see further Vessey 1973, 178, who also notes the presence of Theseus in Hypsipyle's Argonaut catalogue (*Theb.* 5.432), the other character to be involved in both Argonautic and Theban activities in Statius' poem. Amphiaraus does appear

in the list given by Apollodorus 1.9.16. Note too that in Euripides' *Hypsipyle* it was Amphiarus who killed the snake and did everything in his power to protect Hypsipyle at Nemea from the wrath of Eurydice, the mother of Lycurgus; see further Aricò 1961, 58–9.

⁴⁷ See Nugent 1996, 54–5.

⁴⁸ *talìa*, 'such words', raises the intriguing possibility that we are in fact being given only a version of Hypsipyle's words and not the real thing. See further Laird 1999, 90–4; Gibson 2001, 142–3.

⁴⁹ Dominik 1994, 62–3 argues on the basis of *Theb.* 5.628 that the death of Opheltes should be interpreted as compensation for Thoas, the victim that Hypsipyle saved from Venus.

⁵⁰ For discussion of the last part of *Thebaid* 5, Hypsipyle's reaction to the death of Opheltes, the reaction of the Nemeans and Lycurgus and the revelation of Hypsipyle's sons, see Gruzelier 1994, 163.

⁵¹ Aricò 1961, 64 compares Euripides, *Hypsipyle* fr. 1.ii.21–3 (cited below on page 163).

⁵² Nugent 1996, 55 explores the interesting possibility that *fraude* in the phrase *narrabat seruatum fraude parentem* (*Theb.* 6.149) may hint at the possibility of Hypsipyle's narration being fraudulent. Cf. Brown 1994, 116–17.

⁵³ Brown 1994, 113 rightly argues that the force of the imperfect *narrabat* in *Theb.* 6.149 is iterative, and compares (111–12) Hypsipyle's tale to the lamentations for the past of Andromache in *Aeneid* 3. For Opheltes as the audience of Hypsipyle's narrative, see Brown 1994, 106–8.

⁵⁴ On the relationship between the *Hypsipyle* of Euripides and Statius, see Aricò 1961. Vessey 1970, 48–51 is more sceptical.

⁵⁵ The parallel is noted by Aricò 1961, 64.

⁵⁶ Cf. the concerns of Nugent 1996, 55–6 and 67–8 about the reliability of Hypsipyle's account of her father's fate in Statius.

⁵⁷ Note for instance Eumaeus' remarks to Penelope on the effect of Odysseus' storytelling (*Od.* 17.518–21).

⁵⁸ Cf. Vessey 1973, 177; Brown 1994, 121–2, who notes disturbing similarities with the presentation of Dido and Aeneas in *Aeneid* 4, such as Hypsipyle's reference to Jason as a *hospes*; Gruzelier 1994, 161–2; Nugent 1996, 66–8.

⁵⁹ See Nugent 1994, 161 n. 10.

⁶⁰ For discussion of Valerius' Lemnian episode, see Aricò 1991, 199–205; Vessey 1985; Dominik 1997; Hershkovitz 1998b, 136–46; Clare in this volume.

⁶¹ This *chlamys* looks back not only to the garment given by Hypsipyle to Jason mentioned briefly at A.R. 3.1204–6, but also to the cloak worn by Jason at Apollonius 1.721–67 (Hershkovitz 1998b, 142–3), which, as Nelis 2001, 116 and n. 205 points out, is picked up by Virgil with the cloak carried by Cupid at *Aen.* 1.648–9 and 1.711. Valerius' *textos labores*, at 1.409, could be a glance back at the Apollonian ecphrasis; cf. Virg. *Aen.* 8.625 *non enarrabile textum*. On the appearance of the Ganymede story, Hershkovitz 1998b, 142 n. 143 comments as follows: '...this scene may appear disruptive to the images of Thoas' salvation, but it can be read as symbolizing both Hypsipyle's "rape" of the young (virgin) Jason (and,

likewise, Jason's 'rape' of the young virgin Hypsipyle) and Jason's forced departure from Lemnos on Jovian business.'

⁶² Hershkovitz 1998b, 136–7. See also brief discussion in Vessey 1985, 335.

⁶³ Though note that at 2.216–17, when about to describe the murders, Valerius uses the trope of the difficulty of poetic narration: *unde ego tot scelerum facies, tot fata iacentum | quae se aperit series*. Aricò 1991, 208 sees this passage as answered by Hypsipyle's comment at *Theb.* 5.206–7 *quos tibi (nam dubito) scelerum de mille figuris | expediam casus*, and also (203) notes the parallel between V. Fl. 2.216–17 and Virg. *Aen.* 2.361–2 *quis cladem illius noctis, quis funera fando | explicet aut posset lacrimis aequare labores*. It is striking that this Virgilian passage is of course first-person narration, coming from Aeneas' account of events of Troy.

⁶⁴ See n. 1 above.

⁶⁵ See Brown 1994, 61–5 on earlier treatments of Hypsipyle, who notes (62) that 'too little evidence remains to establish whether Hypsipyle is already part of the Argive-Theban story in the cyclic epics'. Brown also discusses the evidence for Aeschylus' *Hypsipyle* and concludes (65) that Euripides' decision to combine the stories of Hypsipyle, Opheltes and the Argives at Nemea in his *Hypsipyle* was an innovation.

⁶⁶ Hardie 1997, 156; cf. Henderson 1998, 250. For the cyclic treatment of the Epigoni, see Davies 1989, 29–31.

⁶⁷ On the departure of the Lemnian men from the island and their war in Thrace, see Nugent 1996, 56–9, who notes that in Statius 'the reason why the Lemnian men have sailed off to Thrace is quite vague' (57). She also suggests that the eroticized language used to refer to their endeavours may 'allude to the possibility of homo-erotic rather than hetero-erotic adventures' (58). It is worth noting that *Theb.* 5.78–80 *dulcius Edonas hiemes Arctonque prementem | excipere, aut tandem tacita post proelia nocte | fractorum subitas torrentum audire ruinas*, which Nugent cites in this discussion, is in itself a conventional trope for an epic narrator: for the idea of war being more desirable than anything else, see e.g. *Iliad* 2.453–4 τοῖσι δ' ἄφαρ πόλεμος γλυκίων γένητ' ἢ νέεσθαι | ἐν νηυσὶ γλαφυρῆσι φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαίαν (= 11.13–14), and perhaps compare also *Theb.* 3.578–9 where the Argives leave behind their families under the influence of Mars. Aricò 1991, 201 notes that in Valerius the men have not gone to war to get new wives, but are bringing the Thracian women as captives for their Lemnian wives (V. Fl. 2.107–14); see also Vessey 1973, 172.

⁶⁸ Vessey 1970, 46 sees Polyxo as a parallel to Oedipus in the first book of the *Thebaid*; see further Vessey 1973, 175 and n. 8, Henderson 1998, 246.

⁶⁹ Nugent 1996, 59 notes that Statius' Polyxo recalls Beroe, in whose form Iris stirs up the Trojan women to burn the fleet in *Aeneid* 5; cf. Aricò 1991, 207. Gruzelier 1994, 158 sees similarities between Polyxo and Virgil's Dido. Though Valerius and Apollonius both have a character Polyxo, she is not at all involved in the killings: see Vessey 1970, 45.

⁷⁰ Nugent 1996, 60. Vessey 1973, 183 sees parallels with *Theb.* 2.71–87, the scenes of nocturnal revelry in Thebes prior to the arrival of the ghost of Laius.

⁷¹ See Brown 1994, 122–3 on Hypsipyle's pyre and lamentations for Thoas,

including the intriguing suggestion that the false laments for Thoas at *Theb.* 5.317 call into question Hypsipyle's reliability as a narrator; cf. Nugent 1996, 55–6.

⁷² See further Nugent 1996, 68.

⁷³ For Bacchus' failure to help Hypsipyle at this point in the story, see Dominik 1994, 62.

⁷⁴ Cf. Brown 1994, 218: 'The mysterious maenadic narrator of book V becomes a spectator of male endeavour as Euripidean romance returns her sons.' On the maenadic qualities of the Lemnian women, see further Hershkovitz 1998a, 47–8.

⁷⁵ This is curious in the light of the fact that the fragmentary hypothesis to Euripides' play seems to suggest that the sons were victorious in the Nemean games; Hyginus *Fab.* 273.6 and Lactantius Placidus on *Theb.* 4.740 (cf. Myth. Vat. 2.141) both suggest that they won the running race, although Statius' version has Parthenopaeus as the winner.

⁷⁶ On this see Brown 1994, 208–14; Gruzelier 1994, 164.

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