

AUGUSTUS AND DOMITIAN: POLITICAL ALLUSIONS IN STATIUS' *THEBAID*

by

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(Under the Direction of Mario Erasmo)

ABSTRACT

Statius explores the limits and potential of examining allusions in epic between literary characters and historical personalities. An examination of Augustus' self-identification with Apollo and Domitian's self-identification with Jupiter results in an allusive comparison between the two emperors in epic, by which Domitian's superiority over Augustus is proclaimed. In the *Thebaid*, Vergil's Apollo is transformed by Statius into a rash and impious god subordinate to Jupiter, who himself becomes a remorseless partner of irrefutable Fate and supremely authoritative of human affairs. The characters of Jupiter and Theseus work as literary allusions to the emperor Domitian, and evoke a subversive comparison to the Augustan Apollo, an allusive response to the god found in Vergil's *Aeneid*. Statius uses the characters of Jupiter and Apollo in the *Thebaid* to show the superiority of Jupiter over Apollo, and thus Domitian over Augustus.

INDEX WORDS: Domitian, Statius, Thebaid, Augustus, Vergil, Aeneid, Apollo, Jupiter, Theseus, Rome, Propaganda, Allusion, Epic, Roman Poetry

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## DEDICATION

To my wife, parents, and family, whose love and support are humbling and overwhelming.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Statius explores the limits and potential of examining allusions in epic between literary characters and historical personalities. This thesis will first examine Augustus' self-identification with Apollo in history in order to establish the relationship between the emperor and his patron divinity. Domitian's self-identification with Jupiter will also be explored in order to demonstrate an equivalent relationship. An examination of Augustus' relationship to Apollo in the *Aeneid* and Domitian as Jupiter in the *Thebaid* results in an allusive comparison between the two emperors, by which Statius proclaims Domitian's superiority over Augustus. The *Thebaid* glorifies Domitian's authority as *dominus et deus* with reference to Vergil's *Aeneid*, the literary champion of the emperor's dynastic predecessor, Caesar Augustus. Almost without exception, the Vergilian Apollo, prophetic, pious, and moderate, is transformed by Statius into a rash, violent, and impious god constantly at odds with and always subordinate to Jupiter. The king of the gods, Vergil's mediator and fair-minded judge, becomes a remorseless partner of irrefutable Fate and supremely authoritative over human affairs in the *Thebaid*. The characters of Jupiter and Theseus, who in Book Twelve replaces Jupiter to settle the war, work as literary allusions to the emperor Domitian and evoke a subversive comparison to the Augustan Apollo, an allusive response to the god found in Vergil's *Aeneid*. This thesis will examine parallel allusions between three sets of referents: Augustus and Apollo, Domitian and Jupiter/Theseus, and consequently Augustus and Domitian.

These parallels assume a complimentary representation of Jupiter and so reflect positively on the emperor Domitian; the case has been made for Books One-Eleven, but scholarship has also reflected the difficulty Book Twelve presents, in which all the gods have yielded to *Furor* to settle affairs at Thebes. This vacuum is filled by the mythical appearance of Theseus, who, I would argue, is a mortal Jupiter in the same way Domitian purports that he is before his expected apotheosis. After the abdication of the gods in Book Eleven, Jupiter's status is uncertain. However, Theseus's appearance soon after responds to this uncertainty. Enhancing the relationship between Jupiter and Theseus are the omnipresent epithets relating Theseus to his mythical father Poseidon/Neptune, which correspond to Jupiter's constant association with and usurpation of Neptune's realm throughout the *Thebaid*. Statius, by following the national epic tradition of Vergil's *Aeneid*, serves Domitian not only by continuing the trope, but by supplanting and surpassing Augustus' Apollo with Domitian's Jupiter in that context.

The relationship between the *Thebaid* and the *Aeneid* is made by Statius himself, who goes to great length to communicate his place as the next toiling writer of a national epic in the *Silvae*, and directly relates his opus to Vergil at the conclusion of his epic. That the poet had Domitian's attention is apparent from *iam te magnanimus dignatur noscere Caesar* (*Theb.* 12.13) and can be inferred from Statius' admitted debt to the help of his father (*Silvae* 5.3.233-237), who was a successful writer and teacher of Greek poetry, and is evidenced to have been connected with the Flavian household from as early as the 70's CE. Most directly, Statius claims in *Silvae* 1.1 that his poem on Domitian's equestrian statue was read to the emperor a day after the statue's dedication.

Chapter Two of this thesis will draw upon the established relationship between poet and imperial patron under the Principate. Vergil wrote the *Aeneid* to glorify his patron Augustus and his regime, and did so, in part, by way of comparisons between Augustus and the poem's characters, who express piety and symbolize the fulfillment of a destined national glory. While Augustus's relationship to Aeneas has been discussed, Augustus' association with Apollo is also present and serves this same function. Statius, as Chapter Three will illustrate, later uses this particular relationship as a contrast to the more direct parallel he draws between his own imperial patron, Domitian, and a uniquely characterized Jupiter in the *Thebaid*.

Vergil recalls Augustan themes throughout his poem, not the least of which is the repeated inclusion of Apollo, the god most closely associated with the Augustan peace and settlement. The Augustan building program responds to this notion with, among other structures, a Temple to Apollo which de-emphasized the Capitolium as the religious center of the *Forum Romanum* in favor of the Augustan temple-residence complex on the Palatine Hill, which Augustus dedicated to Apollo after his victory in the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE. Although he used the *Aeneid* to connect his personal lineage with a different deity, Venus, Apollo was the god more suitable to the values of a religiously and culturally resurgent society. This relationship to Rome's glory is evident throughout the *Aeneid*. Apollo appears in Vergil's epic over fifty times, most frequently in his role as the prophetic deity directing Aeneas towards Rome's destiny, a Golden Age brought on by Augustus. Additionally Apollonian and Augustan connections appear at extremely significant events in the narrative. Augustus' victory at Actium and the Palatine Temple of Apollo are recalled on Pallas' sword belt, described in Book Eight and over which

Aeneas kills Turnus at the end of Book Twelve. In Book Six, Apollo, through the Sibyl, is the vehicle through which Rome's destined glory is fully revealed to Aeneas by Anchises in the Underworld.

Chapter Three will examine the relationship Statius establishes between Jupiter and Domitian throughout the *Thebaid*. The parallels Statius first draws in his *Silvae* are overt and intended to equate the emperor and the king of gods and men. In the *Thebaid*, Statius continues to present Jupiter as the divine manifestation of an emperor who perpetuated his role as *dominus et deus*. Statius begins his comparison in the *Thebaid* topographically, by framing Jupiter's council of the gods in terms very similar to those found in *Silvae* 4.2, as the poet describes the Domitian's *cenatio Iovis* at the opening of his palace on the Palatine. A contemporary Roman audience would have readily accepted this suggestion, since the emperor openly identified himself as Jupiter from early on in his reign, as imperial coinage reflects. Additionally, the emperor cultivated Jupiter both in his mythology (his salvation at the hands of Jupiter reflected in the Sacellum of Jupiter Custos/Conservator on the Capitoline), his cultural program (the institution of the Capitoline Games, in which Statius himself was a participant), and his building program (the aforementioned Jupiter Custos/Conservator dedicated on the site of Jupiter Tonans as well as the rapid and lavish rebuilding of the Capitolium after the fire of 80 CE). Statius recalls Domitian's Jupiter by evoking the Capitoline Games in 1.421-426. The poet repeatedly provides the epithet *Tonans* in the *Thebaid*, evoking the manifestation of Jupiter inextricably linked to the emperor's mythology of his salvation on the site of the Temple to Jupiter Tonans (and thereafter rededicated as the Sacellum of Jupiter Custos/Conservator). Statius also complements his praise of Domitian through

Jupiter with allusive representations of Domitianic authority through other monarchical figures in the *Thebaid*, such as King Adrastus.

Statius, having established the Jupiter-Domitian association in Book One, continues to define the emperor's role as *dominus et deus* by the actions of Jupiter in Books Two-Eleven. Book Twelve, despite and because of the narrative absence of Jupiter, further defines and focuses Statius' glorification of Domitian. The remarkable abdication of the gods in Book 11 leaves Jupiter's status uncertain. However, the dramatic introduction in 12.519 of Theseus responds to this uncertainty. By no means is this character just the Athenian king, but is immediately introduced as an allusion to Domitian by way of *iamque domos patrias Scythicae post aspera gentis / proelia* (12.519-520), Scythia being in roughly the same area where the emperor, always hungry to be recognized for military glory, defeated the Sarmatians in 89 CE. The remaining lines of Book Twelve reinforce the connection with Domitian through epithets evoking Theseus' descent from Neptune, and it is because of this eventual connection in Book Twelve that Statius, throughout the entire *Thebaid*, extends Jupiter's association with lightning and storms to a Neptunian dominion over water.

These associations between Jupiter and Neptune are many in number and give strength to this inclusive reading of Jupiter, for it exists among other interpretations of the king of the gods. This re-evaluation of Jupiter, coupled with the often conspicuous absence of Neptune in the epic, serves to conflate the roles of the two gods and allow the consequential allusion to Domitian as a living god.

Chapter Four will consider the relationship established in Chapter Two together with that of Chapter Three in order to examine Statius' glorification of Domitian in the

*Thebaid* not only as a living god, but also as one who surpasses the Deified Augustus. This comparison is made explicit through the relationship of Vergil's Apollo and Statius' Apollo and Jupiter. The two are frequently depicted together, and Jupiter's authority is always supreme, often explicitly because of Apollo's failure to fulfill his traditionally Augustan roles.

Book One of the *Thebaid* reveals that Statius' Apollo has lost at least some of his *Romanitas*, being invoked as both Osiris and Mithras, and his impotency is exposed primarily through the inset mythological narratives of Apollo and Python, Linus and Coroebus, and Phaëthon. Statius recalls these narratives at several points significant to the overall narrative of the Seven Against Thebes in order to highlight the failure of Apollo and Augustus, and the supremacy of Jupiter and Domitian.

Among the important events in which Statius encourages those intratextual readings is the slaughter of Opheltes, his funeral games, and the story of Amphiaraus' disappearance from the battlefield. The baby's death alludes both to the myths of Apollo and Python as well as to Linus and Coroebus. Opheltes' subsequent funeral has several dynastic implications complimentary to Domitian, and the funeral games again highlight Apollo's impiety, especially in reference to *Aeneid* Five. As was the case in the myth of Linus and Coroebus, Apollo's attempts at piety fail when he tries to circumvent Fate and affect a glorious end for his seer, Amphiaraus. Instead, Apollo becomes an agent of chaos and impiety in every one of these significant events. The Amphiaraus narrative in particular informs the audience of the impotency of Apollo's augury, the primary vehicle of Augustan praise and propaganda in the *Aeneid*. Apollo himself confesses his failure to Diana (9.650-663) when he says that he is powerless and that his prophecies are useless.

In the introductory lines of Book Ten, Statius narrates that Jupiter has conquered Apollo, and that it has happened in the land of the Caesars (10.1-2).

Thus, Statius explores the limits and potential of examining allusions in epic between literary characters and historical personalities. An examination of Augustus' relationship to Apollo in the *Aeneid* and Domitian as Jupiter in the *Thebaid* results in an allusive comparison between the two emperors, by which Domitian's superiority over Augustus is proclaimed.

## CHAPTER 2

### APOLLO IN THE *AENEID*: THE AGENT OF *PAX AUGUSTANA*

Publius Papinius Statius published his *Thebaid* around 92 CE, still in the shadow of Vergil and his *Aeneid*, written over a century earlier. The poet from Naples was the latest in a series of epic successors, most notably among them Lucan, Valerius Flaccus, and Silius Italicus, to try to compete with Vergil and add to the tradition of Roman epic established under Caesar Augustus.<sup>1</sup> It is against this backdrop of Vergil's *Aeneid*, the literary champion of Domitian's dynastic predecessor, that Statius wrote the *Thebaid* to glorify his emperor's authority as *dominus et deus*. Statius uses the characters of Jupiter and Apollo in the *Thebaid* to show the superiority of Jupiter over Apollo, and thus of Domitian over Augustus.

Almost without exception, the Vergilian Apollo, prophetic and moderate, is transformed by Statius into a rash, violent, and impious god constantly at odds with and always subordinate to Jupiter. The king of the gods, Vergil's mediator and fair-minded judge, becomes synonymous with remorseless Fate and, more importantly, supremely authoritative over human affairs in the *Thebaid*. The characters of Jupiter and Theseus, who in Book Twelve effectively replaces Jupiter and settles the Theban affair through *clementia*, work as literary allusions to the emperor Domitian and evoke a subversive comparison to the Augustan Apollo, an allusive response to the god found in Vergil's *Aeneid*. If Aeneas can be seen as an allusion to Augustus himself, Apollo is an allusion

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<sup>1</sup> D.W.T.C. Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 1: Italicus' *Punica* is difficult to date, but some date it to as late as 92 CE.

to Augustan *pietas* and *virtus*, the public expressions of the new leader's political and social programs. It is this political relationship that Statius chose to exploit in his *Thebaid* in order to contrast with Jupiter and Theseus, themselves dramatic allusions to his own emperor, Domitian. This thesis will examine parallel allusions between three sets of referents: Augustus and Apollo, Domitian and Jupiter/Theseus, and consequently Augustus and Domitian.

Vergil, with the financial support of Augustus' literary patron, Maecenas, wrote the *Aeneid* to glorify Augustus and his regime, and did so in part by way of comparisons between Augustus and the poem's characters, who fulfill a destined national glory. The most celebrated of these allusions is Aeneas, the son of a goddess, who embodied familial and national piety, as well as symbolized the foundation of Rome itself. Augustus' relationship to Aeneas has been well established in scholarship, but the prism through which the audience views Augustus' political identity as the institutor of a new age of piety and peace is Apollo. An examination of Vergil's Apollo within the political and literary contexts of Augustan Rome is necessary to highlight Statius' subversive treatment of the god in the *Thebaid*.

Vergil followed the long-standing Hellenistic tradition of characterizing Apollo as the prophetic divinity fighting to save the Trojans, but also minimized the god's vengeful nature and his role as divine supporter of Troy, which figured in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, in favor of a more personal guardianship of Aeneas. Vergil's Apollo rarely becomes personally involved in human affairs, but through various agents directs their actions towards Rome's glorious destiny under Augustus. Apollo, more than any other divine figure in the *Aeneid*, is the Olympian harbinger of Rome's return to a Golden Age,

the *Pax Augustana*, brought on by Augustus' political and social leadership.<sup>2</sup> By cultivating a relationship with the god of light and prophecy, Augustus was defining his new leadership in the thirties and twenties BCE by the contrast with his opponents' divine identifications with Neptune and Dionysus, as well as emerging from the shadow of Julius Caesar and his relationship with Venus.

Octavian's association with Apollo can be traced back primarily to Octavian's participation in the Second Triumvirate and his subsequent dissention with Marc Antony. Before this point, Octavian's relationship with Apollo is hard to establish, but evidence does exist. Suetonius claims that there was a *cena δωδεκάθεος* in which Octavian appeared as Apollo,<sup>3</sup> although Gurval points out that this was a private affair (*secretior*) and so couldn't have carried any significance as a public pronouncement of any affinity with the god.<sup>4</sup> If the story is indeed true, the fact that the son of the Deified Julius Caesar came dressed as Apollo to a banquet frequented by other members of the aristocracy well enough known to have been shockingly exposed by Marc Antony in his letters does at least speak to a more than arbitrarily selected costume. Furthermore, Octavian's choice of Apollo in this bit of gossip seems less a fabrication by Antony since it would have better served his purpose in that letter to have invented the more scandalous and despotic

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<sup>2</sup> For Apollo's usurpation of Jupiter's role in epic as diviner of fate, see Denis Feeney, *The Gods in Epic. Poets and Critics of the Classical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Suetonius says (*Div. Aug.* 70) that these letters included the names of everyone involved in the banquet. The biographer substantiates his citation of Antony's letters by quoting an anonymous but apparently well-known contemporary epigram which repeats the gossip.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Alan Gurval, *Actium and Augustus: The Politics and Emotions of Civil War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 94-98: Gurval is unconvinced of any significant and long-standing political association between Augustus and Apollo. He attributes the *princeps*' connection to Apollo as a temporary one, limited to the time and elements directly correlating to the Battle of Actium.

guise of Jupiter or the more capricious Cupid, taking advantage of the Julio-Claudian's claim to divine heritage through Venus.

Taylor dates this banquet to around 40 BCE, which makes it the earliest rumored association between Apollo and the future *princeps*.<sup>5</sup> There was also a story which circulated around Rome that Octavian's mother Atia was impregnated by Apollo in the guise of a snake after she had fallen asleep in his temple performing rites to him. The result was the birth of Octavian ten months later.<sup>6</sup> Two epigrams by Domitius Marsus are enough to convince Weinstock at least that the story was circulated earlier by Julius Caesar in order to enhance his choice of Octavian as a successor with divine authority.<sup>7</sup>

It should come as no surprise that Octavian actively cultivated his association with a divinity, given the political climate in which he found himself after Julius Caesar's assassination.<sup>8</sup> When his adoption was made public, Octavian used his status as *filius divi Iuli* to obtain the backing of Caesar's veterans. This was effective in obtaining their support initially, but to maintain that loyalty, Octavian also would need to create his own identity and separate himself from his adoptive father. While Julius Caesar claimed descent from Venus (exemplified by the Temple to Venus Genetrix in his Forum), the Triumvirate's fiercest Republican foe, Sextus Pompeius, also actively cultivated his

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<sup>5</sup> Lily Ross Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor* (New York: Arno Press, 1975), 119: Taylor points to this and other connections to establish Augustus' relationship with Apollo in his propaganda.

<sup>6</sup> Gurval, 100.

<sup>7</sup> Stefan Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 14-15.

<sup>8</sup> Gurval points to other suspicious possibilities of an earlier association: namely, the idea that Octavian and Antony had used "Apollo" as a watchword during their war against the conspirators, he shows (p. 111), is a confusion owed to the later association. Instead, the god's name was actually the watchword for Brutus' forces. See also Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988), 49. Zanker, for the same reasons Taylor and Gosling enumerate, confidently argues for a strong Apollonian connection to Octavian/Augustus.

father's identity as Neptune during Sextus' maritime assault on Rome's grain supply.<sup>9</sup> Having defeated Neptune's son, Octavian finally had to deal with his fellow triumvir Marc Antony, who had been stylizing himself since about 41 BCE as Dionysus, especially in conjunction with Cleopatra's Aphrodite.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, it was ultimately this relationship that Octavian exploited to turn public favor against Antony.<sup>11</sup>

Octavian's alliance and subsequent civil war with Marc Antony was fought both on military and political fronts. Octavian charged that Antony had acted on his ambition of becoming an eastern despot, and the ultimate proof of this fact was written in Antony's will, which Octavian took from the Vestals and then read aloud to the senate. The senators heard that, upon his death, Antony intended to give generously to his sons by Cleopatra, to announce the legitimacy of Julius Caesar's son from Cleopatra, Caesarion, and to be buried in Alexandria.<sup>12</sup> In contrast to his opponent Marc Antony, whom he cast as a traitorous Egyptian despot, Octavian portrayed himself as the defender of Roman values. On the recent precedent of Rome's three most magnanimous leaders, Julius Caesar, Sextus Pompeius, and Marc Antony, emerged Octavian's Apollo, who was defined and in a great sense born out of Octavian's victory at the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE. Actium and its shrine to Actian Apollo afforded Octavian the chance to solidify his own Roman divinity in direct opposition to Antony's orgiastic and eastern Dionysian

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<sup>9</sup> Dio Cassius 48.19; see also Dio's note (48.31) on the approving applause by the people of Menas for Sextus at the site of a statue of Neptune.

<sup>10</sup> Wendell Clausen, *Virgil: Eclogues* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 121-122: Antony also claimed descent from Hercules, becoming a convenient parallel to Octavian, who claimed his Julian descent from one god, but identified with another. Vergil (4.15-17) capitalizes on the divine ancestry of both in writing his Fourth *Eclogue*.

<sup>11</sup> Dio Cassius 50.4-6.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 50.3.

identity.<sup>13</sup> Octavian's victory would bring about an end to civil war and the beginning of peace. As Octavian would be responsible for Rome's restoration to peace, so would his patron deity, Apollo. Apollo's role in Octavian's victory became the first and most visual representation of this new era of rebirth, symbolized in great part by a monumental effort to restore and erect anew hundreds of buildings in Rome. The *princeps'* famed building program began with a dedication to his patron deity at the decisive Battle of Actium.

Previously to that dedication, Octavian had vowed a temple to Apollo at Naulochus in 36 BCE, perhaps in gratitude for his victory over Sextus Pompeius.<sup>14</sup> This vow was later renewed in 31 BCE, after Octavian's victory over Antony at the Battle of Actium, and the temple was finally dedicated on October 9, 28 BCE, on the Palatine Hill.<sup>15</sup> The deity involved, the location of the temple, and the time it was dedicated do not lack great significance. Octavian's Temple of Apollo was only the second temple to Apollo in Rome, and it was the first within the *pomerium*. The first temple was built in the Campus Martius four centuries earlier by a distant member of Octavian's adopted family, the consul of 431 BCE, Gnaeus Julius.<sup>16</sup> This early connection between the Julio-Claudians and Apollo might have been attractive to Octavian, who was seeking both to take advantage of and emulate Caesar's legacy as the son of a goddess, but also to carve

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<sup>13</sup> J. Gage, *Apollon Romain* (Paris: BEFAR, 1955), 524: Apollo's role would later be symbolized by his (and Diana's) prominent position on the breastplate of the Prima Porta statue; see also Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor*, 180.

<sup>14</sup> Gurval, 89.

<sup>15</sup> Dio 51.18.1: This is following Octavian's placement of a statue of Apollo on the site of his *praetorium* during the Battle of Actium.

<sup>16</sup> Gurval, 111-112.

out a unique identity for himself as descended from a different god.<sup>17</sup> This second Julian temple philosophically and topographically entrenched Apollo, who up until this point was a minor and purely Hellenistic deity in Rome, in Augustan ideology.<sup>18</sup>

The Temple of Apollo was considered one of the most magnificent structures of its day, and its positioning on the Palatine ensured an impressive view for whoever gazed up at the residence of the *princeps*.<sup>19</sup> Among its many features were columns built of solid Luna marble and a chariot of the sun on the roof.<sup>20</sup> The Temple's *porticus*, the location of which is the most controversial of the site, included fifty statues representing the Danaids.<sup>21</sup> Strengthening the association between the *princeps* and deity was the statue of Octavian in the guise of Apollo himself.<sup>22</sup> A second statue, that of *Phoebus domesticus*, another more personal manifestation of Apollo, graced the cult area.<sup>23</sup> Sossius says that a depiction of the Athenians' victory over the Amazons, an historical allegory for Octavian's miraculous defeat of eastern barbarians, was sculpted onto the

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Suetonius' comment (*Div. Aug.* 94): *Augustum natum mense decimo et ob hoc Apollinis filium existimatum*.

<sup>18</sup> Zanker (p. 108) observes that the temple also played a great part in minimizing Jupiter's role in the state religion.

<sup>19</sup> Velleius Paterculus 2.81.3: *ab eo singulari exstructum munificentia est*.

<sup>20</sup> Zanker states (p. 85) that Apollo's chariot was a replacement for Octavian's, and in it stood Apollo's image not as avenger, but as artist and peacemaker. For a full discussion of the entire structure, see P. Gros, "Apollo Palatinus," in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, ed. Eva Margareta Steinby (Roma: Edizioni Quasar di Severino Tognon s.r.l., 1996), 1: 54-57.

<sup>21</sup> For the most recent archaeological findings concerning the portico, see Caroline K. Quenemoen, "The Portico of the Danaids: A New Reconstruction," *American Journal of Archaeology* 110 (2006): 229-250. See also Sarah Spence, "Clinching the Text: The Danaids and the End of the *Aeneid*," *Vergilius* 37 (1991): 11-19; the relative significance of the Danaids in the Temple to the *Aeneid* and to Augustus will be treated in full below.

<sup>22</sup> Anne Gosling, "Political Apollo: From Callimachus to the Augustans," *Mnemosyne, Fourth Series* 45 (1992): 510; Gosling observes that the poets' use of Apollo to praise their emperor has a precedent in Callimachus.

<sup>23</sup> Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 15.865): *et cum Caesarea tu, Phoebae domestice, Vesta*.

temple's pediment.<sup>24</sup> Incorporated within the *Area Apollinis* was a library intended not only to house an impressive store of Greek and Latin literature, but it was also large enough for the senate to use, as it did on a number of occasions. The Sibylline books were famously transferred from the Capitoline Hill to the Temple of Apollo, a move symbolizing Augustus' reinterpretation of their contents towards his political and social ideology. This temple was in many respects quite appropriately the centerpiece of the Augustan building program, with many of his other structures deliberately recalling this Apollonian shrine.<sup>25</sup>

This emphasis in the shrine on the personal protection which Apollo afforded Octavian was completely relevant here because the temple adjoined the imperial residence in such a way that the delineation between the two would have been difficult to discern.<sup>26</sup> The whole area, in fact, had been dedicated to the official residence until a bolt of lightning struck that spot of the Palatine Hill, at which point Octavian consecrated the area for the temple.<sup>27</sup> Taken together with the *domus*, this temple was a very public and political proclamation of Augustus' personal identification with Apollo.<sup>28</sup>

After the Temple of Apollo was built and Augustus' identification with the god made explicit, the Augustan poets began to use the Apollonian structure as a means by which to evoke and praise Augustus' reestablishment of peace and order. Propertius

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<sup>24</sup> Zanker, 84. Statius responds directly to this comparison in the appearance of Theseus in *Thebaid* Twelve.

<sup>25</sup> P. Gros, in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 1, 54: "comme celui de Presque tous les autres temples construits ou restaurés par Auguste."

<sup>26</sup> This includes even a walkway leading from Augustus' house to the temple. See *ibid.* (54-56) for a full discussion of the controversy surrounding the temple's location.

<sup>27</sup> Cassius Dio 49.15.5.

<sup>28</sup> Gurval, 115.

writes that he was so in awe of the temple that he admired it for too long a time and became late for a meeting.<sup>29</sup> The author gives the temple primacy in Book Four's prefatory description to a visitor of Rome of all that has become beautiful about the former countryside, and then dedicates an entire section to Apollo's Temple and the god's role in Augustus' victory at Actium.<sup>30</sup> Propertius' poetry, if not directly communicating the Augustan program, reveals that he was aware that contemporary poets were using Apollo to praise Augustus' rule.<sup>31</sup> The several instances of Apollo in Propertius have led some to read the inclusion as especially effusive praise of Augustus and still others to conclude it overly and mockingly done so. Regardless of one's interpretation, Apollo's inclusion amplifies Propertius' Augustan or anti-Augustan sentiment. Poem 4.6, concerning Actium, is often at the forefront of the argument and is especially illustrative of Apollo's pervasive role in Augustan propaganda during a time in which an entire circle of poets similarly spread the *princeps'* message of peace and stability.<sup>32</sup>

Horace was the *vates* of Augustus and his Apollo, whom the poet cast as defender of the state, guarantor of a new age, and personal guardian of the *princeps* so that he

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<sup>29</sup> Propertius 2.31: *quaeris, cur veniam tibi tardior? aurea Phoebi / porticus a magno Caesare aperta fuit.*

<sup>30</sup> Prop. 4.1.3: *atque ubi Navali stant sacra Palatia Phoebos*; 4.6.

<sup>31</sup> Book Two is framed by Apollo's association with the poet's *recusatio*, Book Three's opening poem claims Apollo's inspiration where militaristic poetry is rejected. It is directly relevant that he'd mention Apollo here because he is rejecting Augustan ideology. 3.11 allusively uses Apollo for Augustus as well.

<sup>32</sup> See Gosling, 501-512; W.R. Johnson, "The Emotions of Patriotism in Propertius 4.6," *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 6 (1973): 151-180; Gordon Williams, "Poetry in the Moral Climate of Augustan Rome," *Journal of Roman Studies* 52 (1962): 28-46.

could bring about peace.<sup>33</sup> Suetonius relates that Augustus, encouraged by Maecenas, was so taken with Horace's skill that the poet wrote his fourth book of the *Odes* at the request of the *princeps* himself.<sup>34</sup> Horace, of course, was also chosen by Augustus to write the hymn for the *Ludi Saeculares*, newly rededicated in 17 BCE to Apollo and Diana, replacing Dis and Proserpina.<sup>35</sup> Although the subject matter was most likely controlled by Augustus, Horace proved his artistry in his *Carmen*, which celebrated the dawn of a new age and the hope that Rome would do so again after another 110 years. In begging Apollo (and Diana) for his blessings on the new age, Horace addresses Apollo as *Phoebus*, the bringer of light, emphasizing his powers of restitution rather than the more vengeful deity found in Homer. The identification of Apollo with the *princeps* is also made by the use of *augur*, a play on words with *Augustus* made elsewhere in the *Odes* and by Vergil.<sup>36</sup>

The fourth book of the *Odes*, as mentioned above, reflected the confidence and assurance that came with the stability brought by Augustus' rule.<sup>37</sup> Horace glorified his

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<sup>33</sup> *Odes* 1.2, 1.12, 1.21, 1.31, 3.3, 3.4, *Carm. Saec.*; Gosling, 501-512.

<sup>34</sup> *Vita Horati* (p. 486): *coegerit propter hoc tribus Carminum libris ex longo intervallo quartum addere.*

<sup>35</sup> Lily Ross Taylor, "Secular Games," in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd Edition, ed. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1378. It is worth noting that Horace had earlier rejected an association with Augustus both professionally and personally; Suet. (*vita Horati*, p. 484): *Augustus epistularum quoque ei officium optulit...ac ne recusanti quidem aut sescensuit quicquam aut amicitiam suam ingerere desiit.* The author's apparent uncertainty about and subsequent reconciliation with Augustus and his rule is both significant to the context of his poetry and possibly indicative of the general populace's increasing certainty in their new leader.

<sup>36</sup> Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor*, 159; *Carm. Saec.* 61; cf. *Odes* 1.2.28 and *Aen.* 4.376.

<sup>37</sup> Horace published his last book of the *Odes* in 13 BCE, well after the cessation of civil war and into the *Pax Augustana*.

patron and cast him in the role of Apollo to that end.<sup>38</sup> *Odes* 4.6 to Apollo begins with *dive*, a deliberate echo of *divis orte bonis*, a direct reference to Augustus, from *Odes* 4.5.1. Horace is here and nearly everywhere equating Augustus with his patron divinity, but *Odes* 4.6 specifically recalls Apollo Agyieus, an epithet of great significance to the Augustan/Apollonian complex on the Palatine. Agyieus' icon, the *betylos*, is present on wall decorations in both Augustus' residence and Livia's residence and is also shown between Apollo and Diana on a terracotta plaque in the Temple of Apollo itself.<sup>39</sup> Horace also praises Apollo as an avenger of Troy, and specifically for defeating Achilles.<sup>40</sup> This emphasis on revenge is continued in the last of the *Odes* of Book Four, but throughout 4.15 his role transforms, as Augustus' role did, from avenger into savior and *restitor pacis*. Here again, the Palatine Temple and Actian Apollo make an appearance. Horace recalls the capture of the Parthian standards with the same language and enjambment Vergil had used of Octavian sitting at the steps of Apollo's temple during his triple triumph.<sup>41</sup> As if to prove that Apollo is the patron of a new and peaceful Augustan Rome, the deity is conspicuously absent from *Odes* 4.14, which recounts the martial victories necessary to institute the *Pax Augustana*.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> It should be noted that *Odes* 4.4 imagines Augustus as Jupiter; in 4.5, Horace links him to Castor and Hercules, and infers that he is a new Romulus, a role perpetuated by Augustus from the beginning of his rule.

<sup>39</sup> Michael C.J. Putnam, *Artifices of Eternity: Horace's Fourth Book of Odes* (London: Cornell University Press, 1986), 117-120, 126-127. For coinage representing the *betylos* on the prow of ships, commemorating that Actium victory, see H. Kuthmann, "Actiaca," *Jahrbuch des romaisch-germanischen Zentralmuseums* 4 (1957), pl. 12.

<sup>40</sup> *Odes* 4.6.3-4: *Troiae prope victor altae / Pthius Achilles*.

<sup>41</sup> 7-8: *superbis postibus*; Putnam, 274-275; cf. *Aen.* 8.721-722.

<sup>42</sup> Apollo's absence is made all the more significant because of the repeated references (4.14.34-40, 45-46) to Augustus' defeat of Antony, Cleopatra, and Egypt.

*Odes* 4.15 is also significant to Augustus and Apollo in that Horace chose to end his fourth book not as conclusively and personally as he had completed the previous three, but instead openly and communally, urging that Phoebus' lyre should continue in the celebration of the new era which Caesar has created. The proposed *carmen* the Romans will sing is, in fact, Vergil's *Aeneid*.<sup>43</sup>

In contrast to Horace, Ovid used his awareness of Apollo's importance in Augustan propaganda to voice his disagreement with the *princeps* and his social program; more specifically, he attacks Augustus' legislation of morals. Ovid's representation of Apollo within the Daphne story in the *Metamorphoses*<sup>44</sup> can be read as consonant with the anti-Augustan response in the *Ars Amatoria*, which may have in fact been the *carmen* that resulted in his banishment. The Daphne story is not novel to Roman mythology, but the placement of the event just after Apollo's slaying of Python is an Ovidian invention. More importantly, the inclusion of Cupid and the quarrel which prompts the chase is also an Ovidian novelty. Both new elements create the anti-Augustan dimension to the story.<sup>45</sup> Apollo here, as often, represents Augustus, but there is also evidence that the Python episode had previously been used as an allegory specifically for Actium. Propertius likens Apollo's appearance, and so Octavian's victory, at Actium to Python and

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<sup>43</sup> Putnam, *Artifices of Eternity*, 274: To a great extent, *Odes* Four is an introduction to the *Aeneid*, being the first widely published work to respond to the epic after its completion (as Horace had done in Books One-Three, while Vergil was still writing).

<sup>44</sup> *Met.* 1.452-567.

<sup>45</sup> W.S.M. Nicoll, "Cupid, Apollo, and Daphne (Ovid, *Met.* 1.452 ff.)," *Classical Quarterly, New Series* 30 (1980): 174. See also Vinzenz Buchheit, *Hermes* 94 (1966): 90 ff., and Hans Peter Syndikus, *Die Lyrik des Horaz: Eine Interpretation der Oden 2* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972-3), 70.

also to the defeat of the Greeks by Apollo's arrows in the *Iliad*.<sup>46</sup> A bowl found at Annecy portrays the mythological scene with the caption *Octavius Caesar Actius*.<sup>47</sup> By those examples, the Ovidian narrative then represents the Apollo of the Palatine, the personification of the *Pax Augustana*, battling with Cupid, called *lascive*.<sup>48</sup> Apollo/Augustus loses this battle with capricious love, and he is given over to lust for an unmarried virgin. Furthermore, Apollo/Augustus chases Daphne down, takes her against her will, and finally the laurel, the very symbol of the *Pax Augustana* adorning the Palatine temple and walls of Augustus' own residence, becomes the spoils from this impious rape. Ovid's use of Actian Apollo is quite effective in its acerbic as social commentary on Augustus' moral legislation.

While Apollo makes other appearances in the *Metamorphoses*, *Ars Amatoria*, and *Amores*, he is almost wholly absent from the *Tristia*. This is disconcerting upon first look: if the poet used Apollo to condemn Augustan *pietas*, it should follow that he would also employ the god in his *blanditiae* to the emperor while in exile. On the contrary, the deity's absence from Ovid's writings in the first century CE is instructive. Of all the Augustan poets, Ovid lived the longest, outliving even Augustus himself, and so wrote during all aspects of his reign. Apollo's absence in the *Tristia*, whose inclusion otherwise would effectively communicate the poet's forgiveness, is evidence of the decreasing importance of the god in the cult of the emperor after Horace's last writings which incorporate the deity in any significant way, namely the Fourth Book of the *Odes*. Given that Augustus' Apollonian association has always been linked to one incipient event,

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<sup>46</sup> 4.6.33-35.

<sup>47</sup> Nicoll, 181.

<sup>48</sup> *Met.* 1.456.

Actium, and to one structure, the Palatine Temple to Actian Apollo, and for one specific purpose, to celebrate and herald the beginning of a new Golden Age, it makes sense that, just like a physical monument, the literary motif would lose its impact as a vehicle for personal commentary over time.<sup>49</sup>

Another Golden Age poet, Tibullus, seems not to have contributed to Augustus' propaganda except in 2.5, which is addressed to Apollo upon Messallinus' entrance into the *quindecimviri*. Tibullus' distance from the *princeps* is illustrative, as the content of 2.5 shows how pervasive the Apollonian element was in the time of the Augustan literary program.<sup>50</sup> Tibullus here claims that, through his Sibyl, Apollo has presided over Aeneas' flight from Troy, the continuation of the Trojan race in the establishment of Rome, the prophecies of Rome's future glory, and the growth of the city. In short, even by 19 BCE at the latest, the newly Roman Apollo found in Vergil has been wholly infused in the literature of the Augustan Age.<sup>51</sup>

Previous to the *Aeneid*, Vergil was already communicating the idea that Apollo will herald a return to the Golden Age of Saturn, but not through the future *princeps*. Although this age is associated with Saturn, it is *tuus Apollo* of *Eclogues* Four who will guide and protect the savior of Rome. In 40 BCE, the least attractive identification contemporary Romans would have made for this *puer* would have been Octavian. In a

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<sup>49</sup> Edward Champlin, "Nero, Apollo, and the Poets," *Phoenix* 57 (2003), 276-281: even as the prominence of Apollo's cult faded, his association with Augustus endured. There is little to no evidence to suggest that any emperors through the Flavians employed Apollo in any meaningful way other than to communicate their debt to Augustus. Even Nero, the most likely candidate for a significant association with the god, has been proven not to have evoked Apollo in any way other than as the patron of an artist. Additionally, Nero's identification with Apollo occurred only after Agrippina's death in 59, and so in a period of his reign marked by self-indulgence.

<sup>50</sup> Although Book One can be dated to between 27 and 26 BCE, the only dating for Book Two is Tibullus' death in 19 BCE. Friedrich Solmsen, "Tibullus as an Augustan Poet," *Hermes* 90 (1962): 300.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.

time when Antony was the dominant force and Octavian still the unknown and unimpressive quantity, Vergil directs Apollo's protection towards the unborn son of Antony and Octavia.<sup>52</sup> The exclusion of lines 58-59, as Clausen notes, emphasizes the impact Apollo has on *inspice parve puer*, which both formally associates the deity with the boy and creates a personal intimacy between the two by recalling *tuus Apollo* from line ten.<sup>53</sup> Apollo makes other appearances in the *Eclogues* as the traditional pastoral deity of song,<sup>54</sup> but his political position as Augustus' patron and guide does not manifest itself until the *Georgics*.<sup>55</sup>

The poem most immediately preceding the *Aeneid*, the *Georgics*, again announced Apollo's governance over a return to the Golden Age. However, Vergil's intentions now in 30 BCE are to memorialize the victor at Actium, Octavian, and to do so in reference to Apollo. Just as Octavian vowed a temple to Apollo, Vergil promises a temple to his patron in Book Three of his *Georgics*.<sup>56</sup> The *princeps* himself heard this firsthand, as Vergil read his latest work to Octavian over the course of four days in 29 BCE.<sup>57</sup> The Apollonian references within the *Georgics* effectively demonstrated its

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<sup>52</sup> A boy who, as noted above, would have enjoyed the pedigree of both Hercules and Venus.

<sup>53</sup> 121-122, 126. Upon publication as an eclogue, Vergil interpolated these two lines.

<sup>54</sup> Ironically, it is Apollo who counsels Tityrus not to sing epic (by which Vergil later has the god direct the fate of Rome), but to adhere to lyric, as all shepherds should (*Ecl.* 6.3-5). See also *Ecl.* 3.104 (invoked by Damoetas as *magnus Apollo*), 5.66 (Menalcas promises that Daphnis will share Apollo's altar and be worshipped with annual sacrifices), 6.29, 66, 72-73, 82 (modeled on Callimachus, Apollo presides over *his ex omnia primis...et ipse tener mundi concreverit orbis* (33-34), 7.22, and 10.21).

<sup>55</sup> *Georg.* 3, *proem*; *Ecl.* 4, 5.35.

<sup>56</sup> 26-29: *in foribus pugnam ex auro solidoque elephanto / Gangaridum faciam victorisque arma Quirini, / atque hic undantem bello magnumque fluentem / Nilum ac navali surgentis aere columnas.*

<sup>57</sup> Egil Kraggerud, "Vergil Announcing the *Aeneid*: On *Georgics* 3.1-48," in *Vergil's Aeneid: Augustan Epic and Political Context*, ed. Hans-Peter Stahl (London: Duckworth, 1998), 1.

author's commitment to his patron's propaganda since they recall the Callimachean Apollo, a known favorite of Octavian, who founded cities and saved Aeneas from certain death in *Iliad* Five. The temple of *Georgics* Three, adorned with the image of *Troiae Cynthius auctor* and meant for Octavian, is a literary representation of the actual confluence of domestic and sacred space shared by Apollo and Octavian on the Palatine.<sup>58</sup>

In the *Aeneid*, Vergil continued to exploit Apollo's presence on Octavian's Palatine complex to glorify his patron. The poet took advantage of singularly the most beautiful, if Propertius is to be believed, visual example of Augustus' divine power in order to perpetuate the epic ideal of an Augustan destiny. *Eclogues* Four did correctly prophesy the birth of an Apollonian *puer* who would usher in the new age, but time proved that this Roman was not the offspring of Antony. Apollo's *puer* was indeed Augustus, and Vergil's *Georgics* solidified Augustus as Rome's savior and Apollo as his personal protector and guide. Vergil's *Aeneid* was no longer looking towards the future Golden Age promised in the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, but instead celebrated its arrival in the time of Augustus.<sup>59</sup> Vergil glorified his patron through Apollo and his Temple, but in a different way. It was not only fated that Augustus would rule Rome, but that Apollo's guiding hand could be seen at every step along the way. Throughout the *Aeneid*, Apollo acts as Aeneas' personal guide towards the Augustan *Pax Romana* of Vergil's day. While capitalizing on Augustus' greatest and most impressive structure was an important means by which he could glorify his patron, Vergil also employed the deity as the unrivaled

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 13-14.

<sup>59</sup> Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor*, 176.

prophet in the *Aeneid*, usurping the established epic convention of the shades and the paterfamilias as guides, as well as promoted Apollo as Aeneas' personal protector, a role shared only by the divine matriarch of the Julian *gens*, Venus.

Vergil's Apollo is the greatest prophetic power in the *Aeneid* and repeatedly protects the figures responsible for Rome's future.<sup>60</sup> The poet was bound by the epic convention of fortune-telling ghosts, but these shades offer advice which is either short-sighted, too vague, or ignored by Aeneas and others. In contrast, Apollo employs a variety of agents to communicate informative and lengthy messages, and the god speaks several times directly to Aeneas and to others. Although Apollo is classically the god of prophecy, his role is expanded within the *Aeneid* to be the voice of Rome's destiny. Apollo's role is so pervasive and complete that it even surpasses that of the Iliadic personification of piety, Hector, in his prophetic scene from Book One.

Despite the fact that Hector terrifyingly appears to Aeneas as if fresh from his slaughter at the hands of Achilles and, as such, brings the dire news of Troy's fall, the reader is given no indication, beyond Aeneas' initial alarm, that Aeneas actually heeds his advice to flee.<sup>61</sup> Aeneas' reaction to Hector is neither immediate, nor decisive, nor clear-minded. Instead of heeding the authority of the shade and gathering his family for an escape, Aeneas seeks confirmation of Hector's words, is consequently given to *furor*, and abandons his family so that he can fight.<sup>62</sup> More correctly, Aeneas rushes towards a

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<sup>60</sup> i.e., Aeneas, Ascanius and Evander, and others representing Augustan *pietas* and *virtus*. Cf. *Aen.* 3.79, 3.274, 3.358, 4.142, 6.12, 6.69, 6.791-795, 7.241, 9.638, 8.333. Gosling, 502.

<sup>61</sup> 2.274-5: *ei mihi qualis erat quantum mutatus ab illo / Hectore.*

<sup>62</sup> 302-303, 309-310, 314-317: *excitior somno et summi fastigia tecti / ascensu supero atque arrectis auribus asto... tum vero manifesta fides, Danaumque patescunt / insidiae... arma amens capio; nec sat rationis in armis, / sed glomerare manum bello et concurrere in arcem / cum sociis ardent animi; furor iraque mentem / praecipitat, pulchrumque.*

certain death; instead of recognizing the divine authority of Hector's ghost and dutifully leading his family out of Troy, Aeneas impiously forsakes his family and is resolved to die.<sup>63</sup> Upon leaving his house, the first person Aeneas meets is Panthus, a priest of Apollo. As will be commonplace in the *Aeneid*, Apollo, through various agents, will follow up others' earlier and ineffective prophecies with more explicit information and guidance, which will at last result in Aeneas' understanding and action. Here, Panthus definitively relates the urgency and finality of the scene.<sup>64</sup> The priest of Apollo is described, *sacra manu victosque deos parvumque nepotem / ipse trahit*. Apollo quite literally and deliberately provides Aeneas a visual example of how he must both lead his family out of Troy and his people to Italy.<sup>65</sup> Compare this passage to the end of Book Two, where Aeneas takes the first steps towards his destiny:

tu, genitor, cape sacra manu patriosque Penates;  
 ...dextrae se parvus Iulus  
 implicuit sequiturque patrem non passibus aequis;  
 pone subit coniunx.

Father, take these sacred relics and the country's Penates in your hand;  
 ...little Iulus grabbed my right hand  
 and follows his father with unequal steps;  
 my wife follows behind.<sup>66</sup>

Through Apollo's priest, Aeneas is looking directly into his future role as religious leader of a new people.

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<sup>63</sup> 317: *mori succurrit in armis*.

<sup>64</sup> 324-327: *venit summa dies et ineluctabile tempus / Dardaniae. fuimus Troes, fuit Ilium et ingens / gloria Teucrorum; ferus omnia Iuppiter Argos / transtulit*.

<sup>65</sup> 320-321: "He himself drags the sacred relics, the conquered gods, and his little grandson." All translations are my own, unless otherwise specified.

<sup>66</sup> 717, 723-725.

Apollo's exemplar utters essentially the same advice which Hector had already given, but coming from Apollo, along with the divine will of all the gods, Aeneas is spurred to further action.<sup>67</sup> Just after Panthus gives his message, he becomes a casualty of battle, saved neither by his piety nor his status as Apollo's priest.<sup>68</sup> The quick removal of the agent contrasts with the resonance of the agent's message from Apollo. At the beginning of his narration, Vergil is making a statement about Apollo's role. While Troy is still standing and Aeneas is still wholly Trojan, the god is still very much the Iliadic Apollo, concerned less with the person and more for the race. Contrasted with Venus' more personal admonishment that Aeneas should be thinking of his family, Panthus merely relates his despair for the city. It isn't until after much fighting, Vergil's vehicle by which he relates familiar scenes from the fall of Troy, that Venus appears to direct Aeneas back home.<sup>69</sup> Venus herself spoke to dispel Aeneas' madness in order that he would understand the situation and Panthus' advice more clearly.<sup>70</sup> With the Trojan Panthus' death, so passes the Homeric Apollo; however, in the end, it is the priest of Apollo who more effectively communicates the same words with which Hector's shade failed, and who provides a model for Aeneas' later pious behavior.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> 3.337: *talibus Othryadae dictis et numine divum / in flammis et in arma feror.*

<sup>68</sup> 2.429-430: *nec te tua plurima, Panthu, / labentem pietas nec Apollinis infula textit.* The idea that, while his guidance is infallible, Apollo's power in the face of impious warfare is ineffective is echoed in Book Twelve, when he cannot save Aeneas from his wound in battle.

<sup>69</sup> 402-406: the rape of Cassandra; 469-475: the appearance of the serpentine Pyrrhus; 526-553: the death of Polites and Priam; 567-570: the death of Helen.

<sup>70</sup> 604-606: *namque omnem, quae nunc obducta tuenti / mortalis hebetat visus tibi et umida circum / caligat, nubem eripiam.*

<sup>71</sup> This Homeric Apollo is reprised in the Iapyx narrative of Book Twelve.

The epic convention of a ghost as messenger of Fate and the gods is again usurped by Apollo in the ensuing two books. Aeneas' errant voyage to Crete in Book Three clearly illustrates that Aeneas ignores the words of Creusa's *imago* at the end of Book Two. Creusa reveals that divine will dictates a long exile, but that Aeneas' destiny is in Hesperia, specifically near the Tiber River, where he will become a king and take a queen.<sup>72</sup> However, after leaving Troy, the *Aeneidae* land at Delos, where Aeneas needs guidance, despite receiving it from his departed wife. Delos is described as:

quam pius Arquitenens oras et litora circum  
errantem Mycono e celsa Gyaroque revinxit,  
immotamque coli dedit.

which, wandering around shores and shorelines,  
the pious Archer bound to tall Myconos and Gyaros,  
and made it, motionless, inhabitable.<sup>73</sup>

However, the *ecphrasis* does far more than merely providing a description of the city. Vergil's description points once again to Apollo as the guide. Just as the deity secured the island from its wanderings, so will Apollo end the uncertainty of Aeneas' wanderings and secure the Trojans on their destined land. As if to ground the allusion itself, it is here that Apollo responds directly to Aeneas' prayer and reveals the command, *antiquam exquirite matrem*.<sup>74</sup> The reader does not know how Aeneas would have interpreted this because Anchises immediately decides that this land is Crete. Again trusting his father, pious Aeneas and his crew set sail for Crete where, after at least a month, a plague ravages Pergamum, and it is clear that Aeneas' father was wrong. The mistake that

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<sup>72</sup> 780-784.

<sup>73</sup> 3.75-77.

<sup>74</sup> 96: "Search for your ancient mother."

Anchises makes in interpreting Apollo's prophecy at Delos could have been prevented had Aeneas once again not ignored or disregarded the prophecy of a shade.

Anchises' impotence as a guide highlights the subordination of another epic convention, a father's ability to interpret the will of the gods, in favor of Apollo's supreme guidance towards Rome's destiny.<sup>75</sup> After the plague at Pergamum, Anchises decides the best course of action is to revisit Crete and seek clarification. Apollo, now clearly acting as Aeneas' personal guardian by using the Penates as agents, intervenes again before they leave to keep the *Aeneidae* on the right course. The Penates' words not only complement the previous prophecy and reiterate the ignored advice of Creusa from Book Two, but also include a more specific description of the Trojans' destiny, which is less open to interpretation. Contrasting with the short and ambiguous nature of the earlier prophecy, this speech is linear and explicit:

Dardanidae duri, quae vos a stirpe parentum  
prima tulit tellus, eadem vos ubere laeto  
accipiet reduces. antiquam exquirite matrem.  
hic domus Aeneae cunctis dominabitur oris  
et nati natorum et qui nascentur ab illis.

Hardened Dardanians, whom the land first bore  
from your parents' lineage, the same land will receive you,  
brought back, with its joyful bosom. Search for your ancient mother.  
Here the house of Aeneas will rule all the shores  
and your sons' sons and those who will be born from them.<sup>76</sup>

Aeneas hears that Crete is not the correct location, nor are his people meant to settle there, nor will their true destination be reached without a long exile. By providing a multitude of details and a high degree of clarity, Apollo's guidance directly responds to

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<sup>75</sup> Just as the earlier episode in Book Two signals the evolving relationship with Apollo, this scene is appropriate to Augustus at this time in his rule, as he is trying to visibly distance himself from his adoptive father, Julius Caesar, and his father's policies.

<sup>76</sup> 94-98.

the Anchises' failure to interpret the earlier prophecy, while also preventing the further delay of a trip back to Delos. Furthermore, the god's last words specifically direct Aeneas to head off any of his father's future misinterpretations: *et haec laetus longaevo dicta parenti / haud dubitanda refer.*<sup>77</sup>

Despite Apollo's attempt to eliminate further complications, Anchises again illustrates his interpretive impotence at the Strophades Islands. The Harpy Calaeno, acting as another agent of Apollo, prophesizes, *vos dira fames nostraeque iniuria caedis / ambesas subigat malis absumere mensas.*<sup>78</sup> While certainly foreboding, Anchises interprets this as a mortal threat to the Trojans and prays, *servate pios*, to the very gods who issued the prophecy.<sup>79</sup> Apollo again responds to Anchises' wrong interpretation by allaying his fear over the Harpy's words and explicitly states, *aderitque vocatus Apollo.*<sup>80</sup> Additionally, the innocuous and joyful nature of the fulfilled action in Book Seven provides an uncomplimentary perspective on Anchises' over-reaction in this scene.<sup>81</sup> The Helenus episode later in Book Three illustrates Apollo's deliberate and programmatic management of Anchises' interference.<sup>82</sup>

After Helenus' lengthy speech, Andromache, described as *Phoebi interpres*, repeats Apollo's advice to Anchises specifically to prevent any misinterpretation of the

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<sup>77</sup> 169-170: "[...] and happily relate these words not to be doubted to your aged father."

<sup>78</sup> 256-257: "[...] harsh hunger and the injury of our slaughter forces you to consume with your jaws your used up tables."

<sup>79</sup> 266: "Guard the pious."

<sup>80</sup> 394-395: "[...] and Apollo, having been called, will be present."

<sup>81</sup> 116: '*heus, etiam mensas consumimus?*' inquit Iulus.

<sup>82</sup> 374-462.

prophecy Apollo just gave by way of Helenus.<sup>83</sup> While Helenus is indeed another agent of the god's prophecies, Vergil explicitly states that Helenus' words are not just an interpretation of the Apollo's will, but that Apollo is speaking directly to Aeneas.<sup>84</sup> At nearly one hundred lines, Helenus'/Apollo's speech is the longest and most detailed explanation of Aeneas' destiny prior to his visit to the underworld in Book Six, in which Anchises' shade, under the guidance of Apollo's Sibyl, reveals the line of ancestors which will culminate in the rule of Caesar Augustus. Following a crescendo of prophecy in which the certainty of Troy's destruction was communicated by Panthus in Book Two, a vague sense of destiny was imparted by Apollo at Delos early in Book Three, and the more explicit instructions given to Aeneas through the Penates, Helenus here not only tells Aeneas where to go, but also how to get there, where not to go, exactly what to do when he arrives, and finally how to proceed from that point. With the Penates acting as Apollo's agents, Aeneas is communicating directly with his past as well as his future. As such, the language of his destiny is phrased in more political terms, which would speak to a contemporary Roman audience. *Venturos tollemus in astra nepotes* is language reminiscent of the description of Julius Caesar's recent apotheosis.<sup>85</sup> The specific inclusion of *imperiumque urbi dabimus* in line 159 is also unmistakably political.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> 474-481.

<sup>84</sup> 377-380: *pauca tibi e multis...expediam dictis; prohibent nam cetera Parcae / scire Helenum farique vetat Saturnia Iuno.*

<sup>85</sup> 158: "We will raise to the stars your descendants yet to come." Cf. Suet. (*Divi Iulii* 88): *stella crinita per septem continuos dies fulsit exoriens circa undecimam horam, creditumque est animam esse Caesaris in caelum recepti.*

<sup>86</sup> *Imperium* has the dual meaning of "power" and "empire".

Climactically, Helenus urges Aeneas: *ingentem factis fer ad aethera Troiam*.<sup>87</sup> This priest of Apollo and founder of an imitative and pitiable representation of Troy grants Aeneas the status as the legitimate *reconditor* of their homeland.<sup>88</sup> In this scene more than any other, Apollo is the informed guide towards an Augustan Rome. This last of a series of prophecies Apollo provides Aeneas throughout the first half of the *Aeneid* is ominous and grave, forecasting renewed fighting of such a fierce nature that it would seem a second Trojan War. Again, Apollo is specific, describing the cause, and he is hopeful, telling Aeneas where to find help.<sup>89</sup>

From the above examples, it is clear that, while Aeneas' fate is established, Apollo is Aeneas' guide towards Rome's destiny. He appears to Aeneas repeatedly over the course of the hero's journey to repeat prophecies ignored or forgotten, such as those by the shades of Hector and Creusa, as well as to correct the mistakes made by Aeneas' father, Anchises. Through these episodes, Vergil shows Apollo to be the primary architect of Aeneas' destiny.<sup>90</sup> What has not been considered up until this point, however, is evidence that any of Apollo's guidance is particularly Augustan. As will be shown, both Apollo's prophecies to Aeneas and the god's multiple other appearances in the *Aeneid* direct Aeneas and the reader towards a Rome whose destiny is synonymous with the *Pax Augustana*.

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<sup>87</sup> *Aen.* 3.462: "Bear huge Troy to the heavens with your deeds."

<sup>88</sup> Hans-Peter Stahl, "Political Stop-overs on a Mythological Travel Route: from Battling Harpies to the Battle of Actium," *Vergil's Aeneid: Augustan Epic and Political Context*, ed. Hans-Peter Stahl (London: Duckworth, 1998), 44.

<sup>89</sup> *Aen.* 6.83-97.

<sup>90</sup> Indeed, in both Aeneas' justification to Dido and Dido's mocking recapitulation of his words in Book Four, Apollo is the one responsible for the Trojans' departure and not Mercury or Jupiter, who sent Mercury there.

Actian Apollo is present via literary allusions in the most crucial scenes of the epic poem. For example, in Book Three, Vergil travels through and rewrites history as Aeneas finally makes his way to Italy and then to Rome. On the way, he visits Actium and establishes Trojan games.<sup>91</sup> Not only does this recall the Battle of Actium, but implies that Apollo was responsible for Augustus' victory there as thanks for the games his descendent Aeneas established in the god's honor. Additionally, the passage also recalls the games Octavian established at nearby Nicopolis, which were repeated around the empire.<sup>92</sup>

Of the series of prophecies described above, it is remarkable to note that Aeneas' first direct communion with Augustus' patron deity is by way of Apollo's temple at Delos in Book Three.<sup>93</sup> This intercession between Augustus' patron deity and the Augustan figure of Aeneas within Apollo's *limen* should come as no surprise, as the intimacy between Apollo's precinct on the Palatine and Augustus' own residence served as a visual representation to the Romans of the directly personal relationship their *princeps* had with the god. Just as the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine was Octavian's primary piece of propaganda, Vergil too, like his contemporaries, used the Temple in his *Aeneid* to promote the political program of his *princeps*.

Aeneas vows a temple to Apollo in return for what ends up being the primary prophetic scene in the whole *Aeneid* and the single most important element of Augustan

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<sup>91</sup> 3.278-290.

<sup>92</sup> Stahl, in *Vergil's Aeneid: Augustan Epic and Political Context*, 59; see also David West, "In the Wake of Aeneas (*Aeneid* 3.274-88; 3.500-5; 8.200-3)," *Greece and Rome* 41 (1994): 57-61.

<sup>93</sup> *Aen.* 3.84: *templa dei saxo venerabar structa vetusto*; the temple is described in a manner arguably corresponding to the Palatine Temple (91-92): *liminaque laurusque dei totusque moveri / mons circum et mugire adytis Cortina reclusis*.

propaganda, the catalogue of heroes in the underworld, which includes Augustus himself.<sup>94</sup> Vergil claimed that Octavian's monument was the fulfillment of Aeneas' promise to dedicate a temple and games to Apollo.<sup>95</sup> It is in Book Six that Vergil, who called himself *vates* in the fashion of the Augustan Age, gives this same epithet to Apollo.<sup>96</sup> As Vergil is the poet in whose hands Augustus left his greatest piece of propaganda, Apollo and Augustus' Palatine Temple to the god is the vehicle by which Vergil reveals that propaganda to his audience.

Book Six is filled with references to Augustus' Palatine complex and thus colors the Romans' perception of the book's content with dramatically dynastic implications. The Romans would have most certainly made the connections between the temple reliefs and the construction of the temples both in the *Aeneid* and on the Palatine, appreciated the similarities between Augustus' relationship with Apollo and Aeneas' communion with the Sibyl, and certainly understood the Augustan association with the Sibyl, remembering that the *princeps* moved the newly rediscovered Sibylline books to the Temple of Apollo and used them regularly to perpetuate his political and social programs through various decrees, not the least of which was the rededication of the *Ludi Saeculares*.<sup>97</sup>

Aeneas begins his discourse in Book Six with the Sibyl by a prayer to Apollo, and this prayer responds directly to the Apollo of Augustus and his contemporaries:

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<sup>94</sup> Gosling, 502. The Apollo celebrated by the Palatine Temple is specifically recalled in Book Eight as responsible for Octavian's victory at Actium.

<sup>95</sup> *Aen.* 6.69-70: *tum Phoebus et Triviae solido de marmore templum / instituat festosque dies de nomine Phoebi.*

<sup>96</sup> 12.

<sup>97</sup> Suet. (*Divi Aug.* 31): *condiditque duobus forulis auratis sub Palatini Apollinis basi.*

*Phoebe...duce te... iam tandem Italiae fugientis prendimus oras.*<sup>98</sup> From the start, this sixth book presents the most overt Augustan identification with Apollo. The speech continues to evoke Augustus through the Palatine Temple: *Phoebo et Triviae solido de marmore templum / instituam festosque dies de nomine Phoebi.*<sup>99</sup> A contemporary Roman audience would have undoubtedly understood this as Octavian addressing his patron deity before the Battle of Actium just a few years earlier through the character of Aeneas. Vergil has foreshadowed this with the reference to the Temple in Book Three during the games at Actium.<sup>100</sup> The story of Daedalus further focuses the narrative and prepares the audience for Aeneas' later vow by a description of the inventor's Temple to Apollo, complete with a tragic frieze course corresponding to that found on the Palatine Temple. Daedalus' temple doors show the death of Androgeos (perhaps foreshadowing Pallas' death), the Athenian sacrifices, Pasiphae and the Minotaur, and Theseus and Ariadne. Missing, because Daedalus is too devastated to depict it, is Icarus' death.<sup>101</sup> The familial tragedy repeatedly shown here corresponds with the Danaid sculptures decorating the portico around Augustus' Temple of Apollo.<sup>102</sup> The Danaids of his Temple correspond to an Augustan future with the *balteus* of Pallas in Book Eight and the death of Turnus in Book Twelve, which bring about that destiny. It is worth noting

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<sup>98</sup> 6.56-61: "Phoebus... with you as our leader... now finally we arrive at the shores of fleeing Italy."

<sup>99</sup> 69-70: "To Phoebus and Trivia, I will establish a temple made of solid marble and festive days in Phoebus' name."

<sup>100</sup> 3.286-288: *aere cavo clipeum, magni gestamen Abantis, / postibus adversis figo et rem carmine signo: / 'Aeneas haec de Danais victoribus arma.'*

<sup>101</sup> 6.20-33.

<sup>102</sup> Quenemoen, 229-250.

too that Venus, Caesar's patron deity, is described as *nefanda* here on the doors.<sup>103</sup>

Directly following this scene, however, the allusion is precise. Aeneas promises a Temple to Apollo in return for the Sibyl's divination of his future. Not only is the vowed temple *solido de marmore*, but *festi dies* will accompany its dedication and the Sibyl's *sortes arcanaque fata* will be kept there.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, Apollo will enjoy the inner sanctuary and special men will be chosen to watch over it.<sup>105</sup> All four elements direct the audience towards the Palatine. Cassius Dio wrote that Augustus gave responsibility of public buildings and monuments over to the people, but either retained the guardianship of selected structures, which included Actian Apollo, or gave it over to a selected group of men.<sup>106</sup>

The narrative of Aeneas' underworld visit continues and confirms the direction of the particularly Augustan Apollo towards a Golden Age. The golden bough episode, lacking a specific precedent before Vergil and thus confounding scholars for generations, is crucial to Vergil's use of Augustus' relationship with Apollo in order to promote the *princeps'* inception of a new Golden Age at the direction of his patron deity.<sup>107</sup> Two specific narrative elements yield both the Augustan metaphor and Vergil's motive for the

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<sup>103</sup> *Aen.* 6.26.

<sup>104</sup> 69-70, 72.

<sup>105</sup> 69-71.

<sup>106</sup> 55.10.

<sup>107</sup> For the bough as part of a broader association with the Malekulan of the New Hebrides and the epic of Gilgamesh, see W.F.J. Knight, "A Prehistoric Ritual Pattern in the Sixth *Aeneid*," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 66 (1935): 256-273. For the Platonic background, see Agnes Kirsopp Michels, "The Golden Bough of Plato," *American Journal of Philology* 66 (1945): 59-63. Both scholars note that the respective context is insufficient explanation for Vergil's use of it in Book Six. For a summary of earlier suppositions regarding the origin of Vergil's golden bough (Servius *et al.*), see Robert A. Brooks, "Discolor Aura: Reflections on the Golden Bough," *American Journal of Philology* 74 (1953): 260-280.

bough's inclusion. Having retrieved the branch from the forest, Aeneas offers it to the Sibyl, who uses it first to charm Charon. The ferryman's anger at their apparent transgression of the natural order is immediately pacified and, more significantly, Charon seems to have seen it before and remember it fondly.<sup>108</sup> By itself and lacking any more context, very little can be said about this. However, Aeneas later personally uses the same golden bough to gain entrance to Elysium and, in doing so, affixes it to the doorway of the Land of the Blessed.<sup>109</sup> This action directly parallels Augustus affixing Apollo's laurel wreath over both the Palatine Temple to Apollo and Augustus' own residence. The *princeps* himself includes this action in his own *Res Gestae*, along with mention of a *clipeus aureus* with which he adorned his Curia.<sup>110</sup> The allusion is intensified a short while later in Book Six, when in a field of laurel, priests and patriots sing songs that are *Phoebo digna*.<sup>111</sup> If the golden bough alludes to Apollo's laurel, then with it Aeneas is literally reenacting Augustus' dedication of a new era at the direction of Apollo and his Sibyl, later glorified by Horace in the *Carmen Saeculare*. The bough represents the Golden Age, which once existed for the Romans and is now returning at the hands of Augustus and his Apollo, and is the cause for Charon's nostalgic reaction. It should come as no surprise too that Vergil's representation of Augustus' new beginning takes place in the pivotal Book Six, the point recognized by scholars as Aeneas' rebirth as a Roman,

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<sup>108</sup> *Aen.* 6.408-409: *ille admirans venerabile donum / fatalis virgae longo post tempore visum.*

<sup>109</sup> 636: *ramumque adverso in limine figit.*

<sup>110</sup> *Res Gestae* 34: *et laureis postes aedium mearum vestiti publice coronaque civica super ianuam meam fixa est et clipeus aureus in curia Iulia positus.*

<sup>111</sup> *Aen.* 6.658-662.

having let go of his past when he passes through the underworld.<sup>112</sup> Aeneas, guided by Apollo's Sibyl, uses the golden bough just as Augustus, guided by Apollo, used his laurel to signify the return of the Golden Age.

The same laurel of Apollo is present at the transition into the Iliadic Books Seven through Twelve, in the narration of Latinus' foundation of his citadel. The laurel tree which presided over the foundation later is the source of the swarm of bees which announce Aeneas' arrival. The deity's presence is more prominent in the next foundation myth, that of Evander in Book Eight. Evander states that Apollo guided him from his exile to his new home in Latium. These scenes eventually give way to the description of the shield in Book Eight, which narrates scenes important to the growth of Rome, culminating with Actium and the triple triumph of Augustus, pictured sitting on the steps of the Palatine Temple to Actian Apollo. After Book Eight, Apollo nearly disappears from the narrative, an aspect of the *Aeneid* not lacking in great consequence. His minimal appearances carry maximum importance and impact to the Augustan message.

Apollo's greatest involvement in the last four books comes in Book Nine. Apollo himself descends from the sky and appears to Iulus as Butes, formerly the guardian of Anchises and now, at the direction of Aeneas, that of Ascanius. He does so after Iulus, formerly only the slayer of animals, is provoked into combat by Remulus. Iulus piously prays to Jupiter and only commits to battle after the god's approval is noted by a *signum*. In contrast to Remulus, Iulus hails his victory and Remulus' death with a minimal retort, which Apollo sees from his vantage point in the clouds. The god blesses Iulus' coming-of-age with prophecies previously directed only to Aeneas: his people will rise to the

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<sup>112</sup> Nicoll ("The Sacrifice of Palinurus," *Classical Quarterly New Series* 38 (1988): 459-472) pinpoints the burial of Palinurus specifically as Aeneas' last action as a Trojan, the only hindrance tying him to his past.

stars, bring an end to wars, and also grant him a future unencumbered by his Trojan past.<sup>113</sup> Apollo ends his address with a warning that Iulus should withdraw from battle. With that said, the *Dardanidae* recognize Apollo and prevent Aeneas' son from continuing further in the fight.<sup>114</sup>

By way of Apollo, the Augustan allusions are numerous and overt in this scene. Much like his descendant, the founder of the Julian clan has been impiously provoked into a necessary battle and piously enters into it with an invocation to the gods. Iulus defeats a man named both Numanus, evoking Rome's second king, and Remulus, recalling Remus, defeated by Rome's first king Romulus.<sup>115</sup> The victor, despite being eager for more battle and vengeance, is tempered by his patron divinity. This episode, in conjunction with Apollo's inclusion in it, again helps Vergil establish the allusion of Augustus as the *reconditor* of Rome. This scene also marks the transition of Apollo's guidance of Aeneas alone to that of Aeneas' descendants, represented by Iulus. His few appearances in the second half of the *Aeneid* recommend what is apparent in the Iulus episode of Book Nine, that Apollo is interested not in warfare, but in Rome's future and the destiny of the Julian *gens*.<sup>116</sup>

The Iapyx episode of Book Twelve, preceding Aeneas' climactic battle with Turnus, seems at first glance to be problematic to the idea that Apollo is Aeneas' guide

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<sup>113</sup> *Aen.* 9.644: *nec te Troia capit.*

<sup>114</sup> 590-663.

<sup>115</sup> The allusion to Numa Pompilius, a Sabine, is also encouraged by *en qui nostra sibi bello conubia poscunt* (600), a reference to the Rape of the Sabines.

<sup>116</sup> 10.171 (at the head of Aeneas' ship), 316 (Vergil describes Lichas, just killed by Aeneas, as dedicated to Apollo), 537 (Aeneas' slaughter of Haemonides, priest of Apollo and Trivia), 875 (Aeneas first invokes Jupiter, then Apollo, before fighting Mezentius), 11.785 (Apollo allows Arruns to kill Camilla, but only at the cost of his own death), and 12.520 (Turnus kills brothers from Apollo's Lycia along with the Menoetes, who hate war).

and personal savior. Having been wounded, Aeneas stands on the periphery of battle attended by Iapyx, who is attempting to mend the wound *medica Phoebique potentibus herbis*.<sup>117</sup> He not only fails, but Vergil explicitly states that Apollo himself does not help.<sup>118</sup> Rather, Venus lends her medicine, much to the ignorance of the mortals involved, which immediately heals the Trojan leader. Iapyx's words make it clear that he mistakes this as the work of Apollo: *neque te, Aenea, mea dextera servat: / maior agit deus atque opera ad maiora remittit*.<sup>119</sup> Without the audience's knowledge, one can easily understand this as pious humility, rather than actual insight. This episode is unsettling because *prima facie* it appears that Aeneas' perennial savior and guide is suddenly rendered impotent and subordinate to Venus. Another look, however, is required in order to give it the correct perspective and meaning.

The inclusion of Apollo in this scene means little to Aeneas, and more importantly, to Augustus, but instead has greater implications to the resolution of the poem. The *auctor Apollo* spoken of in this instance is neither the patron of Aeneas nor Augustus, but is instead the advisor of Iapyx, from whom the healer received his knowledge of the art.<sup>120</sup> The seemingly awkward interruption of swiftly moving and important events in 391-397 narrates Iapyx's choice of Apollo's gift of healing over all others in order to save his father Jason. Iapyx is described as *Phoebo ante alios dilectus*

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<sup>117</sup> 402: “[...] with the medicine and powerful herbs of Phoebus.”

<sup>118</sup> 405-406: *nihil auctor Apollo / subvenit*.

<sup>119</sup> 428-429: “Nor does my right hand save you, Aeneas: a greater god does and sends you back to greater deeds.”

<sup>120</sup> In only one other instance in the *Aeneid* does Vergil provide Apollo with the epithet *auctor*, and it also describes a third party, and in conjunction with *fortuna*, as is the case here in the Iapyx episode; cf. *Aen.* 8.334, 336: *Fortuna omnipotens et ineluctabile fatum....et deus auctor Apollo*.

and Apollo as *acri...captus amore*.<sup>121</sup> As such, Noonan correctly argues that this story, amidst a gravely important scene, helps emotionally prepare the audience for Aeneas' vengeance on behalf of his beloved Pallas at the end of Book Twelve.<sup>122</sup> The Augustan Apollo's absence in this episode is also poignant as a commentary on warfare, in conjunction with the earlier episode in Book Nine, in which Apollo lauds Iulus for his victory over Remulus.

Finally, Apollo and Augustus, through the Palatine Temple of Apollo, are also present in the climactic battle between Aeneas and Turnus, a duel which concludes the *Aeneid* and represents the beginning of the Roman race. The impetus of this duel, Pallas' *balteus*, is inscribed with the slaughter of a *manus iuvenum*, commonly identified as the sons of Aegyptus slain by the Danaids. Spence rightly states that this scene not only establishes an appropriate connection to Turnus, but more importantly acts as an allusive response to the scene recently found on the *porticus* of the Palatine Temple of Apollo and thus parallels Aeneas' sacrificial and justified killing of Turnus at the climax of the poem to Octavian's defeat of Marc Antony at the Battle of Actium.<sup>123</sup> Spence further argues that, because of this apt association, "the *Aeneid* was intended as a textual temple of Apollo."<sup>124</sup> The particularly Augustan Apollo is evoked at the climax of Aeneas' foundation of Rome.

Octavian inherited an empire that had been shattered by generations of civil war, and he needed to convince the populace not only that the violence had stopped, but also

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<sup>121</sup> 391: "[...] beloved before all others by Phoebus"; 392: "[...] seized by a fierce love."

<sup>122</sup> J.D. Noonan, "The Iapyx Episode of 'Aeneid' 12 and Medical Tales in Myth and Mythography," *Phoenix* 51 (1997): 374-392.

<sup>123</sup> Spence, "Clinching the Text," 11-19.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

that peace would continue. By employing a circle of poets recommended to him by his literary patron Maecenas, the *princeps* capitalized on his early affinity for and political association with Apollo, particularly the Apollo who oversaw Octavian's most defining event, his victory at Actium. While the poets began to write of a return to the Golden Age brought on by Apollo, Octavian dedicated and built a Temple to Apollo on the Palatine Hill, blurring the line between public and private, and political and personal. The poets, perhaps at the behest of the *princeps*, employed Apollo and this structure to praise the Palatine's resident, and to communicate the divinely guaranteed political and social program of the new regime. Augustus sought to establish his rule as a destined re-foundation of Rome through Vergil's narrative in the *Aeneid*, which revealed Apollo to be Augustus' personal patron and divine guarantor of success.

Aeneas, the epic Augustan figure, is personally counseled by Apollo, whose prophecy and guidance throughout the poem direct the leader towards Italy and his destiny as founder of Rome. Apollo's guidance is provided even at the expense of traditionally epic prophets, such as the shades of Creusa and Hector, as well as the living Anchises. At the climax of the *Aeneid's* Augustan propaganda, Palatine Apollo is present as the Sibyl leads Aeneas through the destiny of Rome and when Aeneas slaughters Turnus, thus guaranteeing that destiny.

In stark contrast to the Vergilian Apollo, Statius' representation of the divinity in the *Thebaid* is brutal and impious. The Flavian poet also alludes to Domitian's rule through his characterization of Jupiter, which acts as a literary response to Vergil's Apollo/Augustus, and serves to undermine and supplant Augustan ideology. The parallels between Domitian and Jupiter are overt and intended to equate the emperor and

the king of gods and men; Jupiter is the divine manifestation of an emperor who perpetuated his role as *dominus et deus*. Chapter Three will explore this relationship, which Statius establishes throughout the *Thebaid*.

### CHAPTER 3

#### JUPITER AND THESEUS IN THE *THEBAID*:

#### AUTOCRATIC REPRESENTATIONS OF DOMITIAN

This chapter examines the relationship Statius establishes between Jupiter and Domitian throughout the *Thebaid*. The parallels Statius draws in his *Silvae* are overt and intended to equate the emperor and the king of gods and men. The parallels continue in the *Thebaid* in which Jupiter is presented as the divine manifestation of an emperor who perpetuated his role as *dominus et deus*.

Statius begins his comparison in the *Thebaid* topographically, by framing Jupiter's council of the gods in terms very similar to those found in *Silvae* 4.2, as the poet describes Domitian's *cenatio Iovis* at the opening of his palace on the Palatine.<sup>125</sup> A contemporary Roman audience would have readily accepted this suggestion, since the emperor openly identified himself as Jupiter from early on in his reign, as imperial coinage reflects. This identification is augmented by Statius' evocation of the Capitoline Games in 1.421-426. More specifically, the poet repeatedly provides the epithet *Tonans* in the *Thebaid*, evoking the manifestation of Jupiter inextricably linked to the emperor's mythology of his salvation on the site of the Temple to Jupiter Tonans (and thereafter rededicated as the Sacellum of Jupiter Custos/Conservator).

This Jupiter-Domitian association established so early in the epic defines the emperor's role as *dominus et deus* and so reflects on the actions of Jupiter in Books Two-Eleven. Book Twelve, despite and, in fact, because of the narrative absence of Jupiter,

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<sup>125</sup> *Thebaid* 1.197-302.

further defines and focuses Statius' glorification of Domitian. The remarkable abdication of the gods in Book Eleven, delineated in almost catalogue fashion, leaves Jupiter's status uncertain.<sup>126</sup> However, the dramatic appearance in 12.519 of the previously absent Theseus responds to this uncertainty. By no means is this character just the Athenian king, but he is introduced as an allusion to Domitian by way of *iamque domos patrias Scythicae post aspera gentis / proelia*.<sup>127</sup> Scythia is in roughly the same area where the emperor, always hungry to be recognized for military glory, had defeated the Sarmatians in 89 CE. Literary recognition for this victory comes amidst the first identification of Theseus by name in line 520: *laurigero subeuntem Thesea curru*.<sup>128</sup> The remaining lines of Book Twelve reinforce the connection with Domitian through epithets evoking Theseus' descent from Jupiter's brother, Neptune.<sup>129</sup> The Jupiter/Neptune-Theseus connection is most explicit at the climax of Theseus' role in Book Twelve: *qualis Hyperboreos ubi nubilus institit axes / Iuppiter et prima tremefecit sidera bruma*.<sup>130</sup> It is because of this eventual association in Book Twelve that Statius, whether by imitation of earlier precedent or through innovation, extends Jupiter's association with lightning and storms to a Neptunian dominion over water throughout the entire *Thebaid*.

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<sup>126</sup> 409-423; there is uncertainty, despite earlier mention that Jupiter *visusque nocentibus arvis / abstulit* (11.134-135); see also 12.205-209.

<sup>127</sup> 12.519-520: "[...] and now to his country's homes after the harsh battles of the Scythian race." K.F.L. Pollmann, *Statius: Thebaid 12, Introduction, Text, and Commentary* (Zurich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2004), 41: Statius' use of Theseus to resolve the conflict at the final moment is based on, among others, Euripides' *Herakles*.

<sup>128</sup> "[...] Theseus going forth in his chariot adorned with laurels."

<sup>129</sup> Cf. 12.588, 665, 730.

<sup>130</sup> 650-651: "Just like when cloud-bringing Jupiter stood on the Hyperborean skies and caused the stars to tremble at the onset of winter."

Statius' use of Jupiter in his *Silvae* and *Thebaid* parallels Vergil's Augustan Apollo in that the poet capitalized on the personal mythology his *princeps* was already promoting through his building and cultural programs. As Augustus had employed Apollo to exemplify the Augustan political program, so too did Domitian use Jupiter to perpetuate his own political identity. Within a matter of weeks of his accession, it became clear to the Roman senators that Domitian would define his reign in different terms than did his father and brother. Lacking both the experience of Vespasian and the diplomatic skill set of Titus, the youngest Flavian made little attempt to mitigate the autocratic and despotic nature of his principate. Surpassing the precedents of Augustus, Caligula, and Nero, Domitian proclaimed his wife *Augusta* and deified his dead son within two weeks of assuming power.<sup>131</sup> He then set a new precedent by being elected to the consulship for the first ten years of his reign and by permanently holding the censorship. It was through this latter office that Domitian autocratically added and purged members of the senate whenever he deemed it necessary, instead of during the normal eighteen-month period mandated by custom and tradition.<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, Domitian put eleven or more senators to death and exiled many more during his reign, ignoring the Senate's repeated decrees condemning this practice of killing their brethren.<sup>133</sup> While this may be the most instructive illustration of Domitian's strained relationship with the senate, it is by no means the only narrative of the formerly august body's estranged relations with their emperor. Domitian's reign was in many ways

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<sup>131</sup> Augustus was worshiped as a living god, Caligula deified Livia, and Nero deified Claudius. For Domitian's deifications, see Brian Jones, *The Emperor Domitian* (London: Routledge, 1992), 161-162.

<sup>132</sup> Jones (p. 162) notes that, despite being elected, Domitian refused the consulship on a number of occasions, which added to the senate's displeasure towards their new emperor.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

defined by the distance he created between himself in his Palatine palace and the senators, who, except for the few *amici*, rarely enjoyed his company.

It is no surprise that, by this reckoning, Domitian defined himself politically by the most autocratic of deities, Jupiter.<sup>134</sup> In contrast to his personal affinity and devotion to Minerva, Jupiter became the closest corollary to Domitian's public relationship and authority over Rome and its Senate.<sup>135</sup> The emperor, who himself was addressed as *dominus et deus*, cultivated Jupiter in his mythology, his cultural program, and his building program to serve as a model for his rule.

Domitian's earliest association with Jupiter surrounds the dramatic episode of the Vitellian sack of the Capitol in 69 CE. The climactic event in what became known as the Year of the Four Emperors saw Vespasian's brother Sabinus and his supporters mount a defense from the Capitol on December 19, only to be overtaken by Vitellius' forces. Domitian, who had been summoned by Sabinus, fared better than his uncle and fled. The events of December 19 and 20 are narrated, although differing somewhat in detail, by Dio, Josephus, Suetonius, and Tacitus.<sup>136</sup> Suetonius says that Domitian was hidden by an *aedituus* and then escaped in the morning dressed as an attendant of Isis, eventually staying at the house of the mother of one of his friends.<sup>137</sup> Tacitus states that Domitian escaped the Vitellian siege that night dressed as a worshiper of Isis and then stayed with Cornelius Primus. The next morning, Domitian was hailed as Caesar by the Flavians.

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<sup>134</sup> Domitian had precedent; even before the Flavians, Domitian had the example of Galba, who traced his family back to Jupiter and Pasiphae, (Suetonius, *Vita Galbae* 2).

<sup>135</sup> For the parallel to Augustus' Venus and Apollo, see Chapter Two.

<sup>136</sup> See Dio 65.17.2-5; Josephus, *Bellum Iudaeicum* 4.645-9; Suet., *Vita Domitiani* 1.2; Tacitus, *Historiae* 4.59, 69, and 74.

<sup>137</sup> Dio says this person was Sabinus the Younger.

Although the details are inconsistent among the historiographers, the role the attendant played in this episode is secured by the fact that Domitian memorialized his house with a shrine to Jupiter Conservator as thanks for the future emperor's deliverance by the god from danger. Domitian later monumentalized this shrine into the Temple to Jupiter Custos.<sup>138</sup> Tacitus says that the temple was huge, that it had a marble altar with a relief of his escape, and the cult image may even have depicted Jupiter carrying Domitian to safety.<sup>139</sup>

Domitian publicized this mythology on imperial coinage as well. From 81-84 CE, he commissioned *aurei* and *denarii* to Jupiter Conservator that displayed an eagle with a thunderbolt.<sup>140</sup> Accompanying these coins are *sestertii* from the same period and later which depict Domitian himself with Jupiter's thunderbolt.<sup>141</sup> Almost without exception, this type is paired with *sestertii* and *dupondii* depicting Jupiter and his thunderbolt, the only difference being the god's typically seated position, which is found on the majority

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<sup>138</sup> This temple was modeled on Augustus' Temple of Jupiter Tonans (Ch. Reusser, "Iuppiter Conservator," in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, ed. Eva Margareta Steinby (Roma: Edizioni Quasar di Severino Tognon s.r.l., 1996), 3: 131-132). The identification of this temple has been problematic, with contrasting, but just as compelling, identifications, one of which is on the Haterii relief (Robin Haydon Darwall-Smith, *Emperors and Architecture: A Study of Flavian Rome* (Brussels: Latomus, 1996), 111).

<sup>139</sup> *Hist.* 3.74: *ac potiente rerum patre, disiecto aeditui contubernio, modicum sacellum Iovi Conservatori aramque posuit casus suos in marmore expressam; mox imperium adeptus Iovi Custodi templum ingens seque in sinu dei sacravit.*

<sup>140</sup> Harold Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1966), 2: 309, nos. 51-53. See also the discussion in Kenneth Scott, *The Imperial Cult Under the Flavians* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1936), 91-92.

<sup>141</sup> Mattingly, 372; 377; 381, no. 381; 389, no. 410; 399, no. 443; 403, no. 465.

of them.<sup>142</sup> Even the ubiquitous presence of Minerva, Domitian's patron goddess, is depicted with Jupiter's thunderbolt on imperial coinage.<sup>143</sup>

The fact that Domitian's salvation by Jupiter at the siege of the Capitol was a defining moment for the future emperor is also proven by the poetry that Martial says Domitian penned.<sup>144</sup> The court poets eulogized this event as well, which at the very least was an act of imitation and at the most was at the behest of the emperor himself. Whether by imitation or invitation, Domitian's association with and salvation by Jupiter became central to his imperial propaganda.

Domitian's identity with Jupiter continued throughout his reign. The infamous appellation *dominus et deus* is attested in some letters in 86 CE.<sup>145</sup> The significance of this epithet is profound. Considering that previously deified emperors were granted the adjectival *divus*, and then only posthumously by vote of the Senate, Domitian flouted the convention while alive and demanded that he be equated directly to Jupiter, the master and god himself.

If Suetonius is to be believed, a series of lightning strikes over an eight month span localized on Domitianic structures: the Capitolium, the Temple of the Gens Flavia, and the Palatine complex, specifically his bed chamber. Additionally, the inscription on his triumphal statue was blown off by a whirlwind. To these portents, Domitian is said to

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 360; 362; 366; 369; 375, no. 354; 376, no. 362; 377; 378; 380, no. 373; 381, no. 381; 384; 386; 388, no. 406; 403, no. 464; 406, no. 474.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 306-355, plates 59-68.

<sup>144</sup> Martial 5.5.7. See also Ruurd B Nauta, *Poetry for Patrons: Literary Communication in the Age of Domitian* (Boston: Brill, 2002), 202. Pliny (*Natural History*, Praef. 5) also says that Domitian wrote poetry when he was young.

<sup>145</sup> *Dom.* 13.1 and 15.2. Evidence for this address is found also in Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 11.2; *Epitome De Caesaribus* 11.6; Dio 67.4.7 and 67.13.3-4; and Eutropius 7.23.

have responded, “*feriat iam quem volet.*”<sup>146</sup> These lightning strikes then precipitated a dream in 96 CE which foretold his death and in which Minerva claimed she could not protect him anymore, since Jupiter had rendered her powerless. The truth notwithstanding, even the fabrication of such a story lends credence to a deliberate mythological narrative coupling Domitian’s well-known personal devotion to Minerva with a more public and political identification with Jupiter.

Domitian defined his public and political devotion to Jupiter through his topographical program as well. The emperor first memorialized the Capitol, the site both of his “rescue” and later of his games, to Jupiter, with a *sacellum*, then monumentalized the same space with a temple, and finally he returned the favor shown to him by Jupiter with an impressively swift resurrection of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus from fire. Domitian’s temple to his Guardian certainly would have been overwhelmed by this most impressive element of his building program. Having enjoyed a life-span of only four years since its most recent reconstruction in 76, the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus again burned down to its Republican foundations by the 80 CE fire.<sup>147</sup> Domitian’s work here is especially revealing, as he was able to complete a project begun by his brother Titus, and thus show the continuity of his brother’s plans, while at the same time adding an extravagance not yet seen on the Capitol.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> *Dom.* 15.2: “Let him strike now whom he wishes.”

<sup>147</sup> G. Tagliamonte, “Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Capitolinus, Aedes, Templum (Fino all’a 83 A.C.” in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, ed. Eva Margareta Steinby (Roma: Edizioni Quasar di Severino Tognon s.r.l., 1996), 3: 144-148.

<sup>148</sup> Scott (*Imperial Cult Under the Flavians*, 88-89) remarks, “The fact that the first part of his reign is described as having been...marked by excellent features may perhaps indicate that the emperor tried... to keep on good terms with the senatorial class.”

Domitian's devotion to Jupiter perhaps can be seen not only in the extravagance, but also in the speed with which he rebuilt the Capitol.<sup>149</sup> The *Acta* of the Arval Brotherhood refer to a prayer including the *restitutio et dedicatio Capitoli* on December 7, 80 CE, which dates the beginning of the project to Titus.<sup>150</sup> A coin dating from 82 CE also shows the rededication of the temple.<sup>151</sup> While a two year period is most likely too short a time to have rebuilt a temple as massive as this one,<sup>152</sup> it is clear that the building was given priority and was completed at least by the middle of the 80s.<sup>153</sup>

Despite not having any remains from this third incarnation of the structure, it is very likely that the temple plan executed by Domitian was almost exactly like its predecessors.<sup>154</sup> What may have been of greater consequence to Domitian's public perception were the changes he did make for the new Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. While the emperor was not able to change the layout, he certainly took liberty with building materials. Plutarch relates that the Capitoline project alone cost twelve thousand talents, and much of this was owed to the Pentelic marble used to cover the exterior, which complemented the gold-plated doors and gilded roof tiles. Domitian also changed the columns from the original Tuscan order to the Corinthian, again made of

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<sup>149</sup> Domitian's devotion can also perhaps be witnessed by Suetonius' account (*Dom.* 8.5) concerning some bricks from the Capitolium a freedman had relegated for his own use: *ac ne qua religio deum impune contaminaretur, monumentum, quod libertus eius e lapidibus templo Capitolini Iovis destinatis filio exstruxerat, diruit per milites ossaque et reliquias quae inerant mari mersit.*

<sup>150</sup> Jones, *The Emperor Domitian*, 92.

<sup>151</sup> Darwall-Smith, 107.

<sup>152</sup> Josephus (*Bellum Iudaicum* 7.5.7) says that the Temple of Peace, another huge undertaking by the Flavians, was completed in four years' time.

<sup>153</sup> Darwall-Smith, 107.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

Pentelic marble.<sup>155</sup> The cult image was probably made of ivory and gold, although this was most likely standard practice by Flavian times.<sup>156</sup> In contrast to the reaction of writers such as Plutarch,<sup>157</sup> influenced by the *damnatio memoriae* passed against Domitian after his death in 96,<sup>158</sup> the reaction of the populace was probably overwhelmingly positive. It is not difficult to imagine the pride and peace this newly rebuilt monument instilled in the Romans, as well as the indelible connection between Domitian and Jupiter it represented. Indeed, the controversy over the supposed two year completion period points to the fact that Domitian was conscious of the positive impact that this temple's quick resurrection would have had on the people and on his image as *imperator*.<sup>159</sup>

Also of consequence, albeit somewhat more indirectly, to Domitian's public and political identification with Jupiter is his Porticus Divorum, built in the Campus Martius. This new structure replaced the old Villa Publica and acted as the center of an entirely new religious complex honoring the Flavian family.<sup>160</sup> This included the Temple to

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<sup>155</sup> Amanda Claridge, *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 238.

<sup>156</sup> See *Dom.* 13.2 and Pliny, *Panegyricus* 52.1, 3.

<sup>157</sup> Plutarch's personal commentary (*Publicola* 15.5.101-102) is worth noting here: "If anyone who is amazed at the costliness of the Capitol had seen a single colonnade in the Palace of Domitian, or a basilica, or a bath, or the apartments for his concubines . . . he would have been moved to say to Domitian, 'Thou art diseased; thy mania is to build; like the famous Midas thou desirest that everything become gold and stone at thy touch.'" Trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1914), 543.

<sup>158</sup> Pat Southern, *Domitian: Tragic Tyrant* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1997), 34.

<sup>159</sup> This is analogous to Augustus, who was also well aware of the positive impact his building program has on his people.

<sup>160</sup> Darwall-Smith, 156.

Minerva Chalcidica, which was adjacent and connected to the new Porticus.<sup>161</sup> The Porticus Divorum monumentalized and also redefined the area for a more militaristic purpose as the new starting point used by Vespasian and Titus in their Judaeian triumph, and by Domitian in his double triumph over the Germans and Dacians.<sup>162</sup> The new structure included two *aedes*, one to Titus and the other probably to Vespasian,<sup>163</sup> the presence of which institutionalized the imperial cult in a way that openly recognized the entire Flavian family as divine, in great contrast to the previously individual identifications of Vespasian and Titus.<sup>164</sup> Domitian characterized himself as the living representative of this divine group, his family, in the manner of Jupiter at the head of the Roman pantheon.

Two more structures, a stadium and odeon, also perpetuated Domitian's identification with Jupiter. His stadium was built first and dedicated in 86 CE,<sup>165</sup> the odeon was begun later and remained unfinished upon Domitian's assassination in 96.<sup>166</sup> Their significance lies not in the structures themselves, but in the specific purpose for which they were erected.<sup>167</sup> The stadium was a remarkable step in the Domitianic

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<sup>161</sup> Jones, 88: the Chronographer of 354 gives this building as Domitianic and the Regionary Catalogue claims a Domitianic temple linked to the Porticus by steps.

<sup>162</sup> This is not the only area Domitian monumentalizes, as he will later build the Forum Transitorium on the Argiletum between the Fora of Julius Caesar and Augustus. This is treated in full by James C. Anderson Jr., "The Historical Topography of the Imperial Fora," *Collection Latomus* 182 (1984): 119-139.

<sup>163</sup> Jones, 87. Vespasian's and Titus' triumph was in 83. *Ibid.*, 139: the fact that Domitian's triumph in 86 is highly debated, despite the testimony of Suetonius, is inconsequential here.

<sup>164</sup> Darwall-Smith, 178.

<sup>165</sup> P. Virgili, "Stadium Domitiani," in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, ed. Eva Margareta Steinby (Roma: Edizioni Quasar di Severino Tognon s.r.l., 1996), 4: 341-343.

<sup>166</sup> Claridge, 209; P. Virgili, "Odeum, Odium," in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, ed. Eva Margareta Steinby (Roma: Edizioni Quasar di Severino Tognon s.r.l., 1996), 3: 359-360.

program in that it was the first permanent stadium in Rome, which complemented his family's Amphitheater as the first lasting monument of its kind.<sup>168</sup> More importantly, the stadium held the Capitoline Games in honor of Jupiter starting in 86.<sup>169</sup> While other emperors had tried to import the Greek games to Rome, none had done more than create a singular spectacle of entertainment. The Julio-Claudian attempts were met with disdain and prejudice against Greek pastimes, for there was very little about them that was not Greek.<sup>170</sup> Nero's version was no less Greek, but was exacerbated by the emperor's continual participation. Domitian, despite his affinity for literature and his reputation as a marksman with bow and arrow, did not compete, and he left his name out of the games in favor of Jupiter.<sup>171</sup>

The games seem to have been a success not only as a competition, but also as a vehicle for Flavian propaganda. Much of the poetry that was submitted took the form of praise for Flavian Rome, and so focused the public's attention on what Domitian and his predecessors had done for Rome in the wake of Nero's rule.<sup>172</sup> Domitian presided over the games as the traditional Greek *agonothetes*,<sup>173</sup> which successfully communicated a cultural identification with eastern parts of the Roman Empire, while not seeming to

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<sup>167</sup> Darwall-Smith, 222.

<sup>168</sup> Claridge, 215: although Pompey famously built his stone Theater under the guise of a temple in 55 BCE, it was not until the Amphitheatrum Flavianum that Rome saw its first stone amphitheater.

<sup>169</sup> Darwall-Smith, 223. Jones, 103: Domitian almost completely depleted the treasury to build for these games.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.: even the athletes were probably imported from Greece.

<sup>171</sup> Darwall-Smith, 225: this contrasted with the "Neronian" games.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 127-128. Statius and Florus are just two examples.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 178: Domitian wore the typical purple shoes and Greek cloak.

supplant Roman *mores* in favor of Greek.<sup>174</sup> To further the connection between the Flavians and the Capitoline, Domitian was accompanied onstage by the *Flamen Dialis* and the *Collegium Sodalium Flavianum Titium*, the priestly college instituted by Domitian on the Augustan precedent of his *seviri Augustales*.<sup>175</sup> Domitian wore a gold crown adorned with the Capitoline triad; his *sodales* were dressed as he was, but instead wore the image of the Domitian himself on their gold crowns.<sup>176</sup> This coupled the image of Jupiter Capitolinus, both visually and metaphorically, with that of Domitian. As part of the games, Domitian also led a procession to the Capitoline and the newly rebuilt Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus.<sup>177</sup> These games were the most public proclamation of the emperor's identification with Jupiter.

The Palatine is especially illustrative of the changed role of the principate, as Domitian redefined it from the early imperial leaders. Augustus had created a palatial residence by legally, if not forcefully, buying up aristocratic housing along the Hill. But however grand his residence was in scale, his actual dwelling was meager in appearance, following the *princeps*' public perception. Augustus also interwove the public, private, and religious areas of the Hill in such a way that it was difficult to distinguish them from each other. Domitian, like Nero before him, expanded on this idea. The imperial palace encompassed virtually the entire hill, including all of the structures erected and areas exploited by his predecessors. Domitian's architect Rabirius retained the established

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<sup>174</sup> Alex Hardie, "Poetry and Politics at the Games of Domitian" in *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text*, eds. A.J. Boyle and W.J. Dominik (Boston: Brill, 2003), 129.

<sup>175</sup> Southern, 38, 45: these priests were the appointed caretakers of the Flavian *gens* and thus also the *Templum Gentis Flaviae*, which Domitian established on his family's Quirinal home.

<sup>176</sup> Darwall-Smith, 178; Jones, 103.

<sup>177</sup> Hardie, "Poetry and Politics at the Games of Domitian," 130.

Julio-Claudian imprint, and also created a giant complex of public and private space modeled on contemporary aristocratic residences. In doing so, Domitian used that model as a basis for nearly unprecedented extravagance. The site itself was imposing (as it was in Nero's time), especially looking up to it from the Circus Maximus, but the layout and the rooms spoke volumes about how Domitian regarded his relationship to the aristocracy and to the Roman people. Much of the Domus Tiberiana was rebuilt on the same plan, but Rabirius also extended the palace to the east (over the remains of Nero's Domus Transitoria), and he added a myriad of rooms of impressively various shapes and sizes, including several colonnaded halls, gardens, and even an area resembling an hippodrome, although it was surely too small to hold races.<sup>178</sup> Rabirius usurped public architecture for Domitian's private extravagance.<sup>179</sup>

Superficially, the entire Domus Flavia and Domus Augustana complex is indicative of the Neronian influence of personal luxury. The decoration that was publicly acclaimed on the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus is here used on a scale parallel only to the infamous Domus Aurea, and just as correlative is the grand experimentation in that luxury. While the hippodrome area and others are novel, the greatest example of architectural manipulation for the display of Domitian's authority is seen in the triclinium, or *cenatio Iovis*, celebrated by Statius in *Silvae* 4.2.

Domitian's *cenatio Iovis* mirrors the triclinia of hundreds of aristocratic houses, but the scale was hugely magnified. The room was almost one hundred feet long and just

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<sup>178</sup> C. Krause, "Domus Tiberiana," in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, ed. Eva Margareta Steinby (Roma: Edizioni Quasar di Severino Tognon s.r.l., 1996), 2: 189-197: the creation of such a space lacking in utility other than a garden is itself grand testimony to the nature of this residence.

<sup>179</sup> James E. Packer, "Plurima et Amplissima Opera: Parsing Flavian Rome," in *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text*, eds. A.J. Boyle and W.J. Dominik (Boston: Brill, 2003), 177.

as high.<sup>180</sup> The ceiling was supported by three levels of columns and the southwest wall was apsed. Windows and fountains provided an impressive amount of light throughout the structure. Fredrick suggests that, during dinners, Domitian sat in front of the apse with his guests looking up at him, which would have impressed upon them his role as Jupiter on Earth. The *cenatio*, as well as the entire Palatine complex, was symbolic of the emperor's power over the people. This imagery is no more greatly illustrated than by Dio Cassius' description of a dinner at the imperial residence hosted by Domitian, in which a group of senators summoned to the palace found themselves enshrouded in complete darkness, even to the point of slaves painted black, only to be dismissed before actually eating anything and terrified that at any moment their throats would be slashed.<sup>181</sup> While the story may in fact be fabricated, it is apparent from the narration that the emperor utilized his palace to evoke fear, and probably did so, on a regular basis.<sup>182</sup> The *cenatio* is the ultimate architectural expression of oppressive power. The palace towered over both the Forum and the Circus Maximus, Domitian himself towered over his dinner guests, and his autocracy towered over a castrated senatorial body. This is far removed from the purportedly humble dwellings of the Augustan household and the hut of Romulus, which the Julio-Claudians were careful to cultivate.<sup>183</sup> As much as Augustus' building program sought to reinvigorate republican ideals, Domitian's communicated

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<sup>180</sup> David Fredrick, "Architecture and Surveillance in Flavian Rome," in *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text*, eds. A.J. Boyle and W.J. Dominik (Boston: Brill, 2003), 215.

<sup>181</sup> *Roman History* 67.9.1-5; it is not entirely clear if Dio places this scene in the actual *cenatio Iovis*. The narrative is illustrative nonetheless.

<sup>182</sup> Along the same lines is the story Suetonius (*Dom.* 14.4) recounts that the emperor had rooms built of highly reflective surfaces so he could see behind him in the event of an assassination attempt.

<sup>183</sup> Claridge, 238: the fact that the hut is still in existence in the fourth century is evidence enough that Domitian probably had this structure rebuilt too, although its absence from the literature indicates its lack of importance after the Julio-Claudians, especially compared to the treatment it gets during the Golden Age.

absolute power, primarily through allusions to, and by the model of, Jupiter, the king of gods and men. This is also true of the poetry which praised Domitian.

Earlier, Seneca wrote to the new emperor Nero, *hoc adfectare, hoc imitari decet, maximum ita haberi, ut optimus simul habere*.<sup>184</sup> It is no coincidence that the tutor advised his emperor to perpetuate his identity as *maximus* and *optimus*, the same epithets identifying the leader of the Roman religious state, Jupiter.<sup>185</sup> Another of Nero's court, Lucan, after broaching the subject in the same way Vergil and Horace claimed Augustus' rule had been ordained and would institute a Golden Age after years of civil war, also extends the comparison into simple equality: *sed mihi iam numen*.<sup>186</sup>

Under Domitian, all pretense of a mere association with divinity or the promise of a later apotheosis is abandoned in favor of the direct comparison seen briefly in Lucan. Considering the resurgence of literary patronage for which Domitian was responsible, the deliberate and dramatic implications to his reign and to the cultural identity of his rule cannot be overstated. Although Silius Italicus claims that Domitian will become a god later,<sup>187</sup> Quintilian, at the beginning of his fourth book of *Institutiones*, invokes Domitian instead of the Muses, insinuating his divinity. The writer not only equates the emperor with the gods, but also claims that no other is better suited towards his needs.<sup>188</sup> Martial

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<sup>184</sup> *de Clementia* 1.19.8-9: "It is proper to strive for this, to portray this, to be so regarded as the greatest, so that you may be at the same time regarded as the best."

<sup>185</sup> Cf. Pliny's advice to Trajan (*Pan.* 80), in which he uses *mundi parens*. Despite the similar message, the verbiage here is different after Domitian's *damnatio memoriae*, which distance is typical of writers under the new dynasty. See also Suetonius' comments (*Dom.* 5), writing in the time of Hadrian, about Domitian's predilection towards replacing the original builders' names with his own on the buildings he restored. See also Gordon Williams, *Change and Decline: Roman Literature in the Early Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 159.

<sup>186</sup> *Pharsalia* 1.63: "[...] but to me now divine." See Williams, 163.

<sup>187</sup> 3.625: *o nate deum divosque dature*.

and Statius are at the apex of this flattery and directly refer to Domitian as *dominus* and Jupiter.<sup>189</sup>

It is clear from Martial's writing that literary patronage in the time of Domitian required a degree of flattery previously unseen. The poet repeatedly refers to Domitian as *dominus*, *deus*, *Tonans*, and *Iuppiter* himself.<sup>190</sup> Indeed, it is Martial who also infamously employs the title *dominus et deus* in his own writing.<sup>191</sup> Calling Domitian *deus* and *Iuppiter/Tonans* is overt flattery, but even the title *dominus* was significant.<sup>192</sup> The first instance of *dominus* is found in 1.4 (used adjectivally), in which Martial claims that Caesar's mere frown lords over the world.<sup>193</sup> In Book Five, the term is used amidst Martial's dedication to Domitian, *quintus cum domino liber iocatur*.<sup>194</sup> 5.5 uses *deus* and *dominus* to refer to Domitian in such proximity of line, syntax, and meter, that the poet

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<sup>188</sup> 4.5: *nunc omnis in auxilium deos ipsumque in primis quo neque praesentius aliud nec studii magis propitium numen est invocem*. See Williams (p. 165-166), for the comparison with Valerius Maximus' invocation to Tiberius.

<sup>189</sup> Williams, 166.

<sup>190</sup> *Dominus*: 1.4.2, 2.92.4, 4.67.4, 5.2.6, 5.5.3, 5.6.18, 5.8.1, 6.64.14, 7.2.1, 7.5.5, 7.12.1, 7.34.8, 8.praef.1, 8.1.1, 8.2.6, 8.31.3, 8.32.6, 8.36.12, 8.82.2, 9.16.3, 9.17.3, 9.20.2, 9.23.3, 9.24.6, 9.28.7, 9.56.1, 9.61.9, 9.66.3, 9.84.2, 10.72.3; *deus*: 2.24.7, 2.59.4, 4.1.10, 5.3.6, 5.8.1, 5.55.3, 7.5.3, 7.8.2, 7.34.8, 7.99.8, 8.2.6, 8.8.6, 8.82.3, 9.24.4, 9.28.8 (Domitian is here directly compared to Jupiter), 9.66.3, 10.72.3; *Tonans*: 5.55.1, 6.10.9, 7.56.4, 7.60.2, 7.99.1, 8.39.5, 9.39.1, 9.86.7, 9.91.5; *Iuppiter*: 5.6.9, 5.63.6 (invoked together), 6.10.1 and 3, 7.56.3, 9.36.2 (refers to Jupiter as *alterius Iovis*), 9.86.8, 9.91.6, 9.101.14 (Jupiter called Domitian's patron).

<sup>191</sup> 5.8.1, 7.34.8, 8.2.6, 9.66.3, 10.72.3.

<sup>192</sup> Leonard Thompson ("Domitianus Dominus: A Gloss on Statius' *Silvae* 1.6.84," *American Journal of Philology* 105 (1984): 472) argues that Martial's use of *dominus et deus*, coupled with the absence of this term in Statius and Quintilian, is owed to the fact that Martial was never admitted into the circle of imperial poets and so sought to impress Domitian by more deliberate flattery. It is this desperation that causes his bitterness after Domitian's death.

<sup>193</sup> The impact and potency of Domitian's mere countenance is a trope Statius frequently uses in both the *Silvae* and *Thebaid* as well.

<sup>194</sup> 5.2.5: "My fifth book jokes with its master."

clearly regards them as synonyms.<sup>195</sup> The portion of Martial's corpus written after Domitian's death is just as instructive; it elucidates the necessity for these types of address while the emperor was alive, as the poet speaks ruefully of the dead emperor's preferred *dominus et deus* in 10.72.<sup>196</sup>

Against this backdrop of panegyric is Statius, who wrote his *Silvae* in the latter half of Domitian's reign.<sup>197</sup> Just as Horace, and Vergil's *Georgics*, defined Augustus' relationship with Apollo, Statius' *Silvae* makes Domitian's relationship with Jupiter explicit by recalling the topographical and mythological narrative Domitian himself promoted. Statius openly declares *hic est deus* and *hunc iubet beatis / pro se Iuppiter imperare terris*.<sup>198</sup> This flattery is typical of Statius throughout the *Silvae*, poems which clearly define Domitian's role as *regnator terrarum*, *magnus parens*, *spes hominum*, and *cura deorum*.<sup>199</sup> Lest his audience mistake the emperor as merely *dux hominum*,<sup>200</sup> entire poems are addressed to his divinity in reference to his subjects and to his heavenly abode.

Of his five books, Statius is known to have hand-picked his best poetry for inclusion in the first. Among the poems of that first book, Statius gives new meaning to the formulaic beginning, *a Iove principium*, by first celebrating the equestrian statue of Domitian that was erected in the Forum Romanum.<sup>201</sup> Statius, at the behest of the

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<sup>195</sup> 5.5.2-3.

<sup>196</sup> 10.72.3: *dicturus dominum deumque non sum*; 10.72.8: *non est hic dominus, sed imperator*.

<sup>197</sup> See Bailey's Introduction (p. 4) in *Statius: Silvae* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003): Statius probably wrote the *Silvae* from 89-96 CE: the first three books were published after 93, the fourth book in 95, and the fifth just after his death.

<sup>198</sup> 4.3.128-129: "He is a god... Jupiter orders him to rule the blessed lands on his behalf."

<sup>199</sup> 4.2.14-15.

<sup>200</sup> 4.3.139; he is then equally hailed as *parens deorum* in the same line.

emperor himself,<sup>202</sup> describes the statue as an image carried down from the gods, depicting Domitian in triumph over the Chatti and Dacians. A statue of Minerva, Domitian's personal divinity, accompanies him and carries her aegis, which, as Statius explains in the *Thebaid*, Jupiter had entrusted to the goddess.<sup>203</sup>

As is frequent throughout the *Silvae*, the poem is a vehicle of praise for Domitian, who here, Statius claims, found victory in what the poet terms *bella Iovis*.<sup>204</sup> However, Statius' audience may have needed to grow accustomed to the idea that Domitian was an earth-bound Jupiter, for one of his purposes of *Silvae* 1.1 is to relate this idea indirectly; an *imago* is the perfect subject matter to this end. The presence of Minerva, Domitian's personal divinity, only hints at a link to Jupiter; Domitian's status as *victor* in a neo-Gigantomachia strengthens the association. At the climax of the poem, Statius claims that the equestrian statue, a gift from the Senate and the People, belongs in a Jovian temple, thus establishing Domitian's rightful place among the gods:

optassetque novo similem te ponere templo  
Atticus Elei senior Iovis, et tua mitis  
ora Tarans, tua sidereas imitantia flammis  
lumina contempto mallet Rhodos aspera Phoebos.

The elder Athenian would have chosen to create you,  
a likeness in a new temple of Elean Jupiter,  
and your face calm Tarentum, your eyes imitating starry flames  
harsh Rhodes, with Phoebus scorned, would prefer.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> See Bailey's footnote for 1.*praef.*17. Dewar convincingly argues that the presence of the statue completely reshaped the focus of the Forum, especially in response to its Augustan elements, in favor of the Flavian contributions; Michael Dewar, "The Equine Cuckoo: Statius' *Ecus Maximus Domitiani Imperatoris* and the Flavian Forum," in *The Poetry of Statius*, eds. Johannes J.L. Smolenaars and others (Boston: Brill, 2008), 65-84.

<sup>202</sup> 1.*praef.*18-19: *indulgentissimo imperatori / postero die quam dedicaverat opus, tradere, ausus sum.*

<sup>203</sup> *Theb.* 12.606-610.

<sup>204</sup> 1.1.79.

Stattius' message here is clear: if his allusion to Jupiter seems too flattering, the idea was begun neither by the author nor Domitian, but was sanctioned and consecrated by the Senate and the People of Rome. Domitian-as-Jupiter continues throughout the *Silvae*.

*Silvae* 1.6 describes the scene in the Amphitheater on Saturnalia, the *diem beatum laeti Caesaris*,<sup>206</sup> for which Domitian has spared no expense in showering his subjects with all the luxuries the new Golden Age has brought under his rule.<sup>207</sup> The people themselves hail Domitian as *dominus*, although the emperor is hesitant to allow this title.<sup>208</sup> Stattius claims that this day is better than the Age of *antiquus Iuppiter* and hopes that *nostri Iovis hi ferantur imbres* for as long as Jupiter brings rain throughout the world.<sup>209</sup> This is symbolic of the *imperium* Jove, and thus Domitian, wields over the expanse of the world, and is promoted further by the description of the food which the Roman Jupiter rains down upon the people.<sup>210</sup> As night falls, the people rejoice that they can say they have dined with their leader.<sup>211</sup> The Jovian allusion of 1.6 is also secured by servants who, as if they were *Idaei ministri*, hand out food and wine.<sup>212</sup> This same trope is revisited in 3.4, a poem to Flavius Earinus, Domitian's eunuch, whom Stattius equates to Jupiter's Ganymede.

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<sup>205</sup> 1.1.101-104.

<sup>206</sup> 1.6.7-8.

<sup>207</sup> For the more sinister reading of this poem, see Carole E. Newlands, *Stattius' Silvae and the Poetics of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 227-259.

<sup>208</sup> 1.6.83; the fact that Domitian explicitly forbids this title during the Saturnalia is further evidence that this was an address otherwise commonly used by his subjects.

<sup>209</sup> 1.6.40; 25-28: "[...] these storms of our Jove are brought."

<sup>210</sup> See 1.6.9-11; for "Roman Jupiter," see 3.4.18.

<sup>211</sup> 1.6.49-50.

<sup>212</sup> 34.

While Statius focused 1.6 on the grandeur that Domitian has brought to his subjects, 3.4 looks more intimately at Domitian's heavenly realm and his place inside it.<sup>213</sup> Consequently, the emperor is here, more than elsewhere, the equivalent of a heavenly Jupiter. Gone is the intimation of a comparison or the indirect praise of a statue; Statius directly hails Domitian as Roman Jupiter and the master of the lands:

misisti Latio placida quem fronte ministrum  
Iuppiter Ausonius pariter Romanaque Iuno  
aspiciunt et uterque probant, nec tanta potenti  
terrarum domino divum sine mente voluptas.

You have sent to Latium an agent whom, with a calm brow,  
Ausonian Jupiter and likewise Roman Juno regard  
and each approve, and not without the will of the gods  
is there such great pleasure for the master of the lands.<sup>214</sup>

Domitian's Palatine palace is his heaven, inhabited by his *Romana Iuno* and his own Ganymede, the eunuch Flavius Earinus.<sup>215</sup> Venus sees Earinus playing at the altar of Aesculapius in Pergamum and, because nothing else in the world appears so sweet, she nearly mistakes him for her own Cupid. Consequently, the goddess tells him that he is owed the honors of the Palatine.<sup>216</sup> Given that Earinus is described as being more beautiful than even Venus' own child, the implication is that he belongs in a place just as singularly beautiful and divine. *Montes...dignius aurum* clarifies that this place, Latium and the Palatine palace, has been made thus by Domitian, described here as *pater*

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<sup>213</sup> This is a scene which will be explored more fully in 4.2 with Statius' description of Domitian's dinner party at the palace.

<sup>214</sup> 3.4.17-20.

<sup>215</sup> 18.

<sup>216</sup> 26-27: *nil...tam dulce sub orbe*; 38: *Palatino famulus deberis honori*.

*orbis*.<sup>217</sup> The aspects of this earthbound heaven, inhabited by an earthbound Jupiter, are further espoused in *Silvae* 4.2.

Statius establishes the divinity of Domitian and his realm in 4.2, as the author brags that he is dining *in astris cum Iove*.<sup>218</sup> Despite the revelation in 1.6 that all of Domitian's subjects can say they have dined with their emperor, Statius is effusive in his flattery as thanks for the emperor's invitation to this *cena sacra* in the more heavenly setting of his palace.<sup>219</sup> This heaven, equal to the gods' own domain, also has a Ganymede serving ambrosia amidst expansive hallways, the most glorious marbles, and a gilded roof so lofty that Domitian's gaze can barely behold it.<sup>220</sup> The neighboring Capitolium, and perhaps Jupiter Optimus Maximus himself, is even amazed.<sup>221</sup>

Along with his *domus*, Domitian's status as Jupiter cannot be denied in this poem. Statius relates that the gods rejoice because Earth's Jupiter has a residence equal to his divinity, and Domitian fills and weighs down the palace with his immense being.<sup>222</sup> The emperor is then compared to Mars, Pollux, Bacchus, Hercules, and finally Jupiter.<sup>223</sup> It is clear from his language that Statius, who here claims that his life has only now just begun with this dinner invitation, is approaching the *blanditiae* seen most frequently in

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<sup>217</sup> 47-52.

<sup>218</sup> 4.2.10-11: "[...] among the stars with Jove."

<sup>219</sup> 5-6: *cui sacrae Caesar nova gaudia cenae / nunc primum dominamque dedit contingere mensam.*

<sup>220</sup> 10-12, 18-19, 22-31.

<sup>221</sup> 20-21.

<sup>222</sup> 21-22, 26.

<sup>223</sup> 46-56.

Martial.<sup>224</sup> What is unique to this poem in particular is the personal nature of Rome's Jupiter. While Statius' flattery is effusive, his language takes on a different tone, which conveys a baroque fear actively promoted by Domitian and his heavenly palace. As confident as Statius is in his place at the table, he wonders if he is even allowed to cast a glance at Domitian, and he expresses concern over his uncertainty whether to rise when Jupiter enters.<sup>225</sup> While the deities, his equals, rejoice in his palace, Domitian's subjects are fearful, both because of its vast size and the oppressive power Domitian's presence brings to it.<sup>226</sup>

Statius' use of Jupiter in his praise of Domitian is not limited to these four poems. References to Domitian as Jupiter are scattered throughout; even when the author is lamenting his loss at the Capitoline Games in *Silvae* 3.5, he refers to Domitian as a *saevus* and *ingratus* Jupiter.<sup>227</sup> 4.1 narrates that Jupiter wishes Domitian a long youth, which is itself not very convincing, but Statius has cleverly written ambiguity into the line in order to correlate Domitian and Jupiter:

longamque tibi, rex magne, iuventam  
annuit atque suos promisit Iuppiter annos.

and to you, great king, a long youth  
Jupiter declared and promised his years.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> 11.

<sup>225</sup> 16-17.

<sup>226</sup> 25-26.

<sup>227</sup> 3.5.32-33.

<sup>228</sup> 4.1.45-46.

*Rex magne* is meant to be read initially as Domitian, until the next line clarifies the possible meaning of *rex* in agreement with *Iuppiter*.<sup>229</sup> The word order and intentional ambiguity strongly communicate Statius' agenda in 4.1.

In 4.7, Caesar wields Jupiter's *rapidum fulmen*, an image also seen frequently on imperial coinage.<sup>230</sup> Jupiter's thunderbolt is associated with Domitian again in Book Five.<sup>231</sup> Elsewhere in this same poem of the last book, Statius comforts Abascantus on the death of his wife, Priscilla, by claiming that Domitian recognizes and commends his grief.<sup>232</sup>

From the beginning of his "casual verses," Statius characterizes Domitian as a divine being who has arisen from the turmoil of the *bella Iovis*.<sup>233</sup> *Silvae* 1.1 styles this characterization indirectly, as Statius praises the equestrian statue Domitian erected of himself in the Forum. The statue will stand as long as Earth does, and will do so under only one *astrum*.<sup>234</sup> The remaining poems are characterized in great part by their constant references to Domitian as Jupiter. While the purpose of Statius' *Silvae* has been rightly questioned, his frequent use of Jupiter to characterize Domitian, his actions, and the Rome that the emperor sought to build and define, is irrefutable. From this frame of reference in the *Silvae*, Statius uses Jupiter in his epic *Thebaid* not merely to praise his emperor as a god, but to characterize Domitian's rule as autocratic (much like the

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<sup>229</sup> William J. Dominik, *The Mythic Voice of Statius: Power and Politics in the Thebaid* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 150.

<sup>230</sup> 49-50.

<sup>231</sup> 5.1.133: *Caesarei prope fulmen equi divinaque tela.*

<sup>232</sup> 38: *humanos propior Iove digerit actus.*

<sup>233</sup> 1.1.79.

<sup>234</sup> 93-94, 55.

oppressive tone of *Silvae* 4.2), especially against the deliberately evocative comparison with Vergil's *Aeneid* and its illustration of Augustus' role as *princeps*.

Although Statius intended the *Thebaid's* Jupiter to represent Domitian, he left the overt panegyric for the *Silvae*. In his epic, Statius makes the connection in Book One, but from that point forward, the association is left primarily implicit by intertextuality. For example, Statius' use of the adjective *magnus* connects the two figures in numerous instances. Domitian in the *Silvae* is named *magnus Caesar* (2.5.27 and 5.1.164-165), *magnus dux* (3.1.62 and 3.4.57-58), *magnus parens* (4.1.17 and 4.2.15), and *magnus rex* (4.1.46), while Jupiter is called *magni Iovis* (2.2), *magnus parens* (2.715), and *magnus Tonans* (6.282, 10.61, and 11.496).<sup>235</sup> This last incarnation of Jupiter, *Tonans*, specifically evokes the mythological narrative of Domitian's salvation on the site of the Temple to Jupiter Tonans, an identification Statius fully exploits throughout the *Thebaid* to encourage the connection between his emperor and the king of gods.<sup>236</sup>

At the beginning of Book One, the author alludes to the defining moment in Domitian's personal mythology, the civil war of 69 CE, as *bella Iovis*, and then urges, *cedat tibi Iuppiter aequa / parte poli*.<sup>237</sup> Statius' language in this section deliberately connects to the panegyric adulation of Domitian in the *Silvae*.<sup>238</sup> Compare Statius' exhortation in the next line, *maneat hominum contentus habenis*, with *habites domos*

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<sup>235</sup> Dominik, *The Mythic Voice of Statius*, 165.

<sup>236</sup> *Theb.* 1.421, 2.69, 2.71, 2.154, 2.220, 3.575, 4.13, 4.299, 4.790, 5.511, 5.641, 6.193, 6.282, 7.23, 7.318, 7.329, 8.74, 8.229, 9.510, 10.61, 10.77, 10.852, 11.496.

<sup>237</sup> 29-30: "May Jupiter yield to you an equal portion of the sky." The association is intensified by the repetitive juxtaposition Statius creates within the lines. *Bella Iovis* of line 22 is enjambed with *tuque* immediately following and *tibi* directly precedes *Iuppiter* in 29. Cf. *Silvae* 1.1.79 (*bella Iovis*). The coupling and competition with Apollo invited by *frenator equorum / ipse tuis* of lines 27-28 will be fully discussed in Chapter Four.

<sup>238</sup> 4.1.17-19: *salve, magne parens mundi, qui saecula mecum / instaurare paras, talem te cernere semper / mense meo tua Roma cupit.*

from *Silvae* 4.3.60.<sup>239</sup> The message is virtually the same: the gods consider Domitian a terrestrial Jupiter, whose expected apotheosis should not happen too soon. While the *Thebaid's* adulatory *apologia* of 1.16-33 is certainly programmatic, Domitian's close and direct comparison to Jupiter is made more deliberate in a following section of Book One.<sup>240</sup> Despite the *recusatio* found in lines 32-33, *tempus erit, cum Pierio tua fortior oestro / facta canam*, it is clear that the time to praise his emperor is indeed now.<sup>241</sup>

Statius uses the rest of Book One not only to outline the seeds of war, but also to define the *Thebaid's* Jupiter as the same autocratic *rex deorum hominumque* which rules in his contemporaneous *Silvae*. The poet does this through a narrative that describes both Jupiter's residence and his relationship to those over whom he lords, much like what has already been shown above.<sup>242</sup> This introductory vision of Jupiter and his hall is filled with Domitianic parallels, most readily seen in Statius' vision of Domitian in *Silvae* 4.2. Jupiter's first council with the gods depicts a point at the center of the universe in which he proceeds among a *lectus divum ordo*. Jupiter's palace is described as gilded and high-roofed.<sup>243</sup> On Olympus, Jupiter causes everything to shake *sereno vultu* under *aurea tecta* (1.208), and he finally takes his seat *stellanti...solio*, recalling Statius' own sense of

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<sup>239</sup> *Theb.* 1.30: "May you remain content with the reigns of man."; *Silvae* 4.3.60: "May you live at your home."

<sup>240</sup> Compare Statius' words with Lucan's to Nero (*Phars.* 1.33-38): *quod si non aliam venturo fata Neroni / invenere viam magnoque aeterna parantur / regna deis caelumque suo servire Tonanti / non nisi saevorum potuit post bella gigantum, / iam nihil, o superi, querimur; scelera ipsa nefasque / hac mercede placent*. Lucan recalls Jupiter's usurpation of Olympus after the Gigantomachia, but the allusion lacks the personal and deliberate nature seen in Statius.

<sup>241</sup> "There will be a time when I, more bravely from Pierian inspiration, shall sing of your deeds."

<sup>242</sup> Statius has an Augustan precedent in Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 1.163-252), who parodies Augustus' own *concilium*.

<sup>243</sup> This is much the same as how Statius describes Domitian's in *Silvae* 4.2; cf. *Theb.* 4.2.29-31: *fessis vix culmina prandas / visibus auratique putes laquearia caeli*.

reclining among the stars in *Silvae* 4.2.<sup>244</sup> The gods of his *concilium* are terrified even to take their seats until Jove gives the order in line 205.<sup>245</sup> Their terrified hesitancy to be seated before their *rex* is directly reminiscent of *non adsurgere fas est*, spoken of Domitian's own subjects.<sup>246</sup>

Following his ceremonial entrance, Jupiter commands quiet, terrified silence fills the world, and at last he speaks words described as:

grave et immutabile sacris  
pondus adest verbis, et vocem Fata sequuntur.

A heavy and unchangeable weight  
accompanies his sacred words, and Fate follows his voice.<sup>247</sup>

Jupiter's relationship to his *lectus ordo* in the *Thebaid* bears a striking resemblance to Domitian's relationship to the Senate, a picture Suetonius paints vividly, along with the fear Domitian inspired in them by his own *serenus vultus*.<sup>248</sup> Dominik observes that, although the scene could relate to any of the Julio-Claudians or Flavians, a contemporary reader would immediately connect this particular description, in which Juno's is the only, albeit impotent, complaint to Domitian's autocracy in particular.<sup>249</sup> As shown above, one

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<sup>244</sup> 4.2.10: *videor discumbere in astris*. Olympus also later is described as *ostro dives et auro* (2.406).

<sup>245</sup> Nearly the same reaction is seen in 3.253-254: *dixit, et attoniti iussis; mortalia credas / pectora, sic cuncti vocemque animosque tenebant*.

<sup>246</sup> *Silvae* 4.2.17.

<sup>247</sup> *Theb.* 1.212-213.

<sup>248</sup> See *Dom.* 10.2-4, 11.2-3 for his relationship with the Senate; for his *sereno vultu*, cf. *vultu modesto* described in 18.1-2; cf. *Theb.* 8.82-83: *non forties aethera vultu / torquet et astriferos inclinat Iuppiter axes*. For a complex treatment on the emperor's gaze, see Anna McCullough's recent article "Heard but Not Seen: Domitian and the Gaze in Statius' *Silvae*" *Classical Journal* 104 (2008-2009): 145-162.

<sup>249</sup> Dominik, *The Mythic Voice of Statius*, 164. The implication is that Juno here, like in *Silvae* 3.4.18, is Domitia.

of the most visceral representations of Domitian's authority is witnessed through the banquet to which Statius is invited in *Silvae* 4.2. The emperor dines in a constructed heaven and his role as Jupiter is oppressively manifest.

The comparison between heavenly and earthly palatial spaces is encouraged also by the analogous language found in the description of the palace at Thebes, which also espouses an oppressively baroque atmosphere, gold ceiling, and marble columns. One cannot help but envision Domitian's Palatine residence in these lines. While not explicit, the anachronistic *atria, congestos satis explicatura clientes* specifically evokes Roman, and contemporarily Domitianic, affairs of state.<sup>250</sup>

Just as the poet made clear in his *Silvae*, Domitian is generally heard and felt in Statius' poetry, but rarely directly gazed upon; Jupiter's appearance in the *Thebaid* is no different.<sup>251</sup> The king of the gods is introduced as Domitian in Book One, he sets in motion the destruction of impious Thebes, and then only sparingly appears in any biographical way throughout the remaining eleven books.

Jupiter does make a significant appearance in the Book Five narrative of the women of Lemnos. As he is the case throughout the poem, Jupiter protects his Argives against the Lemnians, who

Amazonio Scythiam fervere tumultu  
lunatumque putes agmen descendere, ubi arma  
indulget pater et saevi movet ostia Belli.

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<sup>250</sup> *Theb.* 1.145: "[...] atria to spread out enough the densely packed clients."; 144-146: *et nondum crasso laquearia fulva metallo, / montibus aut alte Grais effulta nitebant / atria, congestos satis explicatura clientes*. Domitian allocated a portion of his Palatine estate for specifically public and political use. Business was done so frequently and openly here by imperial clients and senators that it quickly took on the identification as somewhat of a senate house in and of itself.

<sup>251</sup> Again, see McCullough for her treatment on Domitian's direct absence in Statius.

You would think that Scythia was teeming  
with an Amazonian uprising and their crescent-shaped line descended,  
when father grants warfare and stirs the opening of savage War.<sup>252</sup>

As Statius will exploit later with Domitian's association to Theseus, Jupiter is depicted in  
an allusion to Domitian's victory over the Dacians.

Domitian's well-publicized penchant for solitude is echoed by Jupiter in Book  
Seven, as Bacchus visits Jupiter in his palace: *et tunc forte polum secretus habebat.*<sup>253</sup>  
This same episode portrays Jupiter with another particularly Domitianic characteristic:  
the *serenus vultus* which inspired wonder and terror in the *Silvae* and in Suetonius'  
biography. In his response to Bacchus' complaint, Jupiter is described as *tranquillus* and  
*vicem placida orsa refert.*<sup>254</sup>

The same wonder and terror provoked by Jupiter's words is again conveyed in  
Book Eight, in a simile after his chthonic brother causes trembling of his own:

non fortius aethera vultu  
torquet et astriferos inclinat Iuppiter axes.

No more bravely (than when) Jupiter turns the heavens  
with his gaze and bends the star-bearing heavens.<sup>255</sup>

Again, Statius provides his audience an example of Domitian's potent gaze in the  
character of Jupiter. Jupiter's gaze is indeed so powerful that Venus later leaves the  
battlefield defeated by, among others, *Iovis severi vultus.*<sup>256</sup> In Book Ten, even in the  
face of Capaneus' grand impiety, Jove's peace is not troubled. The god's calm, initial

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<sup>252</sup> 5.144-146.

<sup>253</sup> 7.152: "[...] and then by chance he alone occupied the sky." Cf. *Dom.* 3.1: *principatus cotidie secretum sibi horarum sumere solebat.*

<sup>254</sup> 7.194-195: "[...] he says calm words in return."

<sup>255</sup> 8.82-83.

<sup>256</sup> 9.839-840.

reaction and subsequently harsh, but justified, reaction to Capaneus' taunts is reminiscent of Suetonius' claim that Domitian was fond of granting clemency in order to lull his subjects into a sense of security right before condemning them to harsh penalties, including death.<sup>257</sup>

Following Capaneus' punishment, Jupiter again inspires calm with just his gaze:

componit dextra victor concussa plagarum  
Iuppiter et vultu caelumque diemque reducit.

Jupiter the conqueror settles the shakings of the regions with his right hand and leads both light and the day back with his countenance.<sup>258</sup>

Significantly, it is that same calm visage of which Jupiter deprives the world that incites the abdication of deities in Book Eleven:

sic pater omnipotens, visusque nocentibus arvis  
abstulit, et dulci terrae caruere sereno.

Thus the all-powerful father, and he took his eyes  
from the guilty fields, and the lands lacked his sweet serenity.<sup>259</sup>

In the words of Statius, Jupiter's *vultus* is the essence of his power, a power Domitian believed was his own as well.

The audience also sees elements of Jupiter/Domitian more frequently past Book One through agents and adherents of Jupiter. Tydeus' slaughter of the Thebans in Book Two is followed by the promise to Athena, or Minerva of the Capitoline Triad, described as *magni decus ingeniumque parentis*, that he will build *aurea templa* on a centrally described hill of the city, terms which in the early 90s CE would specifically evoke the

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<sup>257</sup> 10.897: *non tamen haec turbant pacem Iovis*; cf. *Dom.* 11.

<sup>258</sup> *Theb.* 11.5-6.

<sup>259</sup> 134-135.

newly rebuilt Capitolium.<sup>260</sup> Additionally, one of the strongest links to the emperor after the first book's *concilium deorum* is the encounter between Jupiter and Mars in Book Three. Mars is said to be fresh from the slaughter of the Sarmatians when Jupiter orders him to spur Argos to war. Because Mars is Jupiter's agent of war and an extension of Jupiter, the Sarmatian's slaughter can rightly be called a *bellum Iovis*, much as it was for Domitian, who himself was adamant about settling the Danube against the Suebi, the Dacians, and the Sarmatians.

King Adrastus, first introduced as descended from Jupiter on both sides, also takes on a specifically Domitianic identification.<sup>261</sup> Adrastus' first deed of the epic is to fairly administer the conflict between Polynices and Tydeus, a combat that Statius compares to the Olympiad over which Jupiter presides: *non aliter quam Pisaeo sua lustra Tonanti cum redeunt*.<sup>262</sup> It is not a far reach to assume that Statius' audience would have made the connection to Domitian's Capitoline Games, in which Statius participated and over which Domitian presided. Further evidence is the particularly Domitianic/Jovian manner in which Adrastus reacts: *obtutu gelida ora premit*.<sup>263</sup>

However, the most significant mediator between Jupiter and Domitian is the character of Theseus in Book Twelve. The Athenian king not only adopts a Domitianic identity, but evokes a much more dynamic message about the Roman emperor. Taken with the absence of the divine Jupiter, the semi-divine Theseus' sudden assumption of a Domitianic characterization further suggests Domitian's status as a living god. In order

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<sup>260</sup> 2.715: "[...] glory and ability of her great father"; 727-728.

<sup>261</sup> 1.392: *dives avis et utroque Iovem de sanguine ducens*.

<sup>262</sup> 1.421: "Not otherwise than when every fifth years returns his games to the Thunderer of Pisa."

<sup>263</sup> 493: "He suppressed his cold face with a stare."

to connect Domitian to Theseus, Statius monopolizes the version of Theseus' ancestry which links him to Jupiter's brother, Neptune. This prospect is particularly attractive, given Neptune's notable absence throughout the entire epic and Jupiter's usurpation of his *numen*.

The associations between Jupiter and Neptune are many in number, but not entirely explicit. For instance, as Jupiter takes his seat for the council of the gods, Rivers and Winds are the only gods or demigods mentioned by name who are terrified by his presence.<sup>264</sup> King Adrastus also associates Jupiter with the Winds and Rain later in Book Four.<sup>265</sup> In Book Two, the vast halls of black Jove (*nigrique Iovis*: a common convention clearly referring to Pluto) are invoked, but within a simile related to Neptune.<sup>266</sup> Later in the 2.154, the storms which tormented the two exiles on their journey to Argos are attributed to Jupiter. Undoubtedly, both Tydeus and Polynices wandered on land, but Polynices' journey is compared to a sailor's.<sup>267</sup> In Book Three, Jupiter's agent of war, Mars, is compared to Jupiter while carrying out his commands, which are described as *trisulca*. This suggests Neptune's trident, and the commands are directed against sailors, among others.<sup>268</sup> In the simile of 5.362, Jupiter directly adopts Neptune's role as the master of the sea.<sup>269</sup> In 395, Jupiter's thunderbolt reveals the true size of the *nautae* in order to terrify the women of Lemnos. The great number of allusions to Neptune gives

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<sup>264</sup> 1.205-207.

<sup>265</sup> 765-766.

<sup>266</sup> 2.49.

<sup>267</sup> 2.370-376.

<sup>268</sup> 320-323.

<sup>269</sup> Cf. *Aeneid* 1.124-130, in which Neptune exerts his force over the sea, albeit in an opposing way, for peace.

strength to this inclusive reading of Jupiter, for it exists among other interpretations of the king of the gods.<sup>270</sup> This re-evaluation of Jupiter, coupled with the often conspicuous absence of Neptune in the epic, serves to conflate the roles of the two gods and allow the consequential allusion to Domitian as a living god.

As the epic approaches the abdication of the gods and the consequent appearance of Theseus, Statius intensifies Jupiter's usurpation of Neptune's command over wind and water in order to draw an allegorical connection between Jupiter and Neptunian Theseus, who personifies Domitian in Book Twelve. Just as one need look no further than the beginning of the epic for Jupiter's identification as Domitian, so does one need look only at the first appearance of Theseus to see that he too personifies Domitian. The king of Athens first appears fresh from his victory and in triumph over the Amazons:

iamque domos patrias Scythicae post aspera gentis  
proelia laurigero subeuntem Thesea curru  
laetifici plausus missusque ad sidera vulgi  
clamor et emeritis hilaris tuba nuntiat armis.  
ante ducem spolia et, duri Mavortis imago,  
virginei currus cumulataque fercula cristis  
et tristes ducuntur equi truncaequae bipennes,  
quis nemora et solidam Maeotida caedere suetae,  
gorytique leves portantur et ignea gemmis  
cingula et informes dominarum sanguine peltae.

And now the cheerful applause and the shouts of the crowd,  
sent to the stars, and with worthy arms the merry horn announces  
Theseus driving forth to his country's homes in his chariot adorned with laurels  
after the harsh battles of the Scythian race.  
Before the leader are led the spoils and the virgins' chariots,  
the image of harsh Mars, and wagons piled with plumes  
and sad horses, and stripped axes,  
which were accustomed to bring down woods and Scythian earth,

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<sup>270</sup> See also 5.585 (gathering wintry weather), 6.280-285 (Jupiter is depicted in a series of bronze effigies next to an oceanic scene in which Neptune is absent), 7.309-329 (Jupiter's thunder is linked with *igne trisulco* in the story of Aegina), 8.229-230 (Jupiter plows the sea as a bull with Europa), and 8.422-423 (torrential wind and rain brought by Jove in language reminiscent of Neptune's chariot).

light quivers are carried and belts flickering with jewels  
and shields fouled with the blood of their mistresses.<sup>271</sup>

There are several aspects both of Theseus' victory over the Amazons and of his triumph which disconnect Statius' narration of this episode from its Greek foundation and firmly connect it with Domitian's double triumph over the Germans and Dacians in Rome.<sup>272</sup>

First, Statius has chosen to follow only those versions of Theseus' Amazonian victory which parallel, and so evoke, Domitian's triumph. Various traditions place the Amazons in different areas of the world, yet Statius follows Herodotus' identification that they are a *gens Scythica*, from the area roughly corollary to the Dacians, over whom Domitian claimed victory.<sup>273</sup> This is an especially remarkable localization, considering that Ornytus, earlier in Book Eleven, claimed Theseus was celebrating a triumph over the Amazons from the area of the Thermodon River in Pontus, contradicting the location Statius uses for the purposes of promoting the Domitianic narrative.<sup>274</sup>

Second, Theseus in this episode has returned from attacking the Amazons in their own territory, in contrast with versions that have Hippolyte attack Athens. Statius' deliberate choice of myth is the only version that could be consonant with Domitian's triumphs.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> 12.519-528.

<sup>272</sup> For Domitian's triumph, see *Dom.* 6.1, 13.3 and *Silvae* 3.3.118. Zanker: 84: this triumphal procession over the Amazons also places Domitian into a direct comparison with Augustus. Vergil's description of Augustus' triumphal procession takes place, as has been shown in Chapter Two, on the Palatine Hill and, more specifically, the Temple of Apollo. The Palatine Temple had numerous decorations on it, including a depiction of Theseus' triumph over the Amazons.

<sup>273</sup> *Theb.* 12.519; Herodotus, *History* 4.110-117; others place them in Asia Minor.

<sup>274</sup> *Theb.* 11.163-164; see Nauta, 196, 330.

<sup>275</sup> Karla F.L. Pollmann, *Statius: Thebaid 12: Introduction, Text, and Commentary* (Zurich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2004), 213.

Roman and anachronistic elements abound in Theseus' triumph described in *Thebaid* Twelve. Most strikingly, Theseus' triumphal chariot is *laurigerus* and pulled by *nivei quadriugi*.<sup>276</sup> Additionally, Pollmann has commented on the oddity both of Statius' detail of the Amazons seeking asylum as well as the usage of Minerva rather than the preferred Pallas.<sup>277</sup> I argue that the inclusion of this detail directs the audience back to an important facet of the Flavian, and particularly Domitianic, building program. As discussed above, Domitian monumentalized the starting point of the Flavian's triumphal processions in the Campus Martius with the Porticus Divorum, a temple to the Flavian *gens*, with Domitian at the head. While the Porticus would be completely out of place in Statius' narration of Theseus' triumph, the adjacent temple to Minerva Chalcidica would not. Minerva, Domitian's personal divinity, conveniently connects the emperor to Theseus, the king of her Greek counterpart's city of Athens.

The climax of Book Twelve, Theseus' slaughter of the Thebans, also recalls Domitian by way of a simile to the emperor's divine equivalent, Jupiter. Theseus begins battle:

qualis Hyperboreos ubi nubilus institit axes  
Iuppiter et prima tremefecit sidera bruma,  
rumpitur Aeolia et longam indignata quietem  
tollit Hiems animos ventosque sibilat Arctos;

Just like when cloud-bringing Jupiter stood on the Hyperborean skies  
and caused the stars to tremble at the onset of winter,  
Aeolia bursts forth and unworthy Winter lifts its  
long quiet and whistles its Arctic winds,<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> 12.520 and 532-533.

<sup>277</sup> Pollmann, *Statius: Thebaid 12*, 216.

<sup>278</sup> 12.650-653; cf. 8.423-427, at the beginning of the war against Thebes. See also Pollmann, *Statius: Thebaid 12*, 248, 650-5n.

Statius' inclusion of the Hyperboreans also links the Thesean narrative to the Jovian narrative of Book Five.<sup>279</sup>

Just as *magnus* links Domitian and Jupiter throughout the first eleven books of the *Thebaid*, so too does Statius identify Theseus as Domitian in Book Twelve. Statius' last narration of Theseus' role in the *Thebaid* comes just a few lines before Statius himself addresses his audience and his work. It is no coincidence then that the poet chooses to describe Theseus as *magnanimus* here, while a few lines later he describes his Caesar as *magnanimus*, and in exactly the same metrical position.<sup>280</sup>

In much the same way that Vergil communicated Augustus' political identity through the character of Apollo in the *Aeneid*, so does Statius reflect Domitian's autocratic ideology and divine ambitions through the characters of Jupiter and Theseus in the *Thebaid*. Statius first established the connection in his panegyric *Silvae*, and then perpetuated his emperor's oppressive and irrefutable power in the epic framework of the destruction of impious Thebes. By encouraging intertextual readings with his *Silvae* in his descriptions of Jupiter-Domitian's constructed heaven, his place within that heaven, and his relationship over those whom he rules, Statius uses his *Thebaid* to cement the divine and mythological allusions the *dominus et deus* himself sought to establish in his personal mythology, and cultural and building programs.

As has been shown above, Domitian actively sought to elicit a comparison with, and then surpass, Augustus' rule with his own. Domitian's actions upon becoming emperor illustrate his desire to distance himself from and redefine his role as *princeps*,

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<sup>279</sup> 5.390-391: *talis Hyperborea virides nive verberat agros / Iuppiter.*

<sup>280</sup> 12.795, 814: the modifier in both cases makes up the second foot dactyl. See also Dominik, *Mythic Voice of Statius*, 156-157.

originally defined by his predecessor, Augustus. Domitian not only modeled his personal mythology, his building program, and his propaganda on Augustus' precedent, but also usurped and manipulated those elements to his own autocratic ends. Just as Augustus adopted Apollo as his divine and pious patron from a singular and historical narrative, the Battle of Actium, so too did Domitian identify himself with Jupiter after his salvation from Vitellius' siege of the Capitoline in 69 CE. While Augustus built a Rome made of marble and changed the focus from Jupiter's Capitol to his and Apollo's Palatine complex, Domitian reconstructed the Capitoline Jupiter's preeminence, co-opted the Palatine, and redefined an entirely other area, the Campus Martius, as wholly Flavian at the expense of Augustus and Apollo. Domitian reinvigorated Augustan and Apollonian elements in his cultural program, primarily his Secular and Capitoline Games, only to usurp and redefine them for his patron Jupiter.

Apollo is the appropriate divinity to oppose Jupiter in the epic, so that Statius can allude to the relevant dynastic implications. The literature glorifying Augustus recalled a new Golden Age of religion and piety under the direction of Augustus and his patron Apollo, and so the Silver Age poetry glorifying Domitian used and usurped the Augustan trope of Apollo in order to glorify Domitian through Jupiter. In every facet of his political and cultural programs, Domitian encouraged a comparison with, and usurpation of, Augustus and his patron Apollo. It is for precisely these reasons that Apollo is the appropriate vehicle by which Statius could most effectively communicate Domitian's supremacy over his predecessor, the Deified Caesar Augustus. Chapter Four will examine the relationship Statius narrates between Apollo and Jupiter in the *Thebaid* in order to illustrate Domitian's supremacy over Augustus and his rule.

## CHAPTER 4

### DOMITIAN'S SUPERIORITY OVER AUGUSTUS IN THE *THEBAID*

Chapter Four continues my investigation of the relationship between Apollo and Jupiter in the *Thebaid* in order to examine Statius' glorification of Domitian, not only as a terrestrial Jupiter, but as a divine ruler who surpasses his political and literary predecessor, the Deified Augustus. This comparison is made explicit by the continued allusions between fictional characters and historical persons. In the *Aeneid*, Apollo personified Augustan *pietas* by guiding Aeneas, the mythical founder of Rome, towards his destiny, which Vergil described in terms of the Augustan *Pax Romana*. In doing so, the Vergilian Apollo, previously introduced to contemporary Rome through the *Georgics*, recalled Augustus' personal mythology and building program, and personified the *princeps*' political identity.

Less than a century later, a new political dynasty usurped power after the tumultuous end to the Julio-Claudians; in doing so, the Flavians redefined the principate. Domitian, the youngest son of Vespasian and the last Flavian emperor, utilized Statius in much the same way that Augustus employed Vergil, to communicate the emperor's political identity. Statius overtly praised the oppressively autocratic Domitian as Jupiter in his *Silvae*. The author continued that identification in his *Thebaid*, but also further glorified his emperor through a complimentary comparison with a redefined Augustan Apollo. Thus, Statius explores the limits and potential of examining allusions in epic between literary characters and historical personalities.

This examination of Augustus' relationship to Apollo in the *Aeneid* and Domitian as Jupiter and Neptune in the *Thebaid* results in an allusive comparison between the two emperors, by which Domitian's superiority over Augustus is proclaimed. Apollo, the symbol of Augustan *pietas* in the *Aeneid*, is Statius' vehicle by which the poet illustrates how that definition of piety is outdated and lacks meaning in the time of Domitian.<sup>281</sup> Predominately through several inset mythological narratives, interwoven among the primary mythology of the Seven Against Thebes, Statius shows that Apollo exemplifies impiety and rage, while Jupiter is the companion of irrefutable and unyielding Fate, the protector of the world's safety, and the embodiment of a redefined piety.

Although it will become necessary at various points to deviate from a sequential approach, this methodology seems the most logical treatment in order to elucidate the dynastic implications of Statius' treatment of Jupiter and Apollo in the *Thebaid*. Statius himself worked chronologically, having developed his characterization of Jupiter and Apollo in Book One, and then utilized those characterizations to manipulate the audience's understanding of the gods' actions until their disappearance at the end of Book Eleven. The author's early use of the mythological inset narratives, recalled at significant and numerous instances throughout the poem, also necessitates a sequential treatment.

Much scholarship over the last half-century has focused on the allegorical identities of various characters in the *Thebaid*. Dominik evaluates Statius' monarchical figures as models of contemporary monarchy in general, or more specifically, members

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<sup>281</sup> Randall Ganiban, *Statius and Vergil* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 23.

of the Flavian dynasty, including Domitian.<sup>282</sup> Some of the most conventional arguments propose the subject of the previous chapter, Jupiter, as an allusion to Domitian himself.<sup>283</sup> Lacking among the multitude of proposed allusions is Apollo, and the dynastic implications of such an allusion. Given that Statius himself promoted the comparison between his *magnum opus* and Augustus' national epic, the *Aeneid*, both from the writing and publishing perspectives, and from the overtly Vergilian (and so, Homeric) tradition that his *Thebaid* continues, inter- and intratextual allusions and comparisons of the characters common to both are a natural extension of this relationship.

The terms of Jupiter's role are much the same as Domitian's association with the god in the *Silvae*, but given the different context of epic, Statius further defines his characterization of Jupiter/Domitian.<sup>284</sup> In contrast to the *Aeneid*, in which Jupiter is generally a passive mediator between other deities who themselves actively participate in the fate of Aeneas, the Trojans, and the foundation of Rome, the *Thebaid's* Jupiter is an active catalyst of the destruction of Thebes and, with them, the Argives. Vergil's Jupiter is a victim of Fate, along with everyone else, yet the god encourages the progression of that Fate as a supporter of the pre-ordained Roman cause. Statius' Jupiter, however, is a

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<sup>282</sup> See William J. Dominik, "Monarchal Power and Imperial Politics in Statius' *Thebaid*." *Ramus* 18 (1989): 74-97. See also Dominik, *The Mythic Voice of Statius: Power and Politics in the Thebaid* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 130-180.

<sup>283</sup> Kenneth Scott, *The Imperial Cult Under the Flavians* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1936), 133-140. Scott devotes the following chapter to Domitian's connections to various divinities (Hercules, Bacchus, and Mercury) that appear in the *Thebaid*.

<sup>284</sup> The comparison that Statius makes in the *Thebaid* is present even in Book One of the *Silvae*. There is already an adversarial relationship and dominance over the Augustan Apollo (1.1.103-104): *tua sidereas imitantia flammis / lumina contempto mallet Rhodos aspera Phoebos*: Statius says that Jupiter's eyes are like starry flames, viewing Phoebus with contempt.

ruthlessly impartial and implacable executor of fate. Jupiter explains his position as the agent of immovable Fate to Bacchus in Book Seven:

ast ego non proprio diros impendo dolori  
Oedipodionidas: rogat hoc tellusque polusque  
et pietas et laesa fides naturaque et ipsi  
Eumenidum mores.

But I consider the awful sons of Oedipus not by my own grief:  
the Earth and the heavens and piety and wounded faith  
and nature and the very customs of the Eumenides ask this.<sup>285</sup>

He makes two very important points in this speech: first, that the destiny which stands before them is in no way caused by his personal feelings; second, piety, among other elements of Nature, demands this outcome. Jupiter's complicity with Fate is made clear again in Book Ten, in which Juno complains that *Fata...aversumque Iovem*<sup>286</sup> already oppose the Argive women. Indeed, Jupiter and Fate are often depicted together throughout the poem, such that little distinction can be made between them.<sup>287</sup>

Just before his *apologia* in Book One, Statius introduces the allusive comparison between Apollo and Jupiter when he speaks directly to Domitian:

licet ignipedum frenator equorum  
ipse tuis alte radiantem crinibus arcum  
imprimat aut magni cedat tibi Iuppiter aequa  
parte poli.

It is permitted that the handler of fire-footed horses himself  
press his shining crown high on your hair  
or may Jupiter yield you an equal portion  
of the great sky.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> 7.215-218.

<sup>286</sup> 10.70-71.

<sup>287</sup> See, among others: *sic dura sororum / pensa dabant visumque Iovi* (2.205-206); *sic Iovis imperia et nigrae volvere Sorores* (6.376); *saevumque Iovem Parcasque nocentes* (11.462). For the representation of Jupiter's role as particularly Stoic, see D.W.T.C. Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 82-90.

Although Statius expresses the fear that Domitian will leave the Earth too soon, either Apollo, *frenator equorum*, or Jupiter, will be responsible for the emperor's apotheosis. At the outset of his poem, Statius provides a political context to the two deities and the audience is caught between the customarily Augustan Apollo, known as the patron of poets, and the Domitianic Jupiter, known to readers of the *Silvae* as the patron of Domitian.

Within the context of the Theban myth, Statius immediately puts Jupiter and Apollo into conflict when Adrastus, upon first addressing Polynices and Tydeus, says:

egregii iuvenum, quos non sine numine regnis  
invexit nox dextra meis, quibus ipse per imbres  
fulminibus mixtos intempestumque Tonantem  
has meus usque domos vestigia fecit Apollo,

Excellent young men, whom a favorable night has brought  
to my kingdom not without the will of the gods, whose footsteps  
my Apollo himself, through storms mixed with lightning  
and the dismal Thunderer, fashioned all the way to my house.<sup>289</sup>

The king supposes that Apollo has led the two men through Jupiter's storms. The synonymous metrical position of *Tonantem* and *Apollo* strengthens the opposition. Together with his characterization of Domitian in Book One, Statius here notifies his audience of the conflict between Domitian's Jupiter and Augustus' Apollo inherent in the mythological narrative.

Statius not only uses his first book to continue his identification of Jupiter as Domitian, but he also subversively redefines Augustus' Apollo. The supposedly glorious description of Apollo immediately preceding the last lines of Book One encompasses examples of relatively hollow victories over helpless individuals:

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<sup>288</sup> *Theb.* 1.27-30.

<sup>289</sup> 2.152-155.

tu Phryga submittis citharae, tu matris honori  
terrigenam Tityon Stygiis extendis harenis;  
te viridis Python Thebanaque mater ovantem  
horruit in pharetris, ultrix tibi torva Megaera  
ieiunum Phlegyan subter cava saxa iacentem  
aeterno premit accubitu dapibusque profanis  
instimulat, sed mixta famem fastidia vincunt;

You humble the Phrygian on the lyre, you for your mother's honor  
stretch Earthborn Tityus on the Stygian shores;  
you in triumph and with quiver green Python  
and the Theban mother shuddered, grim Megaera avenging you  
presses starving Phlegyas in an eternal recline  
laying beneath hollow rocks and tortures him  
with impious feasts, but scattered arrogance defeats his hunger.<sup>290</sup>

Marsyas challenged Apollo to a lyre contest and was flayed alive. Tityos tried to rape Leto at Hera's request and was forced by Apollo to be stretched in Tartarus and have vultures peck at his liver. Finally, Phlegyas was killed for burning Apollo's temple at Delphi in retribution for Apollo killing his son Coronis, who had an affair with the god's lover Ischys.<sup>291</sup> Through the words of arguably the most pious ruler in the *Thebaid*, Statius undercuts Adrastus' apparent sincerity by phrasing his invocation in cynical terms that call Apollo's virtue into question.

Statius closes Book One with Adrastus' hymn to Apollo, which, as with the rest of the Book One narrative at Argos, recalls the *Ludi Saeculares*. As established in Chapter Two, the poets Horace and Vergil helped redefine this ancient festival into a specifically Augustan context by way of Apollo. Domitian then specifically recalled the Augustan *Ludi Saeculares* by recalculating and celebrating the festival on the date which

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<sup>290</sup> 1.709-715.

<sup>291</sup> See the note for 1.709 in Charles Stanley Ross' translation (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), and D.E. Hill, "Statius' *Thebaid*: A Glimmer of Light in a Sea of Darkness." *Ramus* 18 (1989): 116.

Augustus established. Therefore, it is all the more disconcerting to the audience when Apollo is invoked by Adrastus:

seu te roseum Titana vocari  
gentis Achaemeniae ritu, seu praestat Osirim  
frugiferum, seu Persei sub rupibus antri  
indignata sequi torquentem cornua Mithram.

Whether you prefer to be called rose Titan  
by the custom of the Achaemenian race, or fertile Osiris,  
or Mithras, twisting to follow the undeserving horns.<sup>292</sup>

Adrastus identifies Apollo with Persian Titan, Osiris, and Mithras, foreign deities the worship of whom competed with Augustus' religious program of Roman renewal.<sup>293</sup>

While the preceding passage encouraged the audience to question Apollo's *pietas*, these closing lines elicit uncertainties about his *Romanitas*.

Apollo's inadequacy in the *Thebaid*, especially in relation to Jupiter's *auctoritas*, is readily apparent as soon as Jupiter first speaks in Book One. Following the king of the gods' terrifying introduction at the *concilium deorum*, Jupiter immediately vents his frustration at man's misdeeds:

quonam usque nocentum  
exigar in poenas? taedet saevire corusco  
fulmine, iam pridem Cyclopum operosa fatiscunt  
bracchia et Aeoliis desunt incudibus ignes.  
atque adeo tuleram falso rectore solutos  
Solis equos, caelumque rotis errantibus uri,  
et Phaëthontea mundum squalere favilla.

How long should I spend on the punishments  
of the guilty? It tires me to lay waste with my flashing  
lightning, now since the laborious arms of the Cyclops  
tire and their fires are lacking on Aeolian hammering.

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<sup>292</sup> 1.717-720.

<sup>293</sup> See also Hill, 117.

And I had even born that the horses of the Sun were freed  
by their false driver, and that the sky was burned by their roaming wheels,  
and that Phaethon's ashes lay waste to the Earth.<sup>294</sup>

Jupiter's first example is the tragedy of Phaëthon, which poets generally considered not the fault of man, but of Phoebus, the Sun-god, or Apollo.<sup>295</sup> Statius, like Ovid, clearly indicates that the fault of the crime lies with Phoebus.<sup>296</sup> Furthermore, Phoebus pleads with his son that he alone has the power to control his chariot and not even Jove can handle it.<sup>297</sup> Statius' narrative of Phaëthon in the *Thebaid* is recurrent and highly evocative, on both intra- and intertextual levels, of the implicit conflict between Jupiter and Apollo.

The character of Augustus' Apollo in the *Thebaid* is also informed by another recurrent myth, that of Linus and Coroebus. This long digression in Book One is based on Callimachus and also on Vergil's model of Hercules and Cacus, a scene in which Hercules' killing brings about order. Statius, however, employs Apollo in his myth as an agent of chaos.<sup>298</sup> King Adrastus explains the origin for the annual rites to Apollo, which he and the Argives happen to be celebrating, when Polynices and Tydeus arrive at Argos.

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<sup>294</sup> 1.215-221.

<sup>295</sup> Timothy Gantz, *Early Greek Myth*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 31-32: Helios is identified as Apollo from very early on. In *Phaëthon* by Euripides, Klymene identifies Helios as the god whom men call Apollo. Likewise, Apollo's culpability is established early in Aeschylus and Euripides. *Ibid.*, 31-34: Hyginus, in *Fabula* 152A, narrates differently, that Phaëthon took the chariot without Apollo's knowledge.

<sup>296</sup> Cf. *Theb.* 1.219-220: *atque adeo tuleram falso rectore solutos / Solis equos* and *Metamorphoses* 2.49-53: *paenituit iurasse patrem, qui terque quaterque / concutiens inlustre caput 'temeraria' dixit / 'vox mea facta tua est; utinam promissa liceret / non dare! confiteor, solum hoc tibi, nate, negarem. / dissuadere licet: non est tua tuta voluntas!*

<sup>297</sup> 60-62: especially, *quid Iove maius habemus?*

<sup>298</sup> Charles McNelis, *Statius' Thebaid and the Poetics of Civil War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 27; Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid*, 101-106. See Hill (p. 113-115) for the opposing view that the narrative of Linus and Coroebus is not based on the Vergilian model. See also Ganiban, 13.

In an epic in which its central gods, except Jupiter, whose role is predominantly the harbinger of Fate,<sup>299</sup> take definitive sides for or against Thebes, Statius' primary motivation for this Apollonian narrative in such a prime position must be to update and define Augustus' Apollo.<sup>300</sup> This reasoning is encouraged by the fact that Statius' account is the first in which Apollo comes to Crotopus' house because of his victory over Python, thus deliberately creating a unique narrative in which the god's well-established act of piety, the slaying of Python, is undone by a savage act of extreme impiety.<sup>301</sup> As Hill simply states, the "episode must undermine our respect for Apollo."<sup>302</sup>

The rites themselves recall the *Ludi Saeculares* over which Domitian had just presided at the time of Statius' writing.<sup>303</sup> The audience, familiar with Augustus' Apollo, perhaps would expect the source of the rites to be of a nature similar to those Secular Games, but instead the story unfolds that Apollo, needing expiation from the slaughter of Python, had come to Argos and raped the daughter of his host, King Crotopus. Psamathe secretly had a baby, who then was devoured by a pack of wolves. The king's daughter was so distraught that Crotopus figured out the reason and killed his daughter for her crime. Apollo became furious and sent a monster, which tormented Argos until an Argive youth, named Coroebus, recruited a band of men to kill it. Apollo, again enraged,

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<sup>299</sup> See Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid*, 82-90.

<sup>300</sup> See Ganiban (p. 13-22) for this episode as a negative commentary on Augustan *pietas*.

<sup>301</sup> McNelis (p. 35-37) emphasizes the chaos Apollo causes in this scene, and elsewhere, adding that it is informative of the recurring theme in the *Thebaid* that the Olympians mishandle and unleash chthonic forces in their attempts to use those forces for the Olympians' benefit.

<sup>302</sup> 114.

<sup>303</sup> See D.R. Shackleton Bailey, *Statius: Thebaid 1-7, 2*: Domitian, it should be remembered, celebrated his games in 88 CE, which was a recalculation based on Augustus' institution of the games (after Claudius moved them to coincide with Rome's eight hundredth birthday). The *Thebaid* was published in 92 CE.

sent a plague until Coroebus offered to sacrifice his life on behalf of all the Argives.<sup>304</sup> Apollo was moved by this selflessly pious act, spared the young man, and the Argives thereafter celebrated Apollo.<sup>305</sup> While the sparing of Coroebus' life may seem positive on first reading, Vessey correctly argues that Apollo's supposed *clementia* engenders exactly the opposite effect when put in the context of epic. Coroebus was reconciled to and welcomed a glorious and pious death at the hands of a god. However, Apollo, acting as a force opposing piety, denied Coroebus that glory and piety.<sup>306</sup>

The god, who in the *Aeneid* was the divine representation of the *Pax Augustana* and a renewed piety that Augustus brought to a turbulent Roman world, is in the *Thebaid* un-Roman, impious, and vengeful. Furthermore, the re-imagined, anti-Augustan Apollo is put in direct conflict and comparison with the Domitianic Jupiter. In the Coroebus tale, Apollo "is a terrible, sexually transgressive deity who displays little sympathy for the human condition."<sup>307</sup> Apollo is the principle illustration of Statius' changed paradigm of divine regard for piety. Augustus' Apollo in this tale has no sympathy or regard for piety, which sets up the need for *clementia*, personified by Theseus/Domitian, in Book Twelve.<sup>308</sup> Statius will frequently recall and employ this primary illustration of Apollo's

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<sup>304</sup> 2.220; Coroebus is later represented with what is assumed to be the head of Apollo's monster in bronze relief on the Argive palace.

<sup>305</sup> 1.557-668; one wonders if there is a bit of playfulness on Statius' part, whose explanation of these rites lasts almost exactly 110 lines. Ganiban (p. 21-22) observes that their celebration of Apollo is justified because of his "tyrannical exercise of power through *clementia*."

<sup>306</sup> 3.59-98; Vessey (*Statius and the Thebaid*, p. 107-116) proves this assertion with a comparison to Maeon, whose glorious death was denied by Tydeus, and so took his own life in front of King Eteocles, much to the king's anger.

<sup>307</sup> Ganiban, 22.

<sup>308</sup> See Hill, 115.

both inward and outward failure in order to remind the audience of the failure of Augustan piety and the supremacy of Domitian.

One source of Vergil's praise for Augustan ideology in the *Aeneid* was Apollo's divine guidance. Apollo was so powerful that the god even supplanted established epic conventions such as paternal and chthonic prescience. In the *Thebaid*, consequently, Apollo's prophetic potency is supplanted by Jupiter. Indeed, Statius himself questions the nature and utility of prophecy following a particularly provocative scene in Book Three. When Adrastus finally breaks his silence concerning the possibility of war against Thebes, he first seeks Apollo by way of the god's prophets, Amphiaraus and Melampus. The two are terrified by what they find in the entrails of sheep, so they instead go to the open sky on Mount Aphetas.<sup>309</sup> Amphiaraus *solitum prece numen amicat*, and the audience, at this point, cannot be terribly surprised to learn in line 471 that the accustomed deity to whom Apollo's prophets pray is Jupiter. To further express the contrast, Amphiaraus prays, *non Cirrha deum promiserit antro / certius*, and says that the Dictaeon is more enlightened than, among others, Branchus, a son of Apollo.<sup>310</sup>

After the avian prophecy on Mount Aphetas seems still too ambiguous to the Argives, Statius inserts his own lament that prophecy and man's desire to know the future, Apollo's realm, has destroyed Jupiter's Golden Age:

unde iste per orbem  
primus venturi miseris animantibus aeger  
crevit amor?...  
at non prior aureus ille  
sanguis avum scopulisque satae vel robore gentes  
artibus his usae; silvas amor unus humumque  
edomuisse manu; quid crastina volveret aetas

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<sup>309</sup> 3.440-496.

<sup>310</sup> 474-475; 479-482.

scire nefas homini. nos pravum et flebile vulgus,  
scrutati penitus superos: hinc pallor et irae,  
hinc scelus insidiaeque et nulla modestia voti.

When throughout the world  
did that first sick love of what's to come  
arise in miserable people?...

But not before that golden blood of birds  
and our race was descent from rocks or oak  
used these arts; there was one desire to overcome  
the woods and the soil; it was wicked for man  
to know what tomorrow's time would unroll.  
We are a depraved and pathetic crowd,  
having inspected the gods above too deeply  
from this, paleness and anger, from this  
wickedness and treachery and no modesty of prayer.<sup>311</sup>

In opposition to the madness Apollo's skills have brought to mankind, *robore* makes it clear that the *aureus sanguis* refers to Jupiter.<sup>312</sup> Amphiaraus echoes this sentiment when he tells Capaneus that ignorance is better than knowing the outcome of the war and laments, *te, Thymbraee, vocanti / non alias tam saeve mihi, quae signa futuri / pertulerim.*<sup>313</sup>

As Jupiter begins to incite the Argives to war, he sends his agent Mars to stir up conflict among the neighboring cities. Chief among them is Therapne, described explicitly as *Apollineas*.<sup>314</sup> This prelude to war provides another sizeable mythological narrative which communicates the adversity Statius' audience witnesses between Apollo and Jupiter. While the king of the gods tries to hasten war, Apollo contrives to delay the

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<sup>311</sup> 551-553, 559-565.

<sup>312</sup> Although *robor* often has a more general connotation than specifically Jupiter's oak, within this context it is an attractive proposition. The implicit reference to the Golden Age (*aureus sanguis*, 559-560) negatively comments on the Apollonian *ludi saeculares* described above.

<sup>313</sup> 638-640: "Oh Thymbraean, not so savage before to me calling you, what signs of the future I have suffered."

<sup>314</sup> 420-422.

slaughter of Thebes.<sup>315</sup> Bacchus tells the rivers that Apollo will help them obstruct the Argives, and an entire triad of books is taken up by this delay: Hypsipyle, the women of Lemnos, Opheltes' death, his funeral, and the funeral games. Given the prominence in Domitian's cultural program of the Alban Games, celebrated at the emperor's own Alban Villa, and the Capitoline Games, honoring Jupiter, this is an important opportunity for Statius to provide commentary on the superiority of Domitian's Jupiter over Augustus' Apollo.<sup>316</sup>

While searching for a way to quench their thirst, the Argives happen upon Hypsipyle, who introduces herself as the Lemnian queen who saved her father Thaos from the paternal and filial slaughter an enraged Venus compelled among her people.<sup>317</sup> After her encounter with Jason and the Argonauts, Hypsipyle fled Lemnos and began to look after Opheltes, the infant son of King Lycurgus and Eurydice. In order to help the Argives find water, and do so quickly, she sets Opheltes down in a meadow, and he wanders astray as Hypsipyle narrates her past. At the conclusion of her story, she hears the death rattle of Opheltes and finds that a serpent has devoured him. The serpent appears in line 506, and, although it directly recalls Apollo's Python, Statius expressly states that it is sacred to Jupiter Tonans.<sup>318</sup> The serpent, like the Argives, is wandering around to somehow quench its thirst. Capaneus, foreshadowing his curse and death in

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<sup>315</sup> Apollo does this, despite the fact that Bacchus is considered the chief agent of the delay; cf. 5.744-745: *Phoebe, moras, semperque novis bellare vetemur / casibus*.

<sup>316</sup> Statius also uses the games to explain the origin of the Nemean Games, much as Vergil did in *Aeneid* Five with Anchises' funeral games.

<sup>317</sup> The goddess, Aeneas' guide (with Apollo) in Vergil, is cast in an extremely unfavorable light, highlighted by her strong presence in 5.157-158: *mixta Venus, Venus arma tenet, Venus admovet iras*; see McNelis' (p. 90) discussion.

<sup>318</sup> Similarity to Python (and also the serpent Cadmus had slain to found Thebes): 529-533; sacred to Tonans: 510-511. See Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid*, 187, and Ross' note on 5.506: Statius modeled this serpent after Ovid, *Met.* 3.30-34.

Book Ten, curses the serpent and then deals it a mortal blow with his spear. Jupiter's snake retreats to its shrine and dies. In his anger over such a personal affront, Jupiter began an all-out attack on Capaneus, but he relents once his thoughts turn to Fate. Instead, Jupiter sends a bolt of lightning that strikes the crest of Capaneus' helmet for the impiety of his slaughter:

ipse etiam e summa iam tela poposcerat aethra  
Iuppiter et dudum nimbi que hiemesque coibant,  
ni minor ira deo gravioraque tela, mereri  
servatus Capaneus; moti tamen aura cucurrit  
fulminis et summas libavit vertice cristas.

Jupiter himself had already demanded his weapons from the highest air and just now both the clouds and storms were gathering, if his anger had not lessened by the god and, Capaneus having been saved, was owed graver weapons; however the air of the stirred lightning ran and grazed the highest part of his plume.<sup>319</sup>

Statius assures the reader in this way that Jupiter is Fate's companion and not capriciously violent, as perhaps his rebuttal to Juno in the *concilium deorum* of Book One might suggest.<sup>320</sup>

King Lycurgus then finds out about Opheltes' death because Jupiter refused his sacrifices in 638-642, and nearly kills Hypsipyle, save for the intervention of Tydeus and the rest of the Argives. Apollo, according to Amphiaraus, demands the continued delay of a funeral to honor both Opheltes and the serpent sacred to Jupiter.

The funeral is another vehicle by which Statius conveys the Domitianic Jupiter's dominance over Augustus' Apollo. The Argives build a pyre *quae crimina caesi / anguis*

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<sup>319</sup> 5.585-587.

<sup>320</sup> See 1.282-292: Jupiter dismisses Juno's complaints quickly and without further justification for his actions.

*et infausti cremet atra piacula belli.*<sup>321</sup> The impiety spoken of is not the slaughter of the baby, but that of the serpent sacred to Jupiter. Accordingly, Opheltes is the least important element of the pyre and funeral in Statius' narration.<sup>322</sup> This expiation is intertextually evocative of Apollo's failed attempts to cleanse himself of the slaughter of Python, which itself intratextually alludes to the impiety of Apollo in the narrative of Linus and Coroebus.<sup>323</sup> Statius secures this latter connection with his description of Opheltes' cloak, on which the audience finds Linus' death beautifully rendered:

teretes hoc undique gemmae  
inradiant, medio Linus intertextus acantho  
letiferique canes.

Everywhere round gems gleam from it,  
Linus was interwoven in the middle of acanthus  
and death-bearing dogs.<sup>324</sup>

Through Statius' deliberate allusion to Apollo's son Linus, Opheltes can also be considered Apollonian. Thus, his death at the hands of Jupiter's serpent communicates Jupiter's, and thus Domitian's, supremacy over Apollo/Augustus.

Opheltes is also possibly an allusion to "the infant son of Domitian who was deified after his premature and unexpected death."<sup>325</sup> Hypsipyle's, and later Adrastus', renaming the infant Archemorus evokes also the apotheosis inherent in the grand funeral

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<sup>321</sup> 6.86-87: "[...] which would consume the crimes of the snake's bloodshed and the black sacrifices of the ill-omened war."

<sup>322</sup> See Mario Eraso (*Reading Death in Ancient Rome* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2008), 127-139) for his discussion on how the largess of both the ceremony and the pyre itself undermine the celebration of Opheltes.

<sup>323</sup> See Ross' note on 6.87.

<sup>324</sup> 6.63-65. Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid*, also observes the connection, 105.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*, 188. See also Scott, 74-75; *Silvae* 1.1.97; Martial 4.3; Silius Italicus, *Punica* 3.629.

that makes up the first half of Book Six.<sup>326</sup> Indeed, the first description of the baby is a simile comparing his need to be calmed to that of Cybele calming Jupiter as an infant: *qualis Berecynthia mater, / dum parvum circa iubet exsultare Tonantem / Curetas trepidos.*<sup>327</sup> The Jovian simile contrasts with the Apollonian one signaling the baby's doom: Opheltes crawls away like *improbis Apollo* on Delos.<sup>328</sup>

Additionally, upon finding water near the end of Book Four, Argos commands his troops to hail Apollo of Leucas. While seemingly puzzling and antithetical to the anti-Augustan narrative at first, the familiar trope of Apollonian inspired chaos subsequently appears as the troops forget themselves, their ranks, and their order in their lust to quench their thirst. In contrast, immediately following the dedication of games to Jupiter, peace returns to the Argives:

tu pace mihi, tu nube sub ipsa  
armorum festasque super celebrabere mensas  
(a Iove primus honos), bellis modo laetus ovantes  
accipias fessisque libens iterum hospita pandas  
flumina defensasque velis agnoscere turmas.

You will be celebrated peacefully by me,  
under the very cloud of weapons and above festive tables,  
(the first honor from Jove), may you happy just receive  
us, rejoicing in our wars, and may you willingly hospitable  
again open your rivers to us tired and may you wish  
to acknowledge the troops you have protected.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> 709 and 739.

<sup>327</sup> 4.789-791: “[...] just like the Berecynthia mother while she orders the restless Curetes to dance around the little Thunderer.” Note that the manuscript tradition in this section is suspect; the line numbers indicated follow Bailey’s non-parenthetical enumeration.

<sup>328</sup> 803.

<sup>329</sup> 4.846-850.

Thus is the reason, according to Statius, that the Nemean Games are celebrated in Jupiter's honor. As with other narratives, Statius has chosen the version convenient to his identification of Jupiter as Domitian.<sup>330</sup>

The games of Book Six are an allegory of the whole Theban war, and so the result of each contest and the manner in which each winner finds victory is highly significant and evocative of Statius' message about piety, culpability, and the war itself.<sup>331</sup> Statius modeled the games on Apollodorus and Vergil, and, as in Homer's *Iliad* and Silius Italicus' *Punica*, the chariot race is the most detailed and lengthy description.<sup>332</sup>

Apollo, in his deliberations before taking an active role in the chariot race, directly recalls the myth of Admetus in which Apollo had been forced into a year-long servitude. While Apollo's humbling is compelling enough, the god admittedly reveals that he was forced into the status of a slave by Jupiter.<sup>333</sup> Admetus' presence in the chariot race, together with Amphiaraus, is a source of concern for Apollo and further undermines Apollo's status, especially in relation to Domitian's Jupiter. Indeed, as Vessey notes, Admetus' place in the narrative of the Nemean Games is unique to Statius, and so his inclusion must be highly evocative.<sup>334</sup>

In that first event, Apollo plays an extremely active and significant role. Caught between Admetus and Amphiaraus, Apollo finally chooses the latter as the winner. However, Apollo ensures Amphiaraus' victory by conjuring a snake so horrific that it

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<sup>330</sup> See the discussion of Theseus' Amazonian victory in Chapter Three, the Apollo and Lycurgus episode above, and the ensuing discussion of Admetus.

<sup>331</sup> Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid*, 219.

<sup>332</sup> *Iliad* 23.262-650 and *Punica* 16.317-456; Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid*, 209-212.

<sup>333</sup> *Theb.* 6.375-378.

<sup>334</sup> Statius' inclusion of Lycurgus in the Apollo and Python narrative is also unique; 214.

would terrify even the Eumenides. Apollo's serpent at once recalls the god's impiety in Book One's Linus and Coroebus episode, echoes the innocent slaughter of Opheltes, and, by way of his intervention, foreshadows Amphiaraus' disappearance and *katabasis* in Book Seven, itself a grand impiety discussed below.<sup>335</sup>

Victory by deceit is not a new trope; in the *Aeneid*, Nisus contrives to trip Salius so that his beloved Euryalus wins the footrace in the funeral games for Anchises.<sup>336</sup> However, Vergil uses that episode to illustrate the piety of the Augustan Aeneas. The leader fairly mediates the situation and rewards Euryalus, Salius, and Nisus as well, with equally worthy prizes.<sup>337</sup> Although Amphiaraus, Polynices, and Admetus each also obtain a reward, Statius has no such motivation to communicate piety in his narration. The statement *hinc vice iusta / gloria mansit equo, cessit victoria vati* indicates that it was an unjust and hollow victory for Amphiaraus and a result orchestrated more by Neptune on behalf of the horse than its charioteer.<sup>338</sup> The seer's inevitable fate, which overshadows his victory, is also reflected in the grotesque imagery of his prize, a cup depicting the drunken Centaurs slaughtering the Lapiths.<sup>339</sup>

The victim of Apollo's horrific trick, Polynices, is associated with the motif of Apollonian impiety as well. Adrastus allows his son-in-law to ride Arion with the following advice: "*urgue alios,*" inquit, "*stimulisque minisque; / ille ibit, minus ipse*

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<sup>335</sup> 500. See also Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid*, 215-216.

<sup>336</sup> *Aen.* 5.286-339.

<sup>337</sup> 348-361.

<sup>338</sup> *Theb.* 6.529-530: "For this reason, in turn, just glory remained for the horse and victory yielded to seer."

<sup>339</sup> 531-535; see also Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid*, 216-217.

voles.”<sup>340</sup> The connection to Phaëthon is immediate and direct, but Statius emphatically and explicitly provides the simile for his audience:

sic ignea lora  
cum daret et rapido Sol natum imponeret axi,  
gaudentem lacrimans astra insidiosa docebat  
nolentesque teri zonas mediamque polorum  
temperiem: pius ille quidem et formidine cauta,  
sed iuvenem durae prohibebant discere Parcae.

Thus when the Sun gave his fiery reigns  
and placed his son in the swift chariot,  
weeping, he was teaching the rejoicing one the treacherous stars  
and the areas unwilling to be trampled and the mild  
center of the skies: he indeed was pious and cautious in his terror,  
But the hard Fates would not allow the young man to learn.<sup>341</sup>

The appearance of the myth intratextually alludes to the Book One scene in which Jupiter used Phaëthon as the primary reason he is tired of administering justice to and punishing the culpable. The culpable party, both in this myth and in the chariot race, is Apollo. Statius once again reminds his audience, in an extremely significant and evocative scene, of the impiety of the formerly august Apollo.<sup>342</sup>

Jupiter’s competition with Apollo in these games is also strengthened by Statius’ description of the temple consecrated on the spot of the games. The poet says that a huge temple for the ashes was built miraculously fast, within the standard nine-day period of mourning.<sup>343</sup> It is not beyond imagination to read a connection to Domitian’s swift rebuilding of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus and restorations after the fire of 80

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<sup>340</sup> 319-320: “‘Encourage other horses,’ he said, ‘with both whips and threats; that one will go, you yourself will wish less.’”

<sup>341</sup> 320-325.

<sup>342</sup> Given the comparison with Statius’ earlier introduction to the myth, the inclusion of *pius* in this instance must be ironic. See Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid*, 212-213: Statius will recall the same myth when Polynices is cremated in Book Twelve.

<sup>343</sup> 6.242-243: *mirum opus accelerasse manus! stat saxea moles / templum ingens cineri.*

CE. This is a particularly compelling identification, given that the series of effigies, which Statius says accompanies the temple, yields an anachronistically Roman context.<sup>344</sup> Among the series depicting Jovian narratives are the Danaids. Lines 286-287 provide a tenuous relevancy to the death of Opheltes/Archemorus, but the full representation of the Danaids' slaughter of the sons of Aegyptus lacks context among the effigies.<sup>345</sup> The sculpture series, however, does connect this (Domitianic) temple to Augustus' Palatine Temple of Apollo which was so prominent in the Augustan message of Vergil's *Aeneid*. A further Apollonian link is also suggested by the presence of Coroebus, named in 286. Given these connections to arguably the centerpiece of each emperor's building program, Statius is again evoking a comparison between his emperor and Vergil's, and in a way that Domitian himself is known to have elicited.

The beginning of the war in Book Seven provides the context for several displays of Jupiter's dominance over Apollo. The book opens with Jupiter's intense anger and frustration at the contrived delay from Books Four through Six, and so Jupiter sends Mars, his instigator, to excite war. In order to do so, Jupiter first descends to Thrace, the abode of Mars, which Statius describes as a place where *laeditur adversum Phoebi iubar*.<sup>346</sup> As the Argives near Thebes, the two gods are again paired in their involvement with the action. Among the portents of war, Jupiter himself offers warnings through

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<sup>344</sup> Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid*, 211 and 223: the scene, especially *magnanimus series antiqua parentum* (268), in which the effigies process, is highly suggestive of Roman funerary practice, including the display of *imagines*. The boxing match also displays a particular *Romanitas* which is entirely anachronistic to the Nemean narration.

<sup>345</sup> See note on 6.287 of Bailey's translation.

<sup>346</sup> 7.45: "Apollo's radiance against it is harmed."

thunder and lightning; Apollo, however, is silent, despite the fact that the shrines in general are issuing grave omens.<sup>347</sup>

From the perspective of Apollo's role in the beginning of the war, possibly the most compelling episode is Amphiaraus' death. The *aristeia* of Apollo's seer, in anticipation of his fate, is modeled after numerous epic precedents.<sup>348</sup> Statius follows those precedents in which the hero's glorious moment anticipates his glorious death.<sup>349</sup> Apollo, in stark contrast to Amphiaraus, fails to respond to his seer's *aristeia*, brought on by *furor*, and orchestrates an unnatural end to Amphiaraus' life.

Amphiaraus' *aristeia* continues until Hypseus, working as Jupiter's agent, prompts Apollo to intervene and hasten Amphiaraus towards his *katabasis*. Just as Statius provided his audience a description of Hypseus' place in myth, it is also appropriate to do so here to illustrate his status as Jupiter's collaborator.<sup>350</sup> Hypseus was the son of the River Asopus, whose daughter was raped by Jupiter.<sup>351</sup> Asopus raged until he was seemingly tamed by Jupiter: *donec vix tonitru summotus et igne trisulco / cessit*.<sup>352</sup> Statius does not give his audience much closure to Asopus' paternal wrath

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<sup>347</sup> 406-413.

<sup>348</sup> Achilles, *Il.* 21; Odysseus, *Odyssey* 22; Aeneas, *Aen.* 10.

<sup>349</sup> Patroklos, *Il.* 16; Nisus and Euryalus, *Aen.* 9; Pallas, *Aen.* 10; Turnus, *Aen.* 12. See Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid*, 258-262.

<sup>350</sup> See 7.309-329.

<sup>351</sup> Statius' language is noticeably mitigating: *namque ferunt raptam patriis Aeginan ad undis / amplexu latuisse Iovis* (319-320). Note both the impersonal indirect discourse and the impersonal nature of the action within the indirect discourse. The fact that Jupiter is the agent of the action is scarcely confirmed by the implied subject needed for the active infinitive *latuisse*.

<sup>352</sup> 324-325: "[...] until he was barely driven off and yielded from the thunder and the three-forked lightning."

except that the river god rejoices in his rage even at this time.<sup>353</sup> Hypseus evokes his father's consequent status as a suppliant of Jupiter, and so Hypseus is an adherent of Jupiter, secured by his epic apostrophe:

Aonidum dives largitor aquarum,  
clare Giganteis etiamnum, Asope, favillis,  
da numen dextrae:

Wealthy donor of Aonian waters,  
Asopus, famous also for the ashes of the Giants,  
grant my right hand your divine will.<sup>354</sup>

Further support that Hypseus is an agent of Jupiter, acting against Apollo, comes from Hypseus himself:

fas et me spernere Phoebum,  
si tibi collatus divum sator. omnia mergam  
fontibus arma tuis tristesque sine augure vittas.

And it is right for me to reject Phoebus,  
if the sower of the gods was compared to you. I will submerge  
all the arms and fillets sad without your augury in your waters.<sup>355</sup>

Apollo, however, uses Hypseus' spear, intended for Amphiaraus, to commence Amphiaraus' *katabasis*. The god redirects the weapon to kill Haliacmon, whose countenance Apollo adopts, and takes over his chariot. The god then, displaying a mortal, and therefore demeaning, *aristeia*, goes on a rampage in order to clear a path towards Amphiaraus.

Jupiter's defeat of Apollo is made apparent by several evocative comments made at the end of this scene. Apollo admits that Fate, Jove's counterpart, has defeated him,

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<sup>353</sup> 325-327.

<sup>354</sup> 730-732.

<sup>355</sup> 733-735.

and that his seer's *katabasis* is a pitiable attempt to circumvent that Fate.<sup>356</sup> Apollo then abandons his chariot in a simile likening it to a ship put adrift by a thunderstorm:

non aliter caeco nocturni turbine Cauri  
scit peritura ratis, cum iam damnata sororis  
igne Therapnaei fugerunt carbasa fratres.

Not otherwise does a ship in a blinding storm of nighttime northwester know that it will sink, when the brothers of Therapnae have fled its sails already condemned by their sister's fire.<sup>357</sup>

The mention of Therapne contributes to the divine conflict, as it is the same Apollonian city in which Mars first stirs up war, at Jupiter's behest, in Book Three.

Statius describes Amphiaraus' glory as *inane* in 692, and the prophet meets his terrestrial fate only by the acknowledging decree of Jupiter's agent, Mars.<sup>358</sup> This is not the first time Apollo has deprived a hero of his glorious and pious death; this situation is analogous to the tale of Coroebus told earlier in Book One. The impiety of Amphiaraus' end at the hands of Apollo is illustrated also by the death of Lycorus in 716-717.

Amphiaraus, formerly a pacifist figure, *ardet inexpleto saevi Mavortis amore*<sup>359</sup> and mistakenly kills Lycorus, a fellow seer of Apollo. Statius devotes a rare two-line aside to the tragedy of this negligent act amidst his narration of Amphiaraus' slaughter.<sup>360</sup> Just as the *Thebaid* as a whole outlines the impiety of fraternal bloodshed, this act

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<sup>356</sup> 771-777.

<sup>357</sup> 791-793. Recall that the *Thebaid's* Jupiter has been shown, in Chapter Three, to have adopted a Neptunian dominion over the winds and water.

<sup>358</sup> 695-697: *nec tarde fratri, Gradive, dedisti / ne qua manus vatem, ne quid mortalia bello / laedere tela queant.*

<sup>359</sup> 7.703. Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid*, 260.

<sup>360</sup> *Theb.* 7.716-717.

outlines the impiety of the *furor* which overtakes Apollo's seer during what should be his most glorious moment.

Book Seven finally concludes when the seer is swallowed by a chasm which Apollo opens in the Earth. Lest his audience believe Amphiaraus' death and Apollo's status appear inspiring and wondrous to the armies, Statius relates, after the extensive narrative delay of Amphiaraus in the underworld, that the Argives are afraid and confused by the sight.<sup>361</sup> The Argives consider the event a sign that the gods have left them and begin bitterly to reproach Apollo for his abandonment.<sup>362</sup> From that point, their complaints turn to tribute for their fallen comrade, but only in the form of a lamentation that all prophecy, augury, and omen will fall silent. Amphiaraus' *decus inane* from 7.692 should resonate with the audience at this point, since Adrastus and the Argives promise to pay homage to the seer, but do so after completely misunderstanding the reason.<sup>363</sup> The Thebans, however, mock Apollo's seer, and instead sing of Bacchus, Thebes' origin, and of the exploits of Jove.<sup>364</sup> Once again, Statius communicates the failure of Augustus' Apollo and the superiority of Domitian's Jupiter.

But what of Amphiaraus' status in the underworld? The end of Book Seven leaves his place uncertain, but the narrative pause between books encourages the audience's expectation. One may assume that his standing in the underworld would

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<sup>361</sup> 8.165-168: they neither wash their wounds nor their weapons.

<sup>362</sup> 174-181 includes no less than a dozen rhetorical questions of direct speech which Statius puts in the mouths of the resentful Argives. Statius may also ironically be intending to foreshadow the actual abdication of the Olympians from the war.

<sup>363</sup> See Michael Dewar, *Statius: Thebaid IX* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 813, n. 663: Amphiaraus' *decus* is further mitigated by the comparison made later in Book Nine when Apollo promises Diana that Atalanta's son Parthenopaeus a *decus extremum*.

<sup>364</sup> *Theb.* 8.218-239, *passim* 225-226: *nunc funera rident / auguris ignari*.

respond to his apparently glorious fate in battle. Indeed, that expectation is manipulated by Statius, since there is no precedent for Amphiaraus' *katabasis* in the Theban myth.<sup>365</sup> Here again, Statius comments negatively on Apollonian piety and the audience finds that Amphiaraus' end/Apollo's actions could not be more detestable to the natural order. The verbs Statius uses in the first three lines of Book Eight are as jarring as their consequence to the underworld: *incidit*, *rupit*, and *turbavit*. While Apollo's seer is the agent of these actions, Statius quickly redirects his audience to sympathize with the shades, whom *horror habet cunctos*.<sup>366</sup> The shades are just as confused as perhaps the Argives are above-ground at Apollo's usurpation of the natural order of death, a defilement illustrated most clearly by:

necdum illum aut trunca lustraverat obvia taxo  
 Eumenis, aut furvo Proserpina poste notarat  
 coetibus assumptum functi; quin cominus ipsa  
 Fatorum deprensa colus, visoque paventes  
 augure tunc demum rumpebant stamina Parcae.

Neither had the Fury yet purified him with the branch of a yew tree,  
 nor had Proserpina noted him on the gloomy door-post  
 as having been taken in by the crowds of the dead; rather  
 the very distaff of the Fates was surprised with him close-at-hand,  
 and the Parcae, alarmed when they saw the seer then finally broke their strings.<sup>367</sup>

All three agents of death, the Furies, the Fates, and Proserpina, have been passed over and supplanted by Apollo in a failed and impious attempt to glorify his prophet.<sup>368</sup>

In the underworld, Amphiaraus must beg Pluto to forgive the transgression his presence has caused. If Statius' audience had any doubt about the nature of Apollo's

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<sup>365</sup> Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid*, 262. See also Erasmo (p. 127-128, 139-140), who thoroughly discusses how Statius' use of intertextuality and expectation enhances the author's narration in the *Thebaid*.

<sup>366</sup> 8.4: "The horror holds them all."

<sup>367</sup> 9-13.

<sup>368</sup> Charon (18-20) also vents his frustration that his role has been circumvented.

deed, they are put aside by the resentment Amphiaraus himself displays. After his *aristeia* abated, the prophet's fillet and olive wreath, and so his skills and utility as a seer, wither and begin to vanish as he tries to ameliorate the irate Pluto.<sup>369</sup> Amphiaraus introduces himself to the god by admitting that his status as Apollo's prophet is of no use or consequence, and admits that Apollo has no power in the underworld.<sup>370</sup> He then asks Pluto to be kinder to him than the gods have been by not punishing him.<sup>371</sup>

Pluto's appearance and adjudication of Amphiaraus' presence in the underworld serves dual and complementary purposes: it heightens the tension between Apollo and Jupiter, and guarantees Jupiter's administration of Fate, as set out by Jupiter himself in Book One.<sup>372</sup> Pluto is often the chthonic equivalent of his brother, and thus frequently evoked as "black Jove."<sup>373</sup> Statius encourages Pluto's identification as Jupiter, in this case, by the simile of lines 82-83: *non fortius aethera vultu / torquet et astriferos inclinat Iuppiter axes.*<sup>374</sup> As a result, Apollo again comes into conflict with the Jovian element, by way of his seer, and nearly incites another fraternal/civil war. Acting on his rage, Pluto decides to send the Furies to guarantee the death of everyone involved in the war in retribution for Apollo's transgression. Despite the mitigating effect Amphiaraus' speech has on Pluto, it is clear that Apollo's impiety has both put Apollo in conflict with Jupiter

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<sup>369</sup> His chariot and arms vanish first, symbolizing the end of his military glory and a return to his normal state.

<sup>370</sup> 8.102: *sic merui de luce rapi*, and 100: *quid enim hic iurandus Apollo?* See also 116-119.

<sup>371</sup> 120: Amphiaraus instead wants Pluto to save his anger for his wife, whose desire for gold conspired to include Amphiaraus in the war.

<sup>372</sup> i.e., the destruction of Thebes and mankind for their impiety.

<sup>373</sup> 1.614-615: *profundo Iovi*; 2.49: *nigri Iovis*; see also 4.526-527: *Stygiae Iunonis*.

<sup>374</sup> "[...] no more bravely (than when) Jupiter turns the heavens with his gaze and bends the star-bearing heavens."

and also helped fulfill Jupiter's promise made at the beginning of Book One, that the Earth should be purged from the wickedness of Thebes.<sup>375</sup>

From every perspective then, Apollo's attempt to glorify his seer has failed. The Thebans view Amphiaraus' disappearance with mockery. Amphiaraus himself is rueful of his lot and loss of power, as is Pluto, who feels that his role in the natural order of the world has been usurped. Apollo later recognizes his own failure and admits as much to his sister Diana when she asks his help to keep Atalanta's son from his fate in battle:

en ipse mei (pudet!) irritus arma  
cultoris frondesque sacras ad inania vidi  
Tartara et in memet versos descendere vultus;  
nec tenui currus terraeque abrupta coegi,  
saevus ego immeritusque coli. lugentia cernis  
antra, soror, mutasque domos:

Alas, I myself pointlessly (shame!) watched my supporter's  
arms and sacred fronds and face turned onto me  
descend towards empty Tartarus;  
I, savage and undeserving of worship, neither held his chariot back  
nor forced the Earth's opening to close.  
You see my mournful caves, sister, and silent homes.<sup>376</sup>

The god laments his mistake and is embarrassed that he has allowed his prophet to die ingloriously. He tells Diana that he is powerless against Fate, and thus against Jupiter, and that his shrines are silent. Finally, Apollo questions his own merit as a subject of worship. By his own admission, Apollo's/Augustus' power has been wholly defeated by Jupiter/Domitian.

The Argives, terrified and confused, then decide that Thiodamus should replace Amphiaraus as their link to Apollo. Despite the unanimity of their decision, Statius makes it clear that the Argives' instincts have failed them. Thiodamus is fearful that his

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<sup>375</sup> See also Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid*, 263-264.

<sup>376</sup> *Theb.* 9.653-658.

new position places his safety at risk, and Apollo himself is absent from the prayers his new prophet offers. Indeed, Thiodamus first offers a prayer not to Apollo, but instead to Mother Earth: *o hominum divumque aeterna creatrix...numinis interpres te Phoebos absente vocabo.*<sup>377</sup> Eventually, the rising doubt about their choice causes so much discord among the Inachians as they prepare for battle that Thiodamus is described as a hindrance to the Argives' fate:

cuncta phalanx sibi deesse putat; minor ille per alas  
septimus extat apex. liquido velut aethere nubes  
invida Parrhasiis unum si detrahat astris,  
truncus honor Plaustri, nec idem riget igne reciso  
axis, et incerti numerant sua sidera nautae.

The whole army thinks that he is lacking for them; that seventh crown stands out less throughout the ranks. Just like in the liquid air if a jealous cloud takes away one of the Parrhasian stars, the valor of The Great Bear has been stripped, and the same sky doesn't stand firm with its fire cut back, and uncertain sailors count their stars.<sup>378</sup>

Even when Thiodamus declares in Book Ten that Apollo is speaking through him, Statius' narration clearly indicates that the agent of his possession is uncertain.<sup>379</sup>

Despite the Argives' reservations, the battle finally begins and brings with it the most poignant comparison between Jupiter and Apollo, by way of the fratricide the twin Ion wrought:

cultor Ion Pisae cultorem Daphnea Cirrhae  
turbatis prostravit equis: hunc laudat ab alto  
Iuppiter, hunc tardus frustra miseratur Apollo.

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<sup>377</sup> 8.303, 336: Oh eternal creator of men and gods... with Phoebus absent, I as mediator of divine will call you.

<sup>378</sup> 368-372.

<sup>379</sup> 10.162-163: *sive hanc Saturnia mentem / sive novum comitem bonus instigabat Apollo.* On the basis of *cui me famulari et sumere vittas*, I agree with Ross that *ille* (190) refers to Apollo and not Amphiaraus, as Bailey offers. More importantly perhaps is the seemingly deliberate ambiguity itself.

The worshipper at Pisa, Ion, struck down Daphneus,  
the worshipper at Cirrha with his horses thrown into confusion:  
Jupiter praises this one from on high, too late and in vain that one  
Apollo pities.<sup>380</sup>

Statius makes the comparison between Jupiter and Apollo as explicitly as possible through the symmetry of the line, highlighted by the juxtaposition of *cultor* and *cultorem*. This is not a battle between two men, or even twin brothers; this is a struggle between two gods. Jupiter supports the victorious Ion and defeats the Apollonian, and conveniently named, Daphneus. The Latin specifically blames Apollo through the adjective *tardus*, and the adversarial nature of the gods' relationship is heightened by their oppositional placement at the beginning and end of line 455. Additionally, not only is Apollo's power *tardus*, but his intended action is described as *frustra*, suggesting his inherent impotency against Jupiter here at the beginning of the actual battle narrative.

After the failure of Amphiaraus, Apollo's own admission of failure, his impotency to help his sister Diana, and the symbolic victory of Jupiter over Apollo at the commencement of war, Apollo's/Augustus' subjugation in the *Thebaid* is complete. The beginning of Book Ten, in the guise of a formulaic prologue, responds directly to Apollo's status and asserts Jupiter's/Domitian's recent victory over Apollo:

obruit Hesperia Phoebum nox umida porta,  
imperii properata Iovis;

Dewy night, hastened by the commands of Jupiter,  
overpowered Phoebus in the Hesperian gate;<sup>381</sup>

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<sup>380</sup> 8.453-455.

<sup>381</sup> 10.1-2. Cf. also the opening lines of the earlier Book Four: *tertius horrentem Zephyris laxaverat annum / Phoebus et angusto cogebat limite vernum / longius ire diem*, and those of the next book (11.5-6): *componit dextra victor concussa plagarum / Iuppiter et vultu caelumque diemque reducit*.

This introduction to Book Ten not only declares that Jupiter has conquered Apollo (*obruit* being an oddly violent word for the action here), but that it happened in *Hesperia*, the land of the Caesars. Statius removes the mythological context of Jupiter's victory and transfers it to the political realm of Domitian's power.

Capaneus' death is in many respects the climax of the *Thebaid* thus far, and brings to fruition much of Statius' narrative commentary about man's impiety, Apollo's/Augustus' impotency, and Jupiter's/Domitian's supreme power. Capaneus' grand display of arrogance towards Jupiter recalls his mockery of Apollo and Amphiaraus in Book Three:

non si ipse cavo sub vertice Cirrhae  
(quisquis is est, timidis Famaeque ita visus) Apollo  
mugiat insano penitus seclusus in antro,  
exspectare queam dum pallida virgo tremendas  
nuntiet ambages.

Not if Apollo himself (whoever he is, so seen  
by the timid and by Fama) would rumble under the hollow top  
of Cirrha, secluded deep within his insane cave,  
I would not be able to wait while the pale virgin announces  
her terrible double-talk.<sup>382</sup>

By climbing Thebes' walls, Capaneus continues to doubt Apollo's prophecy, given by Tiresias, that Menoeceus' death will save the city.<sup>383</sup> At the top of the walls, Capaneus resumes his affront to the gods:

nunc ubi saeva manus, meaque heu cunabula flammae?  
fulmen, io ubi fulmen?

Now where is your savage hand, alas my cradles of fire?  
Thunder, oh where is your thunder?<sup>384</sup>

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<sup>382</sup> 3.611-615.

<sup>383</sup> 10.610-615.

<sup>384</sup> 888-889.

The gods watch all of this with disdain and are said to complain bitterly and be angry.<sup>385</sup> Bacchus' rhetorical questions reflect his impatience, Apollo is reduced merely to grief, Hercules is sadly uncertain, and Venus and Juno are angrily silent.<sup>386</sup> In great contrast to the deities circling him, Jupiter is untroubled: *non tamen haec turbant pacem Iovis*.<sup>387</sup> Even when Capaneus directly mocks Jupiter, the king of the gods calmly and regretfully reacts out of fateful duty, rather than anger:

ingemuit dictis superum dolor; ipse furem  
 risit et incussa sanctarum mole comarum,  
 'quaenam spes hominum tumidae post proelia Phlegrae?  
 tune etiam feriendus?' ait.

The grief of the gods groaned with his words; he himself laughed at him raging and, with the mass of his sacred hair shaken, said, "What hope is their of men after the battles of arrogant Phlegra? Must even you be struck down?"<sup>388</sup>

The gods clamor for Jupiter's justice and their rage increases:

premit undique lentum  
 turba deum frendens et tela ultrica poscit,  
 nec iam audet Fatis turbata obsistere coniunx.

From all sides the crowd of gods, gnashing their teeth, presses the reluctant god and demands his avenging weapons, not even his wife, disturbed by Fate, dares to stand in his way.<sup>389</sup>

In his final extended description of the gods, Statius emphasizes the same overwhelming aspects which appeared in the *concilium deorum* of Book One: Jupiter's passionless role synonymous with Fate and the gods' sheer terror of their leader. Note that Juno,

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<sup>385</sup> 883: *studiis fremebant*, and 885: *ingentes iras*.

<sup>386</sup> 888-896.

<sup>387</sup> 897: "These words, however, do not disturb Jupiter's peace."

<sup>388</sup> 10.907-910.

<sup>389</sup> 910-912.

mentioned specifically in 912, presumably because hers was the only complaint lodged at the first council of gods, has resigned herself as culpable in hindering Fate. Augustus' Apollo, for his part, has been reduced in this climactic scene to just one of a catalogue of gods powerless and petitioning Jupiter, who, Statius directly states, is the only one able to handle the situation.<sup>390</sup> In great contrast to the inaction Apollo showed Capaneus in Book Three, and again here in Book Ten, Jupiter displays his power and supremacy, and strikes Capaneus dead.

Statius' commentary on Jovian/Domitianic supremacy over Augustus' Apollo ceases with Jupiter's abdication early in Book Eleven in favor of the extended Theseus-Domitian allusion evoking the emperor's divine status. In a detail evocative of Domitian in the *Silvae*,<sup>391</sup> Jupiter deprives the Earth of his countenance, a narrative query which is answered by the appearance of the Domitianic Theseus in Book Twelve. The Athenian monarch, a second allusive representation of Domitian, assumes the Jovian role of executor of Fate and minister of justice under the auspices of *clementia*.

In the *Thebaid*, Statius uses Apollo and Jupiter as referents for Augustus and Domitian in a commentary on the superiority of his emperor's rule in a distinctly Flavian world. As a response to Vergil's *Aeneid*, in which Apollo communicated Augustan piety and the fated Golden Age of contemporary Rome, Statius' Apollo reflects the impotency and impiety of those Augustan ideals. Jupiter takes over as the allusive narrative of Domitian's oppressive strength, leadership, and redefined piety in the *Thebaid*. While comparisons evocative of this conflict between the two gods/emperors abound throughout

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<sup>390</sup> 886: *seque obstare videt*.

<sup>391</sup> See Chapter Three for Domitian's and Jupiter's *vultus serenus*. 11.135: *et dulci terrae caruere sereno*.

the *Thebaid*, Statius utilizes and manipulates the mythological narratives of Apollo and Python, Linus and Coroebus, and Phaëthon, as well as Apollo's seer Amphiaraus, to undermine the Apollonian supremacy found in Augustus' national epic, the *Aeneid*, in favor of the autocratic rule of Jupiter. Thus, Statius allusively rejects the rule of Augustus and praises his emperor, Domitian.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the potential and limits of comparing historical and literary figures in Silver Age epic. These parallel allusions were between three sets of referents: Augustus and Apollo, Domitian and Jupiter/Theseus, and consequently Augustus and Domitian. In doing so, it has proven that Statius has continued the epic legacy established in the Golden Age by Vergil, and that he used the *Thebaid* to glorify Domitian's supreme authority. Statius used the characters of Jupiter and Apollo in the *Thebaid* to show the superiority of Jupiter over Apollo, and thus Domitian over Augustus.

Chapter Two explored how Augustus established a relationship with Apollo after the Battle of Actium and encouraged that connection in his building program, personal mythology, and literature. Vergil, continuing his praise of Augustus found in the *Georgics*, wrote the *Aeneid* to glorify his *princeps* and his regime, and did so in part by way of comparisons between Augustus and Apollo. Vergil characterized Apollo as the prophetic divinity and Aeneas' guide. The god, through various agents, directed his actions towards Rome's glorious destiny under Augustus. Apollo, more than any other divine figure in the *Aeneid*, was the Olympian harbinger of Rome's return to a Golden Age, the *Pax Augustana*, brought on by Augustus' political and social leadership.

Chapter Three examined the relationship Statius established between Jupiter and Domitian throughout the *Thebaid*, and proved that Statius reflected Domitian's autocratic

ideology and divine ambitions through the characters of Jupiter and Theseus in his epic. Statius first established this connection in his panegyric *Silvae*, and then perpetuated his emperor's oppressive and irrefutable power in the epic framework of the destruction of impious Thebes. By encouraging intertextual readings with his *Silvae* in his descriptions of Jupiter-Domitian's constructed heaven, his place within that heaven, and his relationship over those whom he rules, Statius used his *Thebaid* to cement the divine and mythological allusions that the *dominus et deus* himself sought to establish in his personal mythology, and cultural and building programs.

Chapter Four continued my examination of the relationship between Apollo and Jupiter and proved Statius' glorification of Domitian in the *Thebaid* as a divine ruler who surpassed his political and literary predecessor, the Deified Augustus. This comparison was made explicit through continued allusions between fictional characters and historical persons by way of the relationship between Statius' Apollo and Jupiter with Vergil's Apollo. Statius used Apollo and Jupiter as referents for Augustus and Domitian in a commentary on the superiority of his emperor's rule in a distinctly Flavian world. As a response to Vergil's *Aeneid*, in which Apollo communicated Augustan piety and the fated Golden Age of contemporary Rome, Statius' Apollo reflected the impotency and impiety of those Augustan ideals. Jupiter took over as the allusive narrative of Domitian's oppressive strength, leadership, and redefined piety in the *Thebaid*. While comparisons evocative of this conflict between the two gods/emperors abounded throughout the *Thebaid*, Statius utilized and manipulated the mythological narratives of Apollo and Python, Linus and Coroebus, and Phaëthon, as well as Apollo's seer Amphiaraus, to undermine the Apollonian supremacy found in Augustus' national epic, the *Aeneid*, in

favor of the autocratic rule of Jupiter. Thus, Statius allusively rejected the rule of Augustus and praised his emperor, Domitian.

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