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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Greek and Roman Tragedy in Flavian Epic Poetry

Exploring Intersections,
Influences and Adaptations
through Literature
and Material Culture

Athens 19-21 September 2024

@Academy of Athens, Central Building, Panepistimiou 28
& National & Kapodistrian University of Athens, Central Building, Panepistimiou 30

Organisers: Angeliki N Roumpou (AoA), Sophia Papaioannou (NKUA)

Keynote speakers: Antony Augoustakis (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign)
Federica Bessone (University of Turin)

Conference website: https://conferences.uoa.gr/event/84/

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OFFICIAL PROGRAMME

Greek Tragedy, with its rich themes, timeless characters, and powerful narratives, has left an indelible mark on the literary tradition. In the Flavian era epic poets such as Statius, Valerius Flaccus and Silius Italicus drew inspiration from Greek and Roman Tragedy, incorporating its themes, motifs and characters into their epic works. By closely scrutinising literary works and cultural elements, this conference aims to explore the multifaceted relationships and connections between these two literary genres, and seeks to foster a deeper understanding of the influences, adaptations, and reimaginings of ancient Greek and Roman Tragedy within the context of the Flavian period.

Scholarship has yielded a rich body of research that highlights the intricate relationship between these two genres, namely how the Flavian poets reshaped and subverted traditional mythological narratives to create new layers of meaning and commentary on their contemporary society. The recent volume on Elements of Tragedy in Flavian Epic (by Marinis/Papaioannou, 2021) has shed light on different aspects of this interaction (such as human and divine causation, the tragic motifs of anagnorisis and vengeance). Individual research has also delved into the incorporation of tragic characters and figures from Greek mythology into Flavian epic, and has analysed how these characters are reinterpreted and contextualised within the epic narratives (see bibliography below). On the other side, despite the detection of the engagement of the Roman Senecan tragedy with the Flavian epic, the findings are minor, and the subject needs further exploration in order to understand if, how and to what extent Roman tragedy works as an intermediary between Greek tragedy and Flavian epic. Additionally, the influence of the fragmentary tragedy of the Republican period on the Flavian epics is understudied and needs further investigation.

Overall, scholarship on elements of tragedy in Flavian epic poetry has already illuminated how the Flavian poets creatively engaged with Greek and Roman Tragedy to craft their own unique narratives, thereby enriching the classical literary tradition and providing valuable insights into the cultural and intellectual milieu of the Flavian era. As scholarship on Flavian epic poetry continues to evolve, several new trends and approaches have emerged, reflecting the dynamic nature of research in this field. The aim of this conference is to explore the enduring legacy of Tragedy and its resonance within the Flavian Epic tradition, in order to invigorate the field of Flavian epic, inspire new perspectives, and contribute to a deeper understanding of this literary tradition. Scholars and researchers interested in Flavian culture and poetry can help expand our knowledge of Flavian epic and its multifaceted connections to broader intellectual and cultural contexts.

PROGRAMME

Venue: National & Kapodistrian University of Athens, Room: A. Argyriadis.
Panepistimiou 30, Athens

08.45 – 09.15 Registration
09.15 – 09.30 Welcome speech by **Prof. Theodora Antonopoulou**, Head of Department of Philology in Athens

PANEL 1 – NARRATIVE STRUCTURE: SPACE & TIME
Chair: Sophia Papaioannou

09.30 – 10.00 **Ruth PARKES** (University of Wales Trinity Saint David)
Incorporating the Tragic in the Epics of Statius
10.00 – 10.30 **Bernhard SÖLLRADL** (University of Salzburg)
Looking Back/Moving Forward: 'Tragic' Prologues in Statius' *Thebaid*
10.30 – 11.00 **Georgia FERENTINOU** (University of Toronto)
Senecan Poetics and Dramatic Time in the Proem of Statius' *Thebaid*

11.00 – 11.30 **Coffee Break & Biscuits**

PANEL 2 – ECHOES OF TRAGEDY: REIMAGINING DEATH SCENES IN FLAVIAN EPIC
Chair: Margot Neger

11.30 – 12.00 **Lorenzo VESPOLI** (University of Geneva)
Nec fata traham natumque videbo / te sine. Tragic Models in the Death Scene of Jason's Family (Val. Fl. 1.752–826)
12.00 – 12.30 **Patrick KUNZENDORF** (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn)

Ending With a Bang – the Spectacular Deaths of Statius' *Seven* in Light of Theatre Influenced Reception Habits in Flavian Times
12.30 – 13.00 **Francesca ECONIMO** (University of Toronto)
Tragedy in Nemea: Reading the Death of Opheltes and Maternal Grief in Statius' *Thebaid* through Seneca's *Troades*

13.00 – 14.30 **Lunch Break**

PANEL 3 – TRAGIC ELEMENTS
Chair: Angeliki Roumpou

14.30 – 15.00 **Alison KEITH** (University of Toronto)
Tragic Intertexts (and Ovidian Interference) in Statius' Theban Necromancy (*Theb*. 4.419–645)

15.00 – 15.30 **Andrew ZISSOS (**University of California, Irvine)
Chorality in the *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus
15.30 – 16.00 **William DOMINIK** (University of Lisbon)
Echoes of Senecan Tragedy in Silius Italicus' *Punica*

16.00 – 17.00 **Federica BESSONE** (University of Turin)
(*Keynote*) Oedipus on the *Thebaid*'s stage

Friday 20 September

Venue: National & Kapodistrian University of Athens, Room: A. Argyriadis.
Panepistimiou 30, Athens

PANEL 1 – REPUBLICAN THEATRE AND FRAGMENTARY TRAGEDY
Chair: Thomas Biggs

09.00-09.30 **Stefano BRIGUGLIO** (University of Turin)
All That Remains: Statius' *Thebaid* and the Tragedies of Accius
09.30-10.00 **Kostas ARAMPAPASLIS** (University of Thessaloniki)
Reading Sophocles through Republican Drama: Two Cases of Statian
Intertextuality
10.00-10.30 **Diana LIBRANDI** (California State University, Long Beach)
Prometheus Tragicus in Valerius Flaccus's *Argonautica*
10.30-11.00 **Esther MEIJER** (University of St Andrews)
The Rumblings of Republican Tragedy in Flavian Epic

11.00 – 11.30 **Coffee Break & Biscuits**

PANEL 2 – MADNESS & TRAGIC PASSIONS IN FLAVIAN EPIC
Chair: Joy Littlewood

11.30-12.00 **Ray MARKS** (University of Missouri)
Hannibal and the Furies in Silius Italicus' *Punica*
12.00-12.30 **Elaine SANDERSON** (University of Liverpool)
Missing Madness? Hercules and *Hercules Furens* in Valerius Flaccus'
Argonautica
12.30-13.00 **Francesco CANNIZZARO** (University of Palermo)
A "Senecan dyad" in Silius: Echoes of *Thyestes* and *Hercules Furens* in
Punica 1-2
13.00-13.30 **Neil BERNSTEIN** (Ohio University)
Tragic Passion and Restraint in Silius Italicus' *Punica*

13.30 – 14.30 **Lunch Break**

PANEL 3 – TYRANNY, SILENCE & POETIC SUPPRESSION
Chair: Agis Marinis

14.30-15.00	**Helen LOVATT** (University of Nottingham)
	(Don't) Eat the Rich: Disnarration, Power and Consumption in Seneca, Lucan and Statius
15.00-15.30	**Alexis WHALEN-MUSE** (University of Southern California)
	Quid Pandioniae restant? Tereus, Procne, and Philomela in Statius' *Thebaid*"
15.30-16.00	**Lorenzo COLLE** (Ca' Foscari University of Venice / University of Udine)
	Tragic Redemptions: Hercules as *Alter Iuppiter* in (Pseudo)Senecan *Hercules Oetaeus*

16.00 – 16.30   Break

PANEL 4 – TRAGIC CHARACTERS & (ANTI–) HEROES
Chair: Helen Lovatt

16.30-17.00	**Marco FUCECCHI** (University of Udine)
	The Hero's (disputed) Legacy: *Armorum Iudicium* and its Transformation in Flavian Epic Poetry
17.00-17.30	**Ana LÓIO** (University of Lisbon)
	Viriatus' *Aetion* in Paulus' *Aristeia:* Tragic Forces at Work in Silius' Cannae
17.30-18.00	**Clara NÜSSLEIN** (Julius-Maximilians-University, Würzburg)
	Didactic Tragedy. Tragic Figures in Silius Italicus' *Punica* as Warning *Exempla* for Domitian
18.00-18.30	**Dalida AGRI** (University of Cambridge)
	Echoes of Tragedy in the *Punica*: The Battles of Lake Trasimene and Cannae.

Free Afternoon

Saturday 21 September

Venue: Academy of Athens, Panepistimiou 28, Athens

09.00 – 10.00	**Antony AUGOUSTAKIS** (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign)
(*Keynote*)	*Ceu nova tunc clades*: Statius' Hypsipyle and Greek Tragedy

PANEL 1 – POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS
Chair: Ana Lóio

10.00-10.30	**Claire STOCKS** (University of Amsterdam)

Domitian's Tragic Farce: Staging Theatre in Flavian Rome

10.30-11.00   **Madeline Marie THAYER** (University of Southern California)
Seneca's Argonautic Tragedy in Statius' *Achilleid*

11.00 – 11.30   **Coffee Break**

PANEL 2 – INCEST & INTRAFAMILIAL RELATIONSHIPS
Chair: Theodoros Antoniadis

11.30-12.00   **Cecilia CRIADO** (Santiago de Compostela University)
Statius and the Tragic Rhetoric of Incest
12.00-12.30   **Alice HU** (Reed College, Portland, OR)
Curious Alchemy: Rape as Foundation Myth in Euripides' *Ion* and Statius's *Thebaid*
12.30-13.00   **Jean-Michel HULLS** (Dulwich College)
Ecce iterum soror! Re-reading Statius' Antigone

13.00 – 13.30   **Closing Remarks**

END OF CONFERENCE

ABSTRACTS

Ruth PARKES
Incorporating the tragic in the epics of Statius

This paper seeks to build on the work of Parkes (2021), on differentiation between epic and tragedy and the way that Statius (particularly in the *Thebaid*) engages with the overlap and distinctions for his own purposes. Spatial, structural and performative aspects will be considered. One area of interest will be the *Thebaid*'s linear thrust forward of an epic narrative that extends in an expansive manner. Initiated with the scroll image of *evolvere* at *Thebaid* 1.2 and the path of song idea at 1.16 (*limes ... carminis*), the narrative continues for twelve books and is only halted by the narrator's proclaimed incapacity to treat the Argive women's grief (*Theb*. 12.797–809). En route, the narrative encompasses numerous tragic

plots and gestures at others; it treats characters at different stages of their tragic career. Statius can highlight the bleak sense of the seemingly unending doom which accompanies Oedipus' "confused" (1.17 *confusa*) house. He can carry characters through the temporal and spatial limitations of tragedy to bring out the full horror of their continued tragic experiences. Attention will, for example, be paid to the tragically-indebted episode involving Ismene in *Thebaid* 8. At *Thebaid* 8.617-21 a simile compares Ismene and Antigone to Pandion's birds, with analogies between Itys and Ismene's suitor Atys (whose death is happening on the battlefield) and the idea of continued reproduction of grief (Augoustakis 2016). The sisters' lamentations dating "from the far back origin of their fate" (*Theb.* 8.611 *longa ab origine fati*) do not go far back enough, unlike the griefs of the Pandion birds which can be traced back to the wedding of Tereus and Proce. Nor will they be at an end here: whilst Itys' death remains the focus of Procne and Philomela's grief (the birds lamenting his name in perpetuity), Ismene's griefs have not ended (note her presence at Jocasta's suicide, *Theb.* 11.634-41).

Bernhard SÖLLRADL
Looking back/moving forward: 'tragic' prologues in Statius' *Thebaid*

The opening scene in Greek and Roman tragedy frequently comprises an expository monologue, usually delivered by the protagonist or a divine/non-human character instigating the events about to unfold (Tarrant 1976, 157-161). Such "prologue speeches" serve several functions: expository (conveying essential background information while also foreshadowing future developments), thematic (introducing key themes), narrative (setting the plot in motion), and emotional (highlighting a key character's *affectus* and personal involvement). The traditional opening devices in epic, the proem and the initial invocation of the Muse, can only fulfil the expository and thematic function. Yet with the introduction of an angry divine soliloquy to set major plot movements in motion, Vergil has shown an effective way to supplement the narrative and emotional function. This highly influential Vergilian innovation informs every single opening scene in Flavian epic and is often imitated at later stages in the narrative to introduce key developments of the plot. As is well known, Vergil's Juno is not only inspired by Poseidon in *Od.* 13, but also by a number of outraged tragic deities (Feeney 1991, 132). This tragic dimension of Vergil's Juno is of particular interest for the Flavian epicists: they re-imagine her plot-driving interventions in ways that connect with tragic models (e.g. Seneca's Juno in *HF*) and introduce quintessential tragic themes (e.g. intra-familial violence, revenge). In my reading of such 'tragic' prologues in Statius' *Thebaid* (1.56-87 [Oedipus], 8.34-79 [Dis], 11.76-112 [Tisiphone]), I interpret the device as an important supplement to other formal devices that structure and segment the epic narrative (e.g. apostrophes, initial and medial proems, invocations, prophecies). I will argue that Statius repeatedly looks back to tragic beginnings to drive his narrative forward, until in *Theb.* 12, that energy is eventually exhausted – as a consequence, the poet needs to tap into an alternative source of energy to be able to conclude his epic tale.

Georgia FERENTINOU
Senecan Poetics and Dramatic time in the Proem of Statius' *Thebaid*

The influence of Senecan drama in Statius' *Thebaid* is by now an established topic in the scholarship of Statius' first epic (Augoustakis 2015, esp.fn1 for bibliography), especially

when it comes to the comparative study of common Theban characters (i.e. Oedipus, Jocasta) or specific episodes (i.e. the necromantic episode in *Theb*.4). In this paper, I shall argue that Senecan influence rather than being limited to individual episodes, takes central stage for the epic overall. Specifically, I shall explore the presence of Seneca's aesthetics and conception of tragic time in the background of the traditionally programmatic section for epic poetry, that is the *Thebaid*'s proem.

In respect to Senecan aesthetics and poetics, the negotiation of what constitutes as sufficient crime, connected to the theme of *maius*, is a common theme of Senecan tragedies. As Schiesaro (2003: 143, 179-80) has pointed out the problem of abundance and sufficiency in the crimes that Senecan heroes ponder is linked to their attempt to surpass with their *nefas* the narratives of the past. Specifically, in the *Phoenissae*, in Oedipus' desire for a fraternal war in Thebes, the very same theme of Statius' epic, these "poetics of excess" are combined with the theme of incest, with the illicit return to the maternal (Fantham 1984: 64-5). Moreover, the theme of "return" and repetition has been identified as permeating the fabric of Senecan poetics, themes, language, and, finally, of dramatic time: moving back in time, repetition against epic linearity become the "modality of tragic representation" in Seneca (Schiesaro 2003: 177-220; Gunderson 2018).

Returning to the *Thebaid*, the interaction between the Statian proem and Senecan tragedy has been fleetingly mentioned, usually with respect to the *confusa domus* ("Oedipus' confounded family", *Theb*.1.16-7), the self-imposed narrative limit by the narrator, as an intertextual echo of Jocasta's self-deprecation speech at the end of *Oedipus* (*Oed*.1025-6 with Briguglio 2017: *ad loc*). My paper argues that the influence of Senecan poetics and dramatic aspects in the proem of the epic is far more pervasive. Through a discussion of the proem's connection specifically with the *Phoenissae* and *Oedipus*, I shall show that the epic narrator of the proem takes over a Senecan-Oedipal persona first in his desire for *fraternas acies* and then in his attempt to define and circumscribe his epic about to begin. At the same time, I aim to bring to the fore the tension between narrative progression and regression, a tension that is programmatically already situated at the outset of the epic: in the staging of this tension, I shall show that Statius' lexical choices point to Senecan imagery and vocabulary representing narrative repetition and "illicit returns", and thus Seneca's conception of dramatic time will take center stage at the beginning of the *Thebaid*. Thus, Senecan drama with its poetics of excess and confusion compounded by the *nefas* of incest, the tension between tragic time and epic linearity, and the focus on repetition, will prove its centrality for the poetics and tensions behind Statius' own hybrid epic.

Lorenzo VESPOLI
Nec fata traham natumque videbo / te sine. Tragic models in the death scene of Jason's family (Val. Fl. 1.752-826)

In recent decades, scholars have increasingly recognised Valerius Flaccus' reworking of the tragic genre as a source of inspiration. The portrayal of characters, their psychological traits, and specific scenes, such as necromantic rituals and suicides, serves as fertile ground for the infusion of epic poetry with elements of tragedy. Valerius Flaccus employs his intertextual technique to engage with his literary predecessors, not only at a verbal level through the borrowing of terms, reuse of *iuncturae*, and similar phrasing, but also at a scenic level by incorporating verbal

patterns that serve as signals to identify the model in scenes sharing a comparable context and/or affinity of action.

The narrative sequence of the death of Jason's family, as described by Valerius Flaccus in the first book of the *Argonautica* (752-826), lends itself to a multi-level analysis of the reuse of Greek and Latin tragedy by the Flavian poet. For example, I shall examine the scenic influence of Sen. *Tr.* 1092b-1103, where Astyanax, Hector's son, is about to be killed by Ulysses, on the terrified reaction of Aeson, Jason's father, upon realising that Pelias' henchmen are coming to kill him (Val. Fl. 1.752-761). I shall then show how, in the depiction of Aeson addressing his younger son (1.771-773), Valerius Flaccus reworks a scene that, from Homer (Hector and Astyanax in *Il*. 6.474-481), reached Virgil (Aeneas and Ascanius in *Aen*. 12.435-436) through the filter of Sophocles' *Ajax* (Ajax and his son in ll. 550-564), and the potential implications of this intertextual interplay between tragedy and epic.

This analysis aims to identify shared features between the texts of Valerius Flaccus and his literary models, examining both verbal evidence and similarities in the context and actions of characters. Furthermore, the concept of 'intertextual irony' shall be considered; in this context, the study seeks to underscore how the reworking of tragic models can produce subtle comic effects. For example, the tragic stature of the young Astyanax in Sen. *Tr.* 1092b-1103, who remains fearless in the face of impending death, is overturned in favor of depicting an old and terrified Aeson facing imminent death in Valerius Flaccus 1.752-761. This interpretation paves the way for a more comprehensive exploration of tragedy, conceiving it not merely as a model faithfully reworked by Valerius Flaccus, but rather as a platform for intertextual experimentation. In conjunction with this approach, my objective is to examine whether Valerius Flaccus integrates the primary tragic model with verbal patterns drawn from other tragedies, particularly those of Seneca, and/or works belonging to different literary genres.

Patrick KUNZENDORF
Ending with a bang – the spectacular deaths of Statius' Seven in light of theatre-influenced reception habits in Flavian times

The death of a character is an incisive event in every narrative. It is therefore not surprising that (Seneca's) tragedies and books 7-12 of Statius' *Thebaid* end with deaths. In addition to their position as the end of the book, the death scenes in the *Thebaid* are characterised by the fact that the respective heroes do not die a simple, quiet death. Instead, their deaths are as monstrous as the deeds that preceded them, or even outdo the previous atrocities.

In this talk, I will show that Statius drew on the design of the deaths scenes in Seneca's dramas when staging the spectacular death scenes of his *Seven Against Thebes*. My interest here concerns neither intertextual relationships between the *Thebaid* and the Senecan dramas nor the comparison of identical characters, nor the search for common motifs. Rather, I focus on similarities in the narrative and rhetorically stylised structure of the death scenes as well as shared design and "staging" techniques through visually vivid language.

To this end, I will first look at contemporary reception habits that significantly presuppose and shape Seneca's dramas and Statius' *Thebaid*. In a second step, I will show how Seneca takes this habit of reception into account in the design of his death scenes. To this end, I will examine Seneca's use of rhetorical techniques, especially φαντασία, with which he transfers strong visual impressions into his stylistic composition. I will argue that Statius

resorts to the same rhetorical techniques and enhances the Senecan text by extending its visual features to *synaesthesia*. Finally, I will show structural similarities in Senecan and Statian death scenes. I will demonstrate that Statius takes up the outperformance typical of Seneca's dramas in the conception of the death scenes of his Seven. Thus, I will not only demonstrate the adaptability of the "Senecan schema" to Statius' poetry, but also suggest its adaptability to death scenes in Flavian epic poetry in general.

Francesca ECONIMO
Tragedy in Nemea: Reading the Death of Opheltes and Maternal Grief in Statius' *Thebaid* through Seneca's *Troades*

Taking his cue from Euripides' *Hypsipyle*, Statius incorporates at the heart of his major epic poem the tragic story of the nurse Hypsipyle and her foster child Opheltes, killed by the Nemean serpent after she had left him alone in order to help the Argive warriors. Despite the connections with Euripides' play, however fragmentary, Statius nevertheless draws on other tragic models such as Seneca's *Troades*, an intertext that deserves to be explored further in the *Thebaid*, but whose influence has been fully acknowledged in the *Achilleid*. This paper, therefore, aims to read Statius' Nemean episode through Seneca's *Troades*—a play which, like Euripides' *Troades*, explores the Trojan aftermath through female suffering—focusing on two specific aspects, the death of an innocent child of royal lineage and the lament/invective of mother figures.

While in Euripides' *Hypsipyle* as we have it the death of Opheltes is not reported at length, Statius describes the child's disfigured body with a pathetic vividness that recalls the image of Astyanax's mangled corpse in the speech of Seneca's messenger. The gruesome aesthetics of the two scenes, alongside the motif of the tomb (*tumulus*), also help highlight another relevant connection: Opheltes and Astyanax are both sacrificial victims (the former is the first victim of the Theban War and the latter is the last of the Trojan War), whose premature deaths serve a political and structural purpose in that they interrupt the wait (*mora*) of the Argive army intent on marching towards Thebes and the Achaean army impatient to set sail from Troy, respectively. Furthermore, the children's deaths are amplified by their mothers' grief. Unlike Euripides' Hypsipyle, who is primarily focused on her own self-defence against the charge of murder, Statius' Hypsipyle is captured in all her fragility as (surrogate) mother: her mourning over Opheltes' corpse and her yearning to be killed recall Andromache's behaviour. The grief of Astyanax's mother also provides a blueprint for the characterisation of Eurydice, Opheltes' natural mother: the hatred the former feels for the 'barbarian' Greeks, the latter channels it towards the 'barbarian' Hypsipyle, considered responsible for killing the heir to the Nemean throne.

Through the reflection of Seneca in the *Troades*, a play that stages the tragic consequences of war against the epic background of the fall of Troy (especially in Virgil, *Aeneid* 2), Statius perfectly encapsulates the dramatic, Euripidean core of the Hypsipyle episode within the martial plot of his poem, establishing a symbolic continuity between the outbreak of the Theban War and the end of the Trojan War. By reading the 'Nemean tragedy' in the *Thebaid* through the Roman filter of the *Troades*, especially Statius' engagement with Seneca's Astyanax and Andromache, this paper will shed new light on the crucial function of Opheltes' sacrifice and maternal mourning as a prelude to the tragedy of the war dealt with in the rest of the poem.

Alison KEITH

Tragic Intertexts (and Ovidian Interference) in Statius' Theban Necromancy (*Theb*. 4.419–645)

This paper explores Statius' recourse to tragic characters and tropes in the necromantic rites conducted by the Theban seer Teiresias, and his daughter Manto, in *Thebaid* 4. For the ancient Attic playwrights, Thebes was the site par excellence of tragedy (Zeitlin 1990a, 1990b), and the Roman tragic and epic poets looked back to both the Athenian tradition and its generic conventions in their rehearsal of Theban plots (Augoustakis 2015, Heslin 2008). Statius gestures repeatedly to the formal features and tragic conventions of literary Thebes in his treatment of the necromancy scene, from the speeches he puts in the mouths of Teiresias (4.472–87, 501–18, 536–48, 583–602) and Manto (4.518–35, 553–78), to her list of the tragic players conjured by the rites and the accompanying description of the tokens they carry that allow their identification (*nosco*, 4.570).

Andrew ZISSOS

Chorality in the *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus

William DOMINIK

Echoes of Senecan Tragedy in Silius Italicus' *Punica*

Silius Italicus' *Punica* exhibits at least a thematic intertextual relationship with the tragedies of Seneca, though stylistic and rhetorical elements reminiscent of Senecan tragedy are also present. The *Punica* echoes Senecan motifs, particularly in its portrayal of intense psychological conflicts, the presence of fatalistic determinism, and the depiction of vengeance and despair as driving forces within the narrative. Silius' characters sometimes reflect the internal turmoil characteristic of Senecan protagonists, where emotions such as *furor* and *ira* play pivotal roles in shaping their actions and the course of events. The spectacle of *furor* is most notably evident in the programmatic first two books of the *Punica* in the Saguntum episode, but there are a number of other episodes (e.g., Cannae, Zama, and Capua) that feature displays of *furor* and *ira*.

The narrative architecture of the *Punica* mirrors Seneca's tragedies in its preference for dramatic, often hyperbolic, expression of pathos and moral ambiguity. The epic's portrayal of Hannibal, for instance, who embodies both admirable and self-destructive qualities, bears resemblance to Seneca's tragic heroes. Through these and other Senecan echoes, Silius not only enriches the epic genre with tragic depth but also engages in a dialogue with his literary predecessors, thereby positioning his work within the broader tradition of Roman literature. Ultimately, the *Punica* emerges as a complex text that transcends mere historical narrative by imbuing the story of Rome's past with the psychological and existential dimensions characteristic of Senecan drama, thus offering a poignant reflection upon the human condition amid the grand sweep of history.

Stylistic and rhetorical elements characteristic of Senecan tragedy also appear in Silius' *Punica*, for example, *sententiae* and even *stichomythia*¸ which serve to remind us that

the dramatic tension created within his epic mirrors that of the tragic stage. This connection between epic and tragedy not only underscores the interplay between different genres but also highlights how Silius Italicus crafts his epic to evoke some of the same emotions and conflicts central to Senecan tragedy.

Federica BESSONE
Oedipus on the *Thebaid*'s Stage

Oedipus sets the action of the *Thebaid* in motion with the curse on his sons, in book 1, and initiates the narrative turn of the poem with his repentance over their corpses, in book 11. His prayer to the Fury is a Senecan prologue: the *Thebaid* is a continuation of the *Oedipus* and a completion of the *Phoenissae*. In the unprecedented scene in book 8, Oedipus' joy at the banquet, which belies the rejection of sociality declared in the *Oedipus Rex*, is a deceptive appearance: here Oedipus does not rediscover the pleasure of life; rather, as in Seneca, he savors the pleasure of evil. Upon the death of his sons, however, the *Thebaid* stages a new Oedipus. His rediscovery of Pietas, Clementia and Natura contradicts Seneca's tragedies, in the name of principles enunciated by Seneca the philosopher, and renews the tragic tradition on his character, anticipating the Athenian solution of the ending. The confrontation between Oedipus and Creon, mediated with rhetorical skill by Antigone, recalls the *Oedipus at Colonus* and anticipates Sophocles' *Antigone*, overlapping the roles of father and daughter: Oedipus is involved in the anti-tyrannical drive that brings the poem to its conclusion. The last mention of Oedipus in the ekphrasis of the Ara Clementiae, alongside other tragic myths redeemed by the hospitality in Athens, represents an instance of purification: as in Attic tragedy, an insoluble knot finds a chance for catharsis in a civic, religious and political context, rethought of in Roman imperial terms.

Stefano BRIGUGLIO
All That Remains: Statius' *Thebaid* and the Tragedies of Accius

The *Thebaid* presents a tragic myth in epic form and draws heavily on both Attic and Senecan tragedies, as scholars have pointed out. By contrast, little attention has been paid to the connection between the *Thebaid* and the tragedies of Accius. With the exception of Antony Augoustakis' important paper on «Republican Roman Tragedy in Flavian Epic» (in S. Papaioannou, A. Marinis [eds.], *Elements of Tragedy in Flavian Epic*, Berlin-Boston 2021), there has been no comprehensive study that detects traces of Accius in the *Thebaid*, and situates possible allusions within the political and poetic discourse of Statius' epics. While commentaries on individual books of the *Thebaid* provide useful material for several passages, it is time to attempt a broader study of Accius' presence in the poem as a whole. Working with the fragments of the Republican tragedies makes the task very difficult: the textual condition means that we can only speculate, and in several cases certainty is impossible. Nevertheless (with this caveat in mind), in this paper I will examine some fragments of the *Phoenissae*, the *Antigona*, the *Clytaemestra* and the *Medea sive Argonautae* as possible intertexts for the *Thebaid*. I will try to identify lexical and especially thematic points of contact between the text and its models: I will consider, for example, the discussion of the power-sharing in Thebes (*Theb*. 1, 74-152), or the arrival of the Argonauts in Lemnos (*Theb*. 5, 335-57). In many cases, these are episodes whose contacts with Accius' fragments

have been suggested, but which have not yet been fully investigated. The results of this survey reveal a non-negligible presence (at least in terms of the few surviving verses) of Accian tragedies in the *Thebaid*, often filtered through Virgil, Lucan, or Seneca (as in the death scene of Capaneus in *Theb*. 10, 827-939), in a series of 'window references' that shed new light on the importance of the Republican theatre for Statius' epics.

Kostas ARAMPAPASLIS
Reading Sophocles through Republican Drama: Two Cases of Statian Intertextuality

The intertextual relationship between Statius' epics and Greek tragedy is an intriguing topic in Flavian studies, and recent scholarship examines how and why the poet alludes to, adopts, and modifies dramatic treatments of Greek myths. The surviving plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides offer solid ground for exploring the transformations, if any, that Greek myths underwent in the process of their incorporation into Flavian literature. However, in the case of fragmentary plays, it is much more difficult to assess the impact of the Greek tradition on the *Thebaid* and the *Achilleid*.

This paper offers another case study on how Statius interacts with the Greek tradition and adopts specific details that suit his literary purpose. It focuses on the mythological stories concerning the Thracian king Lycurgus and the Elean king Oenomaus –both are referred to in Statius' *Thebaid*–, and traces thematic allusions to the plays of Sophocles. More specifically, the reference to Lycurgus' capture by Dionysus' vine in *Theb*. 4.386 (*pampineumque iubes nemus inreptare Lycurgo*) corresponds to the myth's version found in the third stasimon of Sophocles' *Antigone* (955–957: *ζεύχθη δ' ὀξύχολος παῖς ὁ Δρύαντος, | Ἠδωνῶν βασιλεύς, κερτομίοις ὀργαῖς | ἐκ Διονύσου πετρώδει κατάφαρκτος ἐν δεσμῷ*), while Oenomaus' treatment of his daughter's suitors (*Theb*. 1.276–277: *abruptis etiamnum inhumata procorum | reliquiis trunca ora rigent*) points to a link with the Sophoclean version of Oenomaus' story (F473). Even though Statius' access to the works of the Greek tragedians will remain a speculation, these details are also alluded to in the fragmentary plays of Accius (*Oenomaus*, *Stasiastae*) and Naevius (*Lycurgus*), thus suggesting that republican drama functioned as a middle, through which the Sophoclean versions survived into the Flavian era.

The conscious decision to follow the specific mythological versions merits further investigation. As I argue, Statius' choices accord with the thematic of *nefas* that permeates the *Thebaid*'s narrative, reinforcing and foreshadowing the sacrilegious and anti-human aspect of the war between Thebes and Argos. The story of the theomach Lycurgus offers a parallel for the sacrilegious hero, Capaneus, while Oenomaus' barbaric treatment of the suitors' skulls matches that of Tydeus' cannibalization of Melanippus' severed head. These parallels offer an answer both to the reader who might question Jupiter's sense of justice in implicating Argos in the war and, intra-narratively, to Juno's objections about her husband's resolution in Book 1.

Diana LIBRANDI
Prometheus Tragicus in Valerius Flaccus's *Argonautica*

The space dedicated to Prometheus in Valerius Flaccus's *Argonautica* exceeds by far the Prometheus episode in Apollonius Rhodius's *Argonautica* (2.1246-1259). This highlights VF's interest in the connection between the Titan as herald of human civilization and the

Argonauts as bearers of technological advancement (Tschiedel 1998). Scholars have examined the epic, elegiac, and comic tones of the Prometheus episodes in the Roman *Argonautica*, but little has been said on its tragic tones and intertextual references to extant tragedies. In this paper, I will first examine the epic poem's intertextual and thematic indebtedness to extant tragic texts - indebtedness that remains largely unexplored in the commentaries on the epic as well as in the scholarship. I propose that the tripartite structure of the Prometheus episodes mimics a tragic trilogy, one that might overlap with the traditional reconstruction of Aeschylus's *Prometheia* (the *Prometheus Bound*, the now fragmentary *Prometheus Unbound* and the lost *Prometheus the Fire-Bearer*). I suggest that the Prometheus episodes in VF's *Argonautica* retain a tragic framework despite the impossibility of reconstructing the Aeschylean original, with a succession of events that evokes the mythical trajectory of a tragic trilogy: thus, in the first episode, Apollo entreats Jove to delay Heracles' fated journey at Troy for the sake of freeing Prometheus (4.57-82), a section that would correspond with the *Prometheus Bound*; next, the Argonauts withstand a deep turmoil of the sea and a loud earth-shaking without realizing that these are caused by Heracles' wrecking of the rocks and the chains bonding the Titan (5.154-175), a section that would correspond with the *Prometheus Unbound*; and lastly, an aetiological excursus explains the origin of Medea's most powerful filter, the flower blossomed from the blood of the Titan's liver gnawed by the monstrous bird (7.352-372), a tale whose emphasis on fire (7.364) might perhaps evoke *Prometheus the Fire-Bearer* or at least align with the aetiological function of the third tragedy in the *Oresteia*. The exclusion of the Argonauts from the spectacle represented by the imprisonment and the liberation of Prometheus prompts reflections on the separation of epic and tragic spectatorship in VF's *Argonautica* and the ways in which the contamination between these two genres is conceptualized by the poet.

Esther MEIJER
The Rumblings of Republican Tragedy in Flavian Epic

To determine the impact of Republican tragedy on Flavian epic is a speculative endeavour, not least because of the various challenges posed by such an investigation, including – most obviously – the loss of most of the dramatic corpus (Augoustakis 2021). Nevertheless, this paper tentatively attempts to further examine the relation between Republican tragedy and Flavian epic, aiming to shed light on the ways in which echoes of Republican tragedy facilitate reflection on the performative aspects of epic poetry in Flavian Rome. To this end, I consider the intersection between nautical imagery and theatrical images and sounds in the Flavian epics' sea storms, with particular attention to the 'rumblings' (*murmura*) of *carbasa*, *vela*, and other textiles that were used for both ships' sails as well as for the awnings that spanned across theatres.

In *De Rerum Natura*, Lucretius employs Republican tragedy didactically, both on a superficial level – the rumbling of thunder, for example, is compared to that of awnings in the amphitheatre (Lucr. 4.75-77, 6.108-113) – as well as on a deeper level, teaching the reader how to challenge Ennius' mytho-philosophy (Hanses 2023). Through intertextual interaction with Lucretius, and via the famous storm in *Aeneid* 1, Seneca's *Agamemnon* re-dramatises these Republican *murmura* or 'rumblings', escalating them in a deeply intertextual sea-storm in which multiple genres, including epic, battle for dominance (Meijer 2021). By the Neronian era, then, specific Republican tragic fragments from Ennius as well as from Pacuvius (especially *Teuc.* fr. 417 Klotz) seem to function as an established intertextual tool

for reflection on the (non-)performative aspects of both epic and tragedy. In this paper, I trace their reception in Valerius Flaccus, Statius, and Silius Italicus, considering if and how the evocation of Republican tragedy in epic sea storms as well as in storm similes during epic battle scenes offers points of contact between the performance (including *recitatio*) of tragedy and epic.

This close reading then leads me to consider how Flavian epic mediation of Republican fragments reflects on the social aspects of the *recitatio* of epic in Domitianic Rome. It is well established that the *recitatio* of epic was associated with bad rhetoric, effeminacy, and low(er) social status (Markus 2000, 2003). According to Persius, even epics now sounded like 'light' poetry (Pers. 1.69-70: *ecce modo heroas sensus adferre docemus / nugari solitos Graece*). Metrical irregularities – ubiquitous in Virgil – had become far less common in post-Virgilian epic (Markus 2000). I therefore aim to consider how the *murmura* of Republican tragedy affect the metre and sound of the Flavian epics. In doing so, I hope to show how Flavian epicists employed Republican tragedy precisely in order to reflect on and reclaim epic's social image and function *through* its performance. To better understand the social aspects of such performances, I contextualise my examination of Republican *murmura* in the Flavian epics with its resonances in texts that discuss the appropriateness of certain locations for the recital and/or performance of epic, including Pliny the Elder (*NH* 19.23) and Younger (*Epist.* 7.17) (Salles 1992, Dupont 1997).

Ray MARKS
Hannibal and the Furies in Silius Italicus' *Punica*

When readers think of the Furies in Silius Italicus' *Punica*, they probably think of Tisiphone's involvement in the fall of Saguntum in book 2 or the references to Furies in the Nekyia of book 13. But there are other appearances by and references to them in the epic as well as other ways in which they manifest themselves in it. In this paper, I shall review the evidence for the Furies in the *Punica*, both as individuals (Allecto, Megaera, Tisiphone) and as groups (Eumenides, Erinyes, Furiae, Poenae), and then shall look specifically at Hannibal's and his allies' relation to them. I begin by showing how Silius regularly blurs the line between the Furies' role as avengers of familial violence, a role familiar from Greek tragedy, and their role as avengers of other kinds of crimes, particularly involving the breaking of oaths and treaties; in doing so, he makes their vengeance reflect the entangled concerns, motivations, and duties of the poem's principal actors, which are often not only public, civic, or interstate, but personal, familial, or local. I next turn to Hannibal and his allies to show that he plays the role of a Fury in the first half of the epic, but that, as the tide turns in its second half, he and his allies are portrayed as victims of the Furies themselves. We again see in these cases the two sides of the Furies' vengeance, but, notably, when it comes to Hannibal, his persecution by them tends to recall specifically the kinds of punishments they mete out in tragedy, for crimes like matricide and parricide; this feature of his story nicely complements others in the poem that figure him as a tragic hero.

Elaine SANDERSON
Missing Madness? Hercules and *Hercules Furens* in Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*

The madness of Hercules is one of the defining elements of the hero's mythical and literary representation, regardless of whether it prompts or follows his famous labours (Hsu 2021). It is curious, then, that Valerius Flaccus makes no explicit mention of this aspect of Hercules' story, despite highlighting the completion of his labours (V. Fl. 1.34-6, 108-9), Juno's resulting frustration (V. Fl. 1.111-19, 3.509-20), and the items acquired during these labours (V.Fl. 1.34-5). This absence is all the more striking given the *Argonautica*'s close and repeated engagement with Seneca's *Hercules Furens* on a structural level and via corresponding motifs (Manuwald 2021), a play which lavishes attention upon the experience, effects, and aftermath of Hercules' madness (Sen. *HF*. 939-1344). This paper builds upon studies of Valerian interactions with Senecan drama (Buckley 2014, Antoniadis, 2015, 2016), particularly Manuwald's (2021) identification of Seneca's *Hercules Furens* as a major model for the Valerian Hercules to offer further exploration of the enduring legacy of Senecan drama and its resonance in Valerius' *Argonautica.*

I propose that Valerius *does* incorporate Hercules' infamous madness (as represented by Seneca in particular) in the *Argonautica*, but recast as a response to the loss of Hylas (V. Fl. 3.521-97). I first trace parallels between the experience and effects of Hercules' madness in Seneca's play (Sen. *HF* 939-75, 991-5, 121-31) and Hercules' grief in the *Argonautica* (V. Fl. 3.565-97, 726-40, 4.42-51) – focussing on the comparable physical symptoms, use of burning imagery, and the intersection between rage and madness/grief – and argue that the latter should be understood as a kind of insanity via these allusions. I then discuss how elements of Meleager's speech encouraging the Argonauts to continue without Hercules (V. Fl. 3.645-89) allude to the broader tradition of Herculean madness and thus encourage and support this interpretation. Finally, after drawing parallels between the roles of sleep in resolving Herculean madness in Seneca (*HF* 1042-186) and Valerius (4.15-50), I consider how the exile chosen by Seneca's Hercules (in place of suicide) in the final act of the *Hercules Furens* (Sen. *HF* 1314-44) functions as a foundation to understand Hercules' departure from the Argonautic mission and the deeds he will undertake on his own as another 'exile' (V. Fl. 4.52-7), in which the hero must learn to put his strength to new challenges.

Francesco CANNIZZARO
A "Senecan dyad" in Silius: echoes of *Thyestes* and *Hercules Furens* in *Punica* 1-2

Still in recent years the critical stereotype that «*Punica* does not seem to engage significantly with Senecan tragedy» has been dominant: some contributions, especially by M. Fucecchi, N. Bernstein, and most recently by D. Vignola, have been changeling this view, but much work needs to be done. With this paper, I would like to argue that in *Punica* 1-2 Silius draws heavily from Seneca's *Thyestes* and *Hercules Furens*, and try to understand the rationale of such intertextual references.

More specifically, the *ekphrasis* of Dido's temple (Sil. 1.81-98) deserves special attention: among the many *loca horrida* of the Latin literature, Seneca's *penetrale regni* (*Thy.* 641-684) is particularly significant, as shown by precise verbal echoes and similarities of *monstra*. The parallel description of the two places highlights the analogy in the narrative situation, with prolectic effects: Atreus brings with him his young nephews to sacrifice them; Hamilcar makes his son Hannibal swear eternal hatred towards Rome – thus sacrificing him to the Barcids' *furor* and causing his ultimate destruction.

Seneca's Atreus, with his desire of cruel and unusual punishments, lurks also behind Hasdrubal's short description as tyrant (Sil. 1.147-150; cf. *Thy.* 247-249, 255), and, above all, echoes from the *Thyestes* can be discerned though the Saguntum narrative, dominated by the Fury: see e.g. Tiburna's death, comparable to the end of Thyestes' third child (Sil. 2.679-680; Sen. *Thy.* 740-742), and the simile between the Saguntines and a bloody lion (Sil. 2.683-691; Sen. *Thy.* 707-711, 732-736).

Moreover, the Saguntines, protected by Hercules, have Herculean traits: as expectable, they inherit his *virtus* and desire for glory, but also Juno's hatred and his furial dimension, which Seneca explores in his *Hercules Furens*. In fact, they even overcome Hercules: in Seneca, he only threatens to burn his weapons (*HF* 1229-1235) and to commit suicide (1279 ff.), while the Saguntines fulfil their, and Seneca's Hercules, wish (Sil. 2.605-606, 612-613: cf. the identical expression *opus aggredi* for expressing suicide). But as Hercules' destiny is purification and apotheosis (implied in the last lines of Seneca's *Hercules Furens*, and thematized in ps.-Seneca's *Hercules Oetaeus*, whose influence may be detected in Tiburna's death too), so is the Saguntines', as the final apostrophe (Sil. 2.696-707), albeit problematically, makes clear. After all, the Saguntines haven't reached the outrageous excesses of the Pelopids in Seneca's *Thyestes*: they risk incurring in cannibalism (Sil. 2.521-525), but *Fides* prevents them from such impiety.

Therefore, as shown by L. Pontiggia with respect to Lucan, the whole of Sil. 1-2 can be seen as a dyad – for our purpose, a "Senecan dyad": Seneca's *Thyestes* and *Hercules Furens*, influencing Hannibal's initiation and the Saguntum narrative, both help identifying the furial matrix of such episodes, and pave the way for the development of the *Punica*, when Hannibal will be crushed and the Saguntines vindicated.

Neil BERNSTEIN
Tragic passion and restraint in Silius Italicus' *Punica*

Greek and Roman tragedies feature numerous scenes where one character attempts to restrain another from following their passions along a destructive course of action. Familiar examples include Phaedra and her Nurse in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, or Pentheus and Tiresias and Cadmus in Euripides' *Bacchae*. Virgil domesticated tragedy for epic (Panoussi 2009), and was followed in turn by his Flavian successors (Papaioannou and Marinis 2021). In the generation before Silius, Seneca presented this theatrical device on the Roman stage (Schiesaro 2003). While he adapts the erotic conflict from Euripides' *Hippolytus* into his *Phaedra*, his tragedy *Thyestes* features the famous scene where the tyrant Atreus overturns the reasonable suggestions made by his Satelles. The success of this scene may be measured by its imitation in the Pseudo-Senecan *Octavia*, where the Prefect attempts to restrain Nero from executing Octavia and assaulting the rioting crowd (Ginsberg 2017). This paper discusses three major scenes and two minor scenes of public deliberation between passionate and restraining characters structure his epic *Punica*.

In the debate in the Carthaginian senate in *Punica* 2, Hanno attempts to stop Gestar from supporting Hannibal's ultimately destructive invasion of Italy (Bernstein 2017). In *Punica* 8 and 9, Paulus urges Varro to learn from prior commanders' experience and avoid giving battle at Cannae (Ariemma 2010). The concluding debate in the Roman Senate between Fabius and Scipio in *Punica* 16 draws on the expectations of the passion-restraint scene to achieve an unexpected reversal. Fabius plays the part of the older, more experienced

commander who would restrain the younger man from a risky invasion. But Scipio is, in fact, proposing the correct course of action and is supported by his father Jupiter's divine favor (Marks 2005). Minor scenes of passion-restraint include *Punica* 9, where Satricus unsuccessfully attempting to prevent his son Solymus from committing suicide (Bernstein 2022), and *Punica* 13, where Pacuvius successfully forbids his son to attempt an assassination of Hannibal (Bernstein 2008). As a member of the Neronian court, Silius's aesthetic may have been formed in the age of Seneca (Wilson 2013), and his use of one of Seneca's most famous theatrical devices helps support this perspective.

Helen LOVATT
(Don't) Eat the Rich: Disnarration, Power and Consumption in Seneca, Lucan and Statius

This paper explores imagery of eating and consumption in relation to envy, revenge, power and wealth, triangulated through erasure and refusal to narrate (disnarration). Civil conflict and internecine rivalry bring epic and tragedy together, both struggling with the difficulties of replaying traumatic events. How does imagery of eating and consumption as an act of violence or revenge connect the two genres and their anxieties about dysnarration? How does imagery of eating and wealth emblematise both Neronian and Flavian period representations of imperialism and power? How do both genres use cannibalism as unspeakable resistance? How do the different complicities of Seneca, Lucan and Statius play out in these gestures of refusal? How does this imagery operate metapoetically as generic and intertextual disincorporation? The paper will bring together Thyestes and the Ovidian Tereus as models of tyranny with Lucan's Caesar and Statius' Creon, in conjunction to banqueting scenes, Tydeus' cannibalism, exemplarity, refusal and speeches of resistance.

Alexis WHALEN-MUSE
Quid Pandioniae restant? Tereus, Procne, and Philomela in Statius' *Thebaid*"

Twice in the narrative of Statius' *Thebaid*, the poet deploys the memory of the myth of the daughters of Pandion (hereafter, Pandionidae) through the use of similes. The first of these is in *Thebaid* 8, to describe the Theban sisters Antigone and Ismene as they unknowingly await news of Atys' death. The second is in *Thebaid* 12, to describe the group of Argive women as they enter Athens in supplication. Given the veritable feast of Maenadic allusions available for an epic set in Thebes, why does Statius reach so far outside the geographic and temporal bounds of his epic setting to make the more oblique comparison? This paper argues that Statius invites comparisons with the Pandionidae in order to bring the the distant subject matter of his mythological myth into into a distinctly Roman literary-theatrical tradition.

Our consideration of the Roman myth of the Pandionidae begins in June of 44 BCE, when Antony intervened in Brutus' plan to stage Accius' *Brutus* at his *Ludi Apollinares*, replacing it with a performance of *Tereus*. Antony's intervention freighted the mythological subject of Accius' *Tereus* with the distinctly Roman politics of monarchical suspicion and poetic suppression (cf. Cic. *Phil* 1.15.36). Vergil plays with these themes in his sixth *Eclogue* where Silenus produces an ideal *carmen* in verses approved for him by Apollo ("*Phoebo quondam meditante*," *Ecl.* 6.82), and which overtly lacks discussion Tereus' fate ("*Quid loquar…quas illi Philomela dapes?" Ecl.* 6.74-79). Ovid famously turns Vergil's paradigmatic *praeteritio* on its head when he locates his extended tale of horrors in the house

of Tereus almost immediately following his depiction of the flaying of Marsyas by Apollo (*Metamorphoses* 6.382ff.). Seneca, in his *Thyestes*, will draw directly upon Ovid's presentation in his own portrayal of tyranny on the Neronian stage (cf. Tarrant 2002).

Statius, too, participates in this rhetorical game of memory through silence. Each Pandionidean simile in the *Thebaid* avoids explicit description of the heinous acts of rape or infanticide. Furthermore, in neither instance do these horrific correspondences seem immediately applicable to the scenes in which they appear, even though the Ovidian expectation of Maenadic frenzy and avenging furies are strategies that are liberally applied elsewhere in Statius' text (cf. Gildenhard and Zissos 2007). In this light, what appears at first to be a comparison through difference is really a re-articulation of sameness. Thus, unspoken horrors lurk uncannily in the otherwise benign comparisons. This examination of Pandionidae similes in the *Thebaid* will begin with an analysis of each within its discrete episode, and then consider how the two similes operate as a unit. Through this process, I will show that Statius concludes his epic with a Theseus that stands uncomfortably close to those silenced sisters of his own mythological history: namely, Ariadne and Phaedra. This threatens to replay the horror that lurks around the edges of Statius' Thebes, placing Theseus in the role of a new Tereus and bearing implications for how we understand the role of Athens at the end of the epic.

Lorenzo COLLE
Tragic Redemptions: Hercules as *Alter Iuppiter* in (Pseudo)Senecan *Hercules Oetaeus*

The authorship of the Hercules Oetaeus is highly uncertain, as is its dating, although there are strong arguments for considering it the work of a Flavian-era imitator of Seneca. The drama begins with a memorable monologue delivered by Hercules, who laments not yet being admitted to heaven among the gods (vv. 1-103). Directly addressing his father Jupiter, the hero lists all his exploits and boldly claims to have replaced Jupiter himself as the guardian of cosmic harmony. Alongside the conventional twelve labors, Hercules proudly recounts his overthrow of despotic monarchs and tyrants; while this prerogative is not new, it appears particularly recurrent in Seneca's works. A similar role is also assigned to Theseus in the final book of Statius' *Thebaid*: the Athenian hero indeed assumes the role of avenger and acts at a point in the poem where the gods have already abandoned the field.

Throughout the poem, Hercules undergoes a journey of inner development that will lead him from being quasi-*furens* to stoic *sapiens*. At this point - employing precise *Ringkomposition* - the chorus itself endorses Hercules as a new and stronger Jupiter (vv. 1989-1996). My paper aims to analyze this "political" construction of the character of Hercules, also through comparison with the figure of Theseus, who is portrayed as a tyrant-slayer (particularly Creon) and also presents noticeable overlaps with Jupiter, almost indicating a transitional phase from failed divine justice to an emerging (albeit still violent) anthropodicy. Additionally, a comparison beetween the ending of the *Hercules Oetaeus* and Hor. *carm.* 1.12 will also be discussed. The idea is to highlight the tendency of Flavian poetry to create human protagonists who complement, or even replace, the actions of the gods.

Marco FUCECCHI
The hero's (disputed) legacy: *armorum iudicium* and its transformation in Flavian epic poetry

The contest for Achilles' arms between Odysseus and Ajax is a privileged site of interaction between epic and tragedy. The episode, narrated in the epic cycle and performed on the Graeco-Roman stages, is the archetype of the conflict between opposite kind of heroism. Odysseus' victory in the dispute of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 13 highlights the superiority of a dynamic, 'popular', heroism over traditional aristocratic heroism, whose champion (even more than Ajax) is the great 'absent', the late Achilles. Together with other intertexts - the Homeric poems (e.g. *Il*. 2.168ff.: assembly of Greek leaders after Agamemnon's 'evil dream') and Virgil's *Aeneid* (esp. 11.336ff. quarrel between Drances and Turnus) -, the Ovidian episode inspires tumultuous assemblies in Flavian epic, where an orator bitterly attacks an absent protagonist, thus problematising the theme of his behaviour and, more generally, that of different heroic values (Val.Fl. 3.598-725 Meleager and Telamon on Hercules; Sil. 2.270-390 Hannon and Gestar on Hannibal; Stat. *Theb*. 2.382-481 Tydeus and Eteocles on Polynices). Here I will concentrate on the first instance of this 'situational intertextuality' drawing upon the *armorum iudicium*: the quarrel between Meleager and Telamon over the abandonment of Hercules in Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica* 3, an episode without correspondence in Apollonius. While reflecting on heroism, this debate also shows how the relationship between the Argonauts and their leader Jason evolves. The latter has to mediate between the *pietas* of Telamon, Hercules' faithful companion and therefore hostile to the decision to abandon him (637 *at pius ingenti Telamon iam fluctuat ira*), and the ambitious Meleager, spokesman for a new generation of heroes (645f. *rursum instimulat ducitque faventes*). Meleager declares absolute devotion to Jason (670) and claims for himself and his companions the right to continue the voyage, minimizing – through rhetorical irony – Hercules' contribution to the enterprise (673-5 *scilicet in solis profugi stetit Herculis armis / nostra salus.* etc., a device that may remind us of *Inc.fab*. 61-63 R.[3] *vidi te, Ulixes, saxo sternentem Hectora* etc.; see, though in different context, Ov. *met*. 13.288ff. *scilicet idcirco*...etc.). Meleager's words arouse enthusiasm in the collectivity of heroes (690f. *...simul incita dictis / heroum manus*), who do not feel inferior to Hercules (629ff. *... unum tantum afore coetu / nec minus in sese generis dextrasque potentes / esse ferunt*; cf. Ulysses' polemic against Ajax's individualism in Ov. *met*. 13.271f. *... sed ne communia solus / occupet, aut aliquem vobis quoque reddat honorem*). The contest ends with Meleager's victory: Telamon can only warn his companions that too late they will regret the "hero's weapons" (714 *arma viri*), i.e. Hercules, whom Meleager invites Jason to consider (like Achilles) dead in battle (688f. *...quem sortibus aevi / crede vel in mediae raptum tibi sanguine pugnae*). The funereal atmosphere that accompanies the last invocation of Hercules' name (724) sanctions the fulfilment of Apollo's oracle (617ff.): Jason yields to the force of destiny that now wants him to be the absolute leader of the Argo.

Ana LÓIO

Viriatus' *Aetion* in Paulus' *Aristeia:* Tragic Forces at Work in Silius' Cannae

The obscure Viriathus was a Lusitanian chief whose victories over the Romans granted a heroic status in historiography. I would like to focus on the extent to which Silius explores the tragic potential of this character – an invincible warrior who imposed shameful defeats on the Romans and could be stopped only by treason.

Clara NÜSSLEIN

Didactic Tragedy. Tragic Figures in Silius Italicus' *Punica* as Warning exempla for Domitian

As Aristotle pointed out in his Poetic, tragedy is closely connected to the emotions ἔλεος and φόβος (cf. Aristot. *Poet*. 1449b26f.) and has direct impact on all human emotions. Emotions, in turn, can have effects on the way people act and behave. The emotion-influencing parts of tragedy or even tragic figures itself could therefore play an important role within a didactic or educational context. They can serve as warning examples or, to use the Latin term, exempla. Through their actions tragic figures evoke the empathy of the readers and thereby exhort them to act in similar or contrary ways.

As Marks pointed out, the ideal reader of Silius Italicus' *Punica* is the emperor Domitian himself. For this prince Silius Italicus writes a mirror, in which he shows him several role models (e.g. Scipio) or anti-role models (e.g. Hannibal), to influence his way of living and of ruling the Roman Empire. Except for these prominent major characters, there are two minor but nonetheless meaningful examples for Domitian, that are modelled as tragic figures and act in tragic situations: Marcia and Satricus and his son Solymus. Marcia, the wife of the stoic hero Regulus, does not only present a slightly different perspective on fides in comparison to her husband, but also acts like the choir in tragedy as warning and deconstructing instance (cf. Sil. 6.62-589). Pictured as a new Dido, she offers new perspectives on how private life should be (not) organized in the Flavian time. While Marcia is an example for one single person, the episode of Satricus and his son Solymus is a complete "tragedy of errors" (cf. Sil. 9.66-177). Showing nearly all core elements of Aristotle's definition like περιπέτεια and ἀναγνώρισις in combination with tragic irony (cf. Aristot. *poet*. 1452a22-b13), this elusive episode does not only warn Domitian not to be exclusive, but also alludes to the civil war in 69 AD and to key virtues of the Flavian time like pietas and their different forms of appearance.

By presenting the tragic figure Marcia and the tragic en miniature the aim of the paper will be to show not only the adaption of tragic elements in Silius Italicus' Flavian epos Punica, but also the way, how they are functionalized to work as didactic elements for the emperor Domitian.

Dalida AGRI

Echoes of Tragedy in the *Punica*: The Battles of Lake Trasimene and Cannae.

This paper seeks to explore how two pivotal episodes from Silius Italicus' Punica, specifically the battles of Lake Trasimene and Cannae, resonate with Aristotle's idea of tragedy. By examining these episodes, the aim is to discern the implications of interpreting epic through the lens of tragedy.

Although the *Punica*, given its historical subject-matter, is indeed the one Flavian epic that would appear to engage the least with tragedy, it does, however, lend itself to a vast range of 'tragic' readings (Bernstein 2021). While battle narrative, for instance, is a characteristic marker of epic genre, the events at Lake Trasimene and Cannae are emphatically infused with tragic elements, especially through the use of peripeteia or reversal, hamartia and hubris, all of which coalesce to create a sense of tragic aporia that is pervasive

to the *Punica*. The battles of Lake Trasimene and Cannae represent a moment of reversal for the Roman army. Such a reversal also carries the seed of further reversals thus creating a kind of mise-en-abyme of *peripeteia* that simultaneously plays with the notion of beginnings and endings. For instance, by having Hannibal alludes to Rome's destiny to hold empire as he surveys the wounds of dead Roman soldiers at Trasimene, Silius strategically confirms a paradox already at play in book 4 (Schedel 2022): a sense of victory in defeat and defeat in victory, thus blurring the distinction between conqueror and conquered.

Roman commanders, Flaminius and Varro, emerge as compelling tragic figures, whose *hubris*, and eventual downfall mirror Greek tragic models. Their arrogance and unwavering confidence in their military strategy led them to engage Hannibal in battle, resulting in catastrophic defeat. The overarching conflict is even miniaturised and played out within the inner ranks of Roman leadership, reminiscent of intra-familial conflict in classical tragedy. How does reading the *Punica* in the light of this tragic inevitability affect reader's perception of characters and events?

Claire STOCKS
Domitian's Tragic Farce: Staging theatre in Flavian Rome

Suetonius (*Dom.* 7.1; 8.3) writes that Domitian cracked-down on theatrical entertainment during his reign: he prevented actors from performing on the public stage and (re)imposed social hierarchies at the theatre. Yet as emperor, Domitian also oversaw one of the biggest literary and monumental revivals Rome had ever seen, introducing literary competitions (e.g. the Capitoline and Alban Games), and building a new Odeon in the Campus Martius for the performance of poetry. He even restored theatrical spaces following the great fire of 80AD, notably the scaena in the Theatre of Pompey. Why, then, would this patron of the arts be presented by Suetonius as being so reluctant to support theatrical performances? Existing scholarship (e.g. Edwards, 2002: 98-136) typically focuses on Rome's traditional perception of theatre as being morally dubious and associated with the East. Yet this reveals only half the story – for while Suetonius presents Domitian pursuing such a moral agenda, at the same time he shows him embracing Hellenistic practices, down to the clothing that he wears during literary competitions (*Dom.* 4.4). Moreover, theatrical elements are written into the fabric of Suetonius' text, with the emperor's life at times presented as a type of play (*fabula*) or farce (e.g. Dom 15.3).

This paper begins with the 'drama' of Suetonius' *Life of Domitian* and suggests that these omnipresent theatrical elements not only offer comment on how the emperor was perceived but reflect the importance of performance in Flavian Rome as well as the fusion of Hellenistic and Roman elements, notably with respect to Tragedy and its increasingly close bond with Pantomime (Newlands (2021: 174) and Hanses (2022: 477)). Read through these performance filters, it is argued, Suetonius' Domitian becomes an actor on his own stage, vacillating between elements of Tragedy and farce as he plays the role of tragic tyrant and suffers a gruesome, bathic, end. In this way he mirrors figures in Flavian epic (notably the seven against Thebes) and can serve as a vehicle through which we can evaluate the presence of Tragedy, and mime, on the literary and literal (Flavian) stage.

Madeline Marie THAYER
Seneca's Argonautic Tragedy in Statius' *Achilleid*

What does the Argo have to do with Achilles? From the beginning of the narrative of Statius' *Achilleid*, the poet establishes the Argonautic voyage as a key precursor to the events of his own poem. Previous studies have noted that Statius employs earlier accounts of the Argonautic voyage, most notably Catullus 64 and Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*, to both situate his text chronologically as well as to inform its characters and poetics (Hinds, Feeney 2004, Parkes, Davis, Stover). However, the *Achilleid*'s engagement with Seneca's *Medea* has remained relatively understudied, as has the degree to which Statius' text grapples with the divergent ideological readings of the Argo (namely, as a mark of human progress or as a violation of natural boundaries, leading to moral decline). This paper will argue that Statius draws upon Seneca's tragic portrayal of the consequences of the Argonautic voyage in order to establish not just a chronological but an ideological setting for his poem. I will suggest that Statius incorporates into the *Achilleid* the meaning of the Argonautic voyage as articulated in Seneca's play.

The pessimistic interpretation of the Argo's voyage is found throughout the Roman literary tradition. However, this paper will argue that Statius draws upon the language of Seneca's *Medea* specifically, particularly that of the play's second choral ode. In her supplication to Neptune, in which she attempts to persuade the god to sink Paris' fleet, Thetis decries the fact that ever since the Argo "broke the laws and distant majesty of the sea, the crimes of the land go with safe sails" (*eunt tutis terrarum crimina velis | ex quo iura freti maiestatemque repostam | rupit Iasonia puppis Pagasaea rapina*, 1.63-65). The phrase *maiestatem repostam* echoes the Senecan *mare sepositum* (*Med.* 339; the Chorus describes the post-Argo state of the sea as such, and the allusion is noted in Boyle's commentary ad loc.) Neptune, interestingly, does not disagree with Thetis' pessimistic reading of the Argo's voyage, but instead builds upon this Iron Age sensibility in his inability to acquiesce to Thetis; like the sea in the second choral ode of Seneca's *Medea*, which "has yielded and obeys all laws" (*Nunc iam cessit pontus et omnes | patitur leges*, *Med.* 364-65; similarly, the Chorus describes Tiphys as having "written new laws for the winds" in his invention of navigation, *legesque novas scribere ventis*, *Med.* 320), Neptune states that he must yield to the *consulta belli* that have been "decreed" (*edixit*) by Jupiter (1.82-83). Common to both texts is the use of legal terminology (*leges, iura, consulta, edixit*). Finally, the Greek ships themselves at Aulis, which have "overwhelmed" (*operta*) the sea and whose "sails swallow up all winds" (*totos consumunt carbasa ventos*), are able to do what Neptune cannot, which is to "raise their own storms" (*suasque hiemes...attollit*, 1. 443-446), in language that again recalls the Chorus' description of Tiphys' invention of navigation (*Ausus Tiphys pandere vasto | carbasa ponto | legesque novas scribere ventis*). Statius' text thus represents the forces of nature as disempowered with respect to human technology of war. Why then, might Statius be keen to situate the *Achilleid* in a Senecan-influenced Iron Age?

Consideration of how the *Achilleid* uses the myths of the Argo and Trojan War in order to reflect upon the Golden and Iron Ages will help us to historicize the text. In 88 CE, Domitian celebrated the Ludi Saeculares, and the special issue of coinage minted to commemorate the occasion suggests that Domitian's ludi drew heavily upon the Augustan celebration of the New Golden Age in 17 BC (Grunow Sobocinski). Thus, the discourse of the Golden and Iron Ages likely had political relevance at the time of Statius' writing.

Cecilia CRIADO
Statius and the Tragic Rhetoric of Incest

Since Hershkowitz's (1998) seminal work, interest has grown in the study of kinship relations in Statius' *Thebaid*, with broad consensus that these can be described as dysfunctional (see, for example, Bernstein 2003, 2008 and 2015, Parkes 2009, Augoustakis 2010, Conrau-Lewis 2013, Gervais 2015, Newlands 2016, Tang 2018, Rebegginai 2018 and Spinelli 2021). Yet, the motif of incest in the *Thebaid* has not been subject of a specific study, having been only tangentially adduced by scholarship as a cause or prototype of such deviant familial relationships. Given that the incest of Oedipus and Jocasta is almost certainly an ancient motif, one that must already have been present in the early Boeotian tradition (Fowler 2013), Statius could in no way avoid this subject, especially after Seneca issued a categorical moral condemnation of their sacrilegious marriage in his Oedipus which, since the tragedy of the same name by Julius Caesar has not been preserved, is the first documentation we possess of a literary interdiction on the Oedipal type of incest in Rome. My contribution will address Statius's debt in his treatment of incest to Greek tragedy and Seneca.

Seneca expands and exacerbates the Sophoclean emphasis on the genetic chaos that derives from incest. However, he corrects the Greek tragedians on two essential points. First, contrary to what we find in Greek tragedy as a whole, where Oedipus' incest is very rarely qualified as impurity or pollution (*S. OC* 945-6 and *E. Ph*. 1050), this act is recurrently considered in Seneca's *Oedipus*, indeed to a greater extent than patricide, an abominable miasma. Second, again without precedent in the Greek tragedians, incest is defined as a crime against the Naturae lex. On these two axes, Seneca builds his hypertrophic rhetoric of incest of which, by the way, no traces can be found in his philosophical work.

In principle, Statius seems to acquiesce to this rhetoric. Many characters and the very narrative person himself qualify incest as a nefarious crime (1.47, 52, 69; 4.462; 7.212, 514; 11.333) and as a source of biological disorder (1.235; 4.631-2; 10.796-7). However, such generational regression is considered as a violation of the Law of Nature only on one occasion (7.216-7). Against the centrality of the incest motif in the *Thebaid*, there is also the fact that the curse (absent in Sophocles) that Laius utters in Seneca's Oedipus against his son for his patricide and incest (vv. 642-646), and also against his grandsons, whom he condemns to fratricidal confrontation, is transformed by Statius into a prophecy in Laius' mouth (4.635-7). In the *Thebaid*, as in Greek tragedy as a whole, the real cause of the intrafamilial struggle is the curse that Oedipus places on his sons (1.56-87 and 4.644), whose attacks against piety owing to their father are considered a greater crime than the incest of Oedipus by Jupiter himself (1.238). It should also be noted that, contrary to what happens in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the ill-fated ploughing of Cadmus is the primaeval omen of the inveterate curse of Thebes. In fact, agricultural work is always nefarious and loaded with negative implications in the Statian composition (Criado forthcoming). In light of this, it is perhaps worth asking why Statius does not draw on the powerful connection between tillage and human coitus that Aeschylus and Sophocles constantly establish when referring to the incestuous union of Oedipus and Iocasta.

Alice HU
Curious alchemy: rape as foundation myth in Euripides' *Ion* and Statius's *Thebaid*

In this paper, I demonstrate how the tragic narrative pattern of rape-turned-civic-aetiology enacted in Euripides' *Ion* provides an instructive model for reading narratives of sexual violence in Statius's *Thebaid*.

I focus on Hypsipyle's first-person account of her rape by Jason—a detail unique to Statius's version and therefore often questioned (Gibson 2004, Augoustakis 2010, Heslin 2016)—and the story of her subsequent reunion with her children from the rape, against the backdrop of baby Opheltes' funeral. The episode's dramatic "frame" and engagement with Euripides' *Hypsipyle* have been well-noted (Brown 1994, Soerink 2014a/b, Parkes 2021). Building on suggestions of similarities between both Euripides' and Statius's Hypsipyle stories and the Ion (Mueller 2010: 381; Soerink 2014a: 228), I read the story of Hypsipyle's rape and its apparent "resolution" in the *Thebaid* alongside that of Creousa in the Ion.

Although Creousa expresses the suffering caused by her rape by Apollo (Scafuro 1990, Harris 2023) and Hypsipyle calls her children reminders of her rape (Stat. *Theb*. 5.463), after dramatic reversals and recognition scenes, both are reunited with the children produced by their rapes. The reunions are framed as "recompense" for their misfortunes (Stat. *Theb*. 5.710-11; Eur. *Ion* 444-47, 972; Hoffer 1996: 307-8; Gunther 2018: 542). Both stories are thus enfolded into larger narratives that provide proof of divine providence (Eur. *Ion* 1595; Stat. *Theb*. 5.712) and civic and religious aetiologies for Athenian autochthony and the Nemean Games, respectively.

I argue that Statius's story uses the same dramatic machinery as Euripides' tragedy to stage a process by which personal experiences are "authenticated and externalized," transformed "into a performable narrative" (Mueller 2010) in the form of an aetiology—a process that might be likened to the "curious alchemy" by which postmemory (Hirsch 2012) transforms an individual's experience of "a painful and destructive past... into something socially beneficial" (Donoghue 2018).

But the formation of aetiologies in Opheltes' funeral comes under question (Brown 1994; Ganiban 2013; Walter 2022); I argue that Statius imitates tragedy's "polyphonic" quality to show dissent from the formation process. While the Ion suggests, albeit ambivalently, that Creousa assents to the reframing of her rape as a foundational act as required by this resolution (Eur. *Ion* 1609-10; Gunther 2018: 542-3), Hypsipyle, conspicuously silenced (Augoustakis 2010), is shown as excluded from the process.

Comparison with the *Ion* reveals Adrastus's aetiological myth of Linus and Coroebus in *Thebaid* 1 as similarly troubled. Like the *Ion*, the story features a rape by Apollo and the exposure of the resulting child; like Ion, the hero Coroebus condemns Apollo's arbitrary, selfish actions and indifference. But in the *Thebaid*, there is no reunification—mother and child are dead—or revelation of divine providence. I argue that, with its similarities to the *Aeneid*'s Hercules and Cacus story (Ganiban 2007), the myth reflects on the *Thebaid*'s participation in the specifically Roman epic tradition. By denying the possibility of "miraculous babies" resulting from rape, the myth can be read as undoing the narrative of rape-as-foundational-act made central to Rome and Roman epic in Ennius's *Annales* (Keith 2000). Instead, Statius, like Ovid (Hardie 1990), makes his Thebaid a de-foundational epic.

Jean-Michel HULLS
Ecce iterum soror! Re-reading Statius' Antigone

Alenka Zupančič's recent monograph, *Let Them Rot*!, provides a bold new exploration of Sophocles' *Antigone* through the lens of feminist, Lacanian psychoanalysis. Our aim in this paper is to sandwich the *Antigone* of Statius' *Thebaid* between her earlier theatrical incarnations and the radically modern reading (and occasional misreadings) of Zupančič.

Sophocles is only one of many touchstones for Statius' rich and complex creation, yet the juxtaposition of his and Statius' *Antigones* can provide us with insights into Flavian ideas of violence, death and femininity.

Following the structure of Zupančič's discourse, we begin with an exploration of violence and its relationship with public and private laws in Greek and Roman texts. Statius picks up the subtle interplay of public and private law in Sophocles, but provides his Antigone a rapid evolution from childish ingénue during the teichoscopia of book 7, through the (ironically) civic-minded pacification of Creon as she accompanies Oedipus in exile in book 11, before she shatters her feminine identity with her own display of transgressive violence in book 12. Like her father/brother, Statius' Antigone embodies the three ages of man in a single identity.

Zupančič's analysis of funeral rites in Sophocles includes a sophisticated unpacking of Lacanian ideas of death and especially of the 'undead'. Such figures are everywhere in the *Thebaid*, but we can see the major female characters of the poem consistently exhibit an 'undeadness', a crucial characteristic for Sophocles' heroine. This notion informs especially Antigone's first appearance with her aged retainer in book 7 which plays with normative notions of femininity; normal feminine roles are removed from Antigone's world when she joins Oedipus in the living death of exile; finally she finds a species of immortality in her burial of Eteocles and Polynices with Argia, but one which is profoundly different from that of her Sophoclean counterpart.

Finally, we explore the importance of desire and incest in Statius' depiction of feminine subjectivation. Sophocles' Antigone notoriously rejects normative feminine identity in her pursuit of her brother's burial. For Statius, Antigone's role operates along parallel lines, but seems to resolve into the stereotypical equation between Female and Nature as she performs a role as guide for the men around her. Yet her final appearances in the poem explode this apparent resolution as Antigone embraces the incestuous and desire-fuelled potential of her relationship with her dead brother, the graphic violence of which highlights the gap between tragedy and epic.