

of the orator's strategy, in a speech that was delivered on the opening day of the Ludi Megalenses.¹⁵ For all the seriousness that Quintilian notes, there is parody too, as Cicero makes light of this famous moment in Rome's past, and updates the contents of Claudius' speech for his own generation of Clodii.¹⁶

JOSIAH OSGOOD
Georgetown University

15. On the importance of seeing the *Pro Caelio* in the context of the Ludi Megalenses (carefully referred to by Cicero at the start of his speech, *diebus festis ludisque publicis*), see Geffcken 1973, 1–8, and, from a different perspective, Salzman 1982, 299–304.

16. Geffcken (1973, p. 19, n. 2) points out Cicero's interest in "comparing contemporary Clodians to their illustrious ancestor" (see *In Clodium et Curionem* frag. 24 and *Mil.* 17), while also noticing (18) distinctively Ciceronian rhetorical features in the *prosopopoeia*.

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MEN FROM BEFORE THE MOON: THE RELEVANCE OF STATIUS *THEBAID* 4.275–84 TO PARTHENOPAEUS AND HIS ARCADIAN CONTINGENT

This paper seeks to explore the relevance of the detail in the catalogue of Argive forces at *Thebaid* 4.32–308. Specifically, it will focus on Statius' side excursion into primeval Arcadian customs at lines 275–84, arguing that this seemingly irrelevant digression contributes to the wider themes of the work, especially the idea of decline. While the view of the *Thebaid* as a copy of the *Aeneid*, attractive only to textual critics and doctoral students, may be dated, the poem has not yet received the full scrutiny it deserves. In particular, there remains much to be done on its inner structure, the care with which Statius builds up themes and characters through even apparently minor observations. As this paper hopes to show, passages may set up resonances that reach far beyond their immediate locality and subtly shape our response.

ARCADIA: THE FIRST INHABITANTS

The Arcadian section of the catalogue (4.246–304) initially focuses on the beautiful, young leader Parthenopaeus.¹ The troops themselves are not introduced until lines 275 and following—and then in a somewhat unexpected manner, through their ancestors (4.275–84):

Arcades huic veteres astris lunaque priores
agmina fida datis, nemorum quos stirpe rigenti
fama satos, cum prima pedum vestigia tellus
admirata tulit; nondum arva domusque nec urbes,
conubiue² modus: quercus laurique ferebant
cruda puerperia, ac populos umbrosa creavit
fraxinus, et feta viridis puer excidit orno.
hi lucis stupuisse vices noctisque feruntur
nubila et occiduum longe Titana secuti
desperasse diem.

Ancient Arcadians who were before the stars and moon, you give to him faithful troops, you who are said to have been sprung from the rigid stems of trees, when the earth, wondering, bore the first footsteps. Not yet were there fields, houses, or cities, nor was there the state of marriage. Oaks and laurels were bearing robust children, the shady ash produced peoples, and a young boy fell from the pregnant ash. These are said to have been astounded at the changes of light and cloudy darkness and, following far the setting sun, to have despaired of the day.

The distinction between the primeval Arcadians and their descendants is mischievously blurred: those who now offer Parthenopaeus “faithful troops” are said to be “ancient Arcadians, who were before the stars and moon” (275–76).³ This is the cue for nine more lines of the race’s history, featuring a number of myths associated with early man: the notion that humans were originally born of trees (276–81),⁴ an alleged lack of agriculture, housing, communities, and marriage (278–79),⁵ and the recurrent primitive fear that the sun might not return (282–84).⁶ Such an excursus bears no

1. Parthenopaeus’ portrayal is again taken up in Book 6 (the footrace, 6.550–645) and Book 9 (his *aristeia* and death, 9.683–907). For a good discussion of Parthenopaeus’ characterization that brings out his youthful vulnerability and egotism, see M. Dewar, *Statius, “Thebaid” IX; Edited with an English Translation and Commentary* (Oxford, 1991), esp. xxii–xxvii and on 9.683–711.

2. Reading *conubii* with O. Mueller, *P. Papini Stati “Thebais” et “Achilleis,”* vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1870), in preference to the *conubiis* of the MSS (and D. E. Hill, ed., *P. Papini Stati “Thebaidos” Libri XII*² [Leiden, 1996], *Mnemosyne* Suppl. 79): in the sense “way, manner” *modus* takes the genitive.

3. The popular belief that the Arcadians existed before the moon appears to have originated in Hippys of Rhegium, *FGrH* 554 F 7; cf. Callim. frag. 191.56; 777 Pf. The detail that the race also preceded the stars seems a characteristically Statian touch of hyperbole, possibly influenced by Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 4.261–65.

4. Wittily picked up in Atalanta’s criticism of the hard-hearted men who permit her son to go to war: *Arcades, o saxis nimirum et robore nati* (4.340); similarly of the Arcadians at Lycoph. *Alex.* 480. The more popular tradition involved the race, or at least its progenitor Pelasgus, being born of the earth.

5. Cf. Ovid’s description of early Arcadian life at *Fast.* 2.289–300. These notions of primitive life were largely conventional. Note, however, the twist in the absence of *conubium*. Marriage is an alien concept not because of early man’s promiscuity (for which see, e.g., Lucr. 5.962–65) but because the first Arcadian reproduction was done by trees.

6. Cf. Manilius 1.68–70. Perhaps traditionally associated with the Arcadians: see G. Campbell, *Lucretius on Creation and Evolution: A Commentary on “De Rerum Natura” Book Five, Lines 772–1104* (Oxford, 2003), on Lucr. 5.973–81 (a rejection of the idea).

obvious relation to the current Argive-Theban conflict. Nor does it have a precedent in the Parthenopaeus tradition: Statius' focus on the leader's Arcadian background appears to be new.⁷ Duped into reading a (very) brief history of Arcadian life, diverted from the momentum of war preparations, how, then, do we react? Do we dismiss the piece as a misjudged example of *doctrina*? Or excuse it by its appearance in a catalogue, a form that thrives on ethnographical information? Neither reaction seems an adequate response: both seek to sweep away the irrelevance when the passage draws attention to it. Why has Statius dwelled to such an extent, and in such a prominent position, on mythology previously ignored in this connection? Finding no answer within the excursus, we are forced to look outwards.

And indeed, when we examine the wider context, we find that the excursus' irrelevance is more apparent than real. The details highlighted in the digression pick up and invert those provided in the preceding lines. The insertion of a reference to Parthenopaeus, *huic* (275), between *Arcades* and *veteres*, prompts us to think of his age. We have, in fact, just learnt of Parthenopaeus' youth, how he is still a child dominated by his mother,⁸ a boy on the cusp of adolescence.⁹ Ironically, a race renowned for their antiquity is now under the leadership of a mere lad. But there is a dark side to the humor: we are also reminded of Parthenopaeus' vulnerability. His attitude to battle is founded on naïve boyish dreams,¹⁰ and his physical maturity is insufficient for the demands of war: *nec desunt animi, veniat modo fortior aetas* (253).¹¹ The Arcadian people may have endured through time, even cosmological change, but Parthenopaeus' survival is in doubt once he has passed to the adult world of war.

Parthenopaeus' fragility is further highlighted by his different origins. The picture of newborn babes amid Arcadian trees picks up the image of the infant Parthenopaeus crawling around the forest of mount Maenalus (*Maenalia puerum . . . in umbra, / . . . tenero signantem gramina passu*, 256–57), but the similarities are super-

7. Rejecting the tradition of his Argive descent by Lysimache and Talaus (cf. Antimachus frag. 17 with V. J. Matthews, *Antimachus of Colophon: Text and Commentary* [Leiden, 1996], *Mnemosyne* Suppl. 155), the Greek tragedians had made Parthenopaeus Ἀρκάς, οὐκ Ἀργεῖος (Eur. *Phoen.* 1153). However, in portraying him as a metic at Argos who fights for his adopted dwelling (Aesch. *Sept.* 548; Eur. *Supp.* 890–98), they had also moved the emphasis away from his native land. The interest in his Arcadian origins concentrates on the fact that he is Atalanta's son (cf., e.g., Eur. *Supp.* 888–90).

8. He is forced to slip off to war without her knowledge: 4.248–49 *salutis tunc forte remotos / torva parens (neque enim haec iuveni foret ire potestas) / pacabat cornu gelidique aversa Lycae* ("Then his fierce parent chanced to be bringing peace with her bow to distant glades and the farther slopes of cool Lycaeus, otherwise there would not have been the opportunity for youth's exit"). By the time she manages to remonstrate with him (*nunc refer arma domum!* 4.339), it is too late: he is caught up in the army's departure (4.341–43).

9. See, e.g., 4.274, suggesting he is too young to shave: *dulce rubens viridique genas spectabilis aevo* (cf. 4.336; 9.703). Note, too, there is no sign of his returning the nymphs' sexual interest (*quas non ille duces nemorum fluvisque dicata / numina, quas magno non abstulit igne Napaeas?* 4.254–55): according to his mother, he is a *vix Dryadum thalamis Erymanthiadumque furori / Nympharum mature puer* (4.329–30).

10. He is struck with the love of war (*Martis percussus amore*, 4.260): starstruck, placing himself in the main action role. Battle appears an opportunity to gain glory (*tantum nova gloria suadet*, 247) and prove himself a man. Death and suffering are glossed over.

11. Similarly recognized by Atalanta: *expecta . . . dum firminus aevum* (4.335). This discrepancy between Parthenopaeus' hopes and his physical capability proves fatal: deaf to advice, heedless of waning vigor (cf. 9.848–49), he insists on pursuing the enemy and finally proves vulnerable in his exhaustion (9.853–57). He falls, somewhat ironically, to a warrior named Dryas, "tree nymph" (Dewar, "*Thebaid*" IX [n. 1 above], on 9.595ff.).

ficial.¹² While the first Arcadians are said to have been born from wood, Parthenopaeus' human origins are clear from the start.¹³ The consequences are twofold. Firstly, he lacks the toughness of his ancestors. The early Arcadians took on the hardness of the material from which they were created:¹⁴ they came from *nemorum* . . . *stirpe rigenti* (276), "from the rigid stem" and "from the rigid family stock."¹⁵ From the moment of birth they were *cruda puerperia*, "robust children" (280),¹⁶ able to fend for themselves. Child of a mortal, and physically delicate (cf. *tenero* . . . *passu*, 257), the young Parthenopaeus is clearly in need of protection.¹⁷ As he departs for war in adolescence, he fatefully retains some of that youthful vulnerability.

The second consequence of Parthenopaeus' human origin is that he is bound by new, emotional ties. He may chafe at the bonds, departing for war in spite of his parent's wishes, but he cannot escape them. By endangering his own life, he risks that of his mother, whose happiness is dependent on his well-being. It is, however, only as he lies dying that he fully realizes the selfishness of his actions and sends a message in atonement: *dic: "merui, genetrix, poenas; invita capesse: / arma puer rapui, nec te retinente quievi, / nec tibi sollicitae saltem inter bella peperci"* ("Say: 'Mother, I have deserved punishment; take it although you are unwilling. As a boy I seized arms nor, although you held me back, would I stay still, nor did I spare your fear even in the war,'" 9.891–93). Much of the pathos of Parthenopaeus' death scene stems from this understanding of the suffering and loneliness Atalanta will endure.

ARCADIANS: THE CURRENT GENERATION

The excursus, then, appears to be more than inert ornamentation. By engaging with the details set out in the preceding section, it helps develop our attitudes towards Parthenopaeus. A similar strategy may be detected in the following passage, which catalogues those parts of Arcadia involved in the muster (4.284–98):¹⁸

12. Note how *viridis puer* of an early Arcadian at 281 combines *puerum* at the beginning of the description of Parthenopaeus (256) and *viridi* . . . *aevo* from the end of the passage (274), but with an added pun on "green" (like the maternal tree), a reminder of the difference in origins.

13. At least his maternal origins: his father is never named. Cf. 4.246–50 (evidence of motherly control); 4.256–58 (an allusion to Atalanta's pregnancy). There is no hint that nymphs are involved in the reproduction of early Arcadians, a notion that often lies behind the idea of trees giving birth (see M. L. West, *Hesiod "Works and Days" Edited with Prolegomena and Commentary* [Oxford, 1978], on Hes. *Op.* 145; cf. Tzetzes' explanation of Lycoph. *Alex.* 480 through the hamadryad Chrysopeleia). The contrast is between the animate and the inanimate.

14. A common conceit: cf., e.g., Lucr. 5.925–26; Ov. *Met.* 1.411–15.

15. Two meanings of *stirps* are in play: "stem of a tree" (*OLD* 1) and "family stock" (*OLD* 4). Cf. *Arcadiae stirpem* (9.792) with Dewar, "*Thebaid*" IX; P. Hardie, "*Aeneid*" Book IX (Cambridge, 1994), on Verg. *Aen.* 9.603: *durum a stirpe*.

16. Following the translation of L. Håkanson, *Statius' "Thebaid": Critical and Exegetical Remarks* (Lund, 1973), 23–24. The adjective also evokes their immaturity (*TLL*, s.v. *crudus* 1235.65–77).

17. Contrast 9.790–800, esp. 9.797–98, where Parthenopaeus evokes a childhood of invulnerability: *protinus astrictos didici reptare per amnes / horrendasque domos magnarum intrare ferarum*. Through his language, he may be hinting at a resemblance to his tough tree-born ancestors: after calling himself *Arcadiae stirpem* at 9.792 (see n. 15 above), he dissociates himself from human parentage until 9.799–800, at one point claiming *non me . . . / Thyias . . . genetrix . . . / edidit* (9.793–95).

18. This geographical excursus, 4.285–95, has a central position in the structure of the Arcadian catalogue entry. It stands in the middle of the description of Arcadians: after the portrait of Parthenopaeus and his weapons at 251–74 and ancient Arcadians at 275–84 but before the depiction of Arcadian troops, including their weaponry, at 299–304. References to Parthenopaeus and his mother frame the whole episode: the lines detailing Atalanta's ignorance of her son's decision (246–50) are picked up by 309–44, where she hears of his departure and attempts to dissuade him.

rarescunt alta colonis

Maenala, Parthenium fugitur nemus, agmina bello
 Rhipeque et Stratie ventosaque donat Enispe.
 non Tegea, non ipsa deo vacat alite felix
 Cyllene templumque Aleae nemorale Minervae
 et rapidus Clitor et qui tibi, Pythie, Ladon
 paene socer candensque iugis Lampia nivosis
 et Pheneos nigro Styga mittere credita Diti.
 venit et Idaeis ululatibus aemulus Azan
 Parrhasiique duces, et quae risistis, Amores,
 grata pharetrato Nonacria rura Tonanti,
 dives et Orchomenos pecorum et Cynosura ferarum.
 Aepytioidem ardor agros Psophidaque celsam
 vastat et Herculeo vulgatos robore montes,
 monstriferumque Erymanthon et aerisonum Stymphalon.

Lofty Maenalus becomes less crowded with farmers; the grove of Parthenius is fled from; Rhipe, Stratie, and windy Enispe give troops to the war. Neither Tegea, nor Cyllene herself, blessed by the winged god, lie idle, nor the woodland shrine of Alean Minerva nor swift Clitor nor Ladon, almost a father-in-law to you, Pythian Apollo, nor Lampia gleaming with snowy ridges nor Pheneos believed to send Styx to black Dis. Azan comes, rivaling the wails on Ida, and the chieftains of Parrhasia and the fields of Nonacris pleasing to the bequivered Thunderer, which you laughed at, Cupids, and Orchomenos rich in flocks and Cynosura rich in wild beasts. The same ardor makes the fields of Aepytioides and lofty Psophis empty and the mountains famed for the might of Hercules, monster-bearing Erymanthos and Stymphalos, sounding with bronze.

In 284–85, the focus moves from the primitive Arcadians to their descendants: *rarescunt alta colonis* / *Maenala*. The transition becomes immediately obvious. The troops are listed by Maenalus and other place names, including cities such as Tegea and Pheneos. There were *nondum* . . . *domusque nec urbes* (278) for the first Arcadians. Prompted by the excursus to note this development in society, we cannot help but observe further changes. The later Arcadians have gained homes, in the sense of organized communities as well as physical structures, but are here abandoning them for the distant hostile land of Thebes. The contrast is not only between the original Arcadians and their descendants: there is a third group, the current generation.

Colonis (284) also points up the difference. In the primeval age, there were *nondum arva* (278), but in this passage the Arcadians are catalogued through their habits of cultivation: note also the *Nonacria rura* at 294, Orchomenos, which is *dives* . . . *pecorum* (295), and the *Aepytioidem* . . . *agros* (296). In some patterns of cultural development, the move to agriculture was seen as a mark of decline, a move away from the Golden Age. Here, however, Statius presents farming in a positive light, associating it with peace and fertility. The degeneration is, in fact, more recent: the cessation of farming as a result of the war. The *coloni* are mentioned as they leave for Thebes. Who will tend the fields in their absence? How will the race survive the loss of these men in battle? The devastating effect of their departure is hinted at in the use of the verb *vastat* (297): lust for war both “empties” and “lays waste” the fields of Aepytioides.¹⁹ Unlike their ancestors, the juxtaposition of passages reminds us, these

19. *OLD*, s.v. 1 and 2. Cf. the destructive effects of departure for war at 3.576–77 (orders of Jupiter): *agrosque viris annosaque vastant / oppida*; 4.36 (Mars): *quantas populis solaverit urbes*; 6.917: *dilectas cui desolavimus urbes*.

Arcadians had an agricultural livelihood but now they are abandoning it, even destroying it. Again we may see how Statius creates three Arcadias: its first beginnings, the land before conflict, and the land embroiled in it. This prewar agricultural Arcadia is pictured only at the point of collapse.

Developments in the sphere of reproduction are similarly charged. As we have seen, the early Arcadian world lacked marriage, sex, and romance. Matters seem to have changed in the course of time: Ladon is referred to in terms of Apollo's love for Daphne at 289–90: *qui tibi, Pythie, Ladon / paene socer*.²⁰ At 293–94, there is an allusion to Jupiter's seduction of Callisto while in the guise of Diana, which conjures up a land of gaiety and romance: *quae risistis, Amores, / grata pharetrato Nonacria rura Tonanti*.²¹ Even apparently ornamental adjectives suggest the propensity of the land for love: at line 300, we learn that Arcadia produces *Paphias myrtos*, the plant of Venus.²² The gap between the first Arcadians, born from asexual reproduction, and their descendants, who are characterized by reference to local love stories, seems clear. But there is a further contrast: with the present generation. As we make the comparisons, we realize that romantic love, which succeeded the early asexual relationships, no longer holds sway. The frivolous assignments of 203–4 do not belong to this Arcadia, a scene of martial gathering, but to a previous incarnation that we glimpse when it has passed. There is a kind of perversion of former Arcadian values: lust is now directed towards fighting. Parthenopaeus is *Martis percussus amore* (260), *tubas audire calens* (261), rather than fired with passion for the nymphs (254–55; see n. 9); Paphian myrtle is broken off for weaponry: *hi Paphias myrtos a stirpe recurvant* (300).²³

20. See Ov. *Met.* 1.452–67 for the story of Apollo's attempted rape and Daphne's metamorphosis. Product of a later generation, she was turned into a laurel tree rather than begotten by one (cf. 279–80, which is activated by the later reference). This is the first extant variant that names Ladon, the Arcadian river god, as Daphne's father, although an earlier history is suggested by prevalence of the genealogy (P. E. Knox, "In Pursuit of Daphne," *TAPA* 120 [1990]: 183–202, esp. 188). Why should Statius have chosen an Arcadian setting for the myth rather than the rival landscapes of Laconia (see J. L. Lightfoot, *Parthenius of Nicaea: The Poetical Fragments and Ἐποικία Πάθιμα* [Oxford, 1999], 472) or Thessaly (following Ovid *Met.* 1.452, as he does at *Silv.* 1.2.130–31)? Surely this shows his deliberate evocation of the amorous Arcadian past. Another reason may be to teasingly "correct" Ovid, whose Thessalian backdrop appears to have been an innovation (Knox, "In Pursuit," 194). Ovid had brought Ladon into the parallel story of Syrinx at *Met.* 1.702, probably in reference to the rejected genealogy of Daphne (Knox, "In Pursuit," 200): Statius transfers the river back to the "right" myth while evoking the Ovidian narrative (cf. *Met.* 1.557, where Apollo admits that the transformed girl cannot be his *coniunx*).

21. Cf. Ov. *Met.* 2.425: *induitur faciem cultumque Dianae*. Further allusion to the legend occurs at 4.304: *Lycaoniae . . . ursae* (referring to Callisto's transformation into a bear). The evocation of myths from *Metamorphoses* Books 1 and 2 in this section of the catalogue seems suspiciously systematic, perhaps triggered by the precosmological associations of the first Arcadians. As well as allusions to the rapes and transformations of Daphne (see n. 20 above) and Callisto, there is an indirect reminder of the story of Lycaon (Ov. *Met.* 1.163–243) through Callisto's epithet at 4.304 and, perhaps, Jupiter's label *Tonanti* at 294 (recalling the Ovidian god's thunderbolt-hurling tendencies). Given this Ovidian coloring we might see the surprise of Parthenopaeus' horse at his master's increased weight (*arma / mirantem gravius heri*, 4.272–73) as playing on the reaction of the Sun's horses to Phaethon (*sed leve pondus erat nec quod cognoscere possent / Solis equi, solitaeque iugum gravitate carebat*, Ov. *Met.* 2.161–62), especially in light of parallels between the death scenes of the two youths (both are terror-stricken by the realization that they have overreached their limits and now face imminent death (cf. Ov. *Met.* 2.178–200 with Stat. *Theb.* 9.850–74); furthermore, the detail that Parthenopaeus drops his reins (*frenos . . . remisit*, Stat. *Theb.* 4.871) may be meant to recall Phaethon's action at Ov. *Met.* 2.200, *lora remisit*).

22. In drawing together love and Arcadia, Statius may be tapping into associations established by the love elegists, especially Gallus: cf. Verg. *Ecl.* 10; Prop. 1.1; D. F. Kennedy, "Arcades Ambo: Virgil, Gallus and Arcadia," *Hermathena* 143 (1987): 47–59.

23. The reference to myrtle also jarringly evokes the world of pastoral, as in the line's source, *Aen.* 7.817 (Camilla's spear): *pastoralem praefixa cuspidis myrtum*. On one level Parthenopaeus is a counterpart to

The reason why the Arcadians are leaving their native land would, of course, have been foreign to their ancestors. There is no mention of war in early Arcadia: it would have had no place in the kind of Golden Age that then existed, before agriculture, private property, and cities. Arcadia's more recent history similarly lacks signs of conflict. The summons to war clearly disrupts the inhabitants' lifestyle, throwing norms of peace and piety into confusion. Now Mars is preferred to the traditional deities;²⁴ the tranquillity of the countryside no longer seems desirable.²⁵ Reminiscences of past Arcadian harmony highlight the current madness.

What compounds the horror is the nature of the conflict in which the Arcadians are involved. It is a civil war at heart, a dispute between brothers. The excursus had closed with the picture of primeval Arcadians mourning the disappearance of the light (4.282–84). This detail is neatly picked up by the description of the flight of the sun in the last four lines of the catalogue, immediately after the Arcadian section. Mycenae, engaged in its own fraternal quarrel, can send no allies: *hos belli coetus iurataque pectora Marti / milite vicinae nullo iuvere Mycenae; / funerea tunc namque dapes mediique recursus / solis, et hic alii miscebant proelia fratres* ("Neighboring Mycenae did not help this warlike gathering and men sworn to Mars with any soldiers; for then there was the fatal feast and the withdrawal of the midday sun and here other brothers were joining battle," 4.305–8).²⁶ The contrast is clear: for the Arcadians, the loss of sunlight is a recurring change, a natural phenomenon; in the case of the Mycenaean, it is an aberrance, brought on by familial strife and cannibalism. The two races seem worlds apart.

Yet, if we probe further, we realize that it is only the early Arcadians who are different. The current Arcadians may not be fellow soldiers with the Mycenaean but they share similar guilt; Statius repeatedly parallels the strife at Mycenae with the Argive-Theban war. Just as Atreus quarrelled with Thyestes, so Polynices quarrelled with Eteocles: the correspondence is spelled out at 308, "here other brothers were joining battle." At the beginning of Book 4, we are given the image of Phoebus "forcing" the day: *Tertius horrentem zephyris laxaverat annum / Phoebus et . . . cogebat . . . / longius ire diem* (4.1–3). Primarily, this image relates to the changing of the seasons, but the notion of force, and the pun on *horrentem*, "shivering" with cold and fear, suggests the sun's reluctance to appear: it is as though it is attempting

Vergil's Camilla (a swift, vulnerable character of ambiguous gender who rounds off the catalogue), and his Arcadians a version of the Latins (the Vergilian fighters have similarly improvised weaponry at Verg. *Aen.* 7.505–8; note too the wearing of *galeri* at Verg. *Aen.* 7.688 and Stat. *Theb.* 4.303): the echoes serve to stress the primitive rustic nature of the Arcadian contingent and hence their unsuitability for war.

24. Cf. 4.287–88: surprisingly, the inhabitants of Cyllene, who bask in the favor of Mercury, exchange *otium* for *bellum*; 4.288: even the woodland shrine (*templum . . . nemorale*) of Alean Minerva is caught up in war.

25. So in 285 it is a pastoral scene, the grove of Parthenius, which "is fled from" (*fugitur*) rather than the battle as we might expect.

26. We may already have this myth in mind. *Stupere* (cf. 282) is repeatedly used by Seneca in the *Thyestes* to describe reactions to the sun's disappearance (cf. *Thyestes* 800; 815–16; 990–91); cf. also the fear that eternal darkness might follow: *trepidant, trepidant pectora magno / percussa metu, / ne fatali cuncta ruina / quassata labent iterumque deos / hominesque premat deforme chaos* ("Our hearts are trembling, trembling, struck by a grave fear lest all things fall damaged in fatal ruin and formless chaos again overwhelm men and gods," Sen. *Thyestes* 828–32). Furthermore, *desperasse diem* (284) picks up Lucan's description of man's despair at the sun's withdrawal: *desperare diem* (1.543). Lucan immediately parallels this portent of civil war with the events at Mycenae, 1.543–44 (cf. 7.451–54).

to stall time, conscious of the wickedness to come. The events of Seneca's *Thyestes* are being replayed: there, at the fateful approach of Tantalus, which will eventually lead to the sun's flight from paternal cannibalism, *ipse Titan dubitat an iubeat sequi / cogatque habenis ire periturum diem* (120–21).²⁷ The link between situations becomes yet stronger in Book 11 when, at the approach of the fraternal duel, Jupiter calls for the withdrawal of the sun, while drawing a connection with the happenings at Mycenae: *sat . . . / . . . vidisse . . . / . . . festina polo ducentes astra Mycenae. / nunc etiam turbanda dies* (11.127–30). Darkness then falls on Thebes. A seemingly irrelevant comment becomes charged through the appearance of a parallel detail some twenty lines later. Through the historical excursus, Statius passes judgement on the current Arcadians.

To conclude, despite its tangential appearance, *Thebaid* 4.275–84 is closely tied to its surrounding text and serves to bring out key ideas. By focusing on an earlier time, Statius draws our attention to change and decline. The toughness of the first Arcadians stands in contrast with the emotional and physical weakness of their descendant Parthenopaeus. Reminders of the antiquity and longevity of the race pointedly follow hints of the youth's imminent doom. The primeval Arcadians are further used to comment on the nature of the conflict. The transformation of early Arcadia to the land before the war is painted in largely neutral colors, but the subsequent changes, brought on by the muster, signal decline. Places famed for love are now involved in fighting. A tranquil and pious agricultural way of life is shattered. The evil of the fraternal quarrel has infected the countryside, tainting the innocent and corrupting values. Even Arcadia, a famously isolated pocket of primitivism, has fallen.²⁸

RUTH PARKES
Exeter College, Oxford

27. Lucan had already drawn on the idea for his civil war; cf. 7.1–6 (the sun is unwilling to witness Pharsalia): *segnior, Oceano quam lex aeterna vocabat, / luctificus Titan numquam magis aethera contra / egit equos cursumque polo rapiente retorsit, / defectusque pati voluit raptaeque labores / lucis, et attraxit nubes, non pabula flammis, / sed ne Thessalico purus luceret in orbe* ("Rising from the ocean more sluggishly than eternal law summoned him, the sorrowing sun god drove his horses harder than ever against the revolution of the sky and turned his course backwards although the heavenly rotation impelled it on; he wished to suffer eclipse and the pain of eclipse and he drew his clouds to him, not to feed his flames but so that he would not shine undimmed in the region of Thessaly").

28. Thanks to Professor G. O. Hutchinson and the two anonymous referees for their helpful criticisms and comments.