The Father's Tragedy: Assessing Paternity in Statius, *Silvae* 2.1

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The Father's Tragedy: Assessing Paternity in Statius, *Silvae* 2.1

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SUMMARY: *Silvae* 2.1 mourns Glaucias, *libertus*-foster child of Atedius Melior. Statius's allusions to Vergil's *Aeneid* examine fatherhood as a model for understanding other hierarchical relationships. Statius probes Vergil's implied justification of Augustus's rule as *patria potestas* via the princeps' mythical descent from Rome's founding father, Aeneas. Writing under Domitian—no Julio-Claudian—Statius scrutinizes an imperial authority still conceptualized as patriarchy. By substituting a freed slave-child, a bereaved old man and possibly an assassin's victim for Vergil's heroic vessels of Rome's future, Aeneas and Anchises, *Silvae* 2.1 traces how the *Aeneid*'s logic of patrilineal superiority infantilizes and imperils even élite imperial subjects.

KEYWORDS: Statius, *Silvae*, Glaucias, Atedius Melior, fatherhood, *patria potestas*

STATIUS'S *SILVAE* ARE REGULARLY CHARACTERIZED AS POEMS THAT CELEBRATE the joys, and console the sorrows, of private life. The domestic sphere of Statius's wealthy, élite patrons appears in his poetry as a safe realm in which to pursue family intimacy, affording delights preferable to the uncertainty of Rome's public, political life under Domitian.[1] At first glance, therefore, these occasional poems contrast strongly with the fraught arenas of post-Augustan epic and tragedy, where family is a game of hazard: fathers weak, tyrannical, or vindictive; mothers grieving and embittered;[2] sons at each other's throats; daughters with divided loyalties.[3] Yet in the *Silvae*, too, fatherhood does not

[1] Myers 2000; Nauta 2002: 308–23; Newlands 2002, 2011 (e.g., 8–9).

[2] Literary familyhood in Flavian literature: Bernstein 2008; Manioti 2016.

[3] Recent scholarly attention has focused provocatively on epic and tragic motherhood, as a trope simultaneously disruptive of institutional boundaries, and impossibly utopian (Augoustakis 2010; Petersen and Salzman-Mitchell 2012; McAuley 2016).

fare well. Statius's domesticity is oddly marred by a shortage of viable *patres-familias*. True, given the number of mourning odes in the collection, some would naturally be devoted to dead fathers (*Silv.* 3.3, 5.3). But actuarial tables cannot explain the number of fathers absent (*Silv.* 3.5, 4.7), exiled and politically disgraced (*Silv.* 3.3), or lethally poor judges of human character (*Silv.* 5.2).

Two poems in the *Silvae* seem to offer an alternative to the hazards of biological fatherhood. The subjects of *Silvae* 2.1 and 5.5 are foster children. *Silvae* 2.1 explicitly proclaims the advantages of fosterage over procreation—of offspring chosen rather than created blindly. Both poems champion the paternal bond possible in fostering, and vehemently defend the foster-father as a true father, no less than the child's biological parents. Moreover, the foster-fathers in these two poems are loving, attentive, and present to their chosen infant boys (freed from among their household slaves). One is Atedius Melior, the other Statius himself. Yet more starkly than elsewhere in the *Silvae*, both poems articulate paternity as a chapter of accidents, even for these fathers of convention rather than flesh. Because each poem records the premature, inexplicable loss of a foster son to death, they raise the stakes on the *Silvae*'s pattern of failed parentage. In these two poems, fatherhood has not just gone awry, but perished entirely. Yet the theme of fosterage—a parenthood entirely socially constructed rather than rooted in biology—throws into relief the ideological significance of fatherhood as an institution. This affords scope for a theme significant to many of the *Silvae*, but to *Silvae* 2.1, in particular: examining parentage as a model for understanding other relationships of hierarchy and power (including defective parentage).

In this essay, I concentrate on *Silvae* 2.1 for several reasons. Although *Silvae* 5.5 is for Statius's own freedman-foster son, *Silvae* 2.1 is by far the longer and more fully articulated lament for a fosterling. *Silvae* 5.5 ends abruptly, suggesting it was either left unfinished or truncated by the vagaries of the manuscript tradition. Like the rest of the poems in the fifth book of the *Silvae*, it seems to have been collected posthumously.[4] An unfinished poem within a volume

[4] *Silvae* 5's prose opening addresses only the first poem in the book, as though the book's assembler had substituted a stray letter to Statius's patron Abascantus for the missing preface. Statius's prefaces to the other four books carefully articulate the order of each poem to follow, thus guarding against incompetent copying or unauthorized publication that would disturb selection or sequence. By contrast, the terse letter fronting *Silvae* 5 allows us to glean nothing reliable from the order of the book's poems, nor to infer any meaningful dialogue among them. On the thematic and structural significance of the *Silvae*'s prose prefaces: Johannsen 2006; Newlands 2002: 32–36; Newlands 2009a. On the arguments for and against posthumous publication of *Silvae* 5, with bibliography: Gibson 2006: xxviii–xxx.

lacking the poet's *ultima manus* is at best a compromised witness to Statius's fullest reflections on parentage.

Silvae 2.1, on the other hand, is a polished poem cannily positioned within *Silvae* 2. This introductory poem overlaps thematically with several others in *Silvae* 2—laments for favorites, and poems addressed to Melior—but as Carole Newlands (2006a) has shown, 2.1 gains particular resonance from "bookending." It opens a collection closed by *Silvae* 2.7, which laments the dead poet Lucan while celebrating the anniversary of his birth. Both poems share the themes of fosterage, poetic succession and revising cultural memory. I shall show that the initial bookend, *Silvae* 2.1, also uses its concentration on fosterage and contested historical memory to address Vergil as literary father and the *Aeneid* as cultural patrimony. Specifically, the epicedion probes how the epic's imperial paternalism reflects the evolving understanding of the *princeps*'s unprecedented relationship to the state. Augustus drew heavily upon the model of dominance vested in the Roman *paterfamilias* to rule Rome as its *Übervater*, the One whose authority prevailed over all others (including other *patresfamilias*).[5] All other fathers pale in comparison with the emperor[6]—effectively, the emperor is the only real father.[7] *Silvae* 2.1 articulates the cultural context that continued to make fatherhood precarious under Domitian, both for an heirless emperor striving to assert himself as his divine father's successor, and for the seemingly privileged class that comprised Statius's patrons. Asking, "Why are fathers under siege in the *Silvae*?" means first addressing more fundamental questions that the theme of fosterage in 2.1 raises. Who really *is* a father—what properly grounds that title? And what is *patria potestas*—what power does fatherhood justify, and over whom?

CONFOUNDING FATHERS

The *Silvae* punctually laud the art, architecture and gardens of Statius's clients as material earnests of domestic lives distinguished by virtue and refinement.

[5] For example, Augustus's marriage legislation undercut the *paterfamilias*'s power either freely to choose his children's spouses, or to prevent their marrying. See Severy 2003: 55–56, 158–86.

[6] A role ratified by his accepting the title *pater patriae* from the Senate in 2 B.C.E. The more common honorific in the Republic was *parens patriae*. Trading *parens* for *pater* underscored not only Augustus's fatherly relation to the state, but the heritability of that role. The year he took the title, Augustus's adopted son and heir Lucius came of age, emphasizing the coincidence between Augustus's familial and state roles: Rome had virtually become part of Augustus's family, and vice versa. See Severy 2003: 158–86, on the title's evolution.

[7] Raditsa 1980: 320–21.

But Melior's loss of his foster son Glaucias caps an oddly dissonant pattern of heads-of-household *manqués* that pierces such bliss:

—*Silvae* 3.5 records Statius's ever more desperate pleading with his wife Claudia to stop seeking marriage for her daughter in Rome, and retire with him to Naples. We never hear the reply of the woman he describes as having broken him like a horse (26–28); we never know whether he prevails, to be *paterfamilias* in residence for daughter and wife.[8]

—*Silvae* 3.3 lauds Claudius Etruscus's father, but notes the old man fell afoul of Domitian and was temporarily exiled; his son accompanied him into exile, and his father's misfortunes seem to have obviated the son's court career.[9]

—*Silvae* 4.7 is addressed to Vibius Maximus, who nearly missed fatherhood altogether while pursuing a military career in distant places (33–48).

—*Silvae* 5.2 addresses Bolanus's son Crispinus, the object of attempted murder his father may unwittingly have abetted. Vettius Bolanus chose for his wife a woman who, after her husband's death, tried to murder their youngest son (*Silv.* 5.2.77–97). Her husband's will might have given her a motive, by making her eligible to inherit Crispinus's patrimony upon the boy's death; certainly, Bolanus made the deed all the easier by improvidently leaving Crispinus without a guardian (*sine praeside*, 5.2.65).[10]

[8] Statius and his wife divide over where he can best fulfill a singular paternal duty: finding his stepdaughter a worthy spouse. Statius's *suasoria* does not explicitly concede Rome's status as peerless; nonetheless, its phrasing and imagery evoke the contrast between geographic margin and center rehearsed both in Homer's *Odyssey* and Ovid's exile poetry. Naples splits husband and wife, rather than (re)uniting them—unlike Homer's Ithaca, like Ovid's Scythia. The poem effectively silences Statius's wife Claudia, speaking *for* her consent to leave Rome in future-tense verbs that amount to indirect commands. "This is no transcription of a marriage, but rather the mobilization of a power-relation: husbandry" (Henderson 2007: 262). But detecting the *Ars Amatoria* as another intertext, Federica Bessone reads more positively: Statius rewrites Ovid's Roman *nequitiae* as Neapolitan *virtus*. See Bessone 2019: 143.

[9] Domitian exiled Claudius's father for some 7 or 8 years (Weaver 1965: 150; Carradice 1979: 103). Martial's poem on the subject establishes that Claudius Etruscus accompanied his father into exile and led him back (Mar. 6.83). Directly addressing Domitian towards the end of the epicedion, Statius says he "did not delay long" in recalling the father (*Silv.* 3.3.164). But framed as a flattering apostrophe to the emperor, this statement baffles any purely denotative construction of its content (Miller 2004: 228). Whether viewed as short or long, the exile was not trivial for Claudius Etruscus: his father's exile either persuaded him not to follow a public life, or forced him not to do so by stopping his advancement (Nauta 2002: 233).

[10] Peter White speculates that Bolanus might have made his wife *substitutus pupillaris*, the party who would inherit if her *impubes* son died before attaining the *toga virilis*,

These households are damaged, but *Silvae* 2.1 depicts Melior's house as perished with Glaucias himself. The death of Melior's fosterling renders the old man's wealth hateful (162–64):

> … cupit omnia ferre
> prodigus et *totos* Melior succendere *census*,
> *desertas exosus opes*[11]
>
> Reckless, he wants to offer *all* his possessions and to burn *his whole fortune; he despises his wealth left forlorn.*[12]

As Noelle Zeiner observes, only here does the *Silvae* characterize wealth negatively.[13] The dead child constitutes, not part of the *domus,* but the whole, insofar as he subsumes its entire value.

Dire as that loss is, the intertextual relation between *Silvae* 2.1 and 2.7 suggests that even more is at stake in conceptualizing paternity than Melior's bond to his lost child. The birthday ode to Lucan traces a parallel theme of parentage baffled—but also contested, and finally redeemed. Statius depicts Lucan as the epic Muse Calliope's prematurely dead fosterling. She takes him in charge from birth just as Melior does Glaucias. She, too, raises the infant from the ground and claims him as her own. But as Newlands points out, Statius's genethliacon itself negates Calliope's gloomy prediction that the official imperial account of Nero's victim will prevail undisputed, and Lucan's *Bellum Civile* will be silenced. Rather, *Silvae* 2.7's praise for Lucan's brilliance rewrites the Neronian propaganda that branded the poet merely a traitor.[14] Moreover, by praising the *Bellum Civile* as surpassing even Vergil's *Aeneid*, Statius's poem reconfigures poetic paternity—the anxious relationship between literary son Lucan and *the* poetic father Vergil, whose authority threatens to silence all his aspiring heirs.[15] By championing the *Bellum Civile*, an account of Rome's history that radically challenged Vergil's own, *Silvae* 2.7 reassesses the poetic and historical patrimony at stake. Statius's birthday ode tells Rome how to (re) value Lucan's legacy, drawing Statius himself into this line of poetic paternity and filiality. Newlands analyzes *adoret*, which has the "last word" in the account of *Silvae* 2.7, and of *Silvae* 2 as a whole (*Silv.* 2.7.134–35):

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when he could legally inherit (White 1973: 283–84). On Crispinus and the general topic of neglectful fathers, see Bernstein 2007: 184–85 and Bernstein 2009.

[11] My text for the *Silvae* is Courtney 1990.

[12] Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

[13] Zeiner 2005: 126.

[14] Newlands 2006a: 68–69.

[15] Quint 1993: 132–35.

> dolorque festus,
> quicquid fleverat ante, nunc *adoret*
>
> let sorrow, now joyful, *worship* everything it had previously bewailed.
>
> vive, precor; nec tu divinam Aeneida tempta,
> sed longe sequere et vestigia semper *adora* (*Theb.* 12.816–17).
>
> Live, I pray; and challenge not the divine *Aeneid*,
> but ever follow its footsteps at a distance in *worship*.

Silvae 2.7's *adoret* commands that the object of the poem's lament, Lucan's death and the posthumous vilification of his life and work, be now transformed into joyous worship of his remembrance. But it is Statius's poetry specifically that has redeemed Lucan's memory. The birthday-poem's artistic *tour de force* revalues the *Thebaid*'s bidden obeisance to Vergil's masterwork. *Silvae* 2.7 implicitly reverses this humility by portraying Statius as a *vates* superior even to the Muse he and Vergil both share. Statius surpasses Calliope not only in predicting Lucan's now-glorious poetic future, but in making that future happen. The genethliacon indicates Statius as the posthumous redeemer of Vergil's greatest epic challenger and heir—thus another worthy, if not superior, successor and "son" to Vergil.[16]

A similar theme of critical scrutiny and ultimate revision of a hierarchy modelled on parentage runs through *Silvae* 2.1, scaffolded by intertextual resonances with Vergil's *Aeneid*. The imperial power that could compel Lucan's suicide mirrored the *paterfamilias*'s absolute power of life and death over his children. The loyalty oaths Augustus and many subsequent emperors employed spell out an exchange of individual family authority and loyalties for one overarching bond to the *princeps*, requiring he and his family come before all other considerations, including the oathtaker's own children.[17] One "voice"

[16] For a dialogue between the filial relationship to the *Aeneid* sketched at the conclusion of the *Thebaid* and of *Silvae* 4.4, see Newlands 2009b: 399–400. Studies of the intertextual relationship between the *Thebaid* and the *Aeneid* abound; Rebeggiani 2018 usefully surveys previous discussion and bibliography.

[17] For example, the oath of the Paphlagonians to Augustus in 3 B.C.E. (cf. Brunt and Moore 1967: 67–68). When Augustus died, Tiberius exacted from the Italians the same oaths Augustus had established (Cass. Dio 57.3.2). He may have specifically copied Augustus's attention to demanding that the emperor come before kin. Certainly, Caligula did (*ILS* 190, 5–11), and was perhaps not the last emperor to do so. On imperial loyalty oaths and their precedents, see Premerstein 1937: 26–85; Syme 1939: 284–92; Herrmann 1968.

of the *Aeneid* powerfully constructs mythohistorical support for this model of monarchy by retrospectively projecting stringent paternalism onto the mythic origins of Roman ruler and state, idealizing and geneticizing it. The sacrifices of the Aeneadae to the collective mission are matched by "goddess-born" Aeneas's superhumanity, moral as well as physical. The *divae filius* repeatedly sacrifices personal desires to collective good, as when he relinquishes Dido in favor of his son's and homeless Trojans's future Italian kingdom. His self-abnegation represents the paradigmatic leader as a corporate singularity and paragon progenitor. His identity derives from protecting the collectivity that will be Rome, as a Roman father's derives from protecting his family.[18] But the logic of kinship also underpins the criteria for post-Republican sovereignty—for who can best emulate Aeneas's benefit to Rome in the wake of Rome's violent transformation from oligarchic republic to monarchal empire. The fiction of divinely-originated blood-paternity qualifies not only Augustus to wield a *paterfamilias*'s power over other, lesser, non-kin Romans, but also so empowers his Julio-Claudian heirs (through a largely affinal pseudo-consanguinity).

Unsurprisingly, the plot of Vergil's epic sweeps aside all rival genealogies in favor of one exceptional, divinely-originated bloodline: Ascanius and Aeneas as singular son and father, the proto-Julians, before whom other father-son pairs must yield.[19] But Statius's debilitated fathers are this coin's reverse, reflecting a derogating strand of imperial ideology stretching back to Augustus. The emperors's ever-expanding *auctoritas*, *maiestas*, and *divinitas* dictated a correspondingly circumscribed subjectivity for everyone else, reducing Romans to nonage.

[18] The *domus* of the *paterfamilias* as co-extensive with his honor: Saller 1994: 71–153, esp. 93.

[19] Jupiter's prophecy to Venus in *Aeneid* 1, and his interventions in *Aeneid* 4 goading Aeneas to resume his journey, imply that Ascanius will be progenitor of the Alban kings and thus the link to Rome's genealogical future (*Aen.* 1.267–74). However, Anchises' prophecy in *Aeneid* 6 introduces the complicating factor of Aeneas's Italian-born son, Silvius (6.763–66). Eventually, the poem sketches the division of historic labor as between Ascanius's founding the city of Alba Longa and Silvius's fathering the Alban kings. Still, when Augustus takes control of Rome, he claims descent from Ascanius, not Silvius. Vergil implicitly frames the Julio-Claudians' ascent to power as the point in history at which Jupiter's *Aeneid* 1 prophecy finally finds its fulfillment.

O'Hara 1990 and 2007 discusses and interprets the mythical dichotomy regarding the contribution of Aeneas's two sons to Rome's history: "the mythical problem is a conflict between a Trojan son of Aeneas and an Italian son, which is a kind of dispute central to the poem" (O'Hara 2007: 89). The *Aeneid* richly engages the fundamental tension between competing conceits of Roman roots as Trojan (foreign, Eastern, possibly degenerate, but also culturally advanced) or Italian (robust, disciplined, but unrefined). See Reed 2007, esp. 1–15.

This familial conceptualization of power should logically have come to an end with the demise of the last Julio-Claudian, Nero. Instead, the Flavian emperors (Vespasian and his sons Titus and Domitian) constructed a new mythic narrative to link the imperial monopoly of power to their bloodline, mythic superhumanity, and fatherly beneficence to Roman subjects. Anecdotes circulated attributing divine powers to all three. In Egypt, just before Vitellius's defeat and his own accession to power, Vespasian as the New Serapis[20] receives a divine vision in the Serapeum symbolizing his investiture as emperor; he also miraculously heals a blind man and a cripple. Commanding troops against the first Jewish Revolt, Titus wondrously finds water his enemies cannot;[21] when fighting the Roman plague of 80, he seems to emulate his father's self-styling as Egypt's healing god.[22] The Pamphilj obelisk explicitly claims divine birth for Domitian, who himself proclaims his living godhead as *dominus et deus* ("slave-master and god"),[23] and underlines his family's posthumous divinity by erecting the *Templum Gentis Flaviae* on the Quirinal. These gestures extend the claims of divine powers, favor and status for Domitian's father and brother to his own deity, blood, and sovereign entitlement.[24] His godhead, too, appears as paternal care for his subjects: Statius often links Domitian's non-pareil status to his being "*parens*" and "*pater*" to Rome and Italy, which he protects, adorns, entertains.[25]

[20] *P.Fouad* 8; Nock 1957, 118n28; Henrichs 1968, 59n24; Montevecchi 1981.

[21] Joseph. *BJ* 5.409–11.

[22] Tacitus describes as *ops humana* what Vespasian's restorative miracles had surpassed (Tac. *Hist.* 4.81). Suetonius's account of Titus's opposition to the epidemic mentions Titus's use of both *ops humana* and *ops divina* (Suet. 8.4). Trevor Luke argues convincingly that Suetonius's wording hints at Titus's emulation of his father's curative divinity (Luke 2010: 85).

[23] Suet. *Dom.* 13; Dio Cass. 67.13.4; Dio Chrys. 45.1; Martial 5.8.1. Scholars debate whether the literary reports of Domitian's insistence on this title are accurate (Jones 1992: 108–9, and Parker 2001: 209–17 review the evidence and previous discussion). However, the assertion was at least believable enough to ancient audiences to have been disseminated uncritically.

[24] Newlands 2002: 12–13; the obelisks' hieroglyphs: Grénier 1987; Darwall-Smith 1996: 45–50.

[25] Domitian is called *parens Latius* (*Silv.* 1.2.178) in the context of his celebrating a triumph over the Daciae, *Romanus parens* (4.3.108) when Statius predicts Eastern imperial triumphs-to-be. Domitian is *Latiae pater inclitus urbis* (1.4.95) staging the *Ludi Saeculares, pater inclitus orbis* (3.4.48) embellishing Rome with monumental architecture. He is *magne parens mundi* (4.2.132) and *orbis subacti magnus parens* (4.2.14–15) when he hosts a magnificent *cena publica.*

This history of divine patrilinearity and empire may seem far removed from an epicedion on a humble freedman-fosterling. Yet Philip Hardie has analyzed antiquity's tendency to depict the poetic tradition as a parallel dynastic family affair, whereby worthy, divinely-inspired poet-"sons" accede to the godlike poet-"father's" place.[26] Vergil greatly sharpened that august heredital element such that it mirrored imperial succession. His intertextual references to Ennius, Lucretius, and others construct his relation to his predecessors as a sometimes smooth, sometimes violent transmission of authority—a tradition the subsequent Latin poets also adopted. Within this line of fraught investitures, Statius's poetry in general, and *Silvae* 2.1 in particular, sketch the poet as respectful but skeptical heir to Vergil, willing to raise his voice and contest what his poetic father conceived as the logical basis of authority.

The *Silvae* consistently, but subtly, displays that willingness to contest authority, as the collection takes account of different audiences simultaneously—not just Statius's named addressees, but the poet's other patrons, the emperor, and ultimately the wider circles in which the published poems will circulate. Assessing only the *Silvae*'s named addressees shows that all are wealthy, yet of widely divergent social milieu and ambitions. They comprise political careerists, imperial courtiers, and private citizens in quiet retirement; élite freeborn and freedmen; Romans, Greeks, and other natives of the wider empire. Each of these would have a different relation to imperial culture, literary tradition, and the complexities of Flavian society under monocracy. Statius's *Silvae* regularly turns to account the divergence between the interests and ideologies of his named addressees, his other literary patrons, and the emperor. To each the *Silvae* offers a different mirror, not always soothing or flattering: the poems often mix protreptic with panegyric.[27] It should therefore not surprise us when *Silvae* 2.1's intertextual references to the *Aeneid* fold interrogation, anxiety and admonition into condolence and homage. The epicedion's intertexts pointedly engage the paternal logic behind who rules Rome, how it is ruled, and its consequences for everyone else. That everyone *but* the emperor can only, like Melior, play at being fathers expands the scope of the loss the poem grieves, and complicates its nature.[28]

[26] Hardie 1993: 88–119, esp. 116–19.

[27] Newlands 2002: 18–27; Busch 2013–14: 64–66.

[28] *Silvae* 2.1's intertextuality with the *Aeneid* traces an implicit critique of imperial power, raising an obvious question: would not such criticism risk the emperor's wrath? Yet Statius unblenchingly reproaches "*saevum ingratumque Iovem*" when defeated at the Capitoline games (3.5.32–3); Garthwaite 1989 cogently argues that Domitian is this "Jove."

Echoes of the *Aeneid* regularly punctuate *Silvae* 2.1, but cluster most thickly toward the epicedion's concluding *consolatio*, which offers a key interpretive frame for the whole poem. Statius's description of Glaucias's imagined enrollment among the dead evokes an epic interpretive context by deploying elevated style and the imagery of divine intervention.[29] The passage specifically recalls the most famous father-son encounter in Latin epic. As David Vessey has shown, *Silvae* 2.1.183–207 reproduce the imagery, themes and wording of Aeneas's Underworld journey in *Aeneid* 6 to see his dead father Anchises.[30] His sensitive reading of the epicedion elucidates how its intertextuality intensifies the poignancy and gravity of Melior's personal loss (by, e.g., representing Glaucias as an *alter*-Marcellus, Augustus's prematurely-dead son-in-law). However, the political dimension the Vergilian resonances bring to Statius's poem also merits examination. In the Underworld, Vergil's Anchises unveils to Aeneas not just the *lacrimae rerum* of mortality, but the future of his paternity as the seed of empire. The old man reveals both Aeneas's coming line of kingly Julian blood-descendants and the Romans to whom Rome's founder will be "*pater Aeneas*." Anchises' tableau of Rome's future ruled by his Julian descendants justifies the dynasty's dominion by foregrounding their divine descent from Venus. Their bloodline's apogee is the *divi filius* Augustus—son of the divinized Julius Caesar, favorite of the gods, locus of signs and wonders declaring him all but unconquerable. Yet Anchises compares Augustus to Hercules, a semi-divine hero whose famous Labors bring him little personal reward while he civilizes the world by eliminating its monstrosities (*Aen.* 6.801–3). Augustus's singular power is ideally paternal: beneficial to others, indifferent to his own interests.

Silvae 2.1 reproduces the *Aeneid*'s Underworld father-son encounter from the perspective of the ruled rather than the rulers, transmuting Vergil's genetic apologia for imperial power into that power's interrogation. Statius's pilgrim to Hades is a boy of servile status, meeting a man whom an emperor might have assassinated. Melior's beloved friend Blaesus, who welcomes Glaucias to the Underworld (*Silv.* 2.1.191–207), may well be the Junius Blaesus murdered by the eight-month emperor Vitellius.[31] Certainly, Statius's admiring description and chronology of Blaesus's life accord with Tacitus's portrait of a man

The oblique animadversions of *Silvae* 2.1 seem even less of a risk. On Statius's relationship to the *Aeneid* in the context of imperial politics, see Ganiban 2007: 1–23; McNelis: 1–24; Gervais Forthcoming 2022.

[29] Cf. Newlands 2011: 110.

[30] Vessey 1986.

[31] Hardie 1983: 66–67; Nauta 2002: 314–15; Newlands 2011: 111.

whose rank, wealth, and generosity inspired the emperor's paranoiac jealousy (Tac. *Hist.* 3.38–39). *Silvae* 2.1 substitutes a freed slave-child and possibly an assassin's victim for the *Aeneid*'s heroic vessels of Rome's future, Aeneas and Anchises, thus adumbrating how Vergil's logic of patrilineal superiority infantilizes and menaces imperial subjects—even the élite class comprising Statius's patrons.

THE BOY'S TRAGEDY

Silvae 2.1 opens with a blended *laudatio* and *lamentatio*, in which—against the logic of "true" parentage being based on bloodline—Statius champions fosterage as equal to natural reproduction, if not surpassing it. He depicts the quotidian details of Melior's devotion to his charge, which Neil Bernstein has shown construct Melior and Glaucias as loving "father" and "son."[32] Melior welcomes Glaucias at birth like a father (*Silv.* 2.1.78–81):

> raptum sed protinus alvo
> sustulit exsultans ac prima lucida voce
> astra salutantem dominus sibi mente dicauit,
> amplexusque sinu tulit et genuisse putauit.
>
> As soon as you [Glaucias] were snatched from the womb and saluted the bright stars with your first cry, the exultant master raised you up and in his mind he sealed you for his own and grappled you to his breast and credited himself with having engendered you.

Melior's hoisting the child (*sustulit*, 79) may reproduce the gesture by which Roman fathers claimed their freeborn children as their own.[33] Certainly as Glaucias grows up, Melior clothes and educates him like any freeborn son. He outfits the boy in form-fitted, costly purple garments and fine jewels (*Silv.* 2.1.126–36); for a rapidly-growing child, close tailoring means renewing his wardrobe repeatedly at great expense.[34] He schools him in arts typical of free-born élite boys' education (e.g., wrestling, Greek literature, *Silv.* 2.1.110–19). He plays with him affectionately and mourns him more extravagantly than the boy's biological parents (*Silv.* 2.1.23–25,173–74).[35] Statius raises Melior's

[32] Bernstein 2005: 258–60.

[33] Whether any Roman ceremony formally acknowledged legitimacy with the father's lofting the child is debated. Evidence in favor of the ceremony's reality: Santoro 2000; against: Shaw 2001.

[34] Van Dam 1984: 131.

[35] Melior's profusion of grief also exceeds the bounds of self-control central to "proper" Roman masculinity, as Newlands notes (Newlands 2012: 118–20).

paternal affection for the boy into a general principle, praising foster parents' devotion to their chosen charges, virtues that appear to privilege this category of fatherhood.[36] Melior even shines alongside the honor-roll of ideally-devoted parental surrogates Statius lists. These illustrate that fosterage can surpass a biological bond: Chiron, Acoetes, Phoenix, Ino and Acca all overshadow their natural counterparts in devotion to their charges.

Certainly, Melior eclipses the steadfastness of other historical fathers sketched elsewhere in the *Silvae*. A solicitous, at-hand parent, his distance from the vagaries of the political world allow him to remain so. Neither poet, courtier nor soldier, he is unlikely to have to remove because of the emperor's disdain (like Statius, returning to Naples after losing Domitian's Capitoline poetry-contest, *Silv*. 3.5), his outright disfavor (which banished Claudius Etruscus's father, *Silv*. 3.3), or his farflung military ambitions (like Vibius or Bolanus, *Silv*. 3.7, 5.2).

Yet alongside the vignettes of Melior's treating Glaucias like any beloved *liber*, there are particulars of their domesticity that perplex any simple construction of this foster relationship. These details draw Statius's portrait of Melior and Glaucias closer to the problematic vignettes of fatherhood that dot the *Silvae*. The details of *Silvae* 2.1 apparently console Melior and praise Glaucias, but they also register anxiety about their relationship, probing the larger problems of imperial paternity, their causes and consequences. Let us turn to these instructive dissonances.

Bernstein notes that Statius's intense concentration on Glaucias's beauty and luxurious adornment constructs the boy not just as cherished son, but as luxury display-object.[37] Moreover, a number of scholars have also argued that the poem depicts Glaucias in terms appropriate to a sexual object, shading the daily interactions between Melior and Glaucias with eroticism.[38] Statius describes Glaucias's fair complexion, starry eyes (*Silv*. 2.1.41–42), fragrant breath (46)—the standard features of a *puella* ("mistress, girlfriend") from

[36] Bernstein 2005. See also Newlands 2006a, 65–67.

[37] Bernstein 2005, 272.

[38] E.g., Van Dam 1984: 72–73; Vessey 1986: 2770; La Penna 1996, *passim*; Asso 2010; Laes 2010: 252–54; Laes 2011: 223–30; Busch 2013–14. Even readings of the relationship as purely paternal-filial recognize the poem's erotic imagery and literary tropes but explain them away (e.g., Newlands 2006a: 64–67; Newlands 2011: 82, *ad* 2.1.60–61). Statius's verses carefully modulate—and never resolve—a tension between construing Glaucias as servile *eromenos* and free *filius*. That tension, as I argue, reflects the ambiguous status of the emperor's subjects: are they to be objects of his coercive power exercized as solicitous father, or as despotic master?

Roman elegy or comedy.[39] The boy playfully steals wine from Melior's cup;[40] he wakes Melior up in his bed in the morning; like a clingy *puella*, Glaucias detains Melior as he tries to leave the house, and calls him back for more kisses.[41] Glaucias seems both Melior's fosterling, and his boy-paramour (*delicatus*). Though funerary inscriptions testify to the fact that at least some Romans treated *delicati* with filial affection,[42] being a *delicatus* would nonetheless underline the social gap between Glaucias and the older man by emphasizing Glaucias's status as a *libertus*[43] ("freed slave") rather than a *liber* ("freeborn child"). Sexual relations with freeborn Roman boys were both frowned upon, and specifically forbidden by law,[44] while the body of this emancipated "son" is shaded as potentially open and penetrable, vulnerable to the will of a master in a way that even the wide scope of *patria potestas* did not allow. Glaucias's

[39] Paolo Asso (Asso 2010: 664, 669–72) amply documents and discusses the elegiac intertexts that make a pale complexion's flush and eyes like stars marks of beauty—e.g., Ov. *Am.* 3.3.5–6 and Prop. 2.3.14 (blush); Ov. *Am.* 2.16.44, 3.3.9 (eyes like stars). He also mentions fragrant breath, but does not note similar erotic intertexts in Plautus and Ovid. Plautus's Demaenetus woos his son's mistress by praising her sweet breath (Plaut. *Asin.*, 893–95) while Ovid cautions women to keep their distance from a man when their breath is fetid (*Ars am.* 3.277–78). My thanks to Sharon James for bringing my attention to the passages on breath and sexual attraction.

[40] Just as Ovid instructs lovers (including his own girlfriend) to contrive at a dinner party to drink from the same spot on the loving-cup (Ov. *Am.* 1.4.31–34, *Ars am.* 1.575–78).

[41] *Puella* distraught over her lover's leaving or absence: Tib. 1.3.13–14; Prop. 1.15.40 (cf. also 1.15.10, Calypso weeping for Odysseus's departure), 3.20.4.

[42] E.g., *AE* 1929, 106:

> D(is) M(anibus)/ Diadumeno/ alumno ver/nae delicato/ suo ann(orum) XVI/ Felicionis lib(erti)/ sui filio/ M(arcus) Ulpius Van/nius |(centurio) leg(ionis) VIII/ Aug(ustae) patronus fec(it)/ h(oc) m(onumentum) h(eredem) n(on) s(equetur)
>
> For the soul of Diadumenos—fosterling, homeborn slave, his own darling, [aged] 16 years, the son of his own freedman Felicio, Marcus Ulpius Vannius, centurion of the Eighth Augustan Legion, [Diadumenos's] protector, has made this [funerary] monument. It will not fall to his heir.

Other inscriptions memorialize children too young to have been sexual partners, but they do at least indicate that the notions of "fosterling" (*alumnus/a*) and "darling, favorite" (*delicatus/a*) could both be accorded the same child without perceived dissonance, contradiction, or opprobrium (e.g., *CIL* 06, 38972; *AE* 1957, 0217). Many thanks to Marilyn Skinner for her generous help with locating and interpreting these inscriptions.

[43] Melior had freed his parents (*Silv.* 2.1.77–78) and Martial confirms that Glaucias was also a *libertus*: *libertus Melioris ille notus* (Mart. 6.28.1); *libertus iam Melioris erat* (Mart. 6.29.4).

[44] On Roman attitudes towards paederasty, including who was and was not a legitimate object of such desire, see Williams 2010: 103–36.

ambiguous status, the way his portrait vacillates between the attributes of a freeborn Roman boy and those of a catamite, throws the shadow of slavery onto a category of Romans ostensibly free. The class of élite males to which Melior's treatment of Glaucias seems at times to assign the boy also includes the adults into which *liberi* mature, such as Melior and his peers. Here and elsewhere in *Silvae* 2.1, Glaucias's equivocal portrait causes the reader to wonder whether Rome under its imperial *patres patriae* has annulled any meaningful distinction between servile and free, child and adult (especially under one believed to style himself his subjects' "slavemaster and god").

Eroticized paternality and its necessary concomitant, a filial body stained with servility and fragility, is one thematic perspective from which Statius's epicedion surveys relationships of power and hierarchy. This ambiguity sketched in Glaucias's daily life—son or *delicatus*? able to accede to Melior's place one day, or not?—sounds a *ritornello* elaborated more fully in the poem's tableaux of the boy's Underworld reception. The *lamentatio-laudatio*'s equivocal profile of his upbringing points to the ways the emperors' paternalism distorts the political space so as to put everyone at risk; the concluding *consolatio* makes clear that "everyone" includes the emperor. The full discussion of this last point I reserve for my detailed analysis of the poem's finale. For now, suffice it to say that the dialogue of Glaucias's Underworld with the *Aeneid*'s Underworld vision of Julian rule paradoxically reveals the empire's ultimate weak point to be the emperor. If his magnetism fails—if he cannot command his subjects' obedience or produce an heir adequate for their fealty—political instability renders *both* him *and* his subjects as vulnerable as this once charming, now dead, *libertus*.

Oddly, even where Statius's *laudatio* for Glaucias blurs the line between servility and nobility to elevate his object, the poet's praise evokes powerlessness and fragility. Lauding Melior's solicitousness of Glaucias by comparing the old man to mythic, heroically-devoted parental surrogates implicitly equates Glaucias with the youthful paragons these parental figures oversee (an equation for which Statius had paved the way by articulating Glaucias's virtues of self-restraint, erudition, and athletic prowess as claims to nobility of desert rather than birth[45]). Statius's series of princely youths deficiently parented but attentively fostered comprises Bacchus, Perseus, Achilles, Pallas, Remus, and Romulus (*Silv*. 2.1.88–100). Yet one or another ancient source assigns each a violent, premature death; only immortal Bacchus gains a second purchase on life after the Titans rend him.[46] No foster parent can save these wondrous

[45] *Silv*. 2.1.39–40, 111–25, 136; cf. Bernstein 2005: 266–68.

[46] A tradition preserved first in an Orphic theogony has Dionysus torn apart by the Titans (frr. 34, 35, 214 Kern; Hyg. *Fab.* 167; Diod. Sic. 3.62.6; see also West 1983, index

boys from the fatality that stalks them, anymore than Melior could save their comparandum, Glaucias.

The fates of Statius's *Heldenknabe* raise not just Glaucias's virtues and vulnerability to the level of a mythic pattern but also his foster father's ultimate inability to secure his life. They mirror inversely what Walter Burkert identified as "the girl's tragedy" of biological fatherly deficiency, "those sentimental stories about the mothers of important heroes" regularly abandoned by their babies' divine fathers and maltreated by their own human fathers.[47] The best intentions of the virtuous foster-fathers in Statius's mythemes cannot shape ends less dire than the cruelty of the villainous blood-fathers of Burkert's pattern. Such textual details in *Silvae* 2.1 undermine faith in *any* man's power to guide or guard youth, whether as biological or elective father, as master or seneschal. But it takes an abandoned woman and her thwarted motherhood to elaborate the causes, and consequences, of that debility in Rome.

THE RED BADGE OF CARTHAGE

Statius did not invent the "boys' tragedy": his *exempla virtutis* of dead, mythical fosterlings pointedly mirror the *Aeneid*'s series of beautiful, often eroticized youths who die prematurely to make room for Rome's future (e.g., Priam's son Polites, Mezentius's Lausus, Evander's Pallas). Yet the first lines of the mourning-poem's *consolatio* underline *Silvae* 2.1's relationship to the *Aeneid*'s dynastic concerns—both their justification and their costs—by referencing the eroticized parent of a child who never was: Dido. A graphic, intertextually resonant phrase describes the emotional blow Glaucias's death inflicted on Melior. Statius paints the "severed veins" and the "slippery path" of the old man's still-open wound (*Silv.* 2.1.1–4).

> Quod tibi praerepti, Melior, solamen alumni
> improbus ante rogos et adhuc vivente favilla
> ordiar? *abruptis etiam nunc flebile venis*
> vulnus hiat, magnaeque patet via lubrica plagae

s.v. "Dionysus—birth, death, rebirth"). Hyginus says Megapenthes murdered Perseus in revenge for Perseus's slaying of his father Proitos (*Fab.* 244). Either Apollo, Paris, or both working together kill Achilles at Troy (Verg. *Aen.* 6.56–58; Ov. *Met.* 12.598–606; Greek sources and evidence: Gantz 625–28). Vergil's Turnus cuts down the young Arcadian warrior Pallas on the battlefield (*Aen.* 10.479–509). Either Romulus or one of his men slays Remus as the first walls of Rome rise (Diod. Sic. 8.6; Dion. Hal. 1.87; Enn. *Ann.* 1.94–95 Sk; Ov. *Fast.* 4.837–48). One or another group of Roman citizens dismembers Romulus (Dion. Hal. 2.56; Plut. *Rom.* 27; Val. Max. 5.3.1), though another tradition explains his disappearance as apotheosis (Ogilvie 1965: 84–85).

[47] Burkert 1979: 6–7 and 147n19.

> Shall I (reckless) begin with consolation for you for your nursling suddenly snatched away, here before the funeral pyre and the still glowing sparks? *Even now, your pitiable wound gapes, the veins slashed,* and the slippery track of your great wound lies open.

Harm-Jan Van Dam points to Lucan's narrative of the sea battle between Massilia and Caesarian forces as the principal intertext: *scinditur auolsus, nec, sicut uolnere, sanguis/ emicuit lentus: ruptis cadit undique uenis* records the grisly sundering of a Massilian sailor's body (Luc. *BC* 3.638–39). This intertext depicts Melior's being as good as dead and anticipates the old man's attempted suicide at the funeral pyre (*Silv.* 2.1.24–25).[48] But, as Vessey notes, Statius reaches even farther back, to Vergil, the poet who shaped the understanding of imperial power with which Lucan's and Statius's grisly images both wrestle. Vessey points to a passage from the *Aeneid*'s Carthaginian narrative: Statius's juxtaposing *vulnus* with *venis* echoes the emotional wound Dido's love for Aeneas inflicts on her (*Aen.* 4.2).[49]

> At regina gravi iamdudum saucia cura
> *vulnus* alit *venis* et caeco carpitur igni.
>
> But the queen, long wounded by her burdensome passion, nurses *the hurt deep in her blood* and feeds on blind passion.

As woman, Carthaginian, and sovereign, Dido seems an even odder comparandum than a Greek combatant-sailor to male, Roman, private citizen Melior. Yet the queen raises the same questions about paternity that Statius's eroticized portrait of Melior and Glaucias provokes. Dido's love for Aeneas also eerily blends erotic and parental tenderness. This is evident where the grievous outcome of her love overlaps most with Melior's—the loss of a child's consolation—as her reproach to her departing lover makes clear (*Aen.* 4.327–30):

> "saltem si qua mihi de te suscepta fuisset
> ante fugam suboles, si quis mihi parvulus aula
> luderet Aeneas, qui te tamen ore referret,
> non equidem omnino capta ac deserta viderer."
>
> "at least if some scion were mine, had been gotten before your escape, if a dear little Aeneas were playing in my halls, whose face brought you back, I would not seem so completely bound over and abandoned."

[48] Van Dam 1984: 77.
[49] Vessey 1986: 2766.

The filial semblance to her lover Dido desires in the *parvulus Aeneas* already exists in Aeneas's Trojan son, Ascanius. Nonetheless, that seeming ratification of Aeneas's line continued through a legitimate marriage has been falsified by Ascanius's paternal uncle and divine *Doppelgänger*, Cupid. Urged by his mother Venus, the disguised Cupid takes Ascanius's place at Dido's feast welcoming Aeneas, and ensorcels the queen's heart with passion for his "pretend father" (*falsi…genitoris*, *Aen.* 1.716). Cupid's impersonation and its effects foreshadow Dido's wish to have the face of another such junior token reproduce her lover's ("*qui te tamen ore referret*," 4.329). These vignettes from the beginning and end of the affair nullify any attempt to distinguish the parental from the erotic in her love for the child-substitute.[50]

Both Dido and the eroticization of a child's body figure obliquely when *Silvae* 2.1 describes the lavish appointments of Glaucias's funeral. The Vergilian intertexts underline another implication of imperial genetic exceptionalism: the disposability of all other genealogical lines. Statius specifies that Melior's funeral appointments for Glaucias include heaping upon the pyre costly purple coverings (*purpureo tristis rogus aggere crevit*, *Silv.* 2.1.159) and adonizing "locks soon to burn" (*arsuram lavere comam*, *Silv.* 2.1.162). These images and phrases echo the funeral tableau of the *Aeneid*'s most fully portrayed and eroticized lost son: Pallas, entrusted by his father Evander to Aeneas's tutelage in the Latin war, but killed by Turnus. Vergil's description of Pallas's death and obsequy traces a pattern of verbal resonances that sketch the boy as a double for Dido, their beauty and their wounds mirroring each other's (as Michael Putnam has shown).[51] Aeneas's Carthaginian and Pallantian loves materially converge when Aeneas selects, from a pair of gold-embellished purple cloaks, one to wrap around Pallas's "locks soon to burn" (*arsuras comas obnubit amictu*, *Aen.* 11.75). These cloaks were the work of Dido's hands; since Pallas's cloak fits an adolescent's body, his must be the smaller of the two and have been meant for Ascanius. It matches the one Dido wove for Aeneas, which he is wearing when Mercury reminds him of Ascanius's expectations.[52] Aeneas's

[50] Oliensis 1997: 305; Hardie 2006: 26–27.

[51] Putnam 1985. Putnam has also traced an intertextual pattern in the *Thebaid* that reflects Vergil's merging of Dido and Pallas. Verbal and visual links between Vergil's Dido and Pallas, and the loveliness of Statius's doomed boy-warrior Parthenopaeus, transform the death of the beautiful from cause for revenge into unifying catalyst of communal mourning (Putnam 2016).

[52] The intended recipient of these cloaks has received different interpretations. Some see the cloaks as woven for Aeneas and for Dido, as matching royal robes (e.g., Reed 2007: 82). Others see the pair as I do, with one designated for Ascanius (cf. Fratantuono 2004: 862–63). Why otherwise would Aeneas have both, rather than Dido having kept hers?

wrapping the cloak about Pallas's body evokes the imagery and terminology of veiling a bride's hair (*obnubere*). These resonances shade Pallas as another erotic object, his funeral a placeholder for a wedding.

Moreover, Pallas's burning locks mirror other fiery tresses. Portentous fires on different occasions light, but do not scorch, Lavinia's and Ascanius's hair—the two who (unlike Pallas) can continue as Aeneas's intimates and anchors of a succession. The fairy fire illuminating Lavinia's locks marks her as Aeneas's bride-to-be who supplants both Dido and Pallas, offering him a kingdom and a Latin son. The similar *ignis fatuus* wreathing Ascanius's hair catalyzes his family's exit from the burning Troy where he and they would otherwise perish. Such heatless fire portends kingship: it legendarily wreathed the boyhood head of Servius Tullius, sixth king of Rome.[53] Lavinia will be the next queen, progenitor of the Alban kings to come, Ascanius the next proto-Roman King—and he is the one scion the *Aeneid* consistently excludes from any real danger, even in wartime. The combustion diverted from Aeneas's Latin bride and Trojan son onto Pallas is another detail that constructs the Arcadian as both Aeneas's *erōmenos* and his foster-son. His death—indirectly caused by Aeneas—matches the erasure of Dido and her would-be child (*parvulus… Aeneas*, *Aen.* 4.328–29), while substituting for Ascanius's death.[54]

The Vergilian intertext casts the shadow of the *Aeneid*, implicitly distinguishing *the* royal son to be preserved at all costs (Ascanius) from other people's scions, upon Melior's luxurious, and ambiguously tender, funeral appointments for Glaucias. The epic's eroticizing of other royal lines' legitimate, freeborn sons prior to their premature deaths blurs their distinction from servile *delicati*, and thus also mars their status as heirs. They miss being contenders for authority because they are short-lived, but the *delicatus*-imagery colors them as perhaps not quite as worth preserving as Ascanius-Iulus, boy-

But even reading the cloak as Dido's does not affect my argument: Glaucias's funeral arrangements would then reproduce the obsequies of another of the *Aeneid*'s child-sacrifices to its ktistic mission, insofar as Ascanius, the privileged heir, reifies that mission. Dido's despair encompasses the fact that she *and* her potential rival offspring had been discarded in favor of Ascanius (*Aen.* 4.327–30).

[53] Livy 1.39–41; see also Ogilvie 1965: 157–59.

[54] Evander sketches his youthful relationship to Aeneas's father Anchises as erotic. Evander's handing over Pallas's martial tutelage to Aeneas—along with the mission to defeat the tyrant Mezentius, Turnus's ally—could be seen as reproducing that relationship. But Evander says he entrusts his son to Aeneas because age prevents his going into battle himself; Aeneas steps into the paternal role a sturdier father would have fulfilled personally (*Aen.* 8.505–17). On the eroticism of both relationships, see Gillis 1983: 53–83; Putnam 1985; Lloyd 1999.

king and eponymous progenitor of the Julian line. Evoking Pallas in *Silvae* 2.1 narrows the gap between Glaucias as servile, eroticized, vulnerable and dead, and the nominally invested, inviolable, freeborn son(s) Melior might have had. Imperial power renders both Glaucias and the sons for whom he substitutes almost equally disposable.

Casting Melior as the childless Dido, Glaucias as the lost scion Pallas, speaks to the way Roman families' reproductive agency was not only subordinated to imperial interests, but often subject to contradictory forces. The principate's official party line—as evident in, say, the Julian marriage legislation—is to "increase and multiply," with particular attention to élite marriage and fecundity. Yet the emperors created parallel and opposite pressures that worked to ensure aristocratic fertility did not mean producing heirs to political power, lest anyone amass sway to rival the ruler's. Augustus's marriage legislation (for example) automatically extended membership in the senatorial order four generations; no direct agnate of a senator needed actually to participate in the Senate to preserve his status.[55] And despite Augustus's rhetoric about the duty to beget productive citizens for Rome, the Julian laws' emphasis on élite fertility perhaps also had in view the fragmentation of élite property. Splintering noble families' resources among many offspring would sap their capacity to challenge the emperors' power.[56] Further, Augustus and his successors cut off nobles' access to the citizens of Rome by replacing popular elections with elections in the Senate and restricting access to the more profitable public offices, which might have offset the costs of pursuing the *cursus honorum*. When worse came to worst, they made examples of those élite suspected of ambition by executing them (in the eyes of the victims' peers, often arbitrarily). The increased danger and cost of a senatorial career, and its decreased rewards, ensured that many nobles, *pére et fils*, opted out of a public career entirely.[57]

Some familial means to the same end—discouraging political rivals—shifted subtly under Domitian. Domitian did not revive Augustus's legislation encouraging marriage and fecundity when he resurrected the Julian law to which it was logically linked, on adultery (the *Lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis*). Perhaps élites were now best advised to be new Didos—childless *per ragione di stato*. Stanley Hoffer has argued that in some instances, being childless increased your chances of imperial patronage. Men without large independent

[55] Paul. (1 *ad legem Iuliam et Papiam*) D. 23.2.44. pr. See also McGinn 2008: 16–17.

[56] Wallace-Hadrill 1981. Tacitus sees the motive behind the legislation as enriching the state treasury with inheritances forfeited as in conflict with the law. The emperors then benefit whether the law achieves its stated ends, or not (*Ann.* 3.25; see Brunt 1971: 565–66).

[57] Hopkins 1983: 120–200, esp. 194–98.

networks of kindred were less apt to have divided loyalties. Moreover, if a senator with a son did entertain expectations of his son's becoming a senator himself, the fulfillment of those ambitions reduced the Senate seats the emperor could award his faithful followers in order to cement their faithfulness.[58] Once Vespasian's accession showed that anyone could become emperor, the question of loyalty became even more pressing. Certainly, his son Domitian's imperial iconography contrasts strongly with the Julian emphasis on fecundity (as Newlands has illustrated).[59] For instance, where the Ara Pacis shows women and children interspersed with priests, officials, male members of the imperial family, and abundant symbols of fertility, the Cancellaria reliefs foreground adult males. There are no children; the only females are virgin, divine, or both. A Vestal appears on Relief B, while the ever-maiden goddess Minerva, Domitian's patron deity, centers Relief A; other females are abstractions, such as Roma or Victory. The contrast between Augustus's celebration of fecundity and Domitian's erasure of it could not be starker. The reliefs suggest that the strength of Domitian's regime lay neither in his fecundity nor his subjects', but in the army and in the gods.

True, some of the other *Silvae* celebrate prosperous families, and even project glorious public careers for their children. In this regard Statius writes against the grain of Flavian political ideology. But he also adumbrates a subtle tension between the imperial attitude toward fertility and that of Domitian's subjects. For example, in *Silvae* 4.8, as he celebrates the birth of a third child to Julius Menecrates, he remarks the fact that Menecrates received the legal privileges awarded by the *ius trium liberorum* before he had three children. This last child only belatedly and otiosely fulfills the letter of the law. Awarding the right to men who did not qualify, even to the childless, was hardly Domitian's innovation; yet to continue the practice warred with the message of fertility implied in the Ara Pacis and in the legislative source of Menecrates' privilege, Augustus's marriage laws.[60] Why bother having three children if you could enjoy the benefits of prolific parenthood without it?

[58] Hoffer 1999: 230–31.

[59] On the Ara Pacis and the theme of fertility, see Castriota 1995; on the contrast between Augustan and Flavian representations of fertility, see Newlands 2002: 13–17; Newlands 2006b.

[60] It may be telling that Statius unevenly juxtaposes this one birth against the profound devastation and loss of life Vesuvius's eruption wrought in 79 C.E. (4.8.5). Elsewhere in the *Silvae* he characterizes that eruption as not only widely devastating and apt to be repeated (4.4.78–85), but the act of "father" Jupiter (*pater*, 5.3.207)—as if paternal creation such as Menecrates' were unevenly arrayed against a cosmic principle of paternal annihilation.

In the context of such state ideology, portraying Melior as the childless Dido gains additional significance. Melior is like Dido in his grief, but also in having no legitimate child of élite status. His irregular fatherhood evokes the risks of conventional fatherhood for his more ambitious peers: fecundity could make you suspect in the eyes of an emperor scanning for mixed loyalties or even designs on his dominion. But with luck, childless men could trade their would-be children for the emperor's gift of the *ius trium liberorum*. These nominal children might have been the only option such men as Pliny and Tacitus could reconcile with a prominent court position. As a pure legal fiction, these "three children" are no more substantial, no less ghostly, than the dead *libertus* Glaucias. Being forced to choose them over factual heirs is thus no less emblematic of thralldom to a master than Glaucias himself.

The *Silvae* as a whole reflect for the Roman élite that louring subjugation. Though the expansive villas and luxurious gardens the *Silvae* laud seem private, sheltered spaces, many prove porous to imperial will. Statius's epicedion for Claudius Etruscus's father notes that the old man fell from Domitian's favor and was banished, though eventually recalled (*Silv.* 3.3.154–67). The lament for Abascantus's wife was apparently written to defend Abascantus's loyalty to Domitian (e.g., Statius extravagantly claims that Abascantus's love for his emperor outweighs his grief for his dead wife).[61] In vain: Abascantus did not long remain Domitian's secretary (*ab epistulis*). The *Silvae* even glances at the intrigues of the Flavians' unsuccessful rivals from the Year of Four Emperors. If Melior's friend Blaesus was the Junius Blaesus whom Vitellius murdered, then his rank and wealth condemned rather than saved him. The violent loss of an intimate friend to political life—the emperor's execution of a noble and a citizen as though he were a slave—would gloss the determined privacy of Melior's grief and his life. But even if Melior's Blaesus died peacefully aged, their times illustrated the hazards of imperial attention.

MARCELLUS'S SHADOW

I have thus far outlined the reflections in *Silvae* 2.1 of consequences imperial subjects suffered from the emperors' ideological monopoly of fatherhood. The poem also articulates some of the consequences of this monopoly for the rulers themselves. The poet's representation of Glaucias's dead soul's entering the Underworld superimposes upon this fragile boy an image of the very first Roman ruler and his dynasty's latest lost hope, retracing the Vergilian Aeneas's entrance into Hades and review of his descendants there. But the

[61] *Silv.* 5.1.205–208. On the poem as declaration of Abascantus's imperial allegiance, see Hardie 1983: 185–87; Gibson 2006: 74–75. For a contrary view, see Weaver 1994.

boy's beauty and early death also evoke one descendant Aeneas particularly remarks—Marcellus, Augustus's nephew and heir presumptive who died aged 19.[62] Triangulating the first and latest of the Julian royals with a *libertus* dead untimely shades their imperial majesty with his jeopardy.

Statius opens his katabasis with Mercury shepherding Glaucias's entrance into Hades, where Melior's friend Blaesus embraces the boy (*Silv*. 2.1.189–207).

> Quid mihi gaudenti proles Cyllenia virga
> nuntiat? estne aliquid tam saevo in tempore laetum?
> noverat effigies generosique ardua Blaesi
> ora puer, dum saepe domi nova serta ligantem
> te videt et similes tergentem pectore ceras.
> hunc ubi Lethaei lustrantem gurgitis oras
> Ausonios inter proceres seriemque Quirini
> adgnovit, timide primum vestigia iungit
> accessu tacito summosque lacessit amictus,
> inde magis sequitur; neque enim magis ille trahentem
> spernit et ignota credit de stirpe nepotum.
> mox ubi delicias et rari pignus amici
> sensit et amissi puerum solacia Blaesi,
> tollit humo magnaque ligat cervice diuque
> ipse manu gaudens vehit et, quae munera mollis
> Elysii, steriles ramos mutasque volucres
> porgit et obtunso pallentes germine flores.
> nec prohibet meminisse tui, sed pectora blandus
> miscet et alternum pueri partitur amorem.

> What now does the god of Mt. Cyllene announce to me with his joyful wand? Is there anything happy in a season so harrowing? Your boy had recognized the likeness and the lofty visage of nobly-born Blaesus, since he often saw you at home garlanding it with fresh flowers and polishing the image-filled wax with your chest. When he recognized this man traversing the banks of the river Lethe, among the princes of Ausonia, and he recognized the line of Quirinus, he (timidly at first) matched his steps with the man's silent walk and he tugged at the border of his cloak; then he follows him, tugging more vigorously. And not for this did the man any more scorn the one pulling at him—he believed him to be from some unknown branch of his descendants. When soon he recognizes the darling and the pledge of his singular friend, the boy who was consolation for the lost Blaesus, he picks him up from the earth and he winds his arms around his great neck and, long rejoicing, he himself carries the boy around on his arm. He offers him gifts that are of decayed Elysium: barren

[62] Vessey 1986: 2769–83.

> branches and silent birds and blossoms pale with their flowering aborted. Nor did he forbid him to remember you, but he kindly joined his breast to the boy's breast and shared twofold love with the boy.

Mercury reports that Glaucias sees dead souls specified as Roman, meets a father-figure (Blaesus), and has that father-figure guide him through the realm to show him its contents (*Silv.* 2.1.194–205). These details figure Glaucias as an *alter* Aeneas.[63] That figuration develops an alignment of Glaucias with Aeneas sketched at the poem's beginning: lamenting the loss of filial affection Melior suffers upon Glaucias's death, Statius details their daily interactions. He pictures Melior's habit of leaning affectionately upon his fosterling's neck (*Silv.* 2.1.50–51):

> heu lactea colla,
> bracchiaque et numquam domini sine pondere cervix![64]

> Alas for that milky-white neck, and his arms and neck never without the weight of his master!

As Austin Busch has pointed out, that vignette evokes the quintessential image of *pietas* in Roman art and literature: Aeneas's carrying his father out of the burning city of Troy on his back.[65] But Statius's wording, with its references to Melior as a "burden" (*pondere,* 51) on his child's neck,[66] recalls and reverses Vergil's Aeneas's inviting his crippled father to place himself on his neck, denying that the old man will be a burden (*Aen.* 2.707–8):[67]

> ergo age, care pater, cervici imponere nostrae;
> ipse subibo umeris nec me labor iste grauabit.

> Therefore come, dear father, put yourself on my neck; I myself will
> support you with my shoulders and that effort will not weigh me down.

[63] Statius also sketches Glaucias as an *alter*-Aeneas outside of the boy's Underworld journey. Describing Melior's emotional wound with Vergil's words on Dido's (discussed above), the poet implicitly links the respective proximate causes of those wounds, Glaucias and Aeneas.

[64] *Silv.* 2.1.51 is unmetrical in M, the major manuscript. Courtney's Oxford edition adds <*et*>, defended in Courtney 1968: 54.

[65] Busch 2013–2014: 84–85, referencing Zanker 1988: 202.

[66] Some editors emend *bracchiaque* to *bracchia quo*, so that it is Glaucias who burdens Melior's neck. But that creates extreme hyperbaton, for no reason other than to avoid the troubling image of a child bearing an adult's weight (cf. Courtney 1971: 96).

[67] My text for the *Aeneid* is Mynors 1969.

That intertext references a key moment in Aeneas's own irreducibly ambiguous relationship with Anchises, a father who burdens his son literally and figuratively; Vergil shows the father's misguided dominance often thwarting Aeneas's ktistic mission (e.g., by misinterpreting prophecy, *Aen.* 3.103–17). Reproducing that image captures both sides of what the domestic vignettes between Melior and Glaucias sketch: on the one hand, a devoted, reciprocal warmth between foster-father and child; on the other (as the erotic imagery particularly implies) an older man's dependence on a child more as *dominus* than *altor*, reinforcing the hierarchical difference between them. But the realm of the dead resolves the tensions implicit both in Vergil's and Statius's live examples of filiality (as we shall see). Paternity ripens into a better version of itself when Glaucias enters Hades, and finds there another "father" among the shades—Blaesus.[68]

Blaesus plays a key role in underlining Glaucias's resemblance also to the *Aeneid*'s portrait of Anchises' latest descendant, the ill-fated Marcellus. Glaucias and Marcellus have in common their beauty (Marcellus is *egregium forma*, *Aen.* 6.861), their talents, and their promise death has cut short.[69] They even share the motif of flowers offered to their shades. Lest we miss the comparison, Statius borrows Aeneas's unusual phrase inquiring about Marcellus—shown as a stripling wrapped in darkness among Anchises' parade of brilliant souls born to lead republic and empire (*Aen.* 6.863–86)—and puts it in the same marked position Vergil did, at the hexameter's end.[70] Aeneas ponders the relationship between the shades of the elder Marcellus (the brilliant general of the Punic Wars) and the younger Marcellus: were they father and son, or was the youth from the mature warrior's more distant "stock of descendants" (*Aen.* 6.863–64)?

> "quis, pater, ille, virum qui sic comitatur euntem?
> filius, anne aliquis magna *de stirpe nepotum*?"

[68] The equivalent of Vergil's Elysian Fields welcomes Glaucias; logically, therefore, Statius's Underworld reverses many of the patterns of failed fatherhood we have traced thus far. Ancient thought elsewhere equates the Underworld with Utopia, perhaps because all good mortal things eventually come to Hades. See Dieterich 1893: 25; Mace 1996, esp. 236 and 236n23.

[69] Vessey 1986: 2769–83.

[70] According to MusisDeoque (mqdq.it), *de stirpe nepotum* only occurs three times in Latin literature—in Vergil and Statius as noted, and in the 5th-century Gallic poet Marius Victor's Christian epic *Alethia* (*Alethia* 3.579). That would make the Vergilian reference of Statius's phrase virtually unmistakable to a reader. Thanks to Kyle Gervais for calling this to my attention.

> "Who is that, father, who accompanies the man in that way, as he's walking? His son, or someone from the great *stock of his descendants*?"

So, too, Melior's dead friend Blaesus puzzles momentarily over Glaucias's relation to himself: is this boy "from his stock of descendants"? (*Silv.* 2.1.198–99):

> … neque enim magis ille trahentem
> spernit et ignota credit *de stirpe nepotum.*
>
> Nor does he [Blaesus] spurn him [Glaucias] when he tugs more vigorously [on his cloak], and he believes he is from the unknown *stock of his descendants.*

Statius's borrowing of a Vergilian phrase emphasizing uncertain paternity underlines how Aeneas's question applies also to Glaucias. Aeneas specifically frames his query in terms of paternity: is the younger Marcellus the son of the elder Marcellus, or a descendant farther removed? As Vessey points out, the status of Glaucias's paternity is equally problematic: is Melior his father, or not? Some details of Statius's poem pattern Melior after a biological father—as noted, he snatches up Glaucias at birth to claim him for his own (2.1.79–80) and outbids Glaucias's biological parents in mourning the boy's death (2.1.173–74.). Melior has acted like an affectionate father, but Glaucias has living parents, including a biological father.[71]

Evoking Marcellus raises the question whether anyone can escape the consequences of power rooted in dynastic monopoly, including members of the imperial family. *Silvae* 2.1 develops this question of imperial hazard progressively, in tandem with the paired question of imperial subjects' insecurity. Chronologically, Glaucias's counterpart Marcellus is the last of the *Aeneid*'s beautifully eroticized youths who die untimely; the others die to make uncontested room for Marcellus's ancestor, Ascanius-Iulus. Desire, manifest destiny and scorched earth all converge in Marcellus: Aeneas, the first of all Roman dynasts, confronts in the Underworld his Julian dynasty's magnetic, bright, but vanished hope. When Statius overlaps in the figure of Glaucias both Aeneas and Marcellus—first and prematurely-dead last of the Julian dynasty—his mourning poem elaborates an anxiety implicit in how the Vergilian parade of Roman heroes concludes. The aching void Marcellus leaves exemplifies the hazards of staking the future on the ability of a single paternal line to reproduce itself. But when the dead Glaucias recalls this most consequential of Vergil's *enfants perdus*, he also reprises the question of what Rome's imperial future costs the emperor's other "children"—his own subjects. *Silvae* 2.1's catalogue of doomed fosterlings engaged the Vergilian

[71] Vessey 1986: 2773.

connection between failed parentage (especially fatherhood) and the shape of an impotent subjectivity specific to the principate. When the *princeps* is the ultimate *paterfamilias*—able to exercise *patria potestas* over the bodies and lives of all Romans young and old, male and female, freeborn and otherwise—Glaucias's foster-father Melior is no less infantilized, marginalized and vulnerable than his fosterling. The emperor's dominance threatens erasure for this circumspect old man, and—as Blaesus's death testifies—for the whole of his élite class. But the liabilities this poem outlines do not always accrue to imperial subjects; sometimes they cling to the imperials themselves, as the next section will show.

THE PRINCE AND THE *PUER*

While Glaucias's youth and subordination reflect the *de facto* relation of citizens to the emperor, the poem formally links Glaucias to the imperial ruling clan, early and late—to the *gens Aeneia* and to the Julio-Claudians. Given that the details of Glaucias's Underworld reception align him both with Aeneas and with the younger Marcellus, how exactly are ruler and ruler-designate like this pretty slave? Around all three swirl pointed questions of legitimacy, paternity and lawful transfer of status. Like Glaucias, Aeneas and Marcellus are seen as solutions for men who have no sons (Latinus and Augustus). But aboriginal Italy goes to war over Aeneas's succession—whereupon Latinus withdraws and remains passive, no help to his prospective son-in-law and heir. And despite distinct marks of Augustus's favor (e.g., his marriage to Augustus's daughter Julia), Marcellus had rivals for inheriting the princeps' power. Augustus's other sons-in-law, Agrippa and Tiberius, were equally plausible, and like Marcellus, distinguished by honors Augustus accorded them. Augustus eventually adopted Agrippa's sons, Gaius and Lucius, as his own in 17 B.C.E. That distinction he never accorded Marcellus. Nor was Drusus, Augustus's other stepson, out of the running. As Beth Severy notes: "Perhaps the best observation to be made is that Augustus liked to keep the situation complicated."[72] Certainly the question of his chosen heir remained indeterminate until the princeps eventually decided on Tiberius in 4 C.E.—27 years after Marcellus's death, following the deaths of the last alternatives (Lucius and Gaius, who died in 2 and 4 C.E. respectively).

In Glaucias's case, too, the outcome of his filiation with a powerful man was uncertain. We do not know how much of a son and heir he was in Melior's eyes. Did the older man intend to bequeath the boy his wealth and have Glaucias carry on his name, or just want to play at fatherhood for a while before re-

[72] Severy 2003: 72.

turning him to his parents' station in life? Despite Melior's obvious affection for the living Glaucias, and his devastation over the dead boy, at no point does the poem confirm a legal adoption, nor clarify Melior's ultimate goal in assuming the role of *pius altor* (2.1.69). We therefore cannot know whether or not a status-enhancing legal fiction of kinship would have underwritten the role Glaucias eventually assumed.[73]

In this way Glaucias reflects the dilemmas of the emperor as *paterfamilias* constructing the reproduction of his family and the transfer of his power. But the epicedion's obsession with Glaucias's physical body is also significant. The poem links his beauty both to fragility and to perdurability: his beauty attracts Envy (*Invidia*, 122) and adverse Fate (*Lachesis*, 120; *Parcis*, 148), yet survives fatality—he dies as lovely as he lived. This paradox figures another, even more critical problem of the emperor as *pater patriae*: commanding the loyalty of all his subject-"children" under his paternalistic rule, and the consequences of failing to do so. Good looks and their concomitant attractive power can figure the ability of the emperor to sway his subjects' hearts, and therefore their minds. Artistic representations of the emperors' aesthetic charm had also underwritten the Julio-Claudians' logic of genetic superiority. The Prima Porta statue of Augustus is deliberately modeled on the Doryphorus of Polykleitus, a statue Quintilian cites as the ideal of youthful masculine beauty.[74] Portraits of Augustus such as the Via Labicana Pontifex Maximus[75] and a Glyptothek bust with *corona civica* reproduce the smooth, boyish features of Prima Porta, even though at the time of the bust's carving Augustus was an old man. The same principle of representing the ruler as enjoying a godlike eternity of youthful beauty and prowess typically shapes depictions of Tiberius[76] and Claudius (neither of whom acceded to rule in youth); some of these imperial likenesses also affect heroic nudity.[77] The Flavians and their

[73] Though informally adopting a person of lower status to remedy childlessness was unusual, it was certainly possible—and the remedy *Silvae* 5.5 indicates Statius had chosen for himself (Bernstein 2005: 261–62). On the laws, terminology and practices governing adoption, fosterage and inheritance, with bibliography, see Gardner 1989, 1999; Sigismund-Nielsen 1987, 1999.

[74] Quintilian 5.12.21; cf. Pliny *NH* 34.55.

[75] In the Palazzo Massimo alle Terme.

[76] Such as the colored-marble bust of Tiberius in the Hermitage Museum (Inv. #ГР-1732), the cameos at the Boston Museum of Art (Inv. #98.757) and Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien (Inv. #Antikensammlung, IXa 61).

[77] E.g., the Vatican's Jupiter statues of Tiberius (Inv. #9961) and Claudius (Inv. #243). The Sebasteion at Aphrodisias's imperial reliefs show ten of thirteen royal figures nude (Smith 1987).

successors merely adopted this instrument of empire (including exposure, upon occasion).[78] Veristic portraits of Vespasian circulated under his reign, but so did idealized examples. His sons' extant portraits, especially Domitian's, regularly emulate the polished forms that made Augustus, Claudius, and Nero beautiful, ever-youthful, and at times mesmerizingly naked.[79]

Further, Domitian and his successors triangulate their favorites into a refinement of the logic whereby bloom betokens charismatic power to command loyalty. Caroline Vout has examined the power of beautiful *delicati* like Domitian's Earinus and Hadrian's Antinous to underline their masters' regal status by playing Ganymedes to their Joves.[80] But when the youthful face is the emperor's own, his eternally flourishing features meld the roles of sovereign and beloved—a construction in which Statius himself participates. In *Silvae* 3.4's fantasy-drama of Venus's discovering Earinus and deciding his peerless beauty must be dedicated to "Palatine love" (*Palatino…amori*, *Silv*. 3.4.38), the goddess remarks that only Domitian's beauty surpasses Earinus's own (*solus formosior ille/ cui daberis*, *Silv*. 3.4.44–45). Yet the boy's beauty initially persuades her he is one of her own sons. In *Silvae* 3.4, Venus's error representing Earinus as possible divine son, then dedicating him to the divine emperor, frames Earinus, the boy she eventually dedicates to Domitian as "the famous father of the world" (*pater inclitus orbis*, 3.4.48), as the son and heir *this* Roman ruler never managed to produce.[81] At the same time, the poem's mar-

[78] E.g., the heroically nude statues of Vespasian and Titus from the Sacellum of the Augustales at Misenum (Inv. #153950 and 153951 respectively). Given uncertain dating, these and other imperial portraits might postdate their subjects. But representing imperial predecessors as a powerful, godlike line of succession strengthens the current ruler's claim to the same virtues.

[79] Domitian's official portraits all show more elegant features than the portrait types of his father and elder brother. His face ages very little between his small bronze bust in Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen, cast around his accession (Poulsen 1974: 43–44 no. 8, plates 14–15; Johansen 1994–1995: 38–39, no. 8), and the later, more mature Domitian captured in a life-sized marble bust now in the Palazzo dei Conservatori (Fittschen and Zanker 1985: 1:36–37 no. 33, plates 35, 37). Both busts affect the youthful nudity typically reserved for divinities (on Domitian's images, see Wood 2016: 135–40). On the sestertii of 95–96, the obverses' portraiture softens some features such as Domitian's heavy brow, while the reverses sport novel monumental types: a Triumphal Arch, the Equestrian Statue erected in the forum in 91 C.E., a building that might be the *Domus Flavia*, another that suggests the Temple of the *Gens Flavia* (Carradice 1982). The emperor's polished physicality is linked to imperial power—the power to control *Rome*'s (architectural) "face," by erecting monuments to himself and his family.

[80] Vout 2007: 52–135, 167–212.

[81] Newlands 2002: 115.

riage imagery depicts Earinus as the emperor's sterile bride,[82] displacing any fecund woman who might stabilize the succession. Like Glaucias's strangely eroticized relationship with Melior, Earinus's youthfully ambiguous beauty straddles categories of son, sexual object and status-enhancing pretty slave for his master. But unlike Glaucias, Earinus can never actually be his master's heir, or in any way take his place. Statius's depiction of Earinus's relationship with Domitian underlines some of the reasons why the latter remains childless. And a *formosior* but heirless emperor may be as vulnerable to his diffident subjects as his castrate *puer delicatus*.[83]

Silvae 2.1 mirrors this aspect of empire—the hazards of controlling subjects' hearts and minds through their eyes, translated as immortalized beauty—when Statius describes with a resonant Vergilian phrase how the dying Glaucias's beauty resisted mortality (*Silv.* 2.1.154–57):

> gratum est, Fata, tamen quod non mors lenta iacentis
> exedit puerile decus, manesque subivit
> integer et nullo temeratus corpora damno,
> qualis erat.
>
> It is nonetheless welcome, Fates, that relentless death did not eat away at his youthful beauty as he lay dying, and his spirit descended below whole and his body untouched by any defect, just as he was.

There is a stroke of contradiction in Glaucias's mortal suffering: his eyes grow cold and dull, his tongue fails (146–50). The phrase *qualis erat*, underlined by enjambment, echoes these hints and ironically casts doubt upon the power of beauty to transcend mortality. Statius's enjambment calls attention to this phrase and thus to the regal referent of its intertext in Vergil.[84] In *Aeneid* 2, Trojan prince Hector's ghost appears to Aeneas "just as he was" ("*ei mihi, qualis erat*," *Aen.* 2.274)—only "as he was" is mutilated and befouled, contradicting Homer's claim that the gods protected Hector's corpse from damage when Achilles repeatedly subjected it to abuse (*Il.* 23.184–91, 24.18–21, 757–59). Vergil's Hector has beard and hair stiff and clotted with blood, his body flayed by Achilles' dragging it around Troy's walls (*Aen.* 2.277–79). Statius's rewriting of Vergil's rewriting of Homer conjures before his reader's eye a complex vision split between the highest and the lowest, most and least defended,

[82] Laguna 1992: 310.

[83] The frequency with which the Flavian poets directly or indirectly urge the emperor to produce an heir implies his childlessness was a source of anxiety; cf. Stat. *Silv.* 1.1.91–107; Mart. 6.3; Sil. 3.625; see also Newlands 2002: 66–69.

[84] Van Dam 1984: 145; Newlands 2011: 102.

in the social and imperial hierarchy. On the one hand, Glaucias's beautiful body, untouched by physical insult, resembles both the Iliadic prince Hector's corpse and the emperor's everlasting statues, images that underwrite claims to supernatural immunity. On the other, using this marked phrase to describe the child's corpse makes it into a palimpsest evocative of the Vergilian context and contest. Hector figures crucially in the *Aeneid*'s legitimation of Aeneas as the progenitor of the Roman emperors. Hector is the obvious heir to Priam's throne; even his death leaves still-living sons of the Trojan king with claims superior to Aeneas's—Helenus, for example. Aeneas is the scion of a junior royal branch, yet the epic takes pains to ratify Aeneas as Hector's rightful heir.[85] This supernatural vision from Book 2 is the most prominent affirmation—and yet Vergil shatters Homer's account of Prince Hector's "beautiful death" protected by divinity. The Roman emperors broadcast their power in the durability of stone and bronze, yet Hector, their ultimate dynastic anchor, becomes vulnerable flesh savaged by enemies. Under the first Roman emperor's poetic patronage, Vergil sketches the body of the princeps' noble ancestor to be as unshielded as a slave's.

In echoing Vergil's scene of a warrior-prince mutilated by his enemy's hatred and yielding to a successor, *Silvae* 2.1 also references the first (proto-) Roman transmission of rule, underlining its foundation in violence. On the night Troy fell, Vergil's Hector had returned to bridge a break in dynasty: he designates a surrogate (Aeneas) for his dead son, Astyanax.[86] The epicedion superimposes that reference upon Glaucias—a *libertus*, yet one who might also have become an heir in lieu of other possibilities, and beyond ordinary expectations for a child of servile status. But this is also the child *Silvae* 2.1 frames as King Aeneas's counterpart in Statius's Underworld. Not without cause: the boy's dual referents in the dead Hector and the living Aeneas recall Aeneas's own disposability. Vergil grants the Trojan only three years in which to enjoy his succession to the Latin throne before he dies and Ascanius takes over. Aeneas's own mother makes it clear in her speech to the divine council Jupiter convenes in *Aeneid* 10 that her son's importance resides purely in continuing the line of succession. With the heir, Ascanius, preserved, Aeneas

[85] As when Andromache designates Hector and Aeneas as co-equal models for Ascanius's emulation (*Aen.* 3.343), or when Diomedes claims that, having done battle with Hector and Aeneas, he will not engage with the survivor of that pair (*Aen.* 11.281–93)—as if Aeneas were Hector's equal, a reading not at all supported by the *Iliad*'s account of Aeneas's encounter with Diomedes (*Il.* 5.297–318). See also Edgeworth 2001.

[86] Cartault 1926: 188; Hardie 1993: 112–13.

can be suffered to vanish (*Aen.* 10.46–50).[87] The larger mythic tradition has Aeneas specifically meet Hector's fate, in a way foreshadowing his imperial successors' risk. Rather than invading foreigners, a breakaway faction of his own adopted people kill the first Roman ruler.[88] When Glaucias recalls these mythical Trojan royals, Melior's flawless dead boy figures the multiple fragilities of contemporary Roman succession and sovereignty. The *Aeneid*'s pattern of intestine violence recurred often among Aeneas's first-century counterparts. Of the first eleven Roman emperors, only five died in their beds; even among those five, rumor whispered that three had surrendered their lives to surreptitious foul play.[89] This ominous history of documented and speculated homicide testifies to how delicate was the sociopolitical nexus the emperor anchored, how difficult to manage his other, metaphorical body, the body politic. If he were seen as slavemaster to his subjects rather than father, then his imperial flesh was as penetrable as that of a *delicatus*.

A GIFTED PRINCE

Towards the end of *Silvae* 2.1, Statius uses another Vergilian intertext to ponder the artistic instruments for managing the Roman polity. Not just the plastic arts, but the literary and cosmic, can seduce and dominate the world. Statius petitions Glaucias to return after death to Melior's dreams "with living countenance" (*vivis vultibus*, 232). Van Dam interprets this phrase to mean that Atedius will keep an image of Glaucias, just as he kept and regularly honored one of Blaesus (*Silv.* 2.1.191–93). But Newlands notes that Vergil's Anchises uses the same phrase to describe the lifelike countenances of statues other nations will fashion while the business of rule occupies Rome's attention (Verg. *Aen.* 6.847–53):[90]

> excudent alii spirantia mollius aera
> (credo equidem), *vivos* ducent de marmore *vultus*,
> orabunt causas melius, caelique meatus

[87] Venus despairs of a Roman dynasty, claiming she will let Ascanius "live out his inglorious days" in Cyprus, but asks that the Trojans be allowed to return to rule Ilium. Why keep Ascanius, the obvious candidate for Trojan king, idled in Cyprus, unless for her greater ambitions? Cyprus in *Aeneid* 1 already served as Ascanius's temporary depot in aid of Venus's dynastic plans.

[88] Dion. Hal. 1.64; Livy 1.2.6.

[89] Augustus poisoned by Livia (Tac. *Ann.* 1.5; Cass. Dio 56.30); Tiberius killed by, or for, Caligula (Suet. *Calig.* 12; Tac. *Ann.* 6.50); Titus murdered, or murderously neglected, by Domitian (Philostr. *VA* 6.32; Cass. Dio 66.26; Suet. *Dom.* 2).

[90] Van Dam 1984: 186; Newlands 2011: 120.

> describent radio et surgentia sidera dicent:
> tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
> (hae tibi erunt artes), pacique imponere morem,
> parcere subiectis et debellare superbos.
>
> Others, I am confident, will hammer out more breathing bronze with delicate features, summon more *lifelike countenances* from marble, will argue better their causes, will trace heavenly wanderings with their instruments and tell the rising of the stars. Remember, Roman, to rule nations with your governance, and to impose the habit of peace, to spare the downtrodden and war down the proud.

Anchises' dismissal of art as somebody else's business glosses over the essential role art plays in transforming military conquest into political power (including the *Aeneid* itself). Youthfully idealized images of the emperor as conquering hero, the bodies of his vanquished foreign enemies his foil, are found from the center of the Roman empire to its edges, as statues, coins and gems.[91] These images perform the work of knitting the scattered provinces into the notional whole that is Rome, while establishing hierarchical relations within that whole.[92] The boy-faced Prima Porta statue of Augustus even maps the entire cosmos onto the body of the princeps, punctuating his breastplate with divinities and conquered peoples. Caelus spreads the tent of the heavens just below his neck, flanked by Sol on his left breast, Dawn (Aurora) and the Moon (Luna) on the right, while Earth (Tellus) reclines on his belly. Mourning women and men with sheathed and unsheathed swords flank the lower sides of the cuirass, representing defeated peoples in the East and West. Centrally, the subjected Parthian king returns Crassus's standards.[93] Such iconographies modulate hierarchies that distinguish not only subject peoples from Roman

[91] Statues: besides the Prima Porta Augustus, there is, e.g., the heroically athletic, nude Claudius depicted at the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias. He forces a distraught woman representing Britannia to submit. Similarly, a trophy found at Saint Bertrand-de-Comminges (Lugdunum Convenarum, in Gallia Aquitania) juxtaposes a winged Victory with a bound captive. Coins: e.g., the Judaea Capta series Vespasian mints to commemorate Titus's suppression of the First Jewish revolt regularly displays such images as a mourning female, and a kneeling male captive. Gems: e.g., the Grand Cameo of France and the Gemma Augustea, both of which float friezes of a comely royal family above panels depicting the manhandling of the vanquished.

[92] Zanker 1988: 297–333; Mierse 1990; Ando 2000: 303–21.

[93] Some of these specific identifications are controversial, but none of the disputes erases the general pattern of gods triumphally studding Augustus's anatomy front and center, punctuated by diffident foreigners. Discussion of the statue and its ambiguities may be found in Squire 2013.

citizens, but Roman citizens from the emperor.[94] If none but imperial victories can be commemorated in stone and bronze, art effectively suppresses the idea that anyone could rival the emperor's puissance. Art helps make *the* body politic the emperor's own.

Yet it was always open to élites to identify rather with the *debellati*, seeing themselves as aggrieved losers in a zero-sum game of power—at best the emperor's beloved but impotent children, at worst slaves to his slave-master. And that distinction also pivoted upon vulnerable bodies. Roman legal, literary and epigraphic evidence portrays good and bad sovereignty as in part a function of how accessible citizen-bodies are. The tyrant subjects citizens to the corporal punishment befitting slaves: beating, whipping, arbitrary imprisonment. By contrast, the good sovereign emulates a loving father who will correct his offspring with words or other non-corporal punishment, bating the power of life and death the law awards him over his children.[95]

When Glaucias's post-mortem image echoes Anchises' words on the media of Roman triumphalism, the epicedion positions the boy in tensely negotiated territory between Rome's emperor and his subjects. How exactly are we to read this freed slave's body? Glaucias's now-eternal beauty can be seen as reflecting the perdurable images of the good sovereign as gorgeous, invincible conqueror.[96] Yet, since Statius attributes this grace solely to Fata's self-restraint, he subtly underlines the fact that it could have been otherwise (and perhaps was, given his sketch of the dying Glaucias's dulled eyes and tongue). But for whom, exactly? The poem has depicted this vulnerable child born into

[94] Such distinctions are at times complicated and counter-intuitive. The conquered provinces often appear less aggrieved by the emperor than élite Romans. While provincials might have been expected to resist triumphal imagery, the appearance of such monuments all the way from the Western provinces (Lugdunum Convenarum) to the Eastern (Aphrodisias) attests their elites' speedily adopting this visual language to identify themselves with history's Roman "winners." Such assimilation essentially adopts the principle behind Anchises' review of the souls about to populate Roman history: all must drink of the memory-erasing river Lethe (Reed 2007: 171).

[95] Roller 2001: 213–64, esp. 246.

[96] Alexander the Great was a similarly youthful and attractive conqueror with whom Augustus from time to time aligned himself (especially in the Greek East), despite the Macedonian's problematic association with despotism (Kienast 1969; Weippert 1972: 214–23; O'Sullivan 2016). Augustus's imperial successors often followed suit (Ceaușescu 1974; Spencer 2002: 165–203; Croisille 1990). Yet Augustus thought Alexander overestimated conquering an empire, in contrast to securing it (Plut. *Moralia* 207D) and was at pains not to repeat the chaos into which Alexander's early demise plunged the Greek world. That aftermath could be seen as a specifically patriarchal and dynastic failure—the cost of failing to secure a succession.

slavery as freed from enslavement, and foster son to a rich, but very private, man—potentially even Melior's heir. He would never have enjoyed status in law equal to the freeborn Melior, but as citizens, they both would have been (in theory) exempt from corporal punishment. Yet *Silvae* 2.1's framing of Glaucias links the boy not just to citizen-subjects, but to rulers, from Hector through Aeneas to Marcellus. Which rank, then, does Glaucias's uninjured flesh mirror—ruled or ruler? Does he represent the legal inviolability citizen bodies (like Melior's and Blaesus's) are supposed to enjoy, but under imperial tyranny do not? Or do the boy's youth and servile status reflect both the tyrannical emperor's vulnerable subjects and the tyrant's equally vulnerable self—a royal target when their resentment periodically boils over? Both—and neither: the queasy way one alignment dissolves into another and yet another suggests we readers can no longer know where sovereign or subject fits in imperial Rome, nor even whether both can occupy the same political space.

The last half of *Silvae* 2.1's vision of the Underworld echoes—and unsettles—the close of Anchises' review of his Roman descendants, where the old man's speech implicitly invites us to identify ourselves with the imperial clan. Tearfully answering Aeneas's query about who the doomed boy at General Marcellus's side might be, Anchises calls for the young man's shade to be given "lilies with full hands" (*Aen.* 6.883–86).

> tu Marcellus eris. manibus date lilia plenis
> purpureos spargam flores animamque nepotis
> his saltem accumulem donis, et fungar inani
> munere.
>
> "You will be Marcellus. Give me lilies with full hands! Let me sprinkle blushing flowers, at least, and pile up these gifts for the spirit of my descendant—let me enjoy this useless gift to the dead."

J. D. Reed has argued that juxtaposing Augustus's son-in-law with his 3rd-century B.C.E. paternal Claudian ancestor blurs the line between the Iulii and other Roman families; Anchises' lament for the boy as a heroic hope all Rome has lost constructs him as every Roman's lost son. In the last conversation Anchises will ever have with his son, the old man addresses words to Marcellus ("*miserande puer!*") that will become Aeneas's salute to the dead Lausus and Pallas. The war over Aeneas's Latin dominion destroys these brilliant Italian sons, the two most eye-catching sacrifices to Rome's founding (*Aen.* 10.825 and 11.42). The repeated phrase underlines Marcellus as universal Roman heir, substitutable for all potential rivals, even those born centuries before him—and to the degree that he is so, his father-in-law Augustus becomes universal

paterfamilias, *the* conceptual model of the good emperor.[97] But where Vergil made us family, Statius makes us anxious. While Glaucias's youth, beauty, premature death and initial misrecognition in the Underworld mirror Vergil's Marcellus, Blaesus's joyful welcome and unveiling of the Underworld's sights for Glaucias recall Anchises' reception of Aeneas. However, unlike Anchises, Blaesus has no parade of future Roman heroes to show the boy. He can only offer Glaucias spoilt variations on Anchises' blossoms for a dead boy (*Silv.* 2.1.204–5):

> steriles ramos mutasque volucres
> porgit et obtunso pallentes germine flores.
>
> sterile branches, silent birds and pale flowers blighted in their bloom.

Flowers, foliage, birds: if unblemished, these objects would classically represent gifts in the ancient world, particularly erotic gifts, and toys for children.[98] Yet Blaesus's withered blooms, sterile branches, and silent birds are marred, thus suspended in their function as gifts—just as Marcellus himself was. Vergil's almost-emperor is himself the almost-gift (*Aen.* 6.870–72):

> nimium vobis Romana propago
> visa potens, superi, propria haec si dona fuissent.
>
> "The Roman line would have seemed too powerful to you, gods, had these gifts been its own."

The ultimate imperial gift is the lost emperor—and he is the *non-pareil* gift precisely because he is the gift that never arrives. Randall Pogorzelski has argued that Anchises' representation of Marcellus as the ultimate Roman pivots on the fact that he is a loss around which Romans can organize their mourning and thus constitute themselves as a nation.[99] The void to which Pogorzelski points constitutes the imperial *ne plus ultra*; Rome perpetuates itself independent of any one individual's death. When death strips away Marcellus's flesh, it leaves only form—an immaterial body, emptied of history that might prevent his subjects' identification with him—a completely accessible body, a transubstantiation reflecting the slave body's openness. Focused on this blank object of desire, the dead (would-be) emperor, all Romans unite perfectly.

[97] Reed 2007: 153.

[98] Newlands and Asso note the motif of the erotic gift implicit in Blaesus's offerings (Asso 2010: 691, citing Dover 1978: 92–93 on typical offerings of *erastai* to *eromenoi*; Newlands 2011: 114).

[99] Pogorzelski 2009: 283–85.

But the epicedion's cankered version of Anchises' gifts assesses this work of imperial mourning as symptomatic of a sterile commonwealth. Vergil's funereal conclusion to the Parade of Heroes not only organizes the *res publica* around Marcellus as sole object, but around Augustus as sole subject: the emperor's loss becomes all Roman citizens' loss. Augustus's desire for Marcellus is also longing for the dynastic monarchy the presumptive heir betokens—and that yearning Anchises paints as collective, effectively erasing any notion that a citizen could desire differently. Statius's blighted gifts mark the old man's monolithic Rome as a dead zone, a commonwealth that paradoxically cannot contain more than one subject: the emperor. If no desire can find its place but the desire of the emperor (subjective and objective genitive), no principle of reciprocity can bind together individual citizens into a Rome.[100]

THE ANTEROME OF HADES

And yet this social desert is not the whole story. Statius draws a pointed contrast between Anchises' commonwealth and his own by returning, ring-fashion, to the figure of Dido evoked in his opening lines when he articulated Melior's distress with Vergil's words for the queen's amorous grief. Towards the end of the poem, in the *consolatio*, Statius maps Dido's Carthage onto his Underworld when he names the psychopomp Mercury shepherding Glaucias's shade as *proles Cyllenia* (189, quoted above). That resonant phrase looks back to Vergil, the first to call Mercury "Cyllenius" in Latin, and specifically[101] *Cyllenia proles* (*Aen.* 4.258).[102] The precise source and even the loca-

[100] Cf. P. A. Miller on Ovid's portrait of the emperor as "Absolute Subject" in his exilic poetry (Miller 2004: 210–36).

[101] *OLD* s.v. *Cyllenius*, 2b; *TLL*, s.v. *Cyllēnē* 0.2.788.25–60; Van Dam 1984: 165.

[102] A handful of Latin poets also use the phrase after Vergil's innovation, though not always to refer to Mercury. Petronius's Mercury joins the gods participating in Rome's civil war, while Silius's god (like Statius's) conducts the living Scipio to his mother's shade. However, Statius uses the phrase specifically and exclusively in contexts that mirror Vergil's Mercury at Carthage. Its two appearances in the *Thebaid* reproduce respectively Mercury's mission urging upon Aeneas his duty to Ascanius and Rome as *paterfamilias*, and the god's return to hasten the Trojan's acting on that duty. But the *Thebaid*'s epiphanies reverse the Vergilian Mercury's message of fatherly care. Prompted by Oedipus's cursing his sons, Jove commands Mercury to rouse their grandfather Laius to start fratricidal war between his grandsons (*Th.* 1.293). Jove repeats this action and sends Mercury to Mars to restart the long-stalled Theban war which eventually engulfs in the royals' family affair all of Thebes (Hershkowitz 1995: 60). Though reappearing in a less vividly operatic context in *Silvae* 2.1, given that the epicedion specifically styles its addressee Melior as another afflicted Dido, the phrase points us once again to Vergil's Mercury at Carthage. As in the *Thebaid*, *Silvae* 2.1's quotation of *proles Cyllenia* can be read as shorthand for disputing Vergil's vision of a Roman future whose tenor is paternal benevolence.

tion of Statius's borrowing are unmistakable. In all Vergil's oeuvre, he only uses the toponym to describe the god Mercury three times. All three appear in the Carthaginian narrative of *Aeneid* 4, beginning with Mercury's flight from heaven to Africa in order to confront Aeneas, happily at work building Dido's city (*Aenean fundantem arces ac tecta novantem*, 4.260), and spur him towards Italy (*Aen.* 4.252–58):

> hic primum paribus nitens *Cyllenius* alis
> constitit; hinc toto praeceps se corpore ad undas
> misit avi similis, quae circum litora, circum
> piscosos scopulos humilis volat aequora iuxta.
> haud aliter terras inter caelumque volabat
> litus harenosum ad Libyae, ventosque secabat
> materno veniens ab avo *Cyllenia proles.*
>
> Here for the first time this *god of Cyllene* came to a halt by working his evenly balanced wings; from here he hurled himself with the force of his whole body headlong towards the waves, just as a bird flies around the shores, around the cliffs teeming with fish, then low, right next to the waves. Not otherwise did he fly between earth and heaven toward the sandy shore of Libya, and the *offspring of Mount Cyllene* clove the winds as he descended from [Mount Atlas], his maternal grandfather.

The word returns with Mercury's closing argument to Aeneas taxing him with neglecting his paternal duty—one of the epic's more explicit statements of the presumption that there can only be one heir to Rome's destiny, and from him one ruling bloodline, whose future trumps all other concerns (*Aen.* 4.272–78):

> "si te nulla movet tantarum gloria rerum
> [nec super ipse tua moliris laude laborem,]
> Ascanium surgentem et spes heredis Iuli
> respice, cui regnum Italiae Romanaque tellus
> debetur." tali *Cyllenius* ore locutus
> mortalis visus medio sermone reliquit
> et procul in tenuem ex oculis evanuit auram.
>
> "If the glory of affairs so great does not move you, nor will you yourself undertake further the labor for your own praise, have a care for Ascanius, who is rapidly maturing, and for Iulus's expectation as heir, to whom is owed the kingdom of Italy and the Roman land." Having spoken thus, the *god of Cyllene* disappeared from mortal view in the middle of speaking and vanished from sight into thin air.

The toponym thus encircles and marks Mercury's mission to enforce a Trojan future tied to a particular dynasty, a particular place, the founding of a particular nation different from all others.

Vergil's Carthage itself reproaches the logic of Roman singularity upon which Mercury's assumptions rest. Dido's kingdom figures the rejection of distinction and difference, the conceptual foundations of Roman exceptionalism. Thus far, I have noted the darker side of that dismissal in the pattern of incestuous imagery Statius imports into *Silvae* 2.1 from the *Aeneid*. However, Ascanius-Cupid's manipulation of Dido's love and its full implications are entirely beyond the queen's ken or control. By contrast, her willed acts of ignoring social categories reveal her evenhanded humanity. Even before she has met Aeneas, Dido welcomes the Trojans and promises to draw no distinction between them and her Carthaginians (*Aen.* 1.572–74). Once she falls in love with Aeneas, she shares her throne equally with the Trojan (*Aen.* 4.374, 597). As Alessandro Schiesaro has shown, Vergil's Dido represents an alternative world-view, and thus an alternative history, for Rome and the Mediterranean.[103] The details of the Trojans' sojourn in Carthage counterpoint the *Aeneid*'s dominant theme of relentless progress toward Rome's future monopoly of greatness. Vergil's epic paints that dominance as earned through extraordinary leadership stretching from Aeneas through a line of Roman heroes who prefigure their own culmination in the godlike first emperor, Augustus. The poem's mythohistory is of widening differentiation and hierarchy—between nations, as Rome increasingly dominates other peoples; between Romans, as the hero-ruler (Aeneas-Augustus) subsumes and eclipses mere ordinary Romans.

Dido is having none of that—and throwing the shadow of Carthage over Glaucias's Hades deepens the poem's examination of patrilinearity as authority and identity. The most eye-catching aspect of the counterfactual history Dido represents is the dream of a Carthaginian *parvulus Aeneas*, another entry in the *Aeneid*'s list of failed fatherhoods and eroticized, erased sons.[104] The specter of that Carthaginian-Trojan princeling radically undermines the Roman imperial narrative of genealogical exceptionalism, all the way from king to commoner. In this alternate account, Rome's founding father does not entirely break with

[103] Schiesaro 2005, esp. 86–87; Schiesaro 2008, esp. 206–10.

[104] Ovid being one of Vergil's most sensitive readers, *Heroides* 7.133–38 testifies how disturbing is this alternative Trojan scion. Ovid's Dido reproaches Aeneas with possibly abandoning his unborn child along with herself. Her letter's words and images recall Euripides' Medea (Battistella 2007), who by murdering Jason's children destroys her quondam lover's succession.

his Eastern past (a past the Trojans' enemies regularly characterize as rooted in degeneracy and defeat, as does Numanus Remulus at *Aen.* 9.598–620). But neither do Aeneas's followers: if he embraces an African queen and grafts a rival scion upon Rome's historical enemy, then this other future could hold a Carthage who was not Rome's enemy. Given the weight ancient authors accord Rome's fear of Carthage in shaping Rome—her disciplined militarism, her world-dominance—Rome then does not become Rome (at least as we know it).[105] Or Carthage might still be seen as inimical. Certainly, Cleopatra's bearing Julius Caesar's child Caesarion, and Mark Anthony's Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene, did not prevent Egypt's joining issue with Octavian's Caesarian factions. But the fact that Octavian killed Caesarion, while sparing Mark Anthony's twins, testifies to the egregious complication Caesar's wild oats presented. The narrative of a unique dynastic line underwriting a specific national history is contradicted: Rome's geopolitical dominance begins and culminates with Julian blood. How much more embarrassing if Dido's wish for a Trojan-African hybridization displaced this foundation-myth.

The suggestion that Melior's lost child enters another Carthage in Hades develops the image of Melior as another Dido in his grief. Expanding the intertexts to include Vergil's vignette of the effects of the queen's liberality toward the Trojans—Aeneas's last moments as happy, honored and welcome in Carthage—underlines the latitudinarianism that led Melior to foster Glaucias in the first place, and that Glaucias will find again among the dead. As Bernstein notes, Melior's fostering of Glaucias was iconoclastic insofar as the adoption of a freedman by one of the élite class was rare. Adoptions tended to remain within class categories, and to target family members. But Melior has chosen a child of servile origins and status, and, upon the occasion of the boy's death, commissioned Statius at considerable expense to craft a memorial to promulgate his virtues. Statius's argument for Glaucias's nobility of accomplishment rather than nobility of birth celebrates in his patron a relative egalitarianism mirroring Dido's. Like the *parvulus Aeneas*, the logic animating Glaucias's existence as a substitute for other sons—blood-related, freeborn children engendered by Melior—undermines the presumption that social categories such as class and status are meaningfully rooted in "nature." Melior's paternal love for, and social elevation of, Glaucias contests the logic of genetic exceptionalism that the *Aeneid* sketches as justifying Roman imperialism and Roman monarchy.

[105] E.g., Sall. *Cat.* 10; Juv. 6.287–91. Ellen O'Gorman astutely analyzes Carthage's importance to Rome's self-conception (O'Gorman 2004), a trend of thought expanded in the essays to be found in the *Classical Philology* 2017 special issue, *Carthage and Rome.*

And that generous love, vastly expanded in its compass and meaning, continues its retort in Statius's Underworld. The mourning poem draws a pointed contrast between Anchises' commonweal and its own in the epicedion's very final lines. Only here does Statius actually name Glaucias, but he does so in direct address (*Silv.* 2.1.227–29):

> ... ades huc emissus ab atro
> limine, cui soli cuncta impetrare facultas,
> Glaucia! …
>
> Come hither, released from the dark threshold, you who alone know how to obtain everything for which you ask, Glaucias!

The deferred naming capped by apostrophe structurally mirrors Anchises' concluding words, his answer to Aeneas's question, Who is that? "*Tu Marcellus eris*" answers only a few lines before Anchises' voice leaves Vergil's epic forever. In the preceding fifteen lines, Anchises has unfolded how Marcellus would have displayed exceptional virtues such as *pietas* and *fides* had he been able to escape his fate (as the old man desperately wishes, *Aen.* 6.882–83). Yet all the boy's unfulfilled excellence centers on violence and warfare, on the enemies he would have defeated, had he lived (*Aen.* 6.878–81). In praising this pinnacle of Rome's excellence (*Aen.* 6.875–77), Anchises seems to have jettisoned *parcere subiectis* from his memorandum of Romanness (*Aen.* 6.851–53). Statius wishes Glaucias to defy death, and to embody *pietas* and *fides.* The boy is to escape Hades' confines periodically to comfort Melior (in dreams?) and to warm the old man's heart toward Glaucias's biological family (*Silv.* 2.1.227–34):

> … (nil sontes animas nec portitor arcet
> nec durae comes ille serae); tu pectora mulce,
> tu prohibe manare genas noctesque beatas
> dulcibus alloquiis et vivis vultibus imple
> et periisse nega, desolatamque sororem,
> qui potes, et miseros perge insinuare parentes.
>
> (Neither the gatekeeper nor the companion to the harsh chain [Cerberus] forbids passage to a guiltless soul.) Soothe his heart, forbid his cheeks to be wet with tears, fill his happy nights with your sweet conversation and your living countenance, and deny you have died. Make haste to entrust to his heart[106] your grieving sister and your pitiable parents.

[106] The basic sense of *insinuare* is "to recommend." Statius plays on the verb's root in the phrase *in sinu*, underline the intimate intertwining desired for the (biological and adoptive) family Glaucias has left behind (Newlands 2011: 120). My translation strives for this nuance.

Glaucias's mandate is to weave from his master Melior and his parents, Melior's freed slaves, a community that refuses singularity. The very last word, *parentes*, can apply to any one of these parties, or all three together.[107] Pointedly, Statius's final tableau centers neither upon a single father nor exclusive possession of this child. Glaucias's intervention among the bereaved will emphasize relations of exchange and reciprocity, blurring the status gap between the freeborn and freed members of his living *familia*, his micro-community.

Like Vergil's exemplary Roman souls, Statius's shades are to inspire the living (*Aen.* 6.806–7). These closing lines essentially exhort Glaucias to extend to the upper world the ex-centric love the boy has encountered in the Underworld. The final tableau of Glaucias's encounter with Blaesus's shade shows the nobleman ungrudgingly sharing the lowborn Glaucias's affection with the elegantly wealthy Melior: *Nec prohibet meminisse tui, sed pectora blandus/ miscet et alternum pueri partitur amorem* ("Neither does he forbid him to remember you [Melior], but lovingly joins heart with heart, and shares the love of the boy in turn," *Silv.* 2.1.206–7). As Van Dam remarks, the ambiguity of *pueri* (subjective or objective genitive?) and the reciprocity implied in *alternum* sketch an idealized triangle, in which Melior's "son" (*pignus*, 200) loves both men, who in turn love him and each other. And Blaesus's gestures of affection toward Glaucias echo Melior's gestures of affection for Glaucias and for Blaesus's effigy: Blaesus lifts Glaucias from the ground, reproducing Melior's gesture of claiming the boy at birth as his own (78–81); the nobleman proffers Hades' flowers and embraces the boy (*pectora blandus/ miscet*), as Melior wove garlands for Blaesus's effigy and cleaned the portrait with loving attention (*tergentem pectore*, 193).[108] But when Blaesus fastens the boy's weight about his neck (202), he reverses the earlier image of Melior leaning his weight upon Glaucias's neck (51), along with its echoes of Aeneas's assuming Anchises' weight to exit Troy (*Aen.* 2.707–8).[109] Vergil's use of the image to cap the earliest vignette of the Aeneas-Anchises relationship inaugurates the vision of Roman greatness that Anchises' last encounter with his son reveals: the Parade of Heroes in the Underworld, all conflated as Aeneas's "offspring," a parade that culminates as its logical outcome in the rule of Augustus and the paternalistic elevation of the *gens Iulia* over other Romans. Tellingly, in *Silvae* 2.1's two versions of that communion in Hades,

[107] "The poem ends with its most contested term, the definition of parenthood" (Newlands 2011: 120).

[108] Van Dam 1984: 170; Newlands 2011: 113.

[109] Vessey links Blaesus's gesture to Aeneas's lifting Anchises onto his back (Vessey 1986: 2780).

the second echo reverses the epicedion's first. Now Blaesus as father-figure assumes the child's weight as Blaesus lovingly winds the child around his neck (l. 202). Blaesus's paternal gesture appears to resolve the ambiguities of Glaucias's earthly status—whether he was a son or a servile toy. He offers the boy an evenhanded triangle of affection and shared paternity. But just as importantly, metaphorical flesh underwrites the meanings of *tergere pectore* and *miscere pectora* and the fictional bloodtie implied in *pignus*, anchoring the ideal reciprocity of all three in another notional body. Like the emperors' metaphorical flesh, the body politic, this indiscrete "body consociate" comprising Melior, Blaesus and Glaucias weaves many into one, but differs in according precedence to no individual part. For these three loving souls, social markers of noble lineage, age, wealth, freeborn or freed status—anything that might underwrite pre-eminence, such as *dominus*—now disappear in an evenhanded communion of living and dead.

EPILOGUE: BRINGING UP DADDY

The last word of *Silvae* 2.1, *parentes*, succinctly reprises the questions round which the entire poem revolves: who can call himself Father, by what logic and with what authority? These had become vital questions in the wake of Vespasian's accession and the crisis of investiture it represented. If this *parvenu* could be emperor, who could not be? And why should the whirlwind sequence of claimants he had capped—the Year of Four Emperors—end with him? The stability Vespasian's two adult sons seemed to promise for the future eventually yielded to such mortal blows as the deaths of Titus and of Domitian's infant son. That Domitian's long-standing failure to provide another heir was a source of anxiety to his subjects is attested by the frequency with which the poets urge him to remedy this lack. Though the *Silvae* predate Domitian's late attempt to adopt his cousin Flavius Clemens's sons, it was not unpredictable that the emperor's habit of suspicion would render that act as futile as Melior's. He executed his cousin, effectively cancelling the adoption and opening the door upon a chaotic succession.[110]

Yet the central problem of imperial legitimacy—on what constitutional basis does the emperor rule?—did not arise *ex nihilo* with the first Flavian ruler. Vespasian's assuming power merely threw into relief the way dynasty, with its implicit claims to a special genetic fitness for imperial command, had since Augustus papered over his dependence on the republican institution of

[110] A danger not lost on his contemporaries. Suetonius directly connects Domitian's death to Clemens's execution: "quo maxime facto maturavit sibi exitium" (*Dom.* 15.1).

the Roman Senate to ratify his legitimacy as monarch.[111] Augustus's molding himself as emperor into supreme *paterfamilias* to all Romans, the father whose *patria potestas* supersedes all others, deftly substituted blood for election as the conceptual root of Roman governance. When the *Aeneid* winnows its multitude of Trojan and Roman noble scions down to one kingly father and his son, Aeneas and Ascanius, it also importantly reflects this transition to making fatherhood an instrument of statecraft by having it accrue solely to the emperor.

It is with the construction of this power as paternalistic and autonomous, that *Silvae* 2.1's meditation on fatherhood indirectly engages. Statius wrestles with Anchises' vision of dynasty as Rome's teleological goal, implicitly disputing the old man's salvific logic. Positing the emperor as sole true subject of history threatens to erase,[112] *qua* functioning citizenry, the very people he proposes to rule. Statius's corollary to Vergil's dazzling princes, Aeneas and his unborn scions Augustus and Marcellus, is pretty Glaucias, servile and dead. Tellingly, the boy's consolation in Hades is the noble Blaesus, who in him recognizes "neither bond nor free."

The honor-roll of fosterage that Glaucias, Blaesus and Melior inspire—foster fathers proven superior to their biological fathers—undermines specifically the dynastic claim that biology can provide a model for exclusive authority or for the proprietary care of those subject to one's power. But one figure—Phoenix, Achilles' mentor (*Silv.* 2.1.91)—stands out within this list of meritorious fostering because of his unusually complicated relation to paternity. His history draws us to reflect even more deeply on what Statius's vision of fatherhood implies: Phoenix became a "father" by nearly killing his own. According to Homer, Phoenix's self-absorbed, tyrannical father Amyntor dishonored his wife by keeping a mistress. When Phoenix's mother persuaded her son to sleep with the concubine and turn her against the old man, the enraged Amyntor cursed his son with childlessness (*Il.* 9.449–57). Though Phoenix considered killing the old despot (*Il.* 9.458–61), he instead escaped to Phthia. There he found Peleus, who loved him "ὡς εἴ τε πατὴρ ὃν παῖδα φιλήσῃ μοῦνον τηλύγετον" ("even as a father loves his own son/ who is a single child," *Il.* 9.481–82),[113] though Peleus had already sired Achilles. Childless because of Amyntor's curse, Phoenix plays the role of foster-parent to young Achilles (*Il.* 9.485–95); the adult Achilles still addresses him as "aged, illustrious father" ("ἄττα γεραιέ, διοτρεφές" *Il.* 9.607).

[111] Cf. Winterling 2009, esp. 154–60.

[112] Cf. Miller 2004: 210–36.

[113] My text for the *Iliad* is Munro-Allen 1971.

Phoenix is but briefly mentioned in *Silvae* 2.1, yet Statius underlines his appearance. Achilles opens the mythic catalogue of exemplary foster-sons; Pallas follows, the Vergilian Aeneas's ally, ward of his father's retainer Acoetes. Prosody makes Phoenix mirror Acoetes (*Silv.* 2.1.90–93):

> nec senior Peleus natum comitatus in arma
> Troica, sed claro Phoenix *haerebat alumno.*
> optabat longe reditus Pallantis ovantis
> Evander, fidus pugnas *spectabat Acoetes.*
>
> Neither did Peleus, in his later age, accompany his son to the Trojan joining of arms, but Phoenix was *steadfastly at the side of his* brilliant *foster-son.* Evander hoped for the return of Pallas triumphant—from a distance; faithful *Acoetes witnessed* his battles.

Spectabat Acoetes, which closes 93, metrically parallels the end of line 91, *haerebat alumno.*[114] Phoenix thus marks a hinge in *Silvae* 2.1,[115] where Homer's story of Troy becomes Vergil's extension of that story into Italy, and to the very tales of fathers and (lost) sons Statius's epicedion most directly engages. Listing a man who trails Phoenix's fraught history among the exempla of paternal care broadens the poem's meditation on deficient biological fathers. The shadow of autocratic King Amyntor extends scrutiny of fatherhood out-of-joint into questioning other relationships of hierarchy and power. Does paternity model sovereignty only as autonomous singularity, or can fathers and rulers embrace ex-centric synergy?

Phoenix's story of a family and community at odds centers on a man and a ruler (Amyntor) insisting on his primacy, his will as the only will of account. He thus responds to the rhetoric of exceptionalism that underwrites Achilles' and Agamemnon's quarrel at Troy. Each of the two insists he is the "best of the Achaians" (ἄριστος Ἀχαιῶν) and merits corresponding precedence over others.[116] But Phoenix's opening appeal to Achilles illuminates just how exceptional individuals get to be so. Phoenix reminds him that others had a hand in creating this "best." He himself taught the young hero how to speak and act in wartime (Hom. *Il.* 9.438–43). Phoenix's admonition sketches Agamemnon and Achilles as "best" only because others have helped them shine; their claims to dominion are paradoxically and ineluctably rooted in their dependence on those they would subject.[117]

[114] For this see Newlands 2011: 89.

[115] Van Dam 1984: 117.

[116] E.g., *Il.* 1.244 (Achilles); *Il.* 1.91, 2.82 (Agamemnon).

[117] Phoenix himself makes the case for Achilles' interdependence. Agamemnon's reliance on others to shore up his claims to superiority is evident in, e.g., the results

The pointed contrast of Phoenix's synergistic vision of what constitutes authority may be why he is the only foster father from *Silvae* 2.1 to whom the *Silvae* grants several literary returns. He reappears fleetingly in *Silvae* 5.3, more expansively in *Silvae* 3.2 and 5.2. He is the teacher who "punches above his weight," able to hold his formidable charge Achilles in check (*indomiti Phoenix moderator alumni*—"Phoenix, the ruler of his unconquered foster-son," *Silv.* 5.3.192). Though an anomaly at Statius's Troy—unwarlike, owing nothing to Agamemnon (*Silv.* 3.2.98), driven solely by loyalty to Achilles—he figures Statius's own relation to a powerful man, the *tribunus militum* Maecius Celer. The mythical allusion draws their patron-client relationship as less unequal than might appear at first glance: *imbellis* Phoenix still commands respect from his warrior-comrade (*magno Phoenix reverendus Achilli*—"great Achilles stands in awe of Phoenix," *Silv.* 3.2.96). And in *Silvae* 5.2, Phoenix importantly models preserving a father's (Achilles) *kleos* in a way that will shape his son. Statius imagines Crispinus, who lost his father young, learning of Bolanus's British military career secondhand from a *longaevus incola* (*Silv.* 5.2.143). The Caledonian ancient even conjures the father's physical self by pointing to relics like the armor he once wore. "Just so" (*qualiter*) Neoptolemus, who never saw his father, learned of Achilles' deeds from Phoenix (150–51). The paternal authority transcends any individual father's existence: it can survive a father's death, granting coherence to his son's present.

But not by itself—even for a half-divine hero, or for a Roman who "ruled mighty Asia's thousand cities" (*potentis/ mille urbes Asiae*, *Silv.* 5.2.56–57). Rather, the eloquence of two marginal figures—the aged provincial and *imbellis* Phoenix—is crucial to (re)constructing the father's power. As a model for sovereignty, this co-agent paradigm of paternity radically differs from the rhetoric of exceptionalism that underpins emperor-as-*pater-patriae*. For Statius, it takes a village to raise a father.

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of his deployment of Zeus's deceptive dream as a loyalty test (*Il.* 2.1–34, 70–75). Only Odysseus's strenuous work to re-rally the troops prevents a mass desertion and maintains Agamemnon's place atop the wartime hierarchy (*Il.* 2.188–210, 243–77).

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