

Sexus muliebris in Flavian Epic

ALISON KEITH
University of Toronto
akeith@chass.utoronto.ca

The Flavian epic poets wrote in the aftermath of renewed political turmoil and social ferment at Rome, a time calculated to re-energize, if such were needed, a genre long at the forefront in classical antiquity for engaging with the most pressing political, social and literary issues of the day. Their self-conscious exploration of poetics has been well treated by Philip Hardie and a host of recent literary critics¹; their political commitments have likewise received considerable attention from contemporary scholars²; and their treatment of current social issues too has attracted great interest amongst cultural historians³. An emergent focus of recent scholarship on these epics has been the relationship between gender and genre, especially as manifested in relations between the sexes⁴. My paper reopens the investigation of the dynamics of gender in the long epics of

1 — Boyle 1990 and 1993; Davis 1990; Hardie 1993; Barchiesi 1995 and 2001; Dominik 1994a; Hershkowitz 1998a and 1998b; Schenck 1999; Zissos 2002; Anzinger 2007; Ganiban 2007; McNelis 2007; Stover 2010.

2 — Wacht 1991; Braund 1993; Quint 1993; Toohey 1993; Dominik 1994b; Taylor 1994; McGuire 1997; Dominik, Garthwaite, and Roche 2009; Zissos 2009; Stover 2012; cf. Jal 1963.

3 — Newlands 2006; Bernstein 2008; Augoustakis 2010.

4 — Hinds 2000; Keith 2000 and 2010; Bessone 2002, 2010, and 2011; Stover 2003; Lovatt 2006; Cowan 2009; Augoustakis 2010.

Valerius Flaccus, Papinius Statius, and Silius Italicus, by analyzing their deployment of the lexicon of sexual difference. I argue that the Flavian epic poets put on display the conventions, and contraventions, of normative femininity (and masculinity) in narratives that are acutely sensitive to contemporary contestations of the territorial assignments of gender in Roman culture.

I begin with Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*, which recuperates several different models of epic femininity – from the hero's lamenting mother Alcimede, through the sacrificial maiden Helle, to the terrifying witch Medea. Alcimede reprises the Homeric role of *mater dolorosa*, associated most famously with Thetis and Hecuba in the *Iliad*⁵, in her proleptic lament over the death of her son in his epic trial. Introduced in conjunction with her husband Aeson (*Arg.* 1.296-8), Alcimede stands out as the feminine voice of grief (*Arg.* 1.315-19)⁶:

Increscunt **matrum gemitus** et *fortia* languent 315
corda patrum; longis flentes amplexibus haerent.
 uox tamen **Alcimedea planctus** super eminent omnes:
femineis tantum illa furens **ululatibus** obstat,
 obruit Idaeam quantum tuba Martia buxum.

The mothers' wailings increase and the fathers' stout hearts sicken; long they cling weeping in one another's embrace. But the voice of Alcimede sounds far above all other lamentations; her ravings overmaster the cries of the women, even as the martial trumpet overwhelms the Idaean pipe.

Valerius' lexical choices in this passage clarify the traditionally gendered distribution of sex roles in epic: mothers lament their sons' departure on a heroic adventure (cf., e.g., Antikleia at Hom. *Od.* 11.197-203, and Alkimede herself in Ap. Rhod. *Arg.* 1.251-2, 261-306); while aged fathers – once brave and thus fitting progenitors of the next generation of heroes – falter in the face of their sons' new trials (cf., e.g., Laertes at Hom. *Od.* 11.187-96, and Aeson at Ap. Rhod. *Arg.* 1.253, 263-4). The poet identifies Alcimede as the leader of the women's laments (317) in diction that rehearses the conventional assignment to the female sex of *gemitus* (315), *planctus* (317) and, especially, *ululatibus* (318), marked as characteristic of women by the adjective *femineis* (alluding to Verg. *Aen.* 2.487-8, 4.667). Thus, the younger Seneca observes that the Romans had traditionally 'stipulated a year as the period of mourning for women, not

5 — On female lament in the *Iliad*, see Kakridis 1949; Slatkin 1991; and see for further bibliography Perrell 2008.

6 — I cite the text of Valerius Flaccus from the 1980 Teubner edition of Ehlers; my translations follow, or lightly adapt, those of J.H. Mozley in his 1936 Loeb Classical Library edition.

to make them mourn that long but to prevent them from mourning longer' (*Epist.* 63.13)⁷, for women were thought to be particularly subject to grief. Alcimedede exemplifies this Roman stereotype in the short speech that follows (1.320-34), with her anticipation of Jason's death and her own insupportable grief. She acknowledges the cliché of maternal fear (*trepididis matribus*, 1.324) and not only predicts that any mention of her son's whereabouts will precipitate nervous alarm (*quos iam mente dies, quam saeva insomnia curis | prospicio!*, 1.329-30) and fainting (*quotiens raucos ad litoris ictus | deficiam a!* *Scythicum metuens pontumque polumque*, 1.330-1), but finally even hints that his departure will occasion her own death (1.333-4): *da, precor, amplexus haesuraque uerba relinque | auribus et dulci iam nunc preme lumina dextra* ('cast your arms about me, I pray; leave me with words that will cling to my ears, and even now close these eyes with your dear hands').

Valerius pointedly contrasts Alcimedede's (implicitly weak) womanly indulgence in lament here with Aeson's stout manly encouragement of his son (1.335-6): *talibus Alcimedede maeret; sed fortior Aeson | attollens dictis animos* ('so Alcimedede grieved; but Aeson more stoutly raised his [son's] spirits with his speech...'). After reporting Aeson's encouraging speech, Valerius tenderly portrays Jason's attention to his fainting mother and aged father (1.348-9): *sic ait. ille suo collapsam pectore matrem | sustinuit magnaue senem ceruice recepit* ('So spoke Aeson. Jason supported his mother, who had collapsed on his breast, and received his elderly father on his broad back'). This exchange will prove Jason's last sight of his parents, however, for the aged pair commit suicide at the end of the book, and in his depiction of their deaths Valerius again alludes to contemporary Roman ideals of gendered behaviour.

Alcimedede, animated by maternal anxiety, consults the underworld deities, attended by her no less anxious, but better disciplined, husband (*Arg.* 1.730-4):

730

Tartareo tum sacra Ioui Stygiisque ferebat
manibus **Alcimedede tanto super anxia nato,**
siquid ab excitis melius praenosceret umbris.
ipsum etiam **curisque patrem talesque prementem**
corde metus ducit, facilem tamen, Aesona coniunx.

Just then Alcimedede was bringing holy offerings to the lord of Tartarus and the Stygian ghosts, in fear for her mighty son, if shades summoned forth might give her surer knowledge. Even Aeson himself, who shares

7 — *Annun fœminis ad lugendum constituere maiores, non ut tam diu lugerent, sed ne diutius; uiris nullum legitimum tempus est, quia nullum honestum.*

her anxiety but who hides such **unmanly** fears in his heart, yields and is led by his wife.

J.H. Mozely (whose Loeb translation I reproduce here unadapted), imports the gendered clichés of feminine fear and masculine self-discipline into his English rendering of the passage, and thereby accurately conveys the gendered contrast implicit in Valerius' lexical choices in this necromantic scene. Moreover, the poet confirms these normative sex roles in his depiction of the pair's suicide shortly afterwards. For when his father's ghost summons him to death (1.749-51), Aeson ponders an appropriately martial exit (1.756-61) and earns comparison to a lion in Valerius' reworking (*Arg.* 1.757-8) of a traditional simile applied to epic heroes (cf. Hom. *Il.* 20.164, Verg. *Aen.* 12.4-9)⁸.

At this crisis point, Alcimede responds with conventionally feminine fear, tears and agitation, Aeson with conventionally masculine dignity and heroism (*Arg.* 1.761-70)⁹:

contra effusa manus haerensque in pectore coniunx
 "me quoque" ait "casus comitem quicumque propinquat
 accipies, nec fata traham natumque uidebo
 te sine, sat caeli patiens, cum prima per altum 765
 uela dedit, potui quae tantum ferre dolorem".
talia per lacrimas. et iam circumspicit Aeson
 praeueniat quo fine minas, quae fata capessat
digna satis: magnos obitus natumque domumque
et genus Aeolium pugnataque poscere bella 770

But his wife, with outstretched hands, clinging to his breast, cries: "No, but you will take me as a partner in whatever fortune should be yours; I will not prolong my life, nor look on my son without you, I who had endured long enough the light of day when first he set sail over the main, I who had strength to bear this deep sorrow". So she spoke through her tears. And now Aeson considers by what end he may outstrip the threats of the king, how he may embrace a worthy fate: his son, his home, the race of Aeolus and the wars he has fought demand a noble death.

In the event, the noble death Aeson deems fitting is suicide (*Arg.* 1.816-22):

adstitit et nigro fumantia pocula tabo 815
 contigit ipsa graui Furiarum maxima dextra;

8 — Spaltenstein 2002, 282, compares Hom. *Il.* 12.41, 17.133, and V. *Aen.* 9.551, for the motif of the cornered predator. On Valerius' use of similes in the episode, see Garson 1969, Hudson-Williams 1973, and Fitch 1976.

9 — Spaltenstein 2002, 283.

illi auide exceptum pateris hausere cruorem.

Fit fragor; irrumpunt foribus qui saeua ferebant
 imperia et strictos iussis regalibus enses.
 in media iam morte senes suffectaque leto 820
 lumina et undanti reuomentes peste cruorem
 conspiciunt...

The chief of the Furies stood close by him, and touched with heavy hand the cup that steamed with deadly venom; eagerly they drank and drained the blood from the bowl.

A tumult arose; with a shout, there burst in soldiers bearing stern commands and weapons drawn at the king's behest. They behold the aged pair already in the grip of doom, their eyes dulled in death, and spewing forth a poisonous stream of blood...

Despite the troubling presence of a Fury presiding over this death scene, their mutual suicide, expressly undertaken in a spirit of opposition to Pelias' tyranny (*Arg.* 1.790-811), resonates against the suicides of many members of the Stoic senatorial opposition to the Julio-Claudian and Flavian emperors¹⁰. Of particular relevance to Valerius' description of the elderly couple's death is the elder Arria's decision to die with her husband Caecina Paetus, when he committed suicide after being condemned by Claudius in 42 CE for his part in the conspiracy of L. Arruntius Camillus Scribonianus¹¹.

Valerius' conventional treatment of the epic *mater dolorosa*, Alcimedea, is matched by his innovative treatment of the sacrificial maiden, exemplified by Helle and Hesione. Orpheus includes Helle's sad fate in the song with which he motivates the Argonauts on the night before their departure (*Arg.* 1.286-93):

hic soror Aeoliden, aeuum mansura per omne,
 deserit, heu saeuae nequiquam erepta nouercae!
 illa quidem fessis longe petit umida palmis
 uellera, sed bibulas urgenti pondere uestes 290
 unda trahit leuique manus labuntur ab auro
 quis tibi, Phrixe, dolor, rapido cum concitus aestu
 respiceres **miseræ** clamantia **uirginis ora**
 extremasque manus sparsosque per aequora crines!

Then the sister whose name shall live for all time deserted Aeolus' son, saved – alas! – in vain from her cruel stepmother. Still with weary hands she strains far behind the wet fleece, but the waves draw down her

10 — On suicide in Flavian epic, see McGuire 1997; on the younger Cato's exemplary death in this tradition, see Griffin 1986a and 1986b.

11 — Centlivres Challet 2008; Carlon 2009, 18-67; Shelton 2013, 15-42.

garments heavy now with the drenching water, and her hands slip off the smooth gold. What grief was yours, Phrixus, when sped on by the whirling tide you looked back and saw the face of the pitiable maiden as she called you, last her hands, and her hair spread out upon the waters.

I have explored elsewhere, in connection with this scene, the Roman epicists' predilection for making the death of a beautiful maiden the catalyst of heroic action¹². Valerius treats the same topos at greater length in the second book of the *Argonautica* in Hercules' (successful) rescue of Hesione from a sea-monster sent to ravage the Troad because of Laomedon's refusal to pay Neptune and Apollo their wages for building the walls of Troy (*Arg.* 2.451-578)¹³. In this episode, the poet captures the traditional hero's attention (and implicitly captivates that of his audience as well) with the promise of the spectacle of a beautiful young maiden exposed to cruel death (*Arg.* 2.451-7):

Alcides Telamonque comes dum litora blando
anfractu sinuosa legunt, **uox attigit aures**
fleBILE succedens, cum fracta remurmurat unda.
attoniti pressere gradum uacuumque secuntur
uocis iter; iam certa sonat, **desertaque durae** 455
uirgo neci quem non hominum superumque uocabat?
acrius hoc instare **uiri succurrere certi**;

While Hercules, with Telamon at his side, passed along the shore that broke back in a pleasant inlet, a voice reached their ears, re-echoing mournfully as each wave broke and murmured away again. Astonished, they went slowly, following the unseen path of the voice; now it sounds distinct. A maiden abandoned to a cruel death – whom among men and gods was she not calling? At this the heroes press on more keenly, resolved to help.

Valerius' introduction of the sacrificial maiden, Hesione, fetishes both her beauty and her vulnerability as the desirable objects of Hercules' (and our) gaze (*Arg.* 2.462-7):

constitit Alcides, **uisuque enisus** in alta
rupe **truces manicas defectaque uirginis ora**
cernit et ad primos turgentia lumina fletus;
exanimum ueluti multa tamen arte coactum 465
maeret ebur, Pariusue notas et nomina sumit
cum lapis aut liquidi referunt miranda colores.

12 — Keith 2000, 128-9. On 'death, femininity and the aesthetic', see Bronfen 1992 and, in Vergil, Heuzé 1985.

13 — On this episode, see Fitch 1976, Edwards 1999.

Hercules halted, and straining his gaze upwards sees on a high crag galling shackles and the worn face of a maiden, her eyes brimming to the verge of weeping; just as when lifeless ivory is yet constrained by mastering skill to weep, or Parian marble assumes man's lineaments and person, or flowing colours bring wonders before us.

Moreover, by memorializing her as a work of art at the very moment of her threatened death, he offers implicit commentary on his own gendered generic commitments in the *Argonautica*.

In response to the hero's inquiry about the cause of her exposure, Hesione reports her royal lineage and Troy's wealth until ravaged by a sea-monster (2. 471-92), to whom the flower of Trojan maidenhood has been sacrificed. Interestingly, Hesione increases the toll of virgins sacrificed to the beast in her explanation (*Arg.* 2.480-90):

... **primaeva furenti** 480
 huic **manus** amplexus inter **planctusque parentum**
 deditur. hoc sortes, hoc corniger imperat Hammon,
uirgineam damnare animam sortitaque Lethen
corpora; crudelis scopulis **me** destinat **urna.**
 uerum o iam redeunt Phrygibus si numina tuque 485
 ille ades auguriis promisse et sorte deorum,
 iam cui candentes uotiuo in gramine pascit
 cornipedes genitor, nostrae stata dona salutis,
 adnue **me**que, precor, defectaque Pergama **monstris**
eripe... 490

A band of young maidens is sacrificed to its rage amid the tears and embraces of their parents. This the lot, this horned Ammon commands – that a maiden's life and her body that drew death's lot be doomed; the cruel urn condemns me to the rocks. But oh! If once again Heaven inclines to the Phrygians and if you are the one whose arrival was promised by augury and the gods omen, and for whom my father now feeds snow-white horses in the votive pasture, the gift pledged for saving my life, nod and rescue both me and wasted Troy from the monster...

The supernumerary maidens of Hesione's speech have occasioned difficulty amongst the commentators¹⁴, though they well exemplify the way that the Flavian epic poets repeat and amplify the conventions of the genre, including the territorial assignments of the *sexus muliebris*, whose members are so often reduced to immobility in the landscapes through which the epic hero travels¹⁵.

14 — Poortvliet 1991, 260-1; Spaltenstein 2002, 443-4.

15 — Keith 1999, developing de Lauretis 1984, 12; and Keith 2000, developing de Lauretis 1987, 39.

In Valerius' innovative treatment of the episode, the maiden's misery colours the unhappy landscape (through pathetic fallacy), which reminds the hero of the blighted sites of his earlier labours and thereby inspires him to another (*Arg.* 2.492-6):

auxerat haec locus et facies maestissima capti
litoris et tumuli caelumque, quod incubat urbi,
quale laborantis Nemees iter aut Erymanthi
uidit et infectae miseratus flumina Lernaie. 495

The place lent strength to her words, the doleful aspect too of the captive shore, the funeral pyres and the sky that brooded over the city; just so, with pity, had he looked upon the paths to Nemea and Erymanthus, and on Lerna's poisoned waters.

In this way, Valerius motivates the exemplary hero's salvific activity as a reprise of his earlier labours. The sight of the impending death of the beautiful maiden further confirms Hercules' motivation when his bow and arrows unexpectedly prove useless (*Arg.* 2. 524-6):

iam brevis et telo uolucris non utilis aer.
tum uero fremitus uanisque insania coepti
et tacitus pudor et **rursus pallescere uirgo:** 525

Now the space is short and useless for the flying shaft. Then Moreover he groaned at the madness of that vain task, his silent shame, and the maiden pale once more...

The moment of despair, however, is the final spur to the hero's triumph over the monster and rescue of the maiden (*Arg.* 2.542-5):

nec minus in scopulos crudique cacumina saxi
emicat Alcides **uinclisque tenentibus aufert**
uirgineas de rupe manus aptatque superbis
arma umeris ... 545

No less swiftly, Hercules springs up the crags to the top of the harsh rock, and frees the maiden's hands from the fetters binding her to the cliff, and girds his armour on his vaunting shoulders.

In a striking departure from epic convention, Valerius does not make Hesione herself the hero's reward, as she is elsewhere¹⁶, and as he himself implies she will be in the lines that follow (*Arg.* 2.545-9):

... regem inde petens superabat ouante 545

16 — And as Valerius' model here, Ovid's Andromeda of *Met.* 4, is: see Burck 1976.

litora tuta gradu, qualis per pascua uictor
 ingreditur, tum colla tumens, tum celsior armis
 taurus, ubi adsueti pectoris stabula alta reuisit
 et patrium nemus et bello quos ultus **amores**.

Thence seeking the king he outstrips the safe shore with vaunting steps; just as through the pastures the victorious bull stalks, with swelling neck and towering shoulders, when he returns to the high fold of the herd he knows, and the woods of his home and the beloved he has avenged in battle.

These lines rework Vergil's famous passage in *Georgics* 3 concerning the power of *eros* in the animal world, which he illustrates with the contest between two bulls for a beautiful cow (*formosa iuuenca*, *Geo.* 3.219). In the *Georgics*, the defeated bull goes into exile, groaning over the unavenged loss of his beloved (*multa gemens ... quos amisit inultus amores*, *Geo.* 3.226-7), precisely in order to recruit his strength for a rematch. Valerius motivates Hercules' victory over the sea-monster and release of Hesione on the model of Vergil's exiled bull's determination to avenge the loss of his love by way of the bull simile applied to Aeneas and Turnus in single combat in the last book of the *Aeneid* (12.697-724). As Aeneas and Turnus fight for marriage with Lavinia, and possession of the kingdom she brings to the victor¹⁷, so Hercules and the sea-monster, Valerius suggests, fight for Hesione.

Valerius merely hints at such an erotic motivation for his hero's exploit, despite the conventionally amatory inspiration of epic combat in both Homer (Helen in *Iliad* 3, Penelope in *Odyssey* 22) and Vergil (Lavinia in *Aeneid* 7-12), who bring the woman for whom the heroes fight before the assembled warriors as if to display the prize for whom they compete to the rivals at the climactic moment of combat¹⁸. Rather Valerius reserves this motivation to Medea's early encounters with Jason and the Argonauts in *Argonautica* 5.363-98 and 6.575-682¹⁹. His introductory notice of Medea in the first book of the epic, however, undermines this motivation by recourse to another gendered cliché of the genre, that of the epic witch, who appears as both a sexually desirable goddess (like Circe in *Odyssey* 10) and the fearsome exponent of magic rites (again like Circe in *Odyssey* 10, or like Dido's priestess in *Aeneid* 4 and Lucan's Erichtho in *Bellum Ciuile*

17 — Keith 2000, 49-60.

18 — On the *teichoscopia* in *Iliad* 3 as a type-scene of female adornment before an admiring male audience, see Forsythe 1979 and Postlethwaite 1985, with further brief discussion in Edwards 1992, 301-2 and 312-13. On Valerius' *teichoscopia*, see Salemme 1993; Fucecchi 1997; and Spaltenstein 2005.

19 — On the latter scene, see Fucecchi 1997, ad loc., 175-223.

6). Medea enters the *Argonautica* in the guise of the latter, in Mopsus' terrifying vision of the Argonauts' Colchian labours (*Arg.* 1.223-6)²⁰:

“... quem circum uellera Martem
aspicio? **quaenam** aligeris secat anguibus auras
caede madens? quos ense ferit? miser eripe paruos 225
Aesonide. **cerno en thalamos ardere iugales**”.

“What strife is this I see around the fleece? What woman is this, dripping with slaughter, who cleaves the breezes on winged serpents? Whom does she strike with the sword? Poor Jason, snatch your little sons! Look – I see the bridal chambers ablaze!”

Passing directly from the conflict over the Golden Fleece to Medea's murder of her children and Jason's Corinthian bride before her flight in the chariot of the Sun, Mopsus's vision condemns Medea as the murderous witch who both secures Jason's heroic stature and finally undoes it. But his prophecy also emphasizes her transgression of feminine norms and renders her almost Amazonian in her engagement of indiscriminate slaughter (*caede madens*) and usurpation of the male prerogative of the sword (*quos ense ferit*). Although Valerius' epic, cut off by the poet's early death, does not reach even her murder of Absyrtus (let alone those of her later career), Medea's ominous future attends the maiden (*uirgo*, as she is regularly styled by Valerius)²¹ and undermines our sympathy for her maidenly fears in the poem. But the martial masculine exploits of the epic androgyny, merely hinted at here, find fuller development in both Statius and Silius, who explore the transgressive potential of women on the battlefield in *Thebaid* 12 and *Punica* 2 respectively.

Thus Statius represents both Antigone and Argia, Polynices' sister and wife, as assuming martial ambitions when they meet on the battlefield over his body. By marrying Polynices, Argia becomes privy to his desire for war with his brother (2.319-62), and so it is she who overcomes her father's reluctance to send the Seven to war against Thebes (3.678-721) – as she acknowledges when cradling his corpse on the battlefield (12.336-7): *ipsa dedi bellum maestumque rogavi | ipsa patrem, ut talem nunc te complexa tenerem* ('I myself gave you war, I myself asked my sorrowing father – that now I might hold you thus in my embrace'). But Statius transforms Argia from the mouthpiece of war into her husband's comrade-at-arms, when she determines (as Federica Bessone has argued) to “follow” the deceased Polynices to Thebes, and alone faces death, after

20 — On prophecy in Valerius, see Gross 2003 and Manuwald 2009.

21 — *Arg.* 5.240, 334, etc.; cf. Valerius' application of the adjective *uirginis* to Medea at, e.g., *Arg.* 5.356, 392, etc.

the dangers and labours of the march, to perform his funeral honours'²². Statius confirms her masculine daring at the outset of the trek (*Theb.* 12.177-86)²³:

hic **non femineae** subitum **uirtutis** amorem
 colligit Argia, **sexuque** inmane **relicto**
 tractat opus: placet (egregii spes dura pericli!)
 comminus infandi leges accedere regni, 180
 quo Rhodopes non ulla nurus nec alumna niuosi
 Phasidis innuptis uallata cohortibus iret.
 tunc mouet arte dolum, quo semet ab agmine fido
 segreget, inmitesque deos regemque cruentum
 contemptrix animae et magno temeraria luctu 185
 prouocet; **hortantur pietas ignesque pudici.**

Here Argia conceives a sudden passion for unwomanly courage and engages in an immense work, abandoning her sex. She resolves (stubborn hope of noble peril) to confront head on the laws of the impious monarchy, where no bride of Rhodope, no nursling of snowy Phasis flanked by virgin cohorts would go. Then she essays an artful stratagem to detach herself from the faithful train and challenge ruthless gods and the bloody king, despising her life, rash with mighty mourning. Piety and chaste love urge her on.

Inspired by piety and chaste love (186), Argia is emboldened to unwomanly manliness: the juxtaposition of *non femineae* with *uirtutis* (177) underlines the masculine daring of her 'huge project', an undertaking (*opus*, 179) marked as 'epic' by its very size (*immane*, 178). Statius thereby signals Argia's pretensions to the role of the epic 'man' (cf. *arma uirumque cano*, Verg. *Aen.* 1.1), in her transgression of feminine conventions, and concomitant assumption of manly valour (*uirtus*, 12.177), motivated precisely by her devotion to womanly ideals, *viz.* the marital compact²⁴. Her matronly virtue thus paradoxically underwrites a martial ambition that surpasses even that of the Amazons (12.181-2)²⁵.

On the battlefield, Argia and Antigone join forces to secure proper burial for Polynices. As the women lament over Polynices' corpse, Argia proposes that they enter into alliance with one another (*Theb.* 12.378,

22 — Personal communication. For the celebration of '*pietas*, duty, loyalty and affection towards one's family', see Sen. *Helv.* 16, with Vidén 1993, 129-32. For Arria and Fannia, see Plin. *Epist.* 3.11.3, 3.16 5.14.4, 7.19, 9.13, with Vidén 1993, 92-102; Centlivres Challet 2008; Carlon 2009, and Shelton 2013.

23 — I cite the text of Statius' *Thebaid* from Hill's 1983 edition; translations are adapted from J.H. Mozley in his 1928 Loeb Classical Library edition.

24 — On the challenge Argia poses to normative gender relations, see Bernstein 2008, 85-8 and 94-101, and Bessone 2010 and 2011.

25 — Bessone 2010.

iunge, age, iunge fidem) and Antigone agrees immediately when she recognizes her brother's wife (*Theb.* 12.382-8):

“mene igitur **sociam** – pro fors ignara! – malorum,
 mene times? mea membra tenes, mea funera plangis.
 cedo, tene, pudet heu! **pietas ignaua sororis**
haec prior – !” hic **pariter** lapsae **iunctoque** per ipsum 385
amplexu miscent auidae **lacrimasque comasque,**
partitaeque artus redeunt alterna **gementes**
 ad uultum et cara uicibus ceruice fruuntur.

“Do you fear me, then – how blind is chance! – partner in your evils? Mine are the limbs you hold, mine the corpse you bewail. I yield, you take him. Ah shame! The cowardly devotion of a sister! She is earlier – !” Here they collapse side by side and together embrace the same body, greedily mingling their tears and locks, and sharing his limbs between them; they return with united lament to his face and glut themselves by turns upon his well-loved breast.

Their harmony is shattered, however, by the arrival of Creon's armed guards, before whom they lay their competing claims to the burial of Polynices (12.456-60). In their rivalry for death (*ambitur saeua de morte animosaque leti | spes furit*, 12.456-7), they rehearse the brothers' fratricidal duel – though in words rather than under arms (*Theb.* 12.461-2): *nusquam illa alternis modo quae reuerentia uerbis, | iram odiumque putes* ('gone is the reverence that but now was in the words of each; you would think it anger and hatred'). Their unwavering commitment to death is only finally thwarted by the arrival of Theseus' Athenian army, whose victory over the tyrant Creon will secure the burial of all the Argives (*Theb.* 12.677-81):

saeuus at interea ferro post terga reuinctas
 Antigenen uiduamque Creon Adrastida leto
 admouet; ambae hilares et mortis amore superbae
 ensibus intentant iugulos regemque cruentum 680
 destituunt; cum dicta ferens Theseia Phegeus
 adstitit...

But meanwhile Creon ruthlessly leads Antigone and the widowed daughter of Adrastus to death, their hands fettered behind them; both cheerful and proudly eager for death, they hold out their necks to the swords and baffle the cruel tyrant, when Phegeus, bearing Theseus' message, arrived.

Argia's and Antigone's entrance onto the battlefield and subsequent embrace of violent death are motivated by familial piety and conjugal

loyalty, the highest feminine virtues celebrated in Flavian culture²⁶. Polynices' wife and sister thereby also invite comparison with such exemplary masterful women as the elder Arria and her granddaughter Fannia, whose conjugal loyalty earned them contemporary commemoration as Roman icons of Stoic virtue²⁷.

Statius even adapts the quintessentially transgressive figure of the Amazon to the contemporary Roman idealization of marital fidelity. On display in Theseus' (anachronistically Roman) triumph, the Amazons have been civilized, removed from the barbarous margins of the inhabited world and relocated to the centre of Greek civilization (*Theb.* 12.523-31):

ante ducem spolia et, duri Mauortis imago,
uirginei currus cumulataque fercula cristis
 et tristes ducuntur equi truncaequae bipennes, 525
 quis nemora et solidam Maeotida caedere suetae,
 corytique leues portantur et ignea gemmis
 cingula et **informes dominarum sanguine peltae.**
ipsae autem nondum trepidae sexumue fatentur,
 nec uulgare gemunt aspernanturque precari, 530
 et tantum innuptae quaerunt delubra Mineruae.

Before the general are borne his spoils, the virgin chariots that recall the grim War-God, and wagons heaped with crests and downcast steeds and broken axes, with which the foe were wont to cleave the forests and frozen Maeotis, light quivers too are borne and baldrics fiery with gems and shields stained with the blood of the warrior-maids. They themselves, still unafraid, admit no thought of sex, and scorn to entreat nor utter mean lament, only they seek the shrine of unwedded Minerva.

Theseus' martial mastery of the Amazons complements his marital mastery of their queen, Hippolyte (*Theb.* 12.533-9):

...nec non populos in semet agebat
Hippolyte, iam blanda genas patiensque mariti
foederis. hanc patriae ritus fregisse seueros 535
 Atthides oblique secum mirantur operto
 murmure, quod nitidi crines, quod pectora palla
 tota latent, magnis quod barbara semet Athenis
 misceat atque **hosti ueniat paritura marito.**

Hippolyte too drew all toward her, friendly now in look and patient of the marriage-bond. With hushed whispers and sidelong gaze the Attic

26 — See, e.g., D'Ambra 1993; Bernstein 2008, 7-29.

27 — Carlon 2009, 175-82; La Penna 2000, 28-30; Franchet d'Espèrey 2008; Centlivres Challet 2008; Shelton 2013, 15-91.

women marvel that she has broken her country's austere laws, that her locks are trim, and her whole breast hidden beneath her robe, that though a barbarian she mingles with mighty Athens, and comes to bear offspring to her enemy husband.

The Athenian king's reduction of the Amazons to prisoners of war, and their leader to his bedmate, restores the traditional hierarchy of the sexes and thereby anticipates the restoration of order that he will impose on Thebes after defeating Creon. In Statius' epic, the bellicose queen of the Amazons thus emerges as a model Greek wife, whose modest dress confirms her chaste readiness to bear her husband an heir.

The pregnant Hippolyte is in no position to campaign on her own, or her husband's, behalf (*Theb.* 12.635-8):

isset et Arctos Cadmea ad moenia ducens 635
 Hippolyte turmas: **retinet iam certa tumentis**
spes uteri, coniunxque rogat dimittere curas
 Martis et emeritas thalamo sacrare pharetras.

Hippolyte too would have gone to Cadmus' walls leading her northern troops: already the sure hope of her swelling womb holds her back, and her husband asks her to put aside the cares of Mars and to dedicate her retired quivers to the marriage chamber.

Hippolyte is here transformed from transgressive female warrior into dutifully reproductive wife, her weapons retired from the battlefield despite her own inclination to return to the fray. Statius is clearly indebted to earlier epic characterization of Amazons in his portrait of Hippolyte, most notably to Vergil's description of Camilla²⁸. But his domestication of the warrior woman Hippolyte also engages historical precedent in at least one respect. For in 60 or 61 CE, Boudicca – the widow of Prasutagus, the Romans' client-king of the Iceni in East Anglia – led the combined forces of the Iceni and the Trinovantes in rebellion against the Roman governor Suetonius Paullinus and his army²⁹.

If contemporary Roman descriptions of Boudicca implicitly draw on the mythological figure of the Amazon, the fate of the historical British queen may reciprocally inform the Flavian epicists' representation of Amazonian warrior queens. In this context, a final figure to consider is Silius' Asbyte, introduced (like Vergil's Camilla) as both virgin huntress (*haec, ignara viri uacuoque assueta cubili, | uenatu et siluis primos dependerat annos, Pun.* 2. 68-9) and also (like Vergil's Penthesilean Dido) as a

28 — Pollmann 2004, ad loc.

29 — Tac. *Ann.* 14.31-7, *Agr.* 16.1-2; Dio 62.1-12. On Boudicca, see Dudley and Webster 1962; Millett 1990; and Braund 1996.

queen (*regina*, 2.66, 169) of Libyan forces, in this case from Marmarica³⁰. As a warrior maiden (*belligera uirgo*, 2.168), she is duly compared by Silius to the Thracian Amazons (*Pun.* 2.73-6):

quales Threiciae Rhodopen Pangaeaque lustrant
 saxosis nemora alta iugis cursuque fatigant
 Hebrum innupta manus: spreti Ciconesque Getaeque 75
 et Rhesi domus et lunatis Bistones armis.

Even so the band of Amazons in Thrace traverse Rhodope and the high forests on the stony ridges of Mount Pangaeus, and tire out the Hebrus by their speed; they spurn all suitors – the Cicones and Getae, the royal house of Rhesus, and the Bistones with their crescent-shaped shield.

Bare-breasted and carrying the Amazonian lunate shield (*nuda latus Marti ac fulgentem tegmine laeuam | Thermodontiaca munita in proelia pelta*, 2.79-80), Asbyte enters Silius' narrative as a conventional Amazonian figure, right down to the company of female comrades-at-arms that surrounds her (2.82-3)³¹. Her two-horse chariot (*biiugo curru*, 2.82), however, links her to Boudicca, whom Tacitus portrays addressing the British troops 'from a chariot with her daughters before her' (*curru filias prae se uehens*, Tac. *Ann.* 14.35; cf. Dio 62.8.2).

Silius reflects on the conventional hierarchy of the sexes throughout Asbyte's *aristeia*. As she hurls her weapons at Saguntum's walls, the old Cretan warrior Mopsus, stationed between his two sons (*medius iuuenum*, 2.108), catches sight of her and aims his weapon, only to kill her comrade Harpe. In response, Asbyte kills his sons Dorylas and Icarus, and the devastated father leaps from the city-walls in despair at their deaths. This scandalous overthrow of the hierarchy of gender can only be righted by a second battle of the sexes, between Asbyte and Hercules' priest Theron (*Alcidae templi custos araeque sacerdos*, *Pun.* 2.150), who reprises the role of Camilla's killer Chloerus, the priest of Cybele in *Aeneid* 11. Theron, however, is the diametric opposite of Chloerus – no gold-clad effeminate votary of the Magna Mater, but a club-wielding avatar of his muscle-bound god, who relies on his youth, physical prowess and Herculean weapons (club, lion-skin, and shield) to best the warrior maiden (*Pun.* 2.193-205):

aduersus consurgit equos uillosaque fului
 ingerit obiectans trepidantibus ora leonis.
 attoniti terrore nouo rictuque minaci 195

30 — I cite Silius' *Punica* from the Loeb edition of Duff 1934; translations are also adapted from his edition.

31 — On the Amazons, see DuBois 1982 and Tyrrell 1984.

quadrupedes iactant resupino pondere currum.
 tum saltu Asbyten conantem linquere pugnas
 occupat, incussa gemina inter tempora claua,
 feruentesque rotas turbataque frena pauore
 disiecto spargit collisa per ossa cerebro; 200
 ac rapta properans caedem ostentare bipenni,
 amputat e curru reuolutae uirginis ora.
 necdum irae positae; celsa nam figitur hasta
 spectandum caput; id gestent ante agmina Poenum,
 imperat, et propere currus ad moenia uertant. 205

He rose up right in front of the horses and held before them the shaggy head of a tawny lion and thrust it in their frightened faces. Frantic with fear unfelt before – fear of the menacing open jaws – the coursers upset the heavy car and turned it over. Then, as Asbyte tried to flee from the fight, he sprang to stop her and smote her between the twin temples with his club; he spattered the glowing wheels and the reins, disordered by the terrified horses, with the brains that gushed from the broken skull. Then he seized her axe and, eager to display his slaughter of her, cut off the head of the maiden when she rolled out of her chariot. Not yet was his rage sated; for he fixed her head on a lofty pike, for all to see, and bade men bear it in front of the Punic army, and drive the chariot with speed to the town.

The violence of Theron's assault on Asbyte offers a striking contrast to the eroticism of Silius' Vergilian model. Spaltenstein attributes the brutality of Theron's killing of Asbyte to imperial taste (what used to be called 'decadent "silver" Latin')³², and we may agree that the violent realism owes something to the contemporary spectacles of the amphitheatre. But here again, details of the Roman rout of Boudicca's forces provide an illuminating context for Asbyte's violent death on the battlefield. Amazonian (and Camillan) though she undoubtedly is in her literary lineage, Asbyte's martial exploits are depicted by Silius in a starkly contemporary idiom of military violence.

In this regard, we can trace the impact on Silius of some of the same socio-cultural developments that influence Valerius and Statius in their portrayal of the female sex in epic. Perhaps the most notable feature shared by all three Flavian epicists, however, is their repeated definition of the female sex against the standards of masculinity (and often vice versa). The traditional epic *mater dolorosa* acquires new purpose in her quasi-Stoic opposition to the tyrant who sends her son to sea, while sacrificial maidens and Amazonian warriors entertain epic audiences with lurid spectacles of feminine death that reflect those recently staged in the

32 — Spaltenstein 1986, ad loc.

Flavian amphitheatre (Mart. *lib. de spect.* 6, 7, 8, 30 Shackleton Bailey)³³. If it is difficult to discern parallels in these epics for the chaste wives and dutiful daughters of early imperial prose literature³⁴, it is perhaps because their transgressive sisters provide such spectacular narrative counterpoints to the heroes and antiheroes of the Roman epic tradition.

Bibliography

- Anzinger, S. 2007. *Schweigen im römischen Epos: Zur Dramaturgie der Kommunikation bei Vergil, Lucan, Valerius Flaccus und Statius*. Berlin.
- Augoustakis, A. 2010. *Motherhood and the Other: Fashioning Female Power in Flavian Epic*. Oxford.
- Barchiesi, A. 1995. 'Figure dell'intertestualità nell'epica romana', *Lexis* 13, 49-67.
- Barchiesi, A. 2001. 'Genealogie letterarie nell'epica imperiale: fondamentalismo e ironia', *Entretiens Fondation Hardt* 47, 315-54.
- Bernstein, N. W. 2008. *In the Image of the Ancestors: Narratives of Kinship in Flavian Epic*. Toronto.
- Bessone, F. 2002. 'Voce femminile e tradizione elegiaca nella *Tebaide* di Stazio', in *I 'Sette a Tebe'. Dal mito alla letteratura*, A. Aloni, E. Berardi, G. Besso and S. Cecchin (eds.). Bologna: 185-217.
- Bessone, F. 2010. 'Feminine roles in Statius' *Thebaid*: "The Heroic Wife of the Unfortunate Hero", in M. Formisano and T. Fuhrer (eds.), *Gender-Inszenierungen in der antiken Literatur*, 65-93. Trier.
- Bessone, F. 2011. *La Tebaide di Stazio. Epica e potere*. Pisa – Rome.
- Boyle, A. J. (ed.) 1990. *The Imperial Muse: Ramus Essay on Roman Literature of the Empire 2: Flavian Epicist to Claudian*. Bendigo.
- Boyle, A. J. (ed.) 1993. *Roman Epic*. London.
- Boyle, A. J. and Dominik, W. J. (eds.) 2003. *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text*. Leiden.
- Braund, D. 1993. 'Writing a Roman *Argonautica*: the historical dynamic', *Hermathena* 154, 11-17.
- Braund, D. 1996. *Ruling Roman Britain*. London.
- Bronfen, E. 1992. *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*. New York.
- Burck, E. 1976. 'Die Befreiung der Andromeda bei Ovid und der Hesione bei Valerius Flaccus', *WS* n.s. 10, 221-38.
- Carlson, J. M. 2009. *Pliny's Women. Constructing Virtue and Creating Identity in the Roman World*. Cambridge.

33 — Coleman 1990.

34 — On these women see, e.g., Santoro L'Hoir 1992, Vidén 1993, Centlivres Challet 2008, Carlson 2009, and Shelton 2013.

- Centlivres Challet, C.-E. 2008. 'Not So Unlike Him. Women in Quintilian, Statius and Pliny', in F. Bertholet, A. Bielman Sánchez, R. Frei-Stolba (eds.), *Egypte – Grèce – Rome. Les différents visages des femmes antiques. Travaux et colloques du séminaire d'épigraphie grecque et latine de l'IASA 2002-2006*, 289-324. Brussels.
- Coleman, K.M. 1990. 'Fatal charades: Roman executions staged as mythological enactments', *JRS* 80, 44-73.
- Coleman, K.M. (ed.) 2006. *Liber Spectaculorum*, Oxford.
- Cowan, R. 2009. 'Thrasymennus' Wanton Wedding: etymology, genre and *uir-tus* in Silius Italicus, *Punica*', *CQ* 59, 226-37.
- D'Ambra, E. 1993. *Private Lives, Imperial Virtues: the Frieze of the Forum Transitorium in Rome*. Princeton.
- Davis, M. A. 1990. 'Ratis Audax: Valerius Flaccus' bold ship', in Boyle (ed.), 1990, 46-73.
- De Lauretis, T. 1984. *Alice Doesn't*. Bloomington.
- De Lauretis, T. 1987. *Technologies of Gender*. Bloomington.
- Dominik, W. J. 1994a. *Speech and Rhetoric in Statius' Thebaid*. Hildesheim.
- Dominik, W. J. 1994b. *The Mythic Voice of Statius: Power and Politics in the Thebaid*. Leiden.
- Dominik, W. J. Garthwaite, J. and Roche, P. A. (eds.) 2009. *Writing Politics in Imperial Rome*. Leiden.
- DuBois, P. 1982. *Centaur and Amazons: Women and the Pre-History of the Great Chain of Being*. Ann Arbor.
- Dudley, D. R. and Webster, G. 1962. *Rebellion of Boudicca*. London.
- Duff, J. D. 1934. *Silius Italicus, Punica*. 2 vols. Cambridge MA and London.
- Edwards, M. J. 1999. 'The Role of Hercules in Valerius Flaccus', *Latomus* 58, 150-63.
- Edwards, M. W. 1992. 'Homer and Oral Tradition: The Type-Scene', *Oral Tradition* 7/2, 284-330.
- Ehlers, W.-W. (ed.) 1980. *Gai Valeri Flacci Setini Balbi Argonauticon libros octo*. Stuttgart.
- Fitch, J. G. 1976. 'Aspects of Valerius Flaccus' use of similes' *TAPA* 106, 113-24.
- Forsyth, N. 1979. 'The Allurement Scene: a Typical Pattern in Greek Oral Epic', *CA* 12, 107-20.
- Franchet d'Espèrey, S. 2008. 'Principe féminin et principe conjugal dans la *Thébaïde* de Stace', in P.P. Galand-Hallyn and C. Lévy (eds.), *La villa et l'univers familial de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance*, 191-204. Paris.
- Fucecchi, M. 1997. *La teichoskopia e l'innamoramento di Medea. Saggio di commento a Valerio Flacco Argonautiche, 6.427-760*. Pisa.
- Fucecchi, M. 2006. *Una guerra in Colchide: Valerio Flacco, Argonautiche 6, 1-426*. Pisa.

- Ganiban, R. T. 2007. *Statius and Virgil: the Thebaid and the reinterpretation of the Aeneid*. Cambridge.
- Garson, R. W. 1969. 'Homeric Echoes in Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*', *CQ* 19, 362-6.
- Griffin, M. T. 1986a. 'Philosophy, Cato, and Roman suicide: I', *G & R* 33, 64-77.
- Griffin, M. T. 1986b. 'Philosophy, Cato, and Roman suicide: II', *G & R* 33, 192-202.
- Gross, A. 2003. *Prophezeiungen und Prodigiien in den Argonautica des Valerius Flaccus*. Munich.
- Hardie, P. R. 1993. *The Epic Successors of Virgil: a study in the dynamics of a tradition*. Cambridge.
- Hershkowitz, D. 1998a. *The Madness of Epic*. Oxford.
- Hershkowitz, D. 1998b. *Valerius Flaccus' Argonautica: Abbreviated Voyages in Silver Latin Epic*. Oxford.
- Heuzé, P. 1985. *L'image du corps dans l'œuvre de Virgile*. Paris and Rome.
- Hill, D. E. (ed.) 1983. *P. Papini Stati Thebaidos Libri XII*. Leiden.
- Hinds, S. 1998. *Allusion and Intertext: dynamics of appropriation in Roman poetry*. Cambridge.
- Hinds, S. 2000. 'Essential Epic: genre and gender from Macer to Statius', in M. Depew and D. Obbink (eds.), *Matrices of Genre: Authors, Canons, and Society*, 221-44. Cambridge MA.
- Hudson-Williams, A. 1973. 'Some Vergilian Echoes in Valerius Flaccus', *Mnemosyne* 26, 23-8.
- Jal, P. 1963. *La guerre civile à Rome: étude littéraire et morale*. Paris.
- Kakridis, J. Th. 1949 *Homeric Researches*, Lund.
- Keith, A. M. 1999. 'Versions of Epic Masculinity in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*', in A. Barchiesi, P. Hardie and S. Hinds (eds.), *Ovidian Transformations: Essays on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and its Reception*, 214-39. Cambridge.
- Keith, A. M. 2000. *Engendering Rome: women in Latin epic*. Cambridge.
- La Penna, A. 1981 [repr. 2000]. 'Tipi e modelli femminili nella poesia dell'epoca dei Flavi (Stazio, Silio Italico, Valerio Flacco)', in *Atti del convegno di studi vespasiani* (Rieti, settembre 1979), 223-51. Rieti.
- Lovatt, H. 2006. 'The Female gaze in Flavian Epic: looking out from the walls in Valerius Flaccus and Statius', in Nauta, van Dam, and Smolenaars, 59-78.
- Manuwald, G. 2009. 'What do Humans Get to Know about the Gods and their Plans? On Prophecies and their Deficiencies in Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*', *Mnemosyne* 62, 586-608.
- McGuire, D. T. 1997. *Acts of Silence: Civil War, Tyranny, and Suicide in the Flavian Epics*. Hildesheim.
- McNelis, C. 2007. *Statius' Thebaid and the Poetics of Civil War*. Cambridge.

- Millett, M. 1990. *The Romanization of Britain*. Cambridge.
- Mozely, J. H. (ed.) 1928. *Statius*. 2 vols. Cambridge MA.
- Mozely, J. H. (ed.) 1936. *Valerius Flaccus, Argonautica*. Cambridge MA.
- Nauta, R.R. van Dam, H.-J. and Smolenaars, J.J.L. (eds.) 2006. *Flavian Poetry*, Leiden.
- Newlands, C. 2006. 'Mothers in Statius: Sorrows and Surrogates', *Helios* 33, 203-28.
- Perkell, C. 2008. 'Reading the Laments of *Iliad* 24', in A. Suter (ed.), *Lament: Studies in the Ancient Mediterranean and Beyond*, 93-117. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Pollmann, K. F. 2004. *Statius, Thebaid 12: Introduction, text and commentary*. Paderborn.
- Poortvliet, H. 1991. *C. Valerius Flaccus, Argonautica Book II: A Commentary*. Amsterdam.
- Postlethwaite, N. 1985. "The Duel of Paris and Menelaos and the Teichoskopia in *Iliad* 3', *Antichthon* 19, 1-6.
- Quint, D. 1989. 'Epic and Empire', *Comparative Literature* 41, 1-32.
- Quint, D. 1993. *Epic and Empire*. Princeton.
- Salemme, C. 1993. *Medea: un antico mito in Valerio Flacco*. Naples.
- Santoro L'Hoir, F. 1992. *The Rhetoric of Gender Terms. 'Man', 'Woman', and the Portrayal of Character in Latin Prose*. Leiden.
- Schenk, P. 1999. *Studien zur poetischen Kunst des Valerius Flaccus: Beobachtungen zur Ausgestaltung des Kriegsthemas in den Argonautica*. Munich.
- Shelton, J.-A. 2013. *The Women of Pliny's Letters*. London and New York.
- Slatkin, L.M. 1991. *The Power of Thetis*. Berkeley and Los Angeles.
- Spaltenstein, F. 1986. *Commentaire des Punica de Silius Italicus (livres 1 à 8)*. Geneva.
- Spaltenstein, F. 2002. *Commentaire des Argonautiques de Valérius Flaccus (livres 1 et 2)*. Brussels.
- Spaltenstein, F. 2005. *Commentaire des Argonautiques de Valérius Flaccus (livres 6, 7, et 8)*. Brussels.
- Stover, T. 2003. 'Confronting Medea: genre, gender, and allusion in the *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus', *CP* 98, 123-47.
- Stover, T. 2010. 'Rebuilding Argo: Valerius Flaccus' Poetic Creed', *Menmosyne* 63, 640-50.
- Stover, T. 2012. *Epic and Empire in Vespasianic Rome: a new reading of Valerius Flaccus' Argonautica*. Oxford.
- Taylor, P. R. 1994. 'Valerius' Flavian *Argonautica*', *CQ* 44, 212-35.
- Toohy, P. 1993. 'Jason, Pallas and Domitian in Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*', *ICS* 18, 191-201.

- Tyrrell, W. B. 1984. *Amazons, a Study in Athenian Mythmaking*. Baltimore.
- Vidén, G. 1993. *Women in Roman Literature. Attitudes of Authors under the Early Empire*. Göteborg.
- Wacht, M. 1991. *Jupiters Weltenplan im Epos des Valerius Flaccus*. Stuttgart.
- Zissos, A. 2002. 'Reading Models and the Homeric Program in Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*', *Helios* 29, 69-96.
- Zissos, A. 2009. 'Navigating Power: Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*', in Dominik, Garthwaite, and Roche, 351-66.