The Legend of Thebes and Literary Patricide in Chaucer, Boccaccio, and Statius

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CHAUCER'S REFUSAL TO NAME Boccaccio in *The Knight's Tale* and elsewhere in his poetry has often been interpreted as a strategic attempt to lend his writings more substantial authority.[1] As a recent author writing in a vernacular language, Boccaccio's name lacks the solemnity of a "Lollius," a "Corynne," or even an anonymous "old book." Critics have generally agreed, therefore, that Chaucer invents these sources for the same reason that medieval historiographers such as John of Salisbury or Guido delle Colonne feigned reliance on ancient *auctores* while camouflaging signs of recent invention: to bolster the authenticity and credibility of his works.[2] I want to propose in this essay

[1] See especially Robert Edwards, *Chaucer and Boccaccio: Antiquity and Modernity* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2002), 17; Donald R. Howard, *Chaucer: His Life, His Works, His World* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1987), 189–91; and C. David Benson, "The 'Knight's Tale' as History," *Chaucer Review* 3 (1968): 107–23. William E. Coleman, "The Knight's Tale," in *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales*, ed. Robert M. Correale and Mary Hamel, 2 vols. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002), 2:87–247 (109) speculates that perhaps Chaucer's copy of the *Teseida* lacked Boccaccio's name. Critics have similarly attributed Chaucer's erasure of Boccaccio in *Troilus and Criseyde* to Boccaccio's insufficient authority. See especially George Kittredge, "Chaucer's Lollius," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 28 (1917): 47–133 (49); Alastair Minnis, *Chaucer and Pagan Antiquity* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1982), 24–25; David Wallace, *Chaucer and the Early Writings of Boccaccio* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), esp. 152.

[2] To provide a few examples of this practice: John of Salisbury conjures up a pseudo-classical and fictional source-text, Plutarch's *Institutes of Trajan*, in the *Polycraticus* (V.2). Benoît de Sainte-Maure (although not a historiographer in the strictest sense of the word) minimizes his role in the creation of the *Roman de Troie* by presenting himself as a translator of ancient sources—in this case Dares's *De excidio Troiae historia* and Dictys's *Ephemeris belli Troiani*—despite his handsome elaboration of both texts (*Résumé du poème*). Guido delle Colonne relies almost singularly on the *Roman de Troie* for the *Historia destructionis Troiae*, yet he makes no mention of Benoit's text, purporting instead to

that Chaucer's erasure of Boccaccio has a separate origin and purpose. I suggest that Chaucer learns his aesthetic of erasure from Boccaccio, who playfully conceals his debt to Statius in the *Teseida* under the premise of translating an anonymous old book, vowing—with no small irony— that "no Latin author has told his story before."[3] As for why Boccaccio and Chaucer erase their sources, they do so in order to participate in a tradition of authorial usurpation practiced by the Latin epicists, to develop an epic genealogy for their poems. Unlike the medieval historiographers, then, who minimize signs of poetic license, Boccaccio and Chaucer call attention to authorial erasure as a literary trope, situating their vernacular poems in a classical tradition while suggesting their preeminence as modern poets writing in a new, literary language.

But when Boccaccio and Chaucer erase their sources, whom do they expect to notice? Questions of Chaucer's anticipated and actual reception have often framed the way we have discussed his engagement with his sources. Paul Strohm in particular reminds us to consider in any discussion of Chaucer's reception the poet's "consciousness both of an immediate audience . . . and an audience of posterity."[4] It is this second audience for whom I think Chaucer conceals his source. To clarify, I do not imagine that either Boccaccio or Chaucer expected all of his patrons and readers to pick up on the implications of this erasure. Rather, these poets—indeed, all poets—compose with their literary descendants in mind, the writers who will follow them and will invoke these same genealogical strategies to warrant their places in an ongoing literary tradition.[5] And if there is something patricidal about this behavior, there is also something suicidal about it, since Chaucer writes not only to efface

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translate Dares and Dictys directly (*Prologus*). Geoffrey of Monmouth credits his information to the discovery of an invented *liber vetustissimus* (*Historia regum Britanniae*, I.1).

[3] "Una istoria antica . . . che latino autor non par ne dica." The Italian text is taken from *Tutte le opere di Giovanni Boccaccio*, gen. ed. Vittore Branca, 10 vols. (Milan: Mondadori, 1964), 2:254 (I.2); further quotations of the *Teseida* are from this edition. All English translations will be taken from Bernadette Marie McCoy, *The Book of Theseus: Teseida delle nozze d'Emilia* (New York: Medieval Text Association, 1974).

[4] Paul Strohm, "Chaucer's Audience(s): Fictional, Implied, Intended, Actual," *Chaucer Review* 18 (1983): 137–45 (138).

[5] To adopt Walter Ong's famous phrase, the poet "fictionalizes" an audience receptive to his rhetorical strategies (*Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977], esp. 53–81). Or, in the words of Gian Biagio Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets*, ed. Charles Segal (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), 10, the poet "presupposes" and "establishes the competence of [his] Model Reader."

Boccaccio but also to be effaced by a worthy successor, an ambition we will see gratified by Lydgate. It is from this Oedipal series of erasures and un-erasures, of literary patricides and poetic resurrections, that poets understand their authorial legacies emerging. What this means for our present study is that Chaucer, and Boccaccio before him, would seem to conceive of literary lineage in both a retrospective and prospective sense. In mimicking Boccaccio's intertextual poetics, in other words, Chaucer not only binds his work to a previous literary tradition, but also takes steps to ensure his own perpetuity.

That we can trace a pattern of authorial obfuscation from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, or from Virgil to Lydgate, as I will do here, speaks to the efficacy of this device. In resituating Chaucer's famous occlusion of Boccaccio within a genealogy of erasure, I aim to add a new understanding of Chaucer's presentation of himself in relation to a literary tradition that includes not only his ancestors—contemporary and ancient—but, equally important, descendants, in a way that other poets may have appreciated even if we have missed it.

The Humility Topos and the "Little Book" Motif

I will begin with Boccaccio's envoy to the *Filocolo* (1339). In this final farewell to his poem, Boccaccio refers to Statius in a way that suggests his sincere reverence for the earlier poet, a display of modesty that becomes increasingly mediated as we peel back the layers of allusion to discover its literary precedents. Boccaccio cautions his "piccolo libretto" not to aspire to match Virgil in verse, Lucan and Statius in poems of war, Ovid in works of love, or Dante in vernacular poetry. The role of his little book, Boccaccio suggests, is to follow behind these authors as a "minor servant":

Ché, con ciò sia cosa che tu da umile giovane sii creato, il cercare gli alti luoghi ti si disdice: e però agli eccellenti ingegni e alle robuste menti lascia i gran versi di Virgilio. . . . E quelli del valoroso Lucano, ne' quali le fiere arme di Marte si cantano, lasciali agli armigeri cavalieri insieme con quelli del tolosano Stazio. E chi con molta efficacia ama, il sermontino Ovidio seguiti. . . . Né ti sia cura di volere essere dove i misurati versi del fiorentino Dante si cantino, il quale tu sì come piccolo servidore molto dei reverente seguire.

[For since you were created by a humble youth, it is not for you to seek out higher places. So leave the great verse of Virgil to the excellent wits and vigor-

ous minds. . . . And those verses of mighty Lucan, in which the fierce arms of Mars are sung, leave them to martial knights, along with those of Statius from Toulouse. And whoever loved with great purpose, let him follow Ovid of Sulmona. . . . And do not be concerned to aspire to be where the measured verses of the Florentine Dante are sung, whom you ought to follow very reverently as a minor servant.][6]

While this passage points toward Boccaccio's diverse literary influences, ranging from Ovid to Dante, it especially evokes the epilogue of the *Thebaid*, in which Statius asks his epic to trudge behind the *Aeneid* at a reverential distance: "vive, precor; nec tu divinam *Aeneida* tempta, / sed longe sequere et vestigia semper adora" ("Live, I pray, and essay not the divine *Aeneid*, but ever follow her footsteps from afar in adoration").[7] In a witty nod to his textual archetype, Boccaccio even cedes Statius a place among his own *bella scola*. Since Statius betrays no outward interest in outpacing Virgil, and nor does Boccaccio divulge a corresponding rivalry with Statius, Boccaccio would seem to place himself in a tradition of poets paying homage to their literary models. Nevertheless, both Statius's and Boccaccio's declarations of meekness are at odds with their overall presentation of themselves as poets of equal or superior rank in relation to their predecessors.

In the process of denying any rivalry between his own and Virgil's work, Statius recycles the language Virgil gives to Aeneas as he relates the loss of his wife Creusa: "et longe servet vestigia coniunx" ("and let my wife follow our steps afar").[8] Statius's echo of the *Aeneid* at the precise moment he announces its sovereignty over his poem complicates just such a gesture of humility. Rather than acknowledge his textual borrowing, Statius silently absorbs the language of the *Aeneid* into the fabric of his work, insinuating a desire to match Virgil, maybe even to

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[6] The Italian text of the *Filocolo* is taken from Boccaccio, *Tutte le opere*, 1:674 (V.97). The English translation is by Donald Cheney, *Il filocolo* (New York: Garland Library of Medieval Literature, 1985), 470.

[7] Statius, *Thebaid*, XII.816–17, in *Statius*, ed. and trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 3:308–9. The Latin texts of Statius's *Thebaid* and *Silvae*, as well as the English translations, are taken from this edition.

[8] The Latin text of the *Aeneid*, as well as the translation, is taken from *Virgil: In Two Volumes*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), 1:342–43 (II.711). According to Michael Putnam, this passage indicates the "'inferiority' topos of poets' pronouncing their inability to compete with Virgil as Paragon" (Jan M. Ziolkowski and Michael C. J. Putnam, eds., *The Virgilian Tradition* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008], 59).

move beyond him as an archetype in verse.[9] Equally notable are the words that follow: Statius observes that fame is transient, passing from one poet to the next, and he consoles his *Thebaid* that "tibi si quis adhuc praetendit nubila livor, / occidet, et meriti post me referentur honores" ("if any envy still spreads clouds before you, it shall perish, and after me you shall be paid the honours you deserve").[10] Statius imagines that time will grant him due honor and fame, even if, at present, he must pay lip-service to the *Aeneid*, an admission that undermines his previous claim of Virgil's preeminence.[11] In the glare of this proviso, the grandeur of the *Aeneid* appears to stem from the temporary favor of the masses, and not from its intrinsic worth.

In a more explicit challenge to Virgil's poetic authority, Statius concludes an ode from the *Silvae* by claiming that his *Thebaid*

> Multa cruciata lima
> temptat audaci fide Mantuanae
> gaudia famae.

[Tortured by much filing, essays with daring string the joys of Mantuan fame.][12]

Here Statius discharges his epic from the "etiquette of deference" to the *Aeneid* that we saw at play in the earlier work.[13] Instead, he twists his

[9] For a reading of Statius's use of allusion in the *Thebaid* to subvert the *Aeneid*, see Randall T. Ganiban's study, *Statius and Virgil: The "Thebaid" and the Reinterpretation of the "Aeneid"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). See also Karla F. L. Pollman, "Statius' *Thebaid* and the Legacy of Vergil's *Aeneid*," *Mnemosyne* 54 (2001): 10–24.

[10] *Thebaid*, 3:308–9 (XII.818–19).

[11] See Robert Edwards, "Medieval Literary Careers: The Theban Track," in *European Literary Careers: The Author from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, ed. Patrick Cheney and Frederick A. de Armas (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 108, who writes of this passage that Statius eschews open rivalry to "[wager] on time as the medium of both fame and vindication. He denies outright envy only to introduce poetic competition; and in the image of his poem's reverently trailing behind the *Aeneid* ('longe sequere'), we glimpse the revisionary poet stalking his source, marking its steps, and measuring the distances still unfulfilled between them."

[12] *Silvae*, 1:290–91 (IV.7.25–28). Virgil was born near Mantua; "the joys of Mantuan fame" is the *Aeneid*.

[13] Steven Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 93. See also Kathleen Coleman's edition of *Silvae*, IV. In her commentary on the phrase "audaci fide" (IV.7.27), Coleman notes that whereas in the epilogue of the *Thebaid* Statius was "displaying conventional modesty in presenting his new work before the public, here the circumstances are different" and he can take "legitimate pride in its success" (*Statius: Silvae IV* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988], 204).

words from the *Thebaid* ("nec tu divinam *Aeneida tempta*") to imply a new relationship between himself and Virgil in which both poets stand on equal footing: "*temptat* audaci fide Mantuanae / gaudia famae"— attempt Virgilian fame. A second ode addressed to his father reflects a similar ambition. Statius writes, "non posthabuisset Homero, / tenderet aeterno <et> Pietas aequare Maroni" ("Piety mayhap would have accounted (me) not inferior to mighty-mouthed Homer and striven to match (me) with immortal Maro").[14] Tempering his pride in his poetry with a father's expected indulgence of his son, Statius places himself on a par with the poetic exemplars of western civilization. It would seem that his earlier prostration before Virgil was at least partly ceremonial, since in these odes Statius vies for equivalence.

Like Statius's initial deference to Virgil, Boccaccio's words of praise for Statius in the *Filocolo* corrode under scrutiny. After concealing his extensive debt to Statius under the cover of translating an "istoria antica," in the envoy to the *Teseida* (1339–41), Boccaccio declares himself first to sing in the Italian vernacular "the toils endured for Mars":

> Poi che le Muse nude cominciaro
> nel cospetto degli uomini ad andare,
> già fur di quelli i quai l'esercitaro
> con bello stilo in onesto parlare,
> e altri in amoroso l'operaro;
> ma tu, o libro, primo a lor cantare
> di Marte fai gli affanni sostenuti,
> nel volgar lazio più mai non veduti.

[Since the Muses began to walk unclothed before men's eyes, there have been those who employed them, with graceful style in virtuous discourse, while others used them for the language of love. But you, my book, are the first to bid them sing in the vernacular of Latium what has never been seen thus before: the toils endured for Mars.][15]

As early as the Renaissance, readers recognized that Boccaccio's assertion of primacy responds to Dante's call for an Italian poet of arms in *De vulgari eloquentia*. Listing the three subjects worthy of poetic treatment as love, virtue, and arms, Dante notes that while Cino da Pistoia

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[14] *Silvae*, 1:350–51 (V.3.62–63).
[15] *Teseida*, 661 (XII.84); trans. McCoy, 329.

has written on love, and himself on virtue, "arma vero nullum latium adhuc invenio poetasse" ("I find no Italian up to now who has any poetry on deeds of arms").[16] Boccaccio steps forward to fill this vacancy in the *Teseida*, transposing his vision of a vernacular trinity onto the topography of literary giants to whom he paid homage in the *Filocolo*. Where Virgil, Statius, Lucan, and Ovid once reigned, now stand Dante, Boccaccio, and Cino, with Boccaccio claiming the title of martial poet for himself. But in making this move, Boccaccio departs from the trinity of poets suggested in *De vulgari eloquentia*, occluding the names of Dante and Cino in his work and acknowledging only his own vernacular poetic achievement. Thus presenting the *Teseida* as first in its class among an anonymous majority, Boccaccio privileges his accomplishment over even that of his Italian peers.

Yet Boccaccio does not dispense with his humble façade from the *Filocolo* entirely in the *Teseida*. As before, he instructs his poem to "pay homage, as to an elder, to each one who has preceded you, as you will give cause for those who come after you to do"—advice that reprises his command to the *Filocolo* to "follow reverently" behind his models. However, in this advice lurks the hint of a retraction. Not only do his predecessors remain unnamed here, but, as with Statius's insistence in the *Thebaid* that time will grant him due fame, Boccaccio also insinuates that he will eventually rise to a position of prominence. His language is that of generational progression: by treating other books as elders, he will set an example for those who follow, and younger poets will at a later point keep pace behind *him*. Like Statius before him, Boccaccio identifies a pattern of allusive usurpation, and he develops Statius's move to overtake Virgil in the *Thebaid* by expunging Statius from his succession of literary models in his own *Teseida*. Literary fame, Boccaccio implies, is at least partially a textual construction, achieved through the open imitation and appropriation of past literary models, and crystalized by later poets' participation in similar patterns of homage and ascendancy. Boccaccio cements Statius's position within an authorial lineage and articulates his own future in that same lineage with a single poetic gesture.

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[16] The Latin text of *De vulgari eloquentia* is taken from Italo Borzi's *Dante: Tutte le opere*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Newton, 2010), 1017–70 (1045 [II.2]). The English translation is by Marianne Shapiro, *De vulgari eloquentia: Dante's Book of Exile* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 72.

"I will be the first to Sing (what has been Sung before)": Revolutions of Primacy in Antique Poetry

By claiming to be "the first to sing of arms in the vernacular" Boccaccio recycles another refrain associated with *translatio studii*, in which poets announce their primacy as translators of Greek culture and then crown themselves with the laurel. In *Georgics*, III, for example, Virgil declares himself first to bring the poetic muses from Greece to Italy:

> Primus ego in patrium mecum, modo vita supersit,
> Aonio rediens deducam vertice Musas;
> primus Idumaeas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas.

[I first, if life but remain, will return to my country, bringing the Muses with me in triumph from the Aonian peak. First I will bring back to you, Mantua, the palms of Idumaea.][17]

Paradoxically, Virgil's claim of "firstness" recapitulates Ennius's earlier declaration that it was *he* who first brought the Greek Muses to Italy, as Lucretius reports to us in *De rerum natura*:

> Ennius ut noster cecinit, qui primus amoeno
> detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam
> per gentis Italas hominum quae clara clueret.
>
> [As our loved Ennius sang, who first brought down
> from lovely Helicon garlands ever green
> to grow in fame wherever Italians live.][18]

Later in the poem, Lucretius echoes this refrain—only this time with regard to his *own* primacy ("et hanc primus cum primis ipse repertus / nunc ego sum in patrias qui possim vertere voces" ["I've been found the first of all, / able to tell them in our native tongue"]).[19] Indeed, Horace

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[17] The Latin text of the *Georgics*, as well as the translation, is taken from *Virgil: In Two Volumes*, 1:176–77 (III.10–12).

[18] Titus Lucretius Carus, *De rerum natura libri sex*, ed. Cyril Bailey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), 1 (I.117–19). The translation is by Frank O. Copley, *The Nature of Things* (New York: Norton, 1977), 3. For an excellent reading of these lines, see Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext*, 52–55.

[19] *De rerum natura*, 11 (V.336–37); trans. Copley, 120.

claims for himself the same achievement in *Odes*, III.30.10–16; he insists that he was first to bring Greek song to Italy ("princeps Aeolium carmen ad Italos"), and demands to be crowned with the laurel.[20]

Each poet's declaration of primacy relies on, yet undermines, its earlier models. As Steven Hinds says of the *Georgics*, while on the one hand "Virgil's claim to be first is 'authorized' by its association with Ennius' claim," on the other hand "the Ennian precedent can be argued precisely to disqualify the Virgilian claim," since only one poet can truly be first.[21] Virgil's recycling of Ennius's words thus binds his work to a literary tradition at the same time as it calls attention to his own imposture, for if we admit the allusion then we concede the lie. While seemingly self-abnegating, this paradox tells us something about how Hellenizing revolutions operate in Roman poetry; as Hinds explains, "they operate through a revision of previous Hellenizing revolutions, a revision which can be simultaneously an appropriation and a denial."[22] Through the percussive repetition of a literary trope, in other words, a poet can at once invoke and subvert the authority of his models.

Boccaccio glances back at the literary pantheon he established in the *Filocolo* only to disable it in the *Teseida*. His poetic enterprise now paramount, he portrays himself as the sole representative of martial song. The exemplary authors of the *Filocolo*—so imposing in the former poem—here remain unnamed. At the completion of his literary odyssey Boccaccio reaches out to claim his prize. Guided by the light of the starry bear, he awaits the garlands of the laurel:

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[20] *The Odes of Horace*, ed. and trans. David Perry (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1997), 254. Horace makes a similar claim to primacy in his *Epistles* (I.19.23). See also Propertius, *Elegies*, III.1. For a modern analogue, we can turn to Milton's invocation in Book I of *Paradise Lost*. Milton claims that his song will pursue "things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime" (I.13–16), a literal translation of Ludovico Ariosto's promise in *Orlando furioso*, "Cosa non detta mai in prosa nè in rima" (I.2). Moreover, Ariosto himself is alluding to Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato*, in which the narrator declares at the conclusion of Book II that his reader will hear things never before recounted in verse or prose (XXX.1). For a discussion of the textual history of this line, see especially Daniel Shore, "Things Unattempted . . . Yet Once More," *Milton Quarterly* 43 (2009): 195–200. Many thanks to William Robins for bringing this example to my attention.

[21] Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext*, 54. On the motif of "firstness" in Roman poetry see also Tony Woodman, "*EXEGI MONVMENTVM*: Horace, *Odes* 3.30," in *Why Horace?: A Collection of Interpretations*, ed. William Scovil Anderson (Wauconda: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 1999), 205–22, esp. 11–12.

[22] Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext*, 55.

> Però che i porti disiati
> in sì lungo peleggio già tegnamo,
> da varii venti in essi trasportati,
> le vaghe nostre vele qui caliamo,
> e le ghirlande e i don meritati,
> con l'ancore fermati, qui spettiamo,
> lodando l'Orsa che con la sua luce
> qui n'ha condotti, a noi essendo duce.

[Since we have now reached the harbors for which we yearned on such a long voyage while we were borne there by varying winds, we now furl our wandering sails, and with anchors set fast, we await the garlands and the merited rewards, praising that starry Bear that has been our leader, guiding us by its light.][23]

With nothing to pay homage to but the laurel crown, and no one at this point to keep pace behind but the North Star, Boccaccio, the sole identifiable figure among a sea of forgotten sages, claims more for his poem than Statius dared apportion to his *Thebaid*. Whereas Statius couched an argument for equivalence in the verses of his *Silvae*, Boccaccio claims for his *Teseida* poetic dominion.

A Tradition of *Fingendo* and the *Genealogia deorum gentilium*

Hidden beneath a seemingly benign statement of subservience or a declaration of firstness lies a rhetoric of allusive usurpation that allows Boccaccio to latch onto a prior literary tradition while declaring its members antiquated. Boccaccio thus suggests his movement beyond a Statian model by mirroring—and developing on—Statius's earlier treatment of Virgil, praising Statius in one poem only to erase him conspicuously from a second, and following an anonymous "istoria antica" instead of naming his source. In the glosses to the *Teseida*, Boccaccio flags his concealment of Statius in a new way: he takes credit as the author not only for his own material but also for material deriving from the *Thebaid*. In the gloss to Book I.14, for example, Boccaccio claims that his explanation of the shield of Tydeus, which he describes in Book I as pinned to a tree in a forest outside Thebes, is his poetic invention, despite its origins in *Thebaid*, II.704–26. Boccaccio explains in the gloss that the

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[23] *Teseida*, 662 (XII.86); trans. McCoy, 329.

author of the *Teseida* "vuole . . . mostrare, *poeticamente fingendo*, qual fosse la cagione che movesse Teseo contra le donne amazone a fare guerra" ("wants . . . to show by a poetic fiction the provocation that moved Theseus to make war against the Amazon women").[24] The provocation, Boccaccio clarifies, is Tydeus's victory over fifty of Eteocles' men, the knowledge of which inspires Theseus to besiege Scythia. On the one hand, by suggesting that the event that sets the cogs of the siege of Thebes in motion likewise spurs the Amazonomachy, Boccaccio anchors his *Teseida* to the *Thebaid* by way of teleological necessity. Yet, on the other hand, by describing this event as his own poetic fiction— "poeticamente fingendo"—Boccaccio severs this passage from the moorings of its Statian source.[25] *Fingendo* in this context implies not only authorial agency but also innovation, both of which are antithetical to the historiographer's cause.[26] We could not ask for a clearer indication that the "istoria antica" is not merely an authenticating device than Boccaccio's emphasis on his *fictio* in the glosses.

Boccaccio's celebration of his "poeticamente fingendo" anticipates his later work, the encyclopedic *Genealogia deorum gentilium*, in which he defends poetry before the *vulgus ineptum* and imperious censors alike.[27]

[24] *Teseida*, 258 (I.14, gloss); trans. McCoy, 48.

[25] In the *Thebaid*, it is Athena, not Mars, to whom Tydeus dedicates the spoils of his conquest (II.704–6), and Tydeus fastens his victims' armor, not his own shield, to the tree (II.710–12). These changes would seem minor; however, because Boccaccio does not acknowledge the *Thebaid*, they take on the aspect of an alternative account, and one that stands in contrast to the original and even discredits it. It is also worth noting that the Statian passage makes a direct comparison between Athena and Mars—with Mars held as the inferior god (II.715–25). By substituting Athena for Mars, aligning himself with Tydeus, meanwhile reversing the priorities of the Statian scene, Boccaccio inscribes his own superior power as the patron poet of arms. The shield that Tydeus consecrates to Mars—a symbol of victory in the *Teseida*—here signifies Boccaccio's erasure of Statius, with the *istoria antica* taking Statius's place as the authority on Thebes.

[26] *Fingendo* derives from the Latin verb *fingere*, which means "form out of original matter, create," "compose (poems and other literary works)," and "invent." But it could also mean "make up, feign" and "produce insincerity." P. W. Glare, ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 702–3 (s.v. *fingere*, senses 2; 6[a and b]; 9[a and b]; and 10[b]).

[27] Boccaccio lists these as his opponents in the opening of Chapter 2: "Concurrent, ut fit, ad spectaculum novi operis non solum vulgus ineptum, sed et eruditi convenient homines. . . . Sunt hi, ut reliquum sinamus vulgus, homines quidam insani, quibus tanta loquacitas est et detestabilis arrogantia, ut adversus omnia quorumcunque probatissimorum hominum presumant clamoribus ferre sententiam" (Around my book, as usual at the sight of a new work, will gather a crowd of the incompetent. The learned will also attend. . . . There are, among others in this crowd, certain madmen so garrulous and detestably arrogant that they presume to shout abroad their condemnation of everything that even the best man can do). Boccaccio, *Genealogie deorum gentilium*, XIV.2.1, 2.2, in *Tutte le opere*, Vol. 7/8, 1360, 1362. All Latin citations are taken from Boccaccio,

First vindicating poetry against claims that it is unprofitable, insignifi-
cant, and immoral, Boccaccio suggests that innovation is the very foun-
dation of his craft. He grants that poets invent stories; however, he
qualifies this in that they invent stories in the service of a greater truth.
We must therefore look beyond the superficial fiction to see the deeper,
more profound, truth within.[28] First of all, Boccaccio establishes the
"honorable origins" of poetry: " 'Fabula' igitur . . . a 'for, faris' honestam
sumit originem, et ab ea 'confabulacio,' que nil aliud quam 'collucutio'
sonat" ("the word *fabula* has an honorable origin in the verb *for, faris*,
hence 'conversation' [*confabulatio*], which means only 'talking together'
[*collocutio*]").[29] Boccaccio then offers an example from the Gospel of
Luke, in which two disciples spoke together, and Christ himself came to
walk with them. Boccaccio concludes that if it is a sin to compose stories
(*fabulari*), then it is a sin to converse (*confabulari*), which, he adds, only
the biggest fool would admit.[30] Boccaccio then makes a particular case
for the value of epic poetry. Of the four kinds of *fabula*, he explains,
there is one that

Hystorie quam fabule similis est. Hac aliter et aliter usi poete celebres sunt.
. . . Et hec si de facto non fuerint, cum communia sint esse potuere vel possent.

[Is more like history than fiction, and famous poets have employed it in a
variety of ways. . . . If the events they describe have not actually taken place,
yet since they are common, they could have occurred, or might at some time.][31]

Naming Homer and Virgil as among the "famous poets" who have
employed this style of historical writing, and adding Christ himself to
the list ("my opponents need not be so squeamish—Christ, who is God,
used this sort of fiction again and again in his parables!"),[32] Boccaccio

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Tutte le opere, Vol. 7/8. The English translation is taken from *Boccaccio on Poetry*, trans.
Charles G. Osgood (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1930), 17–18; all further
translations are from this edition. We do not have an exact date for Boccaccio's comple-
tion of this work. See Jon Solomon's new edition (in the I Tatti Renaissance series),
Genealogy of the Pagan Gods (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011),
1:viii–ix for the *Genealogia*'s history.

[28] Petrarch justifies poetry in similar terms in *Familiares*, X.4. I am extremely grateful
to Michael Papio for his help and suggestions on this section.

[29] *Genealogie deorum gentilium*, 1412 (XIV.9.3); trans. Osgood, 47.

[30] *Genealogie deorum gentilium*, 1412 (XIV.9.4); trans. Osgood, 47.

[31] *Genealogie deorum gentilium*, 1414 (XIV.9.7); trans. Osgood, 48–49.

[32] The editor notes that the phrase ("Nec fastidiant obiectores . . . usus est") follows
in the margins of cod. Plut. LII 9 (an autograph manuscript), but is suppressed in the
Vulgata; *Genealogie deorum gentilium*, 1707 n. 99. Osgood includes these words in the
body of the text of his translation, 49.

advocates convincingly for poetry that takes on the guise of historical reality. On a grander scale, he makes an argument for *fingendo* as the common element connecting poets in a glorious and transcendent display of "confabulation."

To this end, Boccaccio's marriage of the two terms *poetes* and *fingere* to describe his reference to the shield of Tydeus is a happy one, since his *fingendo* positions him in a tradition of illustrious poets. In fact, shortly after confessing his own recourse to poetic pretending in the glosses to the *Teseida*, Boccaccio reiterates the term "poeticamente fingendo" to describe the fiction of the ancients. The phrase recurs in his annotation on the temple of Mars, which, Boccaccio explains, is housed in the frigid mountains of Thrace to accommodate the god's hot temperament. Boccaccio derives this description from *Thebaid*, VII.34–42, where, on Jupiter's orders, Mercury makes an unpleasant journey to the seat of this frozen shrine. But Boccaccio does not credit his material to Statius. Instead, he ascribes it to the fiction of the ancients:

Scrivono fingendo i poeti che la casa di Marte, dio delle battaglie, sia in Trazia, a piè de' monti Rifei. Alla quale fizione volere intendere . . . che l'ira e il furore s'accende più fieramente e più di leggiere negli uomini ne' quali è molto sangue, che in quegli ne' quali n'è poco.

[Poets feign that the house of Mars, god of battles, is in Thrace, at the foot of the Ripheus mountains. This fiction is to be understood to mean that . . . wrath and fury are more violently and more easily enkindled in men in whom there is much blood than in those in whom there is little].[33]

Boccaccio's qualification of this account as *fictio*—and his allegorical/humoral interpretation of the location of the house of Mars in Thrace—heightens our awareness that, at least in the *Teseida*, poetic authorities are not invoked only to lend a degree of authenticity. Instead, Boccaccio appeals to *i poeti* to call attention to their, and his own, *fingendo*.[34] What is more, Boccaccio's recycled use of the term *poeticamente fingendo*, earlier used to highlight his own art and subsequently adapted to describe the *fingendo i poeti*, positions him in a line-up of ancient poets as a fellow

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[33] *Teseida*, 259 (I.15, gloss); trans. McCoy, 49.
[34] Cf. Barbara Nolan, *Chaucer and the Tradition of the "Roman Antique"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 165, who claims that Boccaccio aligns himself here with his classical forebears, and with the French authors of the *romans antiques*, so as to cloak himself in the "authority of the philosophers educated in the liberal arts."

author, versed in the art of *inventio*. Boccaccio's *fingendo* is justifiable vis-à-vis a poetic standard of "confabulation"—his predecessors made up stories in the service of their poetry, and so, too, shall he. And in this circumstance, where his "poeticamente fingendo" is used, as with the "istoria antica," to showcase his concealment of the *Thebaid*, implicit in Boccaccio's definition of poetry is the practice of not only *inventio* but also, in some cases, *deletio*.

Lest we fail to notice the many signs of the *Thebaid*'s erasure, Boccaccio dedicates a final tribute to his silenced source. In an addendum to the poem, Boccaccio labels his verses the "Teseida di nozze d'Emilia," *Theseid* of the Nuptials of Emilia, a Latinate title deliberately reminiscent of the *Thebaid*, and the closest Boccaccio comes to naming his epic model in the whole work. Announcing that his *Theseid* will bring him "in ogni etate fama immensa" ("vast fame in every age"),[35] Boccaccio recalls Statius's final farewell to his epic at the same time as he disqualifies it: "iam . . . praesens tibi Fama benignum / stravit iter coepitque novam monstrare futuris" ("Already . . . Fame has strewn a kindly path before you and begun to show the new arrival to posterity").[36] Like claims of primacy, declarations of literary immortality have a definite expiration date—they wither at the behest of a usurping heir. Accordingly, Boccaccio's pronouncement of his *Theseid*'s everlasting fame not only evokes the silenced *Thebaid*, in which Statius predicts his eternal glory, but also influences how we interpret Chaucer's subsequent elision of Boccaccio, which, as I will demonstrate, is meant to revisit Boccaccio's earlier erasure of Statius. In his challenge to his predecessor, Boccaccio perpetuates a tradition of authorial expurgation, and thus sets in motion the course of his own literary exile. Moreover, in extending this maneuver by concealing Boccaccio's influence under the pretense of translating "olde stories" (the English equivalent of Boccaccio's "istoria antica"), Chaucer corroborates Boccaccio's place in this tradition, and so offers himself as Boccaccio's ideal reader.[37]

The Silenced Author of Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*

In his encounter with the *Teseida*, Chaucer witnesses Boccaccio erase Statius under the premise of translating a fabricated ancient book.

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[35] *Teseida*, 664 (*Riposta delle Muse*); trans. McCoy, 331.
[36] *Thebaid*, 3:306–7 (XII.812–13).
[37] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, gen. ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), I.859; Chaucer also claims to rely on "olde bookes," or

Unlike other writers whom Chaucer may have observed doing something similar, however, Boccaccio introduces his *istoria antica* at the precise moment in which acknowledging Statius as his principal source would be entirely apt, even desirable: his account of the siege of Thebes and its aftermath, for which he draws on the *Thebaid* so extensively, and with such frequency, that we cannot ignore its influence.[38] Instead of capitalizing on the *Thebaid*'s very real authoritative clout, however, Boccaccio implies the *un*-reliability of Statius's epic by treating it as other writers treat their more dubious material: he buries it beneath the assertion that he is translating an anonymous, ancient source. Chaucer, I argue, mimics and develops this trope of erasure. There is a distinct progression from Statius, who presents Virgil as his superior in the *Thebaid* yet implies his own equivalence in the *Silvae*; to Boccaccio, who names Statius as the exemplary poet of arms in the *Filocolo* only to omit all mention of him in the *Teseida*; to Chaucer, who sustains his erasure of Boccaccio throughout his poems, despite relying on him repeatedly as his principal source.

Yet Chaucer would appear unsatisfied with simply perpetuating a device found in the works of his predecessors. He thus reveals a further interest in recovering Boccaccio's silenced source from the *Teseida* by celebrating Statius as the predominant authority on Thebes. While not exclusive to *The Knight's Tale*, this maneuver is most prominent in this poem, in which Chaucer indicates the imposing influence of the *Thebaid* from the outset.[39] Nearly all of the authoritative manuscripts include a passage from *Thebaid*, XII as a motto or gloss to the first segment:

"bookes olde," three times in *The Knight's Tale*, at I.1198, 1463, and 2294. All quotations from Chaucer's works will be from this edition and cited in the text.

[38] On the relationship between the *Teseida* and the *Thebaid* see especially David Anderson, *Before the Knight's Tale: Imitation of Classical Epic in Boccaccio's "Teseida"* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 38–191.

[39] To provide a few examples, in *The House of Fame* Chaucer records Statius as the sole author holding up the "fame of Thebes" (1460–62). In the *Anelida and Arcite*, a shorter work beginning as a translation of the *Teseida*, Chaucer corrects Boccaccio's earlier suggestion that "no Latin author" had told his story before by claiming to translate an "olde storie, in Latyn which I finde" (10). Chaucer then names "Stace," as well as "Corynne," as one of the two *auctores* whom he will follow (21), suggesting, as Barbara Nolan points out, that Chaucer recognized Boccaccio's debt to Statius in the *Teseida* and attempted a "similar exercise in creative imitation" (*Chaucer and the Tradition of the "Roman Antique,"* 247). Chaucer names "Stace" as one of the poetic models of whom he will "kis the steppes" in the epilogue to the *Troilus*, a passage modeled on the envoy to the *Filocolo*. In recuperating Statius to this assembly of literary exemplars, Chaucer expunges Boccaccio from his own line-up of authors. His adulation of Statius thus involves—even hinges on—the implicit suppression of his Boccaccian source.

> Iamque domos patrias, Scithice post aspera gentis
> Prelia, laurigero [subeuntem Thesea curru
> laetifici plausus missusque ad sidera vulgi
> clamor et emeritis hilaris tuba nuntiat armis.]

[And now Theseus drawing near his native land in laurelled car after fierce Battling with the Scithian folk (is heralded by applause and the trump of warfare ended)].[40]

With this reference to the *Thebaid*, Chaucer signals his deviation from Boccaccio, whose poem, though saturated with allusions to the epic, at no point includes a direct citation of the Latin text. Nor is the passage itself insignificant; these lines mark the introduction in the *Thebaid* of Theseus, a figure who remains peripheral to the main action of the epic even as he plays a necessary role in its conclusion. As Chaucer himself will do, Statius all but forgoes mention of Theseus's whereabouts prior to his battle with Creon, referring to the Amazonomachy only in passing in his description of the hero's triumphal return home.[41] Boccaccio, on the other hand, devotes the first two books of the *Teseida* to Theseus's attack on Scythia, his marriage to Hippolyta, and finally his assault on King Creon. This passage thus contains the seed from which Boccaccio develops the opening of his poem. In beginning with these lines, Chaucer reveals to us the process of Boccaccio's poetic invention, evoking both the original context of Theseus's journey to Thebes and Boccaccio's amplification of this storyline. Perhaps in the spirit of restoration, Chaucer folds the excess material back into its Statian proportion, a mere footnote to a chapter on Theban history.[42] Choosing Theseus's return home for his starting-point, Chaucer relegates the Amazonomachy to

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[40] Chaucer takes this citation from *Thebaid*, XII.519–22. The Latin passage is also included in the *Anelida and Arcite*, between lines 21 and 22.

[41] Anderson, *Before the Knight's Tale*, 201, argues that Chaucer's alterations to the *Teseida* "generally reflect a concern with preserving and accentuating the *Thebaid*-like structure and themes of Boccaccio's narrative." With regard to Chaucer's use of *abbreviatio*, Anderson notes that Chaucer "shortens [the *Teseida*] in ways that maintain, or even increase, the underlying patterns from the *Thebaid*" (202).

[42] Cf. Stephen H. Rigby, *Wisdom and Chivalry: Chaucer's "Knight's Tale" and Medieval Political Theory* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 135, who sees Chaucer's editorial adjustment as a way of ennobling Duke Theseus's achievement: "in massively compressing his source, Chaucer does not have to confront the problems involved in having the chivalrous Theseus overcome a kingdom of women, something which might be considered . . . an achievement of 'litel worschepe.'"

the margins of his poem. He then declares the battle (and, obliquely, the first two books of the *Teseida*) extraneous.

If Chaucer follows Statius in beginning his story after the conquest of the Amazons, then he is unique in showcasing this material before he discards it. Opening with the invocation of fictional, ancient source-texts—"whilom, as olde stories tellen us" (I.859)—he launches into an account of the duke's Scythian interlude, describing

> The grete bataille for the nones
> Bitwixen Atthenes and Amazones;
> And how asseged was Ypolita,
> The faire, hardy queene of Scithia;
> And of the feste that was at hir weddynge;
> And of the tempest at hir hoom-comynge.
>
> (I.879–84)

The sum of this story, the Knight implies, is of little consequence. He casually dismisses this prefatory material as "to long to heere" (I.875; an amusing assessment, considering that the final detail of this summary, the "tempest at hir hoom-comynge," is Chaucer's own invention) before elaborating on the things he would have said, were it not for the time constraints of his journey. "I *wolde* have toold yow fully . . . How wonnen was the regne of Femenye," he insists for a second time (I.876–77; emphasis added). Yet although the Knight flouts the structural integrity of the *Teseida* by omitting the poem's beginning, he hardly gives the rejected portion a quiet burial. Rather, in first presenting and then retracting his offer to speak of the siege against the Amazons, Chaucer calls attention to the restructuring of his source, rendering the very things he deems unnecessary conspicuous by their absence.[43]

Having opened his story with a passage from the *Thebaid* and then justified his truncation of the *Teseida* based on the shortness of time, in the second part of *The Knight's Tale* Chaucer takes his erasure of Boccac-

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[43] For Chaucer's aesthetic of omission in *The Knight's Tale*, see Mark Sherman, "The Politics of Discourse in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*," *Exemplaria* 6 (1994): 87–114. Sherman explains that *The Knight's Tale* "must be read . . . with an eye for what is *not* articulated and is in fact blatantly suppressed." By cataloguing the things he *will not* tell us, moreover, the Knight "heighten[s] the reader's awareness of excluded narratives to such a degree that the unsaid exerts greater narrative force than the said, that the utterance stands in the shadow of what it obfuscates" (91, 94).

cio to a whole new level. He names "Stace of Thebes and these bookes olde" as his source for a scene deriving from the *Teseida*, in which Emilia/ Emelye goes to the Temple of Diana to pray:

> Smokynge the temple, ful of clothes faire,
> This Emelye, with herte debonaire,
> Hir body wessh with water of a welle.
> But hou she dide hir ryte I dar nat telle,
> But it be any thing in general;
> And yet it were a game to heeren al.
> To hym that meneth wel it were no charge;
> But it is good a man been at his large.
> Hir brighte heer was kembd, untressed al;
> A coroune of a grene ook cerial
> Upon hir heed was set ful fair and meete.
> Two fyres on the auter gan she beete,
> And dide hir thynges, as men may biholde
> *In Stace of Thebes and thise bookes olde*.
> (I.2281–94; emphasis added)

Chaucer follows the *Teseida* rather closely here, embellishing his source only in the Knight's hesitancy to provide the specifics of Emelye's ritual, and in his attribution of the episode to "Stace."[44] Still, Chaucer's reference to Statius is not the outright falsification that it would seem. Boccaccio himself derives the details of Emilia's ritual from a corresponding scene in the *Thebaid*, in which the prophet Tiresias performs a series of rites in a forest sacred to Diana with the hope of ascertaining the outcome of the war (*Thebaid*, IV.416–73).[45] When his initial efforts at necromancy fail, Tiresias warns Apollo that he is not above invoking darker forces:

> Ne tenues annos nubemque hanc frontis opacae
> spernite, ne, moneo: et nobis saevire facultas.

[44] *Teseida*, 478 (VII.72–74). In the original Italian, in addition to perfuming the temple, crowning her hair with cereal oak, and lighting two pyres, Emilia sacrifices turtle doves and lambs, draining the blood from their bodies and tossing the entrails and viscera of the dead animals into the fire. Her proceedings closely echo the process of Tiresias's sacrifice in the *Thebaid*. Chaucer removes these more gruesome details from her rites.

[45] For a concise description of some of the parallels between these two episodes, see Anderson, *Before the Knight's Tale*, 80.

> scimus enim [et] quidquid dici noscique timetis
> et turbare Hecaten (ni te, Thymbraee, vererer)
> et triplicis mundi summum, quem scire nefastum.
> illum—sed taceo: prohibet tranquilla senectus.

[Do not, I warn you, do not contemn my thinning years and the cloud upon my darkened brow. I too have means to be cruel. For I know whatever you fear spoken or known. I can harry Hecate, did I not respect you, Lord of Thymbra, him too, highest of the triple world, whom to know is blasphemy. Him—but I hold my peace: tranquil eld forbids.][46]

At this point, Manto interrupts her father, as the earth opens to reveal a scene from the underworld. Among these phantoms are mythical figures in varying states of horror and despair: Semele holding her womb; Agave in a state of Bacchic frenzy, chasing her son Pentheus; Actaeon, horns protruding from his brow, fighting off the hounds that still tear at his limbs; and Niobe, madly tallying the bodies of her dead children. Finally, the old Theban King Laius arrives, with a neck wound marking the patricide of Odysseus, to prophesize that Thebes alone will survive this bloody war. These visions, each more frightening than the last, set the tone for the final books of the *Thebaid*, in which the siege grinds toward its inevitable, tragic conclusion. As the model for Emilia's ritual in the *Teseida*, however, the episode is strikingly inappropriate.

Clearly a transgressive figure, Tiresias is a curious prototype for Emilia. Still, Boccaccio transfigures this scene of horror and necromancy into one of piety and devotion; if Tiresias is arrogant and impetuous, then Boccaccio's Emilia sacrifices "più divotamente" (most devoutly) of all three who sacrifice to the gods.[47] Pious and reverent, she displays not only respect for Diana but also an acceptance of her fate, asking the goddess,

> Se' fati pur m'hanno riservata
> a giunonica legge sottostare,
> tu mi dei certo aver per iscusata,
> né dei però li miei prieghi schifare.

[If the Fates have decreed that I be subjected to the law of Juno, you must certainly forgive me for it. Do not reject my prayers on that account.][48]

[46] *Thebaid*, 2:544–45 (IV.512–17).
[47] *Teseida*, 477 (VII.70); trans. McCoy, 180.
[48] *Teseida*, 481 (VII.83); trans. McCoy, 182.

Even as Boccaccio opts to tell a less sinister tale, however, Emilia's rites retain the prior whiff of necromancy. In addition, by modeling her devotion on a necromantic ritual, Boccaccio makes himself complicit in Tiresias's original trespass, conveying by proxy what is wrong to know. In his commentary on the *Thebaid* (of which we know Boccaccio possessed a copy), Lactantius Placidus notes numerous allusions in this passage to scenes of necromancy from Virgil's *Aeneid*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Lucan's *Pharsalia*, and Seneca's *Oedipus*. This foundation of references makes it all the more difficult for Boccaccio to insist on Emilia's piety, since her ritual follows a long line of occult behavior. As though in response to this tradition, the Knight pares down the episode to a minimum, tepidly insisting that "how [Emelye] dide hir ryte *I dar nat telle*," although it is no doubt a "game to heeren al".[49] It is as if he wishes to distance his tale from its transgressive origins as much as possible. Perhaps as a point of compromise, the Knight directs us to "Stace of Thebes and thise bookes olde" for the specifics of how Emelye "dide hir thynges." And while we will not discover the niceties of Emelye's ritual in the *Thebaid*, we do find its root, and, accordingly, the identity of Boccaccio's "old book," in Tiresias's original trespass.

Naming the ultimate source of his source but not his immediate author, Chaucer participates in a kind of genealogical leapfrog, further associating Statius with the phrase under which Boccaccio concealed him in the *Teseida*, "thise bookes olde." This mention of Statius demonstrates the extent to which Chaucer has enhanced a trope of erasure learned from his predecessors. In reviving Boccaccio's silenced author in the figure of "Stace," Chaucer renders this device more conspicuous, more metapoetic, than it appeared in previous forms, so as to show clearly the tradition of occlusion whence he came. Still, I suspect that Chaucer discovered the idea of crediting a Boccaccian passage to "Stace" in *Teseida*, VI, in which Boccaccio likewise passes over his immediate source in favor of naming an earlier model. This maneuver is relatively muted in the *Teseida*. Boccaccio describes the arrival of noblemen to the tournament in which Palamon and Arcite will fight, and among these men is "Idas the Pisan." As Boccaccio explains in the glosses, the character of Idas is based on Virgil's description of Camilla (*Aeneid*, VII.803–11): "della leggereza che qui pone l'autore che avea questo Ida, scrive

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[49] Coleman, "The Knight's Tale," 2:93, claims that by citing Statius, "the remote source for the passage," Chaucer is "making the point that Statius is available in two forms in the *Knight's Tale*: directly and at second-hand via the *Teseida*."

Virgilio di Camilla, e quindi fu tolto ciò che qui se ne scrive" ("of the swiftness that the author here ascribes to Idas, Virgil writes of Camilla, and what is written here is taken from him").[50] As it so happens, this reference to Virgil is the only explicit mention of an ancient poet in the entire *Teseida*: a suggestive detail, because the figure of Idas the Pisan is original to Statius, not Virgil.[51] Recently crowned with an Olympic wreath, Idas is a fearsome competitor in the games of *Thebaid*, VI.550–645, triumphing over Parthenopaeus in the first footrace. Boccaccio clearly invokes this figure, dwelling on Idas's recent triumph in the Olympic games, and describing his exploits in the race (*Teseida*, VI.52–53). Yet no scholar has thought to look beyond Camilla for a textual model, because Boccaccio names Virgil as his source (although Piero Boitani notes that Boccaccio's citation of Virgil here is "curious" for the very reason that he "never acknowledges his much more substantial debt to Statius").[52] In naming Virgil, however, Boccaccio brings to the surface of his poem a Virgilian prototype that remains unacknowledged by his author. Not only does Statius's Idas possess qualities reminiscent of Virgil's Camilla—Idas, for example, runs as fast as a speeding arrow (*Thebaid*, VI.596–97), and Camilla can outrun the wind (*Aeneid*, VII.806–7)—but the games of *Thebaid*, VI are themselves modeled on Virgil's description of the athletic tournament in *Aeneid*, V, as Lactantius Placidus informs us.[53] Given how closely these authors were reading

[50] *Teseida*, 436 (VI.53, gloss); trans. McCoy, 163. Coleman, "The Knight's Tale," 2:113, suggests that Chaucer's version of the *Teseida* may have lacked Boccaccio's original commentary. However, his suggestion is primarily based on negative evidence—what Chaucer would have "responded to in some way" if he had found it in his manuscript. Coleman ultimately suggests that the "most prudent conclusion regarding the question of Boccaccio's glosses is that the case is not proved" (2:113–14).

[51] While the name of Idas is common in epic poetry, the figure of Idas the *Pisan*, an Olympian who competes in a footrace, is particular to the *Thebaid*. See Johannes Jacobus Smolenaars's commentary on *Thebaid*, VII (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 266, which lists these examples of other figures with this name: *Iliad*, IX.558; *Aeneid*, IX.575 (Trojan); X.351 (Thracian); *Metamorphoses*, V.90; *Fasti*, V.701 (Argonaut).

[52] Piero Boitani, *Chaucer and Boccaccio* (Oxford: Society for the Study of Mediaeval Languages and Literature, 1977), 27. Anderson, *Before the Knight's Tale*, 115–16, mentions Statius's Idas in his discussion of Boccaccio's games, yet he claims that Boccaccio translates only Virgil here.

[53] "PRIMVS SVDOR EQVIS: Vergilius <Aen. V 66>: 'prima citae classis ponam certamina Teucris.'" R. D. Sweeney, ed., *Lactantius Placidus in Statii Thebaida commentum: Anonymi in Statii Achilleida commentum. Fulgentii ut fingitur Plancidas super Thebaiden commentariolum*, Vol. 1 (Stuttgart and Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1997), 406 (VI.296). For Boccaccio's use of Lactantius, and the existence of a copy of the *Thebaid* containing Lactantius's commentary in Boccaccio's possession, see Anderson, *Before the Knight's Tale*, 4, 38 n. 1.

each other, it is likely that Boccaccio was aware of Statius's debt to the *Aeneid*, and that he names Virgil as his source so as playfully to allude to this debt. Chaucer appears to have recognized this maneuver and amplified it in his own poem. If Boccaccio discreetly credits Virgil for a figure taken from the *Thebaid* in the glosses to his poem, then Chaucer closely translates a passage from the *Teseida* before misattributing it twice; first, to Boccaccio's occluded author, "Stace," and second to the proxy Boccaccio had invented to perform this occlusion, "thise bookes olde."

The consideration and humor Chaucer puts into concealing his source suggests that he anticipated an audience who would recognize the intricacies of his intertextual poetics. I imagine it was Chaucer's anticipation of just such an audience that led him to connect his erasure of Boccaccio in *The Knight's Tale* with his similar occlusion of Boccaccio in other works, most explicitly in the *Troilus*. For example, Chaucer gives the exiled Arcite of *The Knight's Tale* the alias of "Philostrate," Chaucer's silenced Boccaccian source for the *Troilus*, instead of the name assigned to him in the *Teseida*, "Penteo" (IV.3).[54] Perhaps it is no accident, then, that (Ph/)Filostrato(e)/Arcite is quite literally "buried" by the end of the work, with Mars, Boccaccio's patron god of the *Teseida*, enlisted to guide his soul home (I.2815), and a "coroune of laurer grene" placed on his brow (I.2875). This final detail—the laureation of Philostrate—may even be Chaucer's way of paying homage to his occluded author without explicitly naming him. In the epilogue to the *Troilus*, moreover, Chaucer repurposes the envoy from the *Filocolo* to praise the very author whom Boccaccio erased in the *Teseida*. Chaucer directs his "litel bok" to kiss the steps of Virgil, Ovid, Homer, Lucan, and Statius (V.1786–92), unceremoniously ousting Boccaccio from his own line-up of authors to make room for the exiled "Stace," meanwhile usurping Boccaccio's post as the "sixth of six" poets.[55]

But it is not Boccaccio's role as "poet of arms" that Chaucer covets; in fact, Chaucer makes explicit elsewhere in the *Troilus* that he would prefer *not* to sing of war.[56] Instead, it is Boccaccio's status as an interme-

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[54] There is some debate on the chronology of *The Knight's Tale* and the *Troilus*. Yet, the fact that the two poems share many lines speaks to the proximity, perhaps even overlap, of their composition. See Vincent DiMarco, "Explanatory Notes for the *Knight's Tale*," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 826.

[55] See David Wallace, *Chaucer and the Early Writings of Boccaccio* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985), 50–53, for a discussion of poets naming themselves sixth of six authors.

[56]   And if I hadde ytaken for to write
            The armes of this ilke worthi man,

diary poet—the vernacular arbiter in a line-up of ancients—that Chaucer seeks to assume, and in doing so establish his place in an epic tradition. Note that Chaucer removes not only Boccaccio but also Dante from his line-up of literary models, severing Boccaccio's connection to the classical *auctores*. This second elision makes room for a new vernacular poetics. Again in the *Troilus*, Chaucer stresses the very *Englishness* of his poem:

> And for ther is so gret diversite
> In Englissh and in writyng of oure tonge,
> So prey I God that non myswrite the,
> Ne the mysmetre for defaute of tonge;
> And red wherso thow be, or elles songe,
> That thow be understonde, God I biseche!
> (V.1793–98)

In a business where being *myswriten* is an occupational hazard, Chaucer no doubt intends his appeal for comprehension to be taken quite literally, but his plea for his book to be "understonde," "wherso thow be [read], or elles songe," also announces "oure tongue" as a literary language—a language that is accessible and coherent to all.[57] Chaucer then directs the *Troilus* for correction to his *English* counterparts, "moral Gower" and "philosophical Strode," casting aside the Latin poets and their "corsed olde rites" (V.1856, 1857, 1849). In a poem where the principal source receives no mention, the importance of this dedication cannot be overemphasized. Naming himself poet of love (V.1769), Strode poet of philosophy, and Gower author of moral works, Chaucer rewrites Dante's list of worthwhile literary subjects as love, philosophy, and virtue, removing not only Boccaccio but also the entire category of martial poetry from this list. The effect of this dedication, of course, is to establish an English equivalent of the Florentine *tre corone*.

Anchoring his *Troilus* in a classical past yet ultimately suggesting the primacy of a new vernacular literature, Chaucer performs a maneuver

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> Than wolde ich of his batailles endite;
> But for that I to writen first bigan
> Of his love, I have seyd as I kan—
> (V.1765–69)

[57] Although we can only speculate on Chaucer's knowledge of *De vulgari eloquentia*, his plea for the *Troilus* to be understood echoes Dante's insistence on the superiority of Italian based on its universal capacity to be understood (*De vulgari eloquentia*, I.1).

similar to Boccaccio in his Theban poem. After elevating a standard of ancient literary models in the *Filocolo*, Boccaccio suggests a corresponding, even predominant, Italian literary tradition in the *Teseida*, evoking the memory of his ancient models *in absentia*. In the epilogue to the *Troilus*, Chaucer, in turn, develops an intricate web of allusions to his Italian forebears, Dante and Boccaccio, incorporating references to the *Commedia*, the *Filocolo*, the *Filostrato*, and the *Teseida* in a span of less than 100 lines. Far from acknowledging his literary debts here, however, Chaucer removes the names of Dante and Boccaccio from his list of authorial influences. He presents his poem as a distinctly English work following in the footsteps of the classical *auctores*, "Virgile, Ovide, Omer, Lucan, and Stace," whom he names only to condemn for their "corsed olde rites." Finally, Chaucer looks forward to an English posterity, inviting his friends, patrons, and readers to receive—and in Gower and Strode's case, correct—his work. Chaucer parades his literary models before us, but in a way that requires our attention to the prevalence of his poetry in relation to previous writings.

Go, Little Quire

I will conclude this study with Lydgate, but before doing so I will invoke an example of authorial occlusion from the writings of Chaucer's near contemporary, Petrarch. This example, concerning Petrarch's famous silence toward Dante in his writings, and Virgil's earlier silence toward Homer, suggests the existence of a pattern of authorial concealment outside a series of interconnected works on Thebes, and corroborates what I imagine to be poets' motivation behind perpetuating this trope: to position themselves within a genealogy of erasure, and, in the process, to locate their works within an illustrious tradition of great writings.

In *Familiares*, XXI.15 (1359), Petrarch responds to Boccaccio's suggestion that perhaps his frequent recommendation of Dante rankled with the older poet by denying jealousy of any man, including Virgil and Homer, but especially not Dante, who writes for the "ydiotas in tabernis et in foro."[58] In the course of this letter, Petrarch gestures at Dante multiple times, yet he never once names him. This is typical

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[58] Francesco Petrarca, *Le familiari*, ed. Vittorio Rossi and Umberto Bosco, 4 vols. (Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1933–42), 4:94–100 (XXI.15). Further quotations are from this edition.

behavior for Petrarch, who, despite engaging with Dante consistently in his poetry, avoids mentioning him throughout.[59] As Giuseppe Mazzotta notes, were it not for his reticence to name Dante, there would be nothing in this letter that would lead us to doubt Petrarch's sincerity.[60] One year following this exchange, however, Petrarch makes abundantly clear that his silence toward Dante is not accidental—to the contrary, it bespeaks his profound understanding of authorial erasure as a literary device.

In a separate letter addressed to the deceased Homer, *Familiares*, XXIV.12 (1360), Petrarch defends Virgil for neglecting to mention the Greek bard anywhere in his writings, drawing us "irresistibly . . . to the implied homology" between these two instances of authorial erasure.[61] Petrarch concedes that Virgil's behavior does, on the surface, appear extraordinary. Lucan, Flaccus, Ovid, Juvenal, and Statius all acknowledge their debt to Homer, while Virgil, overladen by the weight of Homer's spoils, does not.[62] Nor is Virgil consistent in his ingratitude; indeed, he courteously mentions other poets, including his contemporaries, Varus and Gallus, which, Petrarch claims, Virgil never would have done if he were possessed by jealousy. Still, Petrarch cautions Homer not to draw the obvious conclusion—that is, that Virgil's refusal to name him was a deliberate attempt to undermine his poetic authority. What happens next is rather remarkable: Petrarch offers Homer a clearly fallacious explanation for Virgil's silence, deflecting, rather than engaging in, a legitimate conversation on authorial borrowing and

[59] Petrarch names Dante only twice in all his poetry, and both times in conjunction with other vernacular love poets writing for the vulgar masses. On these instances, see especially Kevin Brownlee, "Power Plays: Petrarch's Genealogical Strategies," *JMEMSt* 35 (2005): 467–88.

[60] Giuseppe Mazzotta, "Petrarch's Dialogue with Dante," in *Petrarch and Dante: Anti-Dantism, Metaphysics, Tradition*, ed. Zygmunt G. Barański and Theodore J. Cachey, Jr. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 181.

[61] Ibid. This letter was to an unknown correspondent, in response to a letter written in Homer's name; yet Petrarch addresses the recipient as Homer throughout. Aldo Bernardo explains that Petrarch shared his letters, and especially those addressed to the ancients, with his literary friends. We know, for example, that Boccaccio was allowed to copy certain letters from *Familiares*, XXIV, Petrarch's series of letters to the ancient poets. See Aldo Bernardo, "Introduction," in Francesco Petrarch, *Rerum familiarium libri: I–VIII* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), xxiii.

[62] Petrarch, *Le familiari*, 4:258 (XXIV.12). The translation of this letter is taken from *Francesco Petrarca: Letters on Familiar Matters. Rerum familiarium libri XVII–XXIV*, trans. Aldo Bernardo (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 342–50 (45); further translations are taken from this edition. (Although Homer is named in the *Juvenalia*, these poems are thought to be apocryphal, and not by Virgil at all.)

occlusion. Petrarch claims that Virgil was reserving for Homer a place of honor in his poetry, but unfortunately died before he could grant him this tribute:

Posuisset, michi crede . . . nisi mors impia vetuisset. Licet autem alios ubi occurrit atque ubi commodum fuit annotasset, tibi uni, cui multo amplius debebat, non fortuitum sed certum certoque consilio destinatum reservabat locum. Et quem reris, nisi eminentiorem cuntis atque conspectiorem? Finem ergo preclarissimi operis expectabat, ibi te suum ducem tuumque nomen altisonis versibus laturus ad sidera.

[He would have done so, believe me . . . were it not that death interfered. Though he mentions others where it is opportune and convenient, for you alone, to whom he was much more indebted, he was reserving a special place selected after careful consideration. And what was this, do you suppose, if not the most prominent and distinguished place of all? He thus was waiting for the end of his outstanding work, where he intended to exalt your name to the heavens as his guide in sonorous verses.][63]

To substantiate his claim, Petrarch points to the *Thebaid* as an example. As Virgil took Homer as his model, so too was he chosen by Statius as a model for the *Thebaid*, and yet Statius did not acknowledge Virgil until the very end of his work: "nec tamen ingenue ducem suum nisi in fine poetici itineris recognovit" ("yet he did not openly acknowledge him as his guide except at the end of his poetic journey"). Of course, Statius's mention of Virgil at the end of his epic belies a complicated program of erasure of his own, as we have seen, and Petrarch acknowledges this in his phrasing: "illic tamen bona fide totum grati animi debitum benemerite persolvit Eneydi" ("it was [only] at the close that he openly and in good faith paid the full debt of his grateful mind to the *Aeneid*").[64] Rather than support his case in defense of Virgil, then, in petitioning the *Thebaid* Petrarch aggravates any cause for Homer's resentment. He implies that Virgil's silence was not only deliberate, but it was also recognized and perpetuated by a successor.

Petrarch uses his letter to Homer to establish a clear precedent for his reticence to name Dante, and so to align himself with a classical

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[63] *Le familiari*, 4:259 (XXIV.12); trans. Bernardo, 346.
[64] *Le familiari*, 4:259 (XXIV.12); trans. Bernardo, 346.

tradition of occlusion. He implies a correlation between himself and Virgil, and between Dante and Homer, all the while playing up the unique implications of his own situation: as Petrarch is still among the living, his silence toward Dante cannot be explained—however ironically—by an early death.[65] This is not to suggest that Petrarch's distaste for Dante's poetics was disingenuous, or that he lacked an "all too real desire to . . . eclipse [Dante] and cancel his presence," but rather that he relied on an existing trope of erasure to act on these propensities.[66] In other words, Petrarch solicits our attention to a notable example of erasure from a classical past to corroborate his own silence. In doing so, he affiliates himself with his literary predecessors, meanwhile suggesting that his erasure of Dante is intentional.

I have included this example from the *Familiares* because it points to the existence of a trope of erasure beyond the specific strand that I have followed in this study. Moreover, it suggests that poets rely on one another not only for their material but also for their very method of authorial engagement. As Petrarch conjures up an example of literary occlusion from Antiquity to gloss his silence toward Dante, so Chaucer deposes Boccaccio using Boccaccio's own poetics of intertextuality, expanding on a trope of erasure adapted from his predecessors to render this excision complete and multifaceted.

Turning at last to the fifteenth century, we see that Chaucer's greatest reader, John Lydgate, frequently employs a strategy of erasure in his engagement with Chaucer. We need look no further than the *Siege of Thebes*, Lydgate's added Canterbury tale, for an example of this. Writing his poem as a preface to *The Knight's Tale*, Lydgate restores to the *Siege* the material contained in the first two books of the *Teseida*, which Chaucer had dismissed as "to long to heere." At the point when Lydgate's narrative would intersect with the Knight's, moreover, he indulges in a little *praeteritio* of his own, summarizing the parts of the story he would have told if they did not fall beyond the scope of his narrative. Instead,

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[65] Nor is Dante the only poet whom Petrarch erases. Andrew Laird, "Re-inventing Virgil's Wheel," in *Classical Literary Careers and Their Reception*, ed. Philip Hardie and Helen Moore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 150, points us toward Petrarch's "strategic occlusion" of Virgil, his "clear model" for the *Africa*. Wherever in the *Africa* "one might expect references to the story of the *Aeneid* to prompt an overt or positive acknowledgement of its poet," he notes, "that expectation is confounded" (147).

[66] Mazzotta, "Petrarch's Dialogue with Dante," 181–82.

Lydgate directs us to his "mayster Chaucer," and to the beginning of the "Knyghtys Tale," for these details.[67]

But this reference constitutes the sole mention of Chaucer in the entire *Siege of Thebes*. Although Lydgate alludes implicitly to Chaucer as the "floure of poetes thorghout al Breteyne" in line 40 of the preface, he does not actually *name* Chaucer until the very end of the poem. This omission, which prompted A. C. Spearing to suggest that the "implicit claim of the *Siege* is that in it Lydgate *becomes* the father whose place he usurps," recapitulates Statius's deferred acknowledgment of Virgil to the epilogue of the *Thebaid*.[68] Moreover, it is made all the more striking by Lydgate's frequent references to Boccaccio throughout his poem. Each time invoked as a source or authority, "Bochas" is named no fewer than seven times in the *Siege*, a gesture that calls attention to Lydgate's sustained silence toward Chaucer, and echoes Chaucer's previous treatment of Boccaccio and Statius.[69]

Lydgate experiments with a strategy of elision elsewhere, naming Chaucer among a succession of illustrious poets in the *Fall of Princes* only to erase him from a similar catalogue in the *Life of Saint Alban and Saint Amphibal*. In the first case, openly alluding to the epilogue of the *Troilus* and its literary antecedents, Lydgate identifies Chaucer as the most excellent of his literary predecessors:

> I nevir was acqueynted with Virgyle,
> Nor with the sugryd dytees of Omer
> Nor Dares Frygius with his goldene style,
> Nor with Ovyde, in poetrye moost entieer,
> Nor with sovereyn balladys of Chauceer
> Which among alle that euere wer rad or songe,
> Excellyd al othir in our Englysh tounge.[70]

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[67] *John Lydgate: The Siege of Thebes*, ed. Robert R. Edwards (Rochester: TEAMS, 2001), lines 4501, 4524. James Simpson, "'Dysemol daies and fatal houres': Lydgate's *Destruction of Thebes* and Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*," in *The Long Fifteenth Century: Essays for Douglas Gray*," ed. Helen Cooper and Sally Mapstone (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 15–33 (29), notes that this maneuver forces us to reinterpret *The Knight's Tale* through the lens of the *Siege*, reinserting Chaucer's text into an "unequivocally historical, political narrative; it equally places the most severe constraints on whatever glimpses of prudential wisdom the *Knight's Tale* might have seemed to offer."

[68] A. C. Spearing, "Renaissance Chaucer and Father Chaucer," *English* 34 (1985): 1–38 (26).

[69] These instances are as follows: lines 199, 213, 1541, 3171, 3201, 3510, 3541.

[70] John Lydgate, *The Fall of Princes*, ed. Henry Bergen, 4 vols., EETS e.s. 121–24 (London: Oxford University Press, 1924–27), IX.3401–7.

Although Lydgate would seem to exempt himself from this pantheon of great authors by denying any affiliation with its members ("I nevir was acqueyted with . . ."), in "endorsing Chaucer's claim as the first 'poet' of stature to 'kiss' Parnassan steps," Lydgate "firmly enters his own 'poetrye' into this extraordinary company" with what Christopher Cannon aptly describes as only "ostensible modesty."[71] But Lydgate takes this strategy of self-authorization one step further in the *Life of Saint Alban and Saint Amphibal*. Here, he recapitulates a similar succession of authors from the *Fall of Princes*, claiming that he lacks the poetic skills of Lucan, Virgil, Homer, Cicero, and Petrarch, only this time he *omits* Chaucer from the list. The implication is that now it is Lydgate who is sixth of these six great authors, and who excels "al othir in our Englysh tounge":

> I nat acqueyntid with Musis of Maro,
> Nor with metris of Lucan nor Virgile,
> Nor sugrid ditees of Tullius Chithero,
> Nor of Omerus to folwe the fressh stile,
> Crokid to clymb over so hih a stile,
> Or for to folwe the Steppis Aureat
> Off ffranceis Petrak, the poete laureat.[72]

Lydgate's omission of Chaucer from his succession of literary models whose steps he will follow is accentuated in the following line, with a reference to Chaucer's poem, *The House of Fame* ("The golden trumpet of the hous of ffame, / . . . / Hath blowe ful fer the knyhtly mannys name").[73] Presented without mention of its author, this reference may show Lydgate cheekily complying with the narrator of *The House of Fame*'s request to remain anonymous after witnessing Lady Fame's arbitrary dispensation of either glory or slander to her petitioners. When questioned, Chaucer refuses to identify himself so that "no wight have my name in honde" (1877). (Although, since earlier in the same poem Chaucer names himself {729}, we may take this demonstration of humility lightly.)

Nor is this the first time that Lydgate excises Chaucer from a cata-

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[71] Christopher Cannon, *The Making of Chaucer's English: A Study of Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 185.

[72] John Lydgate, *The Life of Saint Alban and Saint Amphibal*, ed. J. E. Van der Westhuizen (Leiden, Brill: 1978), 8–14.

[73] Ibid., 15–17.

logue of his authorial models. In the *Mumming for the Mercers of London*, Lydgate names a succession of six poets: Cicero, Macrobius, Virgil, Ovid, Petrarch, and Boccaccio (29–33). Lydgate's lineage includes Boccaccio, but it leaps gracefully over Chaucer, an omission that has been read by Maura Nolan as Lydgate's attempt to suggest his unmediated relation to a European poetic tradition.[74] But perhaps, in light of Chaucer's naming of Statius but not Boccaccio, and Boccaccio's naming of Virgil but not Statius, more central to Lydgate's purpose than the tradition Nolan has identified is one of authorial erasure. This may not accord with our perception of Lydgate as a poet plagued by anxiety, more likely to follow Chaucer slavishly than to exploit his poetics, but it would suggest that Lydgate deeply understood the implications of Chaucer's refusal to name Boccaccio, and that he perpetuated a trope of concealment in this and other works so as to affiliate his poems with those of his predecessors. Indeed, this perspective dovetails with the increasing scholarly impulse to see Lydgate as a canny, even playful, interlocutor of his English and Italian sources.[75] At the very least, the repeated acts of erasure committed by (and performed upon) Statius, Boccaccio, Chaucer, and Lydgate—acts, we might say, of deliberate literary patricide—remind us that authorial occlusion need not signify a poet's concern over his source's inadequacy, but rather can be used to indicate the active tradition whence he came, and which will continue long after him. Indeed, while Oedipus may now give his name to a psychological complex, we would do well to remember that he existed first as a character in an "olde storye" about Thebes.

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[74] Maura Nolan, *John Lydgate and the Making of Public Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 103.

[75] See, for example, Robert Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Jennifer Summit, *Memory's Library* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); and Mary C. Flannery, *John Lydgate and the Poetics of Fame* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012).