STATIUS' SILVAE 3.5.44–49 AND THE GENRE OF OVID'S 'HEROIDES'[1])

Statius' Silv. 3.5[2]) is a *suasoria*[3]) in which he appeals to his wife Claudia to consent to their moving to Naples, the poet's home-town. As an argument to strengthen his case, Statius compares her marital fidelity (*fides*) to the proverbial fidelity of several mythical heroines (lines 44–49)[4]):

heu ubi nota fides totque explorata per usus,
qua ueteres Latias Graias heroidas aequas?
isset ad Iliacas (quid enim deterret amantes?)
Penelope gauisa domos, si passus Vlixes;
questa est Aegiale, questa est Meliboea relinqui,
et quam tam saeui fecerunt maenada planctus.

The heroines cited in the catalogue are Penelope, Aegiale, a "Meliboean" (that is, Thessalian) woman and an unnamed heroine compared to a maenad (l. 49). The latter has been identified as either Andromache or Ariadna[5]), but it is more likely that Statius

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1) I am grateful to E. Courtney, R. F. Thomas, A. Ramírez de Verger, E. Sánchez Salor and C. Chaparro Gómez for their help and criticism in successive drafts of this note. Needless to say, I alone am responsible for the view expressed.

2) For an up-to-date study of the *Silvae* see H. Cancik, Statius, 'Silvae'. Ein Bericht über die Forschung seit Friedrich Vollmer (1988), in: H. Temporini and W. Haase (edd.), ANRW II 32.5 (Berlin–New York 1986) 2681–2726, and D. W. T. Vessey, Transience Preserved: Style and Theme in Statius' 'Silvae', ibid., 2754–2802. – For Stat. silv. 3.5, see D. W. T. Vessey, Statius to his wife: Silvae III.5, CJ 72, 1977, 134–40; E. Burck, Statius an seine Gattin Claudia (Silvae 3,5), WS 99, 1986, 215–227; E. Burck, Retractatio: Statius an seine Gattin Claudia (Silvae 3, 5), WS 100, 1987, 137–53; A. Imhof, Statii ecloga ad uxorem (III 5) (Halle 1863); and A. Garzya, Stace et Ménandre, AC 25, 1956, 412–16.

3) For Stat. silv. 3.5 as a *suasoria*, see Vessey, op. cit. (note 2) 134.

4) I reproduce the text of the recent Oxford edition by E. Courtney (1990).

5) Valpy thought of Andromache, on the basis of the homeric comparison of this heroine to a maenad (Il. 10.460–61). Cf. A. J. Valpy, P. Papinii Statii opera omnia (Londini 1824) vol. 3, p. 1718. Ariadne was proposed by Gronovius, raising the simile in Catullus 64.60–61 (see F. Hand [ed.], Iohannis Frederici Gronovii in Papinii Statii Silvarum Libros V Diatribe [Lipsiae 1812] vol. 1, p. 360), only to be rejected by Markland (cf. J. Markland, P. Papinii Statii libri quinque Silvarum [Londini 1827] 295 b).

is referring to Laodamia[6]). Besides, the identities of Aegiale[7]) and of the "Meliboean" woman[8]) are more than doubtful, but my concern is with the fact that none of the heroines in the catalogue is Roman, which contradicts the introductory phrase *Latias Graias heroidas*. This difficulty has not escaped the attention of commentators, but a satisfactory explanation has not been reached so far. One line of approach is to suggest that *Latias Graias* is a conventional polar expression which should not be taken literally[9]). Another possibility is to interpret that the periphrasis in line 49 is alluding to a Roman heroine,

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6) I base my conclusion that the heroine alluded to in line 49 is Laodamia on the following facts: a) Statius mentions elsewhere the detail that Laodamia surrounded the image of her dead husband with a Dionysiac cult (see silv. 2.7.124–25 and H.-J. van Dam's note ad locum in P. Papinius Statius. Silvae Book II. A Commentary [Leiden 1984] 501–2); b) the phrase *isset ad Iliacas* (referring to Penelope in line 46 of this *silua*) is a recall of Catullus 68.86, *isset ad Iliacos*, referring to Protesilaus (I am grateful to Professor R. F. Thomas for drawing my attention to this echo). This verbal reminiscence suggests that Statius had Laodamia's story in mind, although he applied the Catullan expression to a different heroine.

7) The usual explanation makes Aegiale the wife of Diomedes, in spite of her infidelity to her husband: see commentary of F. Vollmer, Publii Papinii Statii Silvarum Libri. Herausgegeben und erklärt (Leipzig 1898, repr. Hildesheim–New York 1971) 432 ad loc., and H. Frère and H. J. Izaac, Stace. Silves (Paris 1961) 127 n. 2.

8) Frère and Izaac, ibid. (note 7), identify Meliboea as the lover of Alexis, following the narration of Servius on Aen. 1.720. Vollmer, ibid. (note 7), on the other hand, thinks that she is the wife of Philoctetes. I think that the latter identification is to be preferred. Meliboea is the Thesalian home-town of Philoctetes (Mela 2.35) and *Meliboeus* is an epithet of Philoctetes at Verg. Aen. 3.401. The most likely is that Statius uses *Meliboea* [*uxor*] as a periphrasis to refer to Philoctetes' wife. This rhetorical device of applying to a member of a couple an epithet which properly belongs to the other is well documented in Statius: a) at Theb. 5.121, the phrase *Rhodopeia coniunx* refers to Procne, the wife of the Rhodopeian (i. e. "Thracian") Tereus; b) at silv. 3.5.57–58, Statius writes *Trachinia Alcyone*, because Ceyx, Alcyone's husband, is the legendary king of Trachis (in fact, *Trachinius* modifies Ceyx at Ov. met. 11.282, 351); c) the following example is more striking: at silv. 3.2.89, the periphrasis *Agenoreus iuuencus* stands for Iuppiter, alluding to his transformation into a bull in order to rape Europa. The epithet is obviously adequate to Europa, Agenor's daughter, not to Iuppiter.

9) H.-J. van Dam, op. cit. (note 7) 407 on silv. 2.6.24–25 states that this type of polar expressions are much to the taste of Statius. At silv. 2.6.24–25 we read: *optarent multum Graiae cuperentque Latinae / sic peperisse nurus*; van Dam comments: "Apparently Statius likes these polar expressions with Latin/Greek ... Similarly in III 5,44–5 Statius writes *fides ... qua ueteres heroidas aequas*, where only Greek examples follow". Frère and Izaac, ibid. (note 7), raise the precedent of Prop. 2.32.61, *si tu Graias tuque es imitata Latinas*, wrongly arguing that, in this passage, no reference is made to any Latin woman. As a matter of fact, Propertius mentions the Roman precedent of Lesbia in 2.32.43–46.

namely Dido[10]). Finally, there have also been attempts to correct *Latias* of line 45[11]).

In order to solve this difficulty, it is my contention that Statius uses *heroidas* in this passage as a literary denomination to allude to the title of Ovid's collection *Heroidum Epistulae*[12]) and, in more general terms, to an established literary genre[13]). I think that Statius himself provides thematic and textual hints in this poem to support that suggestion, as can be seen from the following. Firstly, lines 44–49 are a kind of summary of the main thematic elements of Ovid's *Heroides*: mythical heroines (45 *heroidas*) complaining (48 *questa est*) about their lovers'/husbands' abandoning them (48 *relinqui*)[14]). Secondly, two out of the four heroines cited by Statius are in fact speakers of two Ovidian *Heroides* (Penelope ~ epist. 1; Laodamia ~ epist. 13). Thirdly, this poem, as a *suasoria*[15]), is very indebted to epist. 16, in which Paris urges Helena to leave for Troy: both the general situation and specific

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10) Cruceus thought of Dido, arguing that she is compared to a maenad in Verg. Aen. 4.299–302: see M. Rinn et M. Achaintre, Œuvres complètes de Stace traduites (Paris 1829) 333.

11) Phillimore suggested *Latia* for *Latias* in the apparatus of his Oxford edition (1905). He did not incorporate his conjecture in his text apparently for the metrical difficulty of *Latia*, whose last short syllable should be lengthened before the *muta cum liquida* of *Graias*. E. Courtney also discusses the problem (Emendations of Statius' Silvae, BICS 15, 1968, 53). He finds two obstacles in this passage: "the application of the word *heroides* to Romans, which is defensible only from very inferior writers" and the fact that none of the heroines in the catalogue is Roman. He therefore proposes the correction of *Latias* to *Italis*. However, he has left the text undisturbed in his recent Oxford edition (1990).

12) Although Ovid calls his work *epistula* (ars 2.345), there is some evidence that the complete title of the collection was *Heroidum Epistulae*. This denomination appears (with slight variations) in several manuscripts, as well as in Prisc. G. L., ed. Keil II, p. 544,4. For the title of the *Heroides* see A. I. Sabot, Les Héroides d'Ovide: Préciosité, Rhétorique et Poésie, in: H. Temporini and W. Haase (edd.), ANRW II 31.4 (Berlin–New York 1981) 2553–4.

13) It is important to point out that such a genre did not in fact exist as the literary form (the epistolary monologue) that Ovid created, but there were numerous precedents with a thematic setting akin to the *Heroides*. This epistolary form is probably the innovation that Ovid meant when stating, in a much debated line, that he "renewed the genre" (ars 3.346, *ignotum hoc aliis nouauit opus*).

14) Curiously enough, the definition of Ovid's *Heroides* provided by an author adheres closely to this Statian passage: "Le *Heroides* ... sono variazioni di un τόπος letterario, il tema dell'eroina che, abbandonata dell'amante, si lamenta della propria sorte (un motivo caro alla poesia ellenistica)" (F. Cupaiuolo, Itinerario della poesia latina nel I secolo dell'impero [Napoli 1973] 59).

15) For the analysis of some of Ovid's *Heroides* as *suasoriae*, see H. Jacobson, Ovid's Heroides (Princeton 1974) 322–30.

details suggest a direct influence[16]). Finally, several phrases in this *silva* are close borrowings from Ovid's *Heroides*: 44 *heu, ubi nota fides* ~ epist. 6.41, *heu, ubi pacta fides*; 60–61 *uiduo quod sola cubili / otia ... terit* ~ epist. 16. 317, *sola iaces uiduo tam longa nocte cubili*; 1–2 *quid mihi maesta die, sociis quid noctibus, uxor / anxia peruigili ducis suspiria cura* ~ epist. 12.169, *non mihi grata dies; noctes uigilantur amarae*.

This thematic pattern (complaint of a deserted woman) identifies not only Ovid's *Heroides* but a broader group of literary compositions occurring both in Greek[17]) and Latin literature. Hence *Latias Graias heroidas*. The Latin elegists applied also this dramatic scheme to their personal relationship with their mistresses[18]). This group of compositions, in Statius' view, would consti-

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16) The dramatic situation is identical in Ov. epist. 16 and Stat. silv. 3.5: a male speaker (Paris and Statius respectively) tries to persuade a woman (Helena, Claudia) to leave her home-town (Sparta, Rome) and move to his native land (Troy, Naples). The daughters of both women are mentioned: silv. 3.5,54 ff. ~ epist. 16.255. Both men include in their *suasoriae* a praise of their fatherlands as an argument to urge the move (praise of Asia in epist. 16.355–356 ~ praise of Naples in silv. 3.81–105). There are also borrowings of specific details: cf. epist. 16.190, *in qua tu nata es, terra beata mihi est* ~ silv. 3.5.106–9, *[nostra tellus] creauit / me tibi ... / nonne haec amborum genetrix altrixque uideri / digna*? Also, both men depict the women as "kidnapped": epist. 16.341, *nec tu rapta time ...* ~ silv. 3.5.18, *quas autem comitem te rapto per undas*). Finally, there is a striking echo in Statius from the Ovidian *epistula* in which Helena answers Paris: epist. 16. In epist. 16.66 Helena reproaches Paris for trying to take her to a "barbarian" land: *at certe barbara terra tua est*. Statius seems to anticipate this objection when stating in silv. 3.5.81–82: *has ego te sedes (nam nec mihi barbara Thrace / nec Libye natale solum) transferre laboro*.

17) For Greek examples of the genre, cf. Calypso's story in Hom. Od. 5.202–68. It is tempting also to speculate that Statius was referring to some Hellenistic story involving abandoned heroines, like Medea's in Apoll. Rh. Arg. 3 and 4 (σχετλιασμός in 4.350–90). Some stories in Parthenius' Περὶ ἐρωτικῶν παθημάτων also involve a pattern akin to the Heroides-theme. For another thing, we have the note in Suidas (s.v. Θεόκριτος) that some ascribed to Theocritus a work precisely entitled Ἡρωίνας (see Gow's commentary, vol. I [Cambridge 1965] xv–xxv). Finally, Persius alludes in his first Satire to the stories of Phillis and Hypsipyla as sentimental subjects of contemporary Latin *epyllia* (Pers. 1.33–35; see note ad loc. of M. Dolç, A. Persio Flaco. Sátiras [Barcelona 1949] 83–84). Both subjects could well go back to Hellenistic models.

18) It is interesting to notice the parallelism between *questa est ... relinqui* (line 48) and Prop. 1.3.43, (Cynthia) *leuiter mecum deserta querebar*; and 1.6.8, *queritur nullos esse relicta deos*. In fact, the complaint (*querelae, querimonia*) has been recognized as a quasi-technical appellation for love-poetry (see C. Saylor, Querelae: Propertius' distinctive technical name for elegy, ΑΓΩΝ 1, 1967, 142–49). For the motif of the elegiac mistress' complaint, see N. P. Gross, Amatory Persuasion in Antiquity. Studies in Theory and Practice (Newark 1985) 69–123. F. Cairns

tute a *genre* in the thematic sense of the term, although actual examples could appear in different formal genres, ranging from lyric to epic, from elegy to *epyllion*[19]).

When in these lines Statius equates the *fides* of his wife with that of the mythical heroines of the "Heroides" genre, he is in fact following the precedent of Ovid himself. It has been pointed out that Ovid, in trist. 1.3.79–86, resorts to reminiscences of the *Heroides* to indicate the similarity of his wife's fate to that of the heroines while himself plays the departing lover[20]).

Furthermore, in four other passages of his exilic poetry Ovid compares his wife's loyalty to that of several mythical heroines. Penelope, Andromache, Laodamia, Evadne, and Alcestis are all mentioned in these four catalogues of *exempla*[21]), but, strikingly enough, only two are common to the four lists: Penelope and Laodamia. Both are cited in Statius' catalogue and, as said above, both are speakers of two Ovidian *Heroides*. That Statius has Ovid in mind is assured even by a verbal reminiscence: the phrase *fides ... / qua ueteres Latias Graias heroidas aequas* is a pastiche of two remarks occurring in two of the four above mentioned *Tristia*'s passages: *prima locum sanctas heroidas inter haberes* (trist. 1.6.33) and *edidit haec mores illis heroisin aequos* (trist. 5.5.43). The fact that Statius selects from these catalogues only the two heroines who are also the addressers of two *Heroides* (Penelope and Laodamia), suggests that he is ultimately alluding to the "Heroides" genre. Taking this into account it is possible to solve the difficulty concerning the fact that none of the heroines in the Statian catalogue is Roman. By *Latias Graias heroidas* Statius probably meant not "Roman and Greek heroines" but "Latin and Greek pieces

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remarks that this complaint (σχετλιασμός) is a characteristic *topos* of the *propemptikon* or farewell speech (Generic composition in Greek and Roman Poetry [Edinburgh 1972] 12).

19) Lyric: cf. the Horatian monologues of Hypermestra (carm. 3.11.37–52) and Europa (carm. 3.27.34–56). Epic: cf. Dido's laments in Verg. Aen. 4.305–30, 365–87, 590–629 and Alcyone's story in Ov. met. 11.421–73. Elegy: cf. the *querelae* of Cynthia in Prop. 1.3.35–46 and Arethusa's epistle (Prop. 4.3). *Epyllion*: cf. Ariadna's σχετλιασμός in Catull. 64.132–201.

20) Suggestion of B. R. Nagle, The Poetics of Exile (Bruxelles 1980) 44. A textual self-reference occurs, for instance, in trist. 1.3.84 *accedam profugae sarcina parua rati* (cf. epist. 3.68 *non ego sum classi sarcina magna tuae*).

21) Andromache, Laodamia and Penelope are cited at trist. 1.6.19–22; Penelope, Evadne, Alcestis, and Laodamia at trist. 5.5.51–58; Penelope, Alcestis, Andromache, Evadne and Laodamia at trist. 5.14.35–40; Alcestis, Penelope, Laodamia, and Evadne at Pont. 3.1.105–12. See B. R. Nagle, op. cit. (note 20) 76 and n. 16.

belonging to the 'Heroides' genre". Ovid's *Heroides* would constitute, in Statius' view, a representative example of the Latin group.

One last remark. It is worth noting that Propertius' epistle of Arethusa to Lycotas (4.3) clearly represents an example of the "Heroides" genre. It has also been recognized as the immediate precedent of Ovid's *Heroides*[22]). Interestingly enough, Ovid himself acknowledges this debt by echoing Prop. 4.3. 11–16 in epist. 6. 41–46. The first lines of these passages are:

haecne marita fides et pacta haec praemia nuptae . . .?
(Prop. 4.3.11)[23])

Heus, ubi pacta fides? ubi conubialia iura?
(Ov. epist. 6.41)

Statius had probably in mind both lines when he wrote:

heu ubi nota fides totque explorata per usus,
qua ueteres Latias Graias Heroidas[24]*) aequas?*
(silv. 3.5.44–45)

The phrase *heu ubi nota fides . . .?* is the textual clue whereby Statius alludes to two of the most important stages in the development of a genre that he called "*Heroidas*".

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22) See E. J. Kenney, The Heroides, in: E. J. Kenney and W. V. Clausen (edd.), The Cambridge History of Classical Literature II. Latin Literature (Cambridge 1982) 422–27, specially 422. For the influence of Prop. 4.3 on Ov. epist. 13, see H. Merklin, Arethusa und Laodamia, Hermes 96, 1968, 461–94; James H. Dee, Arethusa to Lycotas: Propertius 4.3, TAPhA 104, 1974, 81–96; and P. Fedeli, Properzio. Elegie Libro IV (Bari 1965) 119.

23) The text of this line has been much debated. I follow the recent Loeb edition by G. P. Goold (Propertius. Elegies. Edited and translated by G. P. Goold [Cambridge, Mass. 1990] 376).

24) Thus printed, since it is the technical denomination for a literary genre.